



Into the West: The Literature of Travel in the Western Peripheries of the British-Irish  
Isles, c.1880-c.1940

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the literature of travel in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, across four case studies in the western peripheries of the British-Irish Isles: Cornwall, West Connacht, the Isle of Skye, and North West Wales. In the period 1880-1940, railway lines extended westwards, steamer and coach services became more numerous, and the transport network thickened, as the modern tourism industry emerged in the West. Companies marketed the West and competed for the custom of a burgeoning group of tourists, as part of an increasingly commercialised industry which emphasised the historical, literary, and mythical associations and the dramatic landscapes of the West. As the West was increasingly within both physical and imaginative reach, travel texts proliferated. Situated at a nexus in the cultural sphere, these texts borrowed and popularised the theories of academics, supplemented landscape descriptions with lines from famous poems and novels, and retold the tales and superstitions collected by folklorists. These books guided travellers as they constructed narratives of landscape and explained the importance of particular sites. They also influenced the views of ‘armchair tourists’, who read these books for entertainment. These texts articulated the ‘westward gaze’, as travellers journeyed to the edges of the land and looked towards the horizon, which inspired the imagination of mythical sunken lands and distant islands of immortality. The West was an important cultural imaginary in a period when the forces of mass media and commercialisation fuelled the desire to renegotiate the present by rediscovering places perceived as authentic, exciting, supernatural, and in danger of extinction. The West was a set of performative spaces, experiences, and images where issues of regional and national identity surfaced, where narratives of history were constructed and contested, where conflicting leisure pursuits came into contact, and where landscapes served as metaphors for the expression of cultural tensions.

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### A note on the text

The titles of guidebooks and handbooks are given in short form in the main body of the text, with the full title given in the first citation. Subsequent short citations may include the date to distinguish texts with similar titles. Several editions of *Murray's Handbooks* contain an introduction numbered from p. 1, after which the main portion of the handbook also begins at p. 1. To avoid confusion, where introductory material is cited this has been indicated in the footnote.

The names of places and people in quotations from primary source material have been reproduced in the original spelling (and capitalisation), which results in some variation for several names. In my text, names are given in the conventional English-language form. For instance, 'Bardsey Island' is used instead of the Welsh *Ynys Enlli*, and 'Cuillin' is used instead of the Scottish Gaelic *An Cuilthionn*. The vernacular spelling is used for those names that have entered common English-language usage, so 'Caernarfon' is used instead of the anglicised 'Carnarvon'. In Ireland, the vernacular English-language form has been used, so 'Connacht' is used instead of the anglicised 'Connaught' and the Irish *Connachta* or *Cúige Chonnacht*.



## Introduction

In 1908, the ornithologist and natural historian W. H. Hudson published an account of his experiences as a traveller in western Cornwall. At the Land's End, Hudson:

...blessed the daily furious winds which served to keep the pilgrims away, and to half blot out the vulgar modern buildings with rain and mist from the Atlantic... During these vigils, when I was in a sense the 'last man' in that most solitary place, its associations, historical and mythical, exercised a strange power over me. Here, because of its isolation, or remoteness, from Saxon England, because it is the very end of the land, 'the westeste point of the land of Cornewalle', the ancient wild spirit of the people remained longest unchanged, and retained much of its distinctive character down to within recent times. It was a Celtic people with an Iberian strain, even as in Wales and Ireland and Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis explores the idea of 'the West' in narratives of travel from the period 1880-1940, across four case studies from the western regions of the British-Irish Isles: Cornwall, West Connacht, the Isle of Skye, and North West Wales. As railway and steamer services made the West more accessible, travellers and tourists discovered the western peripheries in growing numbers and writers mobilised the West as a fresh metaphor with which to articulate their political and cultural ideas. The 'imagined West' comprised rural regions defined by dramatic landscapes and was perceived as wild, authentic, and preindustrial in nature. As Hudson hinted at the end of the passage, the West transcended the individual nations, cultures, and regions of the British-Irish Isles. In a close reading of travel texts, this thesis establishes the West as an important cultural phenomenon in this period, and makes an important contribution to a historiography bound by the framework of national political borders.

The West was constructed through 'a matrix of related stories as much as topographic details' – an array of different voices and disciplines, including the historical and contemporary, the academic and popular, the political and poetic, and the factual and fictional.<sup>2</sup> The associational values of certain regions and specific landscape features of the West were acquired and contested in the multifarious publications of academics, journalists, novelists, poets, playwrights, composers, and many others. Situated at a nexus within this cultural sphere, travel texts borrowed and popularised the theories of academics, supplemented landscape descriptions with lines from famous poems and novels, and retold the tales and superstitions collected by folklorists. They were decorated with illustrations, photographs, and maps, and all of this was brought together by writers who used the techniques of dramatic fiction in their personal narratives of travel. These texts guided travellers by mapping space, plotting routes, and constructing narratives of landscape by explaining the importance of particular sites. They also influenced the views of 'armchair tourists', who read these books for entertainment, as they described the 'events which places call to mind', and saw 'as we wish that we could see'.<sup>3</sup>

In the passage above, Hudson raised several of the themes explored in this thesis. The West functioned as a set of spaces, experiences, and images where conflicting leisure pursuits came into contact and cultural tensions emerged, with day-tripping 'pilgrims' and their modern mass-tourism practices threatening to disturb Hudson's intellectual and imaginative engagement with the Land's End. The West

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<sup>1</sup> W. H. Hudson, *The Land's End: A Naturalist's Impressions in West Cornwall* (London, 1908), pp. 58-60.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from Mike Pearson, *In Comes I: Performance, Memory and Landscape* (Exeter, 2006), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Aodh de Blácam, 'Guide Books for the Gael', *The Irish Monthly* 63.745 (1935), pp. 473-4.

also promised an escape from ‘vulgar modern buildings’, and served as a metaphor for the expression of anxieties about both nineteenth-century industrialisation and twentieth-century commercialisation. ‘Historical and mythical’ associations furnished the contested historical narratives contained in travel texts – narratives that endeavoured to unite the constituent nations with symbols of overarching Britishness. The reliance on ideas about the ‘Celtic’ and ‘Saxon’ to articulate national and regional differences could at once denote a diverse, multifaceted Britishness and also threaten to disintegrate the notion of a coherent, centralised whole.

## I – Source material

### *Guidebooks, travelogues, travel texts*

The core body of source material consists of approximately 300 of what I call ‘travel texts’, spread evenly over the four case study regions. Travel texts provide accounts of movement through space that was conducted in the expectation of returning to the place of origin.<sup>4</sup> The travel texts considered in this thesis are predominantly books, with some articles of interest from periodicals also included. Many of these books are compilations of articles that were first serialised in periodicals and magazines.<sup>5</sup> The focus on published books makes for an extensive yet coherent source base which is representative of travel texts more generally, and remains manageable within the scope of the thesis, which balances geographical breadth with archival depth.

Many labels have been used to describe travel writing, including ‘guidebook’, ‘travel memoir’, ‘travel story’, ‘travel book’, ‘travelogue’, and ‘travel literature’, which illustrates both the richness of travel writing and the range of characteristics that critics have opted to emphasise in their preferred term.<sup>6</sup> In particular, historians and literary critics have differentiated systematic guidebooks from personal travel narratives, which corresponded to the dichotomy of the prosaic and the literary.<sup>7</sup> After discussing the generic and recurring features of systematic guidebooks and personal travel narratives, this section rejects the dichotomous categorisation of travel writing as an analytical framework, and offers the term ‘travel texts’ as an appropriate alternative.

The systematic guidebook emerged in the 1830s and 1840s, with publications such as *Murray’s Handbooks*, *Black’s Guides*, and Thomas Cook’s *Traveller’s Handbooks*.<sup>8</sup> Systematic guidebooks contained maps and

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<sup>4</sup> Kevin J. James, *Tourism, Land, and Landscape in Ireland: The Commodification of Culture* (New York, 2014), p. 2; James derived his definition from Helen Gilbert and Anna Johnston, *In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire* (Oxford, 2002), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Examples include the chapters of W. I. Adams, *Photographing in Old England, with some snap shots in Scotland and Wales* (New York, 1910), which were ‘written as letters to the readers of *The Photographic Times*’ in 1909. Henry Wilkinson was sent to Ireland as a special correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, and his articles were republished in H. Spenser Wilkinson, *The Eve of Home Rule: Impressions of Ireland in 1886* (2nd edn, London, 1886). Much of Mrs Rodolph Stawell, *Motor Tours in Wales and the Border Counties* (Boston MA, 1909) first appeared in the *Car Illustrated* – see p. xi. For other examples, see the prefatory ‘Note’ in Arthur L. Salmon, *Literary Rambles in the West of England* (London, 1906), p. v; the preface in Arthur L. Salmon, *The Heart of the West: A Book of the West Country from Bristol to Land’s End* (London, 1922), pp. v-vi; and Joseph Pennell and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Our Journey to the Hebrides* (New York, 1889), p. v.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, Paul Fussell defined travel writing as a ‘sub-species of memoir’, while Jan Borm used the term ‘travel literature’ to emphasise ‘the literary at work in travel writing’; see Jan Borm, ‘Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology’, in Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (eds), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 13-15. For the debate about whether or not travel writing is a genre, see pp. 13-26. For a summary of some theoretical approaches to ‘travel writing’ in general, see Mary Baine Campbell, ‘Travel writing and its theory’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 261-78.

<sup>7</sup> Gilbert explains the links between categories of travel writing and the ‘judgemental division between the traveller and the tourist’; see David Gilbert, ‘“London in all its glory – or how to enjoy London”: Guidebook representations of imperial London’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 25.3 (1999), p. 283.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

illustrations, and suggested routes and itineraries of varying length. Such texts were formulaic, and provided practical information such as the names and prices of hotels, bathing facilities, motor garages, and convenient excursions for each location. Historical information, anecdotes, and ‘pithy quotes’ from literary figures accompanied the description of the various sites, all of which was conveyed in a succinct writing style.<sup>9</sup> Guidebooks were authoritative in their tone, directing and instructing the reader, and they were ‘essentially corporate products’ despite the pretence that they were written by an individual author.<sup>10</sup> Many guidebooks attempted to appeal to a wide audience of tourists from ‘all classes and every nationality – noble and simple, rich and poor, strong and ailing’.<sup>11</sup> In this endeavour the systematic guidebooks aimed to be comprehensive,<sup>12</sup> though by the late-nineteenth century they routinely directed readers towards publications such as *Bradshaw’s* for further information on railway timetables, showing an awareness of the increasingly specialised literary culture. Publishers were keenly aware of the need to produce new editions with the latest information, which contained ‘additions and corrections as are necessitated by the changes which are currently going on’.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the contents of guidebooks changed over time alongside economic, political, and technological developments.<sup>14</sup>

Personal travel narratives, or travelogues, predate the systematic guidebook, and many of the formative and most influential travelogues were published in the 1770s and 1780s, such as Samuel Johnson’s *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) and Thomas Pennant’s *A Tour in Wales* (1778).<sup>15</sup> Travelogues constituted a heterogeneous category of travel narratives, and existed in a wide variety of forms, including diaries that were written up at the end of a day’s travel, letters written to family and friends at home, articles intended for serialised publication in newspapers or periodicals, as well as full-length books.<sup>16</sup> Travelogues were read for entertainment, and often described humorous or dramatic episodes. Their authors were sometimes conventional tourists and pleasure-hunters, while others had purposes that were overtly political.<sup>17</sup> In the West, many writers eschewed signs of poverty and hunger in favour of

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<sup>9</sup> Rudy Koshar, ‘“What Ought to Be Seen”: Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities in Germany and Europe’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 33.3 (1998), p. 323. The Scottish Mountaineering Club’s guide to the Isle of Skye was praised for its ‘clearness and terseness with an entire absence of the sensational embroidery that disfigures writing of some enthusiasts on rock climbing’; see W. W. [review], ‘E. W. Steeple, G. Barlow and H. MacRobert, *Island of Skye. The Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide* (Edinburgh, 1923)’, *The Geographical Journal* 64.4 (1924), p. 334.

<sup>10</sup> Gilbert, ‘Guidebook representations’, pp. 281-2. For the Muirhead family and their ‘informative, authoritative’ guidebooks, see Ian Campbell Robertson, ‘Muirhead Family’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/61390> [28 May 2019]. For Baedeker’s and Murray’s guidebooks, see Jan Palmowski, ‘Travels with Baedeker – The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain’, in Rudy Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 105-30. For Baedeker, see David M. Bruce, ‘Baedeker: The Perceived “Inventor” of the Formal Guidebook – A Bible for Travellers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century’, in Richard W. Butler and Roslyn A. Russell (eds), *Giants of Tourism* (Wallingford, 2010), pp. 93-110.

<sup>11</sup> Great Western Railway, *Holiday Haunts in England and Wales* (London, 1913), p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Koshar, ‘Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities’, p. 323.

<sup>13</sup> Askew Roberts and Edward Woodall, *Gossiping Guide to Wales (North Wales and Aberystwyth)* (London, 1890), p. iii. For the recognition of the need to stay up to date, also see Askew Roberts, *Gossiping Guide to Wales* (London, 1879), p. 1; and Askew Roberts and Edward Woodall, *Gossiping Guide to Wales (North Wales and Aberystwyth)* (London, 1902), preface, p. v.

<sup>14</sup> For a comment on the effect of the motorcar on guidebooks, see Arthur Quiller-Couch, ‘Introduction’ (1932), in A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, *Cornwall and Its People* (London, 1948), p. v.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Heiss, ‘Tourism’, in Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier (eds), *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 1021-2. For an introduction to the earliest known examples of travel writing, from the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt, one thousand years before Homer’s *Odyssey*, to the narratives of Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and Christopher Columbus, see Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, ‘Introduction’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> C. J. Woods, *Travellers’ Accounts as Source-Material for Irish Historians* (Dublin, 2009), p. 13. For instance, W. I. Adams wrote letters ‘without literary pretence, often at the end of a day of travel, while the facts which they recorded were fresh in mind’; see Adams, *Photographing in Old England*, p. 9. For an example of a travelogue of concise, short, diary notes, see Eric Gill, ‘A Diary in Ireland’ (1919), republished in Eric Gill, *In a Strange Land* (London, 1944), pp. 27-49.

<sup>17</sup> Woods, *Travellers’ Accounts*, pp. 16-18. J. L. Joynes toured Ireland in order to see ‘something of the people, and especially of the working of the Coercion Act’; see J. L. Joynes, *The Adventures of a Tourist in Ireland* (London, 1882), p. i.

picturesque landscapes, while others set out explicitly to get to the bottom of the Land Question and observe the workings of Coercion Act and the Land Acts.<sup>18</sup> Many writers made euphemistic allusions to ‘agrarian disturbances’, the ‘difficulties’ of the land tenure system, and ‘centuries of political misunderstanding’, while others avoided the topic by claiming that politics did not fall within the scope of their travelogue.<sup>19</sup>

For several influential critics and historians, the partition of systematic guidebooks and personal travel narratives also represented a cultural divide, as Roland Barthes dismissed guidebooks as agents of blindness in his well-known essay on the *Guide Bleu*.<sup>20</sup> Guidebooks were considered a ‘debasement’ of earlier, more erudite travel writing, and were criticised for their systematic format and superficial content. Literary critics linked the emergence of guidebooks with broader changes in patterns of consumption, and argued that tourism represented a ‘crude displacement’ of enlightened travel by the ‘mindless consumerism of mass leisure and entertainment’. As tourism debased travel, ‘commerce dislodged art’.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, literary travel writing has commanded the bulk of scholarly attention.

However, David Gilbert has shown that this approach trivialises those texts labelled ‘guidebooks’, which were diverse in their contents, in the ways in which they were organised, and in the ways they were used by readers.<sup>22</sup> Full-length guides were supplemented by pamphlets<sup>23</sup> and shorter versions of the original guidebook for the tourist who wished to pack light, or read less.<sup>24</sup> Densely packed texts such as *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878) considered history, geology, and botany in an introduction that was 97 pages long, and declared that no guide would be complete ‘without dwelling largely on such subjects’.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, in 1903, G. E. Mitton declared that ‘the time is past for prefaces giving dry geographical and mineralogical facts at length’,<sup>26</sup> and such weighty treatises were absent from *Ward and Lock’s* publications, which

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<sup>18</sup> For texts which set out to discuss contemporary politics, see Malcolm Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye, with Sketch of a Trip to St Kilda* (Glasgow, 1885), pp. 35-6, 38-9; Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 124; Joynes, *Adventures in Ireland*, pp. iii, 8-10, who discussed politics with Michael Davitt, several landlords, and others; Gill, ‘Diary in Ireland’, pp. 44-9; James H. Tuke, *Irish Distress and Its Remedies. The Land Question. A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (5th edn, London, 1880). Some authors recognised the balance between the picturesque and human reality; see C. F. Gordon Cumming, *In the Hebrides* (London, 1883), p. 310; Hugh Quigley, *The Highlands of Scotland* (2nd edn, London, 1939 [1936]), p. 1; [Review], ‘Mrs Stanley Gardiner, *We Two and Shamus* (London, 1913)’, *The Athenaeum* 4470 (1913), p. 691.

<sup>19</sup> For texts which made brief or euphemistic allusions to contemporary political developments, see H. V. Morton, *In Search of Ireland* (7th edn, London, 1932 [1930]), p. vii; C. W. [Charles Whymper], ‘An Artist’s Notes. In an Irish Village’, *The Leisure Hour* 47 (1898), p. 639; M. E. M. Donaldson, *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands* (2nd edn, Paisley, 1923), p. 130. This was also a common feature of so-called guidebooks; see *Black’s Picturesque Tourist of Scotland* (27th edn, Edinburgh, 1887), pp. 439-40; *Black’s Tourist’s Guide to Ireland* (19th edn, Edinburgh, 1885), p. 241; R. T. Lang (ed.), *Black’s Guide to Ireland* (5th edn, London, 1902), p. 96; *Black’s Guide to Ireland* (8th edn, London, 1912), p. 96; G. E. Mitton (ed.), *Black’s Guide to Galway Connemara and the West of Ireland* (20th edn, London, 1912), p. 241; W. F. Wakeman, *The Tourists’ Picturesque Guide to Ireland* (8th edn, Dublin, 1890), p. 274; R. T. Lang (ed.), *Black’s Guide to Ireland* (24th edn, London, 1906), p. xxviii; John Cooke (ed.), *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Ireland* (6th edn, London, 1902), introduction, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘The Blue Guide’, in Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London, 2000), p. 76. This is also discussed in Gilbert, ‘Guidebook representations’, p. 282.

<sup>21</sup> Koshar, ‘Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities’, p. 324.

<sup>22</sup> Gilbert, ‘Guidebook representations’, p. 283.

<sup>23</sup> Caledonian Railway published a 13-page pamphlet in 1911, titled *Bonnie Scotland: land of brown heath and shaggy wood* (Edinburgh, 1911).

<sup>24</sup> Henry Irwin Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s Smaller Practical Guide to North Wales* (2nd edn, London 1884) and Henry Irwin Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s Smaller Practical Guide to North Wales* (3rd edn, London, 1890) were abridged versions of Henry Irwin Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s Practical Guide to North Wales* (London, 1878). The weighty introductory sections on Local Names, History, Geology, Botany, Mines and Minerals, and Angling were cut, while the remaining sections from the introduction and the guidebook-proper were shortened quite considerably. The remaining text was extremely similar, so these guides are quite literally ‘smaller’, abridged versions of the larger text.

<sup>25</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), p. iii for preface, p. v for the introduction contents page, and pp. xv-cxii for the introduction.

<sup>26</sup> G. E. Mitton (ed.), *Black’s Guide to Scotland* (33rd edn, London, 1903), p. xiii.

prioritised information on 'Holiday Season Tickets' and 'Combined Rail and Coach Excursions' in North Wales.<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, guidebooks also differed greatly in their attitudes towards advertisements. Keen to avoid any association with unthinking, commercial forms of tourism, *Baedeker's Handbooks* and the *Blue Guides* asserted in their prefaces that 'advertisements of every kind are rigorously excluded'.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, *Ward and Lock's* 'Guide Book Advertiser' ran to 88 pages in their guide to *Falmouth and South Cornwall* (1909), and contained adverts for various products from lozenges to tools,<sup>29</sup> while the advertiser in their *North Wales Southern Section* (1912) was 98 pages long.<sup>30</sup> In a departure from the guidebook's traditional aim of comprehensiveness, the commercial interests of the Great Western Railway meant that the Company's guidebooks neglected to mention the South Western Railway route to Plymouth, instead focussing solely on their own 'much-talked of and luxuriantly equipped Express train which takes you from Paddington to Penzance'.<sup>31</sup> Even in such a competitive marketplace, guidebooks were not always so exclusionary, and *Baedeker's Great Britain* directed readers towards C. S. Ward and M. J. B. Baddeley's *Thorough Guides* series, for 'those in search of more detailed information regarding any particular district'.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, the categories 'guidebook' and 'travelogue' suggest internal coherence and similarity, as well as fundamental and observable differences between those categories. This obscures the fact that the line between guidebooks and travelogues was typically blurred.<sup>33</sup> The historian Kevin J. James addressed the intertextual nature of these publications, and explained that practical guidebooks which contained train timetables and lists of steamer fares supplemented this information with 'evocative narratives of place' that have been more commonly associated with literary travelogues.<sup>34</sup> In the guidebooks published by MacBrayne's steamer company, detailed tables of prices and itineraries of tours to the Isle of Skye were accompanied by a lyrical description of the island:

Skye is the largest, and her facilities, scenic opportunities, and historic interests the most comprehensive, of all the Western Isles. Grandeur and elfin shadows, stark peaks that hide in the mist and in an hour emerge sparkling, seeming so near that you could touch

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<sup>27</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to North Wales (Southern Section)* (4th edn, London, 1912), pp. 9-11.

<sup>28</sup> Quotation appears in Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: Scotland* (London, 1927), p. vi; and Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: England* (London, 1920), p. vi. For *Baedeker's*, see J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers by K. Baedeker* (Leipzig, 1887), p. vi.

<sup>29</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Falmouth and South Cornwall* (4th edn, London, 1909), advertiser pp. 1-88; for the lozenges and tools adverts, see advertiser pp. 1-16.

<sup>30</sup> *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), advertiser pp. 1-98.

<sup>31</sup> Great Western Railway, *The Cornish Riviera* (2nd edn, London, 1905), p. 6, also see the 'Train Service' appendix, pp. 85-93. However, in his guidebook for the London and North Western Railway, George Shaw insisted that 'in those cases in which the London and North Western Railway system offers a more circuitous approach, the author has unhesitatingly sacrificed the interests of the company to the convenience of the tourist in recommending a line, even when in direct opposition to that company'. Shaw did not wish his guidebook to be 'a mere advertisement'; see G. Shaw (ed.), *The Official Tourists' Picturesque Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (London, 1875), p. v.

<sup>32</sup> J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers by K. Baedeker* (2nd edn, Leipzig, 1890), p. v. Also see J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers by K. Baedeker* (4th edn, Leipzig, 1897).

<sup>33</sup> Gareth Roddy [review], 'Kevin J. James, *Tourism, Land, and Landscape in Ireland: The Commodification of Culture* (New York, 2014)', *Studies in Travel Writing* 20.2, pp. 230-2.

<sup>34</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 14; Roddy [review], 'James, *Tourism in Ireland*', pp. 230-2. Taking the Caledonian Railway guidebooks as an example, stanzas of Byron and Scott preceded the introduction in Caledonian Railway, *Tours in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1893), pp. 11-12. In later editions, Robert Reid's poem 'Scotland' preceded the contents page of Caledonian Railway, *Through Scotland by the Caledonian Railway* (Glasgow, 1898); George Eyre-Todd (ed.), *Through Scotland by the Caledonian Railway* (Glasgow, 1906), p. 5; George Eyre-Todd (ed.), *Through Scotland by the Caledonian Railway* (Glasgow, 1907), p. 5; and George Eyre-Todd (ed.), *Through Scotland by the Caledonian Railway* (Glasgow, 1909), p. 5.

them with your hands. Perilous and savage faces beaten with storm and scowling at the clouds. Sounding caverns and smiling beaches, wide glens of laughing green.<sup>35</sup>

In both guidebooks and travelogues, authors moved seamlessly between the trope of the holiday and polemical commentary, between humorous anecdotes and treatises on historical or racial development, and between practical timetabled information and lyrical passages of text or excerpts from the well-known works of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Scott. This thesis adopts the term ‘travel texts’ as a broad category which is flexible enough to include a wide variety of travel writing, including some systematic texts which, given their reliance on material from pre-existing editions and other texts, were more ‘compiled’ than they were ‘written’. At the same time, the boundaries of the term ‘travel texts’ remain sufficiently firm to demarcate the diverse yet coherent intersecting bodies of literature which are united by having travel at their core.

### *A literary bogland*

As suggested above, guidebooks and travelogues seep through one another, and are not discrete or self-contained entities. Taken together, travel texts are the products of interconnections and borrowed ideas, as they pull information, imagery, and quotations from earlier travel texts, academic history books, works of literature and topography, illustrations and photography, and many more sources besides.<sup>36</sup> There was ‘no hard and fast boundary’ between travel texts and the surrounding culture.<sup>37</sup>

The image of bogland – as described by the poet Seamus Heaney – serves as a useful metaphor for this cultural environment.<sup>38</sup> The extensive bogs of Ireland developed around two thousand years ago as a result of the cooler, wetter climate, agricultural clearing of the forests, and lack of drainage, which resulted in ‘layer upon layer of spongy vegetation, cotton grass, bog rush, and sphagnum’.<sup>39</sup> The landscape painter T. P. Flanagan’s description of the bog’s ‘moistness’ and ‘fecundity’ influenced Heaney’s understanding of it. For Heaney, the bog is ‘melting’, preserving artefacts of history, creating an environment of ‘kind, black butter’ in which time becomes spatialised, and where past and present occupy the same plane in a living landscape.<sup>40</sup> Just as layers of the bog seep through one another, so the travel text is enriched by earlier layers of the literary culture, as older, canonical texts influenced the style and content of later publications, enriching them with stylistic conventions, landscape descriptions, and historical narratives. Writers of travel texts were also readers, and integrated other accounts with their narratives, ‘producing a metanarrative of place’.<sup>41</sup>

Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (first published in 1757) provided much of the language with which writers articulated the experience of western

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<sup>35</sup> For the description, see David MacBrayne, *The Royal Route. The Isles of Youth. See this Scotland First* (Glasgow, 1938), p. 19; for the ‘Time Tables and Tours Data’, see from p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Watt and Carter concisely summarised this method of writing as describing ‘landmarks of Scottish scenery in reference to the historical events with which they are connected, and the literary and legendary associations of which they are the centre’; see Francis Watt and Rev. Andrew Carter, *Picturesque Scotland: Its Romantic Scenes and Historical Associations described by Lay and Legend, Song and Story* (London, 1887), p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Gilbert, ‘Guidebook representations’, p. 281.

<sup>38</sup> I thank Dr Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid for her help in developing the ideas in this section.

<sup>39</sup> Dianne Meredith, ‘Landscape or Mindscape? Seamus Heaney’s Bogs’, *Irish Geography* 32.2 (1999), pp. 131-2.

<sup>40</sup> Seamus Heaney, *New Selected Poems 1966-1987* (London, 1990), p. 17; Meredith, ‘Seamus Heaney’s Bogs’, pp. 127-8, 133; Brian McHale, ‘Archaeologies of Knowledge: Hill’s Middens, Heaney’s Bogs, Schwerner’s Tablets’, *New Literary History* 30.1 (1999), p. 243; Anthony Purdy, ‘The Bog as Mnemotope: Nationalist Archaeologies in Heaney and Tournier’, *Style* 36.1 (2002), pp. 93-4.

<sup>41</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 11.

landscapes in their travel texts between 1880 and 1940. His consideration of the sublime and beautiful was republished throughout the period, while it was also absorbed second-hand through the Romantic writers, and, as chapter three argues, was deeply embedded in the cultural aesthetics of landscape by the late-nineteenth century. In addition to the key foundational text of Burke, each region of the western British-Irish Isles had its own genealogy of key texts. For instance, the travel texts of Scotland openly drew on a corpus of canonical texts, which they listed as recommended reading and mined for passages with which to furnish their descriptions of Skye. Among these canonical texts were Samuel Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* (1775), Thomas Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772* (published in 1774), Sir Walter Scott's 'The Lord of the Isles' (1815), and Alexander Smith's *A Summer in Skye* (1865).<sup>42</sup> By the 1930s, more recent works such as J. A. MacCulloch's *The Misty Isle of Skye* (1905) joined the list of heavily-quoted canonical texts.<sup>43</sup>

The enduring influence of earlier travel texts was ensured by their republication with updated prefaces, which gave new life to older texts. In 1883, the Celtic scholar John Rhys edited a new edition of Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Wales* after 'one of those happy holidays I spent in the neighbourhood of Snowdon',<sup>44</sup> and a selection of Arthur Young's tours in England and Wales were republished by the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1932.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps one of the most widely published travel texts in this period was George Borrow's *Wild Wales* (1862), which appeared in numerous editions and reprints between 1880 and 1940.<sup>46</sup> In 1879, Walter White suggested that 'the active wayfarer' might find the latest edition of his *A Londoner's Walk to the Land's End and a Trip to the Scilly Isles* (first published in 1855) useful 'for comparing the past with the present',<sup>47</sup> while the journalist C. Lewis Hind refused the opportunity to alter the text for the fourth edition of his *Days in Cornwall* (1925), which was first published in 1907. Despite the increase in railway, charabanc, and motorcar traffic, Hind maintained that the 'seas and the skies, the little wild coves, the solemn hills, and the ancient cromlechs and stone circles are the same. The heart of Cornwall does not change'.<sup>48</sup> Reviewers reinforced the links between travel texts old and new, such as the *Manchester Guardian* review of H. V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1927), which described the author's 'Borrovia charm in his narrative of personal adventure'.<sup>49</sup>

That is not to suggest that the literary culture remained unchanged. In 1939, Hugh Quigley questioned the legacy of the Scottish Highland image inherited by his generation, describing it as an 'extraordinary

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<sup>42</sup> For instance, Smith is recommended reading for those travelling to Skye in Scott Moncrieff Penney (ed.), *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Scotland* (8th edn, London, 1903), see 'Addenda, 1909', p. 3; while parts of Johnson's travels are mentioned and passages from Pennant and Scott are quoted in G. E. Mitton (ed.), *Black's Guide to Scotland, North* (London, 1920), pp. 237-43. Jeanette Marks devoted a chapter to 'Dr Johnson's Tour of North Wales' in her *Gallant Little Wales: Sketches of its People, Places and Customs* (Boston MA, 1912), pp. 59-85. A. R. Hope Moncrieff dealt extensively with Johnson, Boswell, and other famous visitors to Skye in W. Smith and A. R. Hope Moncrieff, *The Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London, 1907), pp. 117-45. J. B. Reynolds used a passage from 'The Lord of the Isles' to accompany a picture of Loch Coruisk, in J. B. Reynolds, *Quotation and Picture Series: Scotland* (London, 1915), pp. 24-25. George Birkbeck Hill, *Footsteps of Dr Johnson (Scotland)* (London, 1890).

<sup>43</sup> For example, J. J. Bell drew heavily on MacCulloch for his description of the Spar Cave in Skye; see J. J. Bell, *Scotland's Rainbow West* (London, 1933), pp. 306-7.

<sup>44</sup> John Rhys (ed.), *Tours in Wales by Thomas Pennant* (Caernarfon, 1883), vol. 1, p. xi.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur Young, *Tours in England and Wales* (London, 1932).

<sup>46</sup> John Murray published editions of George Borrow's *Wild Wales* in 1888, 1896, 1900, 1901, 1907, 1919, and 1926. Editions were also published by J. M. Dent, G. P. Putnam's, and John Lane in this period. A selection is listed in the bibliography, with the publisher indicated.

<sup>47</sup> Walter White, *A Londoner's Walk to the Land's End and a Trip to the Scilly Isles* (3rd edn, London, 1879 [1855]), p. x.

<sup>48</sup> C. Lewis Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (4th edn, New York, 1925 [1907]), 'preface to the fourth edition', p. vii.

<sup>49</sup> This line from the review was published in H. V. Morton, *In Scotland Again* (London, 1933), p. 420. Of course, writers were not always complimentary about other travel texts. Hugh MacDiarmid had 'no patience' with 'old wives' tales, day-trippers' ecstasies, trite moralisings, mawkish sentimentality, supernatural fancies, factual spinach, and outrageous banality which fills most books on this subject'; see Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Islands of Scotland: Hebrides, Orkneys, and Shetlands* (London, 1939), p. vii.

confusion of thought and feeling' which mixed Romantic descriptions of 'immense landscapes' and 'overarching clouds' with the realism of 'the bare human reality beneath', and the Victorian 'machine-made convention of admiration' that was underscored by 'Balmoralism'.<sup>50</sup> Whether they were being republished, updated, or called into question, earlier layers of the literary culture remained active in subsequent decades. In this way, travel texts are best understood not in terms of 'old' and 'new' as part of a neat chronology in order of publication, but as additions to an interconnected and living literary culture, in which travel texts past and present occupied the same space in a literary bogland.

Travel texts reached outwards to other genres, too, and in this sense, they are revealing as historical sources because they were situated at a nexus in the cultural sphere.<sup>51</sup> Writers alluded to and sometimes retold the tales, superstitions, and legends that had been compiled by well-known folklorists as well as local amateur collectors, and written accounts were often supplemented by illustrations, photography, and maps. Travel texts incorporated the scholarship of academic historians, geographers, and archaeologists into their introductions, and the boundary between genres was often crossed by academics themselves.<sup>52</sup> The language of geology provided a new idiom for the articulation of landscape appreciation in travel texts from the nineteenth century, and the important influence of this discipline will be discussed fully in chapter five. By the 1920s and 1930s, some writers were calling for not just 'the admiration' but also 'the study of scenery' in a modern, scientific manner which updated Burkean principles of the sublime and beautiful.<sup>53</sup> In *The Scenery of England* (1932), the geographer Vaughan Cornish conducted a 'scientific analysis of the sentiment aroused by the different influences of scenery', to demonstrate how 'every phase of Nature can exercise its impact upon the mind'.<sup>54</sup> This new 'philosophic basis for the aesthetics of scenery' was expressed as a 'scientific statement' through modern disciplines such as geology and geography.<sup>55</sup>

This wealth of source material added depth to the personal adventures and anecdotes of the individual authors, who often presented their travel narratives using techniques associated with fiction writing, such as the serio-comic mode which emerged in Modernist literature.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, in travel texts it was not always possible to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction, even for the authors themselves. R. M. Ballantyne's *Deep Down. A Tale of the Cornish Mines* (1883) occupied the blurred space between fact and fiction, which the author described as 'not a record of facts, but a story founded on facts'.<sup>57</sup> Lord Dunsany was equally open about his use of 'a character of fiction' called Old Mickey in *My Ireland* (1937), with whom Dunsany conversed, and discovered 'what the people of Ireland actually think of the new form of government'.<sup>58</sup> Just as travel texts were read as entertaining pieces of imaginative literature, works of fiction were recommended as texts to accompany the traveller. The clergyman, folklore collector, and

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<sup>50</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> For the links between literature and 'wider spheres of intellectual and cultural activity', see Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Cork, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> The geographer H. J. Fleure wrote an introductory article in Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: Wales* (London, 1922), pp. xi-xxvi. J. J. Bell drew on W. R. Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1913), in Bell, *Scotland's Rainbow West*, p. 19.

<sup>53</sup> O. J. R. Howarth, *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (London, 1937), p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, 'Foreword', in Vaughan Cornish, *The Scenery of England: A Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country* (Letchworth, 1932), p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>56</sup> For the emergence of the serio-comic mode in travel texts, see Stan Smith, 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Modernism's Grand Tours', *Studies in Travel Writing* 8.1 (2004), pp. 1-18.

<sup>57</sup> R. M. Ballantyne, *Deep Down: A Tale of the Cornish Mines* (London, 1883), quotation at p. iii; see chapter one, pp. 1-13.

<sup>58</sup> Lord Dunsany, *My Ireland* (London, 1937), p. 33.



author Sabine Baring-Gould recommended Sir Walter Besant's *Armored of Lyonesse* (1890) – a work of fiction in three volumes – as a guide to the Scilly Isles.<sup>59</sup>

As a literary form, travel texts served as the meeting place of different genres, in what Jonathan Raban described as resembling 'a notoriously raffish open house'.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, travel texts offer a challenging but rewarding task for the modern historian to attempt to look through barriers of medium and genre in order to write an 'integrated history'.<sup>61</sup> The intertextuality of travel texts provides an opportunity to pursue such a history, as they contain traces with which the historian may chart the 'movement of ideas and attitudes, images and perceptions within the cultural sphere', between literary and academic genres and more popular travel texts.<sup>62</sup> It also draws attention to how these ideas mutate and alter as they are appropriated and put to new uses for different audiences, contributing to the gradual clarification and reinforcement of wider cultural perceptions and attitudes.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, these texts should not be viewed in isolation, as discrete and distant crates 'full of air' separated by years or decades, but instead as tightly packed layers occupying a cultural space – a literary bogland – of shared influence.<sup>64</sup>

### *Writers and readers*

This thesis explores travel texts that were written for publication, predominantly by middle-class Anglophone writers. The authorship of a travel text was not always indicated, but relevant information about the writer has been considered, where possible.<sup>65</sup> For many authors, writing travel texts was not their primary occupation. The number of texts under consideration prohibits a full biographical summary of each writer, but their primary occupation is briefly indicated when they are first mentioned in the thesis. Nevertheless, travel texts should not simply be read biographically, as the differences between the narrative voice and the author could be alarmingly stark.<sup>66</sup>

Early travel accounts were often written by men, who 'moved more freely in the public sphere', while narratives of the heroic male traveller have a long literary heritage which includes Homer's *Odyssey*, the Norse Sagas, the Arthurian legends, as well as the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century 'adventure quests' of the New World.<sup>67</sup> The narrative of the masculine, heroic adventure was prevalent in the male-authored travel texts of the West, as were gendered descriptions of mountain landscapes and their level of suitability 'for ladies'. Sara Mills described the inability of women writers 'to adopt the imperialist voice' with ease, which was evident in texts characterised by a 'less authoritarian stance', a wealth of detail, and a tendency to write about relationships, in contrast to the 'more public discourse of male travellers'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of Cornwall* (3rd edn, London, 1906 [1899]), p. 329.

<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Raban, *For Love and Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling 1968-1987* (London, 1988), p. 253.

<sup>61</sup> Siân Nicholas, 'Media History or Media Histories? Re-addressing the history of the mass media in inter-war Britain', *Media History* 18.3-4 (2012), p. 379.

<sup>62</sup> Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, pp. 2-5.

<sup>63</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1994), p. 89.

<sup>64</sup> Heaney, *New Selected Poems*, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> For instance, Stephen Gwynn's division of Ireland into east and west (as opposed to the political division between north and south) can be read in line with his political views; see Colin Reid, *The Lost Ireland of Stephen Gwynn* (Manchester, 2011), p. 245. For an example of a travel text written under a pseudonym, see The 'Governor', *A Yachtsman's Holidays; or, Cruising in the West Highlands* (London, 1879).

<sup>66</sup> H. V. Morton's writing is the prime example of the potential gap between the narrative voice and the author; see Michael Bartholomew, *In Search of H. V. Morton* (London, 2004). For a good summary of the points raised by Bartholomew, see Kitty Hauser [review], 'Bowling Along', *London Review of Books* 27.6 (2005), pp. 28-9.

<sup>67</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'Travel Writing and Gender', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 225.

<sup>68</sup> Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London, 1991), pp. 3, 21-22. Also see Bassnett, 'Travel Writing and Gender', p. 227.

The landscape of the destination was feminised in some male-authored travel texts, and women were gazed upon as part of the performance of travel and exploration, which is discussed in chapter three. Such writing techniques removed women from that culture which travels, maps, and discovers.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, women who travelled and wrote about their experiences did so in alternative ways to the narrative voice which saw the world as mappable, knowable, containable, and instead emphasised ‘the complexity of networks and patterns in everyday life’.<sup>70</sup>

While these patterns of narration are prevalent, it is also important to note that the diversity of both women’s and men’s travel writing makes such categorisation problematic.<sup>71</sup> Authoritative narratives of mountain adventures were written by writers such as Dora Benson, who in her ‘Section on Mountain Walks and Rock Climbs’ omitted certain routes and climbs that she deemed too dangerous or difficult for the general reader.<sup>72</sup> The travel text ‘transcends gender boundaries’, and ‘enabled change in gender identities’ as much as it ‘pinned those identities down’, as male writers also subverted the image of the explorer-hero for comic effect.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, women travellers were invariably considered the social superiors of the male hosts who often served as local guides, and they also performed an ‘imperial gaze’ on their journeys through the West, so that gendered narratives were both reinforced, subverted, and also inflected by the important dynamics of social status and Empire. In addition, the broader changes in travel texts during this period – such as the increasing use of dialogue and the eclipse of the realist, instructive ‘heroic adventure’ – are equally observable in the work of both female and male writers.<sup>74</sup> In the travel texts of the West, there was a complex intersectionality of gender and class with discernible yet flexible patterns of stylised narration.

As historical sources, travel texts are particularly illuminating of a period in which educational legislation had brought into being a mass literate public in Britain. Travel texts proliferated in this new society of readers, circulating widely among metropolitan inhabitants and Anglo-American travellers.<sup>75</sup> Writers such as H. V. Morton achieved very high levels of popularity. Morton’s *In Search of England* was first published in 1927, and by 1934 the book had reached 21 editions.<sup>76</sup> *In Search of Wales* (first published in 1932) was endorsed by David Lloyd George, who described it as ‘the best travel book on Wales that I have ever read’, and it ran to nine editions by 1936.<sup>77</sup> *In Search of Ireland* was first published in 1930, and by 1932 had reached its seventh edition.<sup>78</sup> Altogether, the *In Search of* series sold over 280,000 copies by the 1940s.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Bassnett, ‘Travel Writing and Gender’, pp. 230-1.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230-1.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>72</sup> Dora Benson, ‘Mountain Walks and Rock Climbs in North Wales’, in Percy J. Piggott (ed.), *Burrow’s Guide to North Wales* (Cheltenham, 1922), pp. 74-108, quotation at p. 74.

<sup>73</sup> Kate Hill, ‘Introduction: Narratives of Travel, Narratives that Travel’, in Kate Hill (ed.), *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Texts, Images, Objects* (Farnham, 2016), p. 3. Bassnett, ‘Travel Writing and Gender’, p. 225.

<sup>74</sup> Bassnett, ‘Travel Writing and Gender’, pp. 239-40; Helen Carr, ‘Modernism and Travel (1880-1940)’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 75.

<sup>75</sup> Sara Blair, ‘Local Modernity, Global Modernism: Bloomsbury and the Places of the Literary’, *ELH* 71.3 (2004), p. 816.

For a description of the educational legislation introduced in the period, see John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London, 1992), pp. 5-7.

<sup>76</sup> H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (13th edn, London, 1931 [1927]), p. iv.

<sup>77</sup> For Lloyd George’s comments, see Morton, *In Scotland Again*, p. 422. For number of editions by 1936, see H. V. Morton, *In Search of Wales* (9th edn, London, 1936 [1932]), p. iv.

<sup>78</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. iv.

<sup>79</sup> Prys Gruffudd, David T. Herbert, and Angela Piccini, ‘In Search of Wales: travel writing and narratives of difference, 1918-50’, *Journal of Historical Geography* 26.4 (2000), p. 590.

Morton's books were sold for 7s 6d, but for those unable to afford the latest publications there were public libraries, which produced useful bibliographies of their travel-text collections.<sup>80</sup>

Readers were not simply 'passive recipients of information', and near the beginning of most systematic travel texts there were requests for corrections and additional information to be sent by the sharp-eyed reader to the publisher, so that future editions might be amended. In addition, many writers were also readers, who presented their own experiences as authentic correctives to the well-established, unoriginal tropes of more conventional travel texts.<sup>81</sup> As well as those who combined reading with travelling,<sup>82</sup> many of those who read travel texts did so as so-called 'armchair tourists', who transported themselves to the West through their imaginations.<sup>83</sup> *The Bookman* reassured the reader that 'if there can be no holiday at all', then Morton's *The Call of England* (1928) was 'a good substitute'.<sup>84</sup> As the *Daily Mirror* put it in 1928, the reader, with a novel or poem, a 'handful of pamphlets', a 'map or two', and 'a sufficiency of imagination', could spend 'blissful evenings' escaping suburbia 'without leaving his fireside'.<sup>85</sup> R. A. Scott-James described his enthusiasm for armchair tourism in his book, *An Englishman in Ireland* (1910):

Next to the delight of actual travel I know nothing more exhilarating than to make anticipatory journeys over the map of the world, marking out imaginary routes... Seated by our April fireside we can safely indulge the wild spirit of adventure as we climb those dark lines on the paper – they are mountains – or follow the long, winding valleys of the river.<sup>86</sup>

During the Great War, the difficulties of travelling turned many into armchair tourists. In response to the mass postponement of 'annual excursions', the Cambrian Archaeological Association felt that 'members should, in some small way, be compensated', and in 1917 published *Tours in Wales (1804-1813)*, based on the manuscript journals of Richard Fenton.<sup>87</sup>

In the new age of mass readerships, travel texts remained active as cultural artefacts as they were re-read for years after publication. W. H. Hudson explained that the immediate function of the travel text was to provide information on 'history, antiquities, places of interest', and to satisfy 'curious minds' when travelling. However, while the act of travelling is transient by nature, the book 'is not thrown away like the newspaper or the magazine', and instead served another purpose – as 'a help to memory', enabling the traveller to 'mentally... revisit distant places'.<sup>88</sup> Just as one person indulged 'in the luxury of a new up-to-date guide', older copies 'will be snapped up by poorer men, who will treasure it and hand it down or on to others'.<sup>89</sup> At the same time, getting rid of an old book was 'a rare thing to do', and for this reason the supply to second-hand bookshops 'does not keep pace with the demand'.<sup>90</sup> In the early decades of

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<sup>80</sup> For the price of Morton's books, see Morton, *In Scotland Again*, p. 419-22. For the example of Bootle Central Public Library, see Charles H. Hunt and William T. Montgomery, *Where Shall I Spend my Holidays? Some Aids to a Decision (Topographical, Antiquarian, Literary)* (Liverpool, n.d. [1905?]).

<sup>81</sup> Eric Zuelow criticised the treatment of tourists as 'passive recipients' in Eric G. E. Zuelow [review], 'Kaylan Bhandari, *Tourism and national identity: heritage and nationhood in Scotland* (Bristol, 2014)', *Journal of Tourism History* 8.1 (2016), pp. 99-101. For an example of recognition of numerous contributions to the revised edition of a travel text, see Roberts and Woodall, *Gossiping Guide to Wales*, preface p. xv.

<sup>82</sup> Nicola J. Watson, *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain* (New York, 2006), pp. 1-5.

<sup>83</sup> Jill Steward suggested that vicarious travel also inspired physical travel; see Jill Steward, 'The "Travel Romance" and the Emergence of the Female Tourist', *Studies in Travel Writing* 2.1 (1998), pp. 85-105.

<sup>84</sup> This comment was published in Morton, *In Scotland Again*, p. 420.

<sup>85</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 3 September 1928, p. 11.

<sup>86</sup> R. A. Scott-James, *An Englishman in Ireland. Impressions of a Journey in a Canoe by River, Lough and Canal* (London, 1910), p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Fenton, *Tours in Wales (1804-1813)*, ed. John Fisher (London, 1917), p. iii.

<sup>88</sup> W. H. Hudson, *Afoot in England* (London, 1909), p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

the twentieth century, editions from the 1860s and earlier were 'still prized', not just as 'keepsakes' but for continued study and reference.<sup>91</sup>

### *Travellers and tourists*

In addition to entertaining a reading public, travel texts were also practical tools for travellers and tourists. As indicated above, historians and literary critics understood the terms 'tourist' and 'traveller' as corresponding to their respective literary genres. The tourist, relying on itineraries and all-inclusive tickets, used the guidebook as a means for passive consumption, 'stripped of interest and individuality'.<sup>92</sup> The traveller possessed the knowledge, sensitivity, and spirit of adventure to leave the 'beaten track', and avoid the crowded and popular watering places prioritised by guidebooks. The traveller enjoyed the written narratives of fellow travellers, and would perhaps also contribute to this literary culture, using travel 'as a route to self-development'.<sup>93</sup>

The dichotomy between the tourist and the traveller was also used by contemporaries as part of a symbolic cultural economy. During the age of the Grand Tour, the ability to travel was itself a marker of social distinction. But as recreational travel became more widely available during the nineteenth century, the distinction of the traveller was increasingly expressed through 'a loosely defined set of inner personal qualities', which amounted to 'superior emotional-aesthetic sensitivity'. For the informed traveller, this involved the representation of experiences as authentic, in contradistinction to the surrounding 'vulgarity, repetition, and ignorance' of the tourist.<sup>94</sup> Many writers distinguished themselves from mass tourists, while also appealing to their own readers and fellow travellers, who comprised 'an imagined small group of independent spirits'.<sup>95</sup> R. A. Scott-James described his travels in terms that facilitated the imagination of himself as part of a select group of 'free, large-hearted men doing all that they do from preference, with the continuous energy of Supermen'.<sup>96</sup>

Again, such a dichotomy conceals as much as it reveals. James noted that the categories 'tourist' and 'traveller' were often 'used interchangeably by contemporaries', and many who travelled through Killarney were also labelled 'excursionists', which brings into question the extent to which these categories have analytic value.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the locations, itineraries, and practices described in literary travelogues and associated with informed travel could become as entrenched, as repetitive, and as formulaic as the contents of even the most prosaic guidebook.<sup>98</sup>

Just as travel texts were multifaceted, and slipped between modes traditionally associated with both guidebooks and travelogues, so individual writers moved seamlessly between forms of journeying associated with 'tourism' and those associated with 'travel'. Morton carefully constructed the image of the motorcar adventurer, but also read up on practical information before driving down the Llŷn Peninsula, and regurgitated the standard guidebook tale of the linguist 'Dick' of Aberdaron.<sup>99</sup> The pioneering air traveller Alexander Corkey 'hastily referred to my little guide book' on occasion,<sup>100</sup> while

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>92</sup> Gilbert, 'Guidebook representations', p. 282.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>94</sup> James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 4-6.

<sup>95</sup> Buzard, *Beaten Track*, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> Scott-James, *Englishman in Ireland*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>99</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 111.

<sup>100</sup> Alexander Corkey, *The Truth about Ireland, or Through the Emerald Isle with an Aeroplane* (London, 1910), p. 43.

Charles M. Taylor emphasised his ‘reading up’ on points of interest, but had his route planned and tickets arranged by the manager of ‘the main office of Thos. Cook & Son’.<sup>101</sup> Even the informed traveller required the practical information contained in systematic travel texts and the routes provided by travel agents, and such fleeting comments provide a glimpse of the fluidity with which the individual moved between so-called ‘traveller’ and ‘tourist’.<sup>102</sup>

The terms ‘tourist’ and ‘traveller’ are therefore unhelpful to the historian as descriptors of real differences between those who conducted journeys for recreational purposes, but they are useful as routes into contemporary debates about authenticity. Close reading is required to determine when ‘tourist’ and ‘traveller’ were used as generic and interchangeable descriptors of movement through place, and when they were used to articulate the writer’s position in the symbolic economy of travel.

## II – The West

### *Introducing the West*

‘The West’ is commonly associated with the powerful imaginary of the American West.<sup>103</sup> But, as A. J. Hayes noted in his account of travelling to Achill Island, ‘the “far West” does not necessarily mean America’.<sup>104</sup> In the British-Irish Isles, the West has been perceived as ‘different’ and ‘exotic’ since the so-called ‘Celtic Revivals’ of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when changing perceptions of western peripheries once seen as barbaric reflected a general shift of sensibilities across Europe.<sup>105</sup> Artists, intellectuals, and writers from English-speaking metropolitan centres looked westwards to a ‘Celtic’ periphery, projecting onto western rural landscapes values of beauty, wildness, and authenticity.<sup>106</sup> This provided the foundation for the nineteenth-century dualism between ‘the capable, sober, solid Saxon and the poetic, sentimental, other-worldly Celt’.<sup>107</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century, Ernest Renan’s *La Poésie des Races Celtiques* (1860) (which was read in translation by W. B. Yeats and others) and Matthew Arnold’s *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) were influential in developing further the positive connotations of travelling to the West.<sup>108</sup> In travel texts, the West was closely intertwined with the construction of the ‘Celtic’, but they were not synonymous. The landscapes of the West were characterised by mountains, moorlands, cliffs, and wild seas, and largely omitted the archetypal Celtic geography of the ‘trackless forests’, in whose mysterious depths the Druids inhabited their groves.<sup>109</sup> The idea of the West is discernible as a varied yet coherent set of images, spaces, and experiences that were described in travel texts as well as in the wider literary culture, which will be explored throughout this thesis. These texts constructed a transnational western periphery which shared historical, cultural, and topographical

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<sup>101</sup> Charles M. Taylor Jr., *The British Isles Through an Opera Glass* (Philadelphia, 1899), p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> For other examples, see Marks, *Gallant Little Wales*, p. 179; and Baring-Gould, *A Book of Cornwall*, p. 44.

<sup>103</sup> See Bruce Greenfield, ‘The West/California: Site of the Future’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 207-22; and Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork, 1996), especially chapter two, ‘Synge, Country and Western: The Myth of the West in Irish and American Culture’, pp. 23-36.

<sup>104</sup> A. J. Hayes, ‘A Holiday in the Far West. Achill Island’, *The Leisure Hour* 43.512 (1894), p. 636.

<sup>105</sup> Terence Brown, ‘Saxon and Celt: The Stereotypes’, in Terence Brown, *Ireland’s Literature: Selected Essays* (Totowa NJ, 1988), pp. 4-5. As Ian B. Stewart recently pointed out, interest in the Celts is evident from sixteenth-century ‘linguistic antiquarianism’, and the eighteenth-century ‘Revival’ is therefore better understood as the literary apogee of an already well-established interest in the Celts; see Ian B. Stewart, ‘The Mother Tongue: Historical Study of the Celts and their Language(s) in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland’, *Past and Present* 243.1 (2019), pp. 71-107.

<sup>106</sup> Seamus Deane, *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1880-1980* (London, 1985), p. 13. For Scotland, see Katherine Haldane Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: Creating Caledonia* (London, 2017).

<sup>107</sup> Brown, ‘Saxon and Celt’, p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘The Invention of Celtic Nature Poetry’, in Terence Brown (ed.), *Celticism* (Amsterdam, 1996), p. 107.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103-5.

similarities, in opposition to eastern and southern regions that were typically associated with metropolitan and industrial centres.

Geographically, the West was a vague concept in that there was no rigid cartographic boundary or topographical definition of where it began and where it ended. However, in travel texts the West was constructed through the persistent description of similarities between Cornwall, western Wales, western Ireland, the Highlands and islands of western Scotland, the Isle of Man, and Brittany.<sup>110</sup> The mountainous landscapes of the West were in direct opposition to the flatter landscapes of the east, so that the historian and writer A. G. Bradley described his eastward journey from Wales to England as one which provoked ‘a sinking, a flat feeling’.<sup>111</sup> The ‘hilly and moorland country’ which met the rough coastlines of western Cornwall reminded W. H. Hudson of Connemara, while Arthur Salmon claimed that Cornwall was more similar to some areas of Ireland than it was to Devon.<sup>112</sup> Writing in 1924 shortly after partition, Stephen Gwynn (who served as MP for Galway City between 1906 and 1918) explained that ‘Ireland is virtually grouped into Eastern and Western’. The West was ‘more weather-beaten and storm-swept’, with a ‘more continuous’ mountain-chain, and the conditions in Connacht varied ‘only in degree from those which prevail in West Munster or West Ulster’.<sup>113</sup>

For academics such as the geographer H. J. Fleure, the West was defined by its historical continuity, as new ideas were assimilated slowly, ‘without letting them utterly destroy the old pattern of life and work’.<sup>114</sup> In descriptions of this historical development, many writers depicted the westward movement of peoples, from short, dark Iberians to waves of Goidelic and Brythonic Celts, ‘pushed’ to the western ends of the land by the Anglicising influence of the Saxons.<sup>115</sup> These ancient historical processes were evident in the contemporary survival of vernacular languages and racial ‘types’ in the West, which travel texts described in great detail. The naturalist and photographer Seton Gordon compared the appearance and speech of the Aran islanders to the Highlanders of western Scotland,<sup>116</sup> while Hudson observed what he described as ‘that intensely Irish type so common in West Cornwall’.<sup>117</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould claimed that the ‘dark men and women about Land’s End’ may also be found ‘in the Western Isles of Scotland and in West Ireland’.<sup>118</sup> These examples provide a glimpse into the construction of the West through writing, which is a process explored throughout this thesis.

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<sup>110</sup> For an example of brief comparisons made between Connemara and Brittany, see John M. Synge, *In Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara* (Dublin, 1911), pp. 158, 180. For Synge’s interest in the Celtic revival in Brittany, see David H. Greene, ‘Synge and the Celtic Revival’, *Modern Drama* 4.3 (1961), pp. 296-7. For a contemporary discussion of the links between Cornwall and Brittany, see Thomas Taylor, *The Celtic Christianity of Cornwall: Divers Sketches and Studies* (London, 1916), pp. 37-49.

<sup>111</sup> A. G. Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales* (Boston MA, 1926), p. 260.

<sup>112</sup> Hudson, *Land’s End*, pp. 29-30. G. E. Mitton also used the term ‘the Connemara of England’; see G. E. Mitton and G. F. Nicholls, *Cornwall* (London, 1915), pp. 47-8. Arthur L. Salmon, *The Little Guides: Cornwall* (6th edn, London, 1927 [1903]), p. v.

<sup>113</sup> Stephen Gwynn, *Ireland* (London, 1924), pp. 52-3.

<sup>114</sup> H. J. Fleure, ‘The Celtic West’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 88.4571 (1940), p. 882.

<sup>115</sup> E. G. Bowen, ‘Early Christianity in the British Isles: A Study in Historical Geography’, *Geography* 17.4 (1932), p. 273. Also see Skene’s description of ‘Celtic tribes’, who ‘gradually retreated’ until they were ‘confined to the mountains and western islands’; see W. F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban* (Edinburgh, 1876), vol. 1, p. 17. Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>116</sup> Seton Gordon, *Wanderings of a Naturalist* (London, 1921), p. 186.

<sup>117</sup> Hudson, *Land’s End*, p. 37.

<sup>118</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon* (London, 1899), pp. 2-3.

In the wake of influential work by Edward Said and Mary Louise Pratt, the concepts of ‘Orientalism’, ‘transculturation’, and cultural imperialism inspired the development of ‘Celticism’, a strain of scholarship which aims to deconstruct the system of representation of the Celtic periphery from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards, when metropolitan Europeans wrote ‘*about* these nations but rarely *for* them’.<sup>119</sup> As early as 1897, the author and politician John Mackinnon Robertson recognised the ‘psychological compulsion’ of opponents of ‘Irish nationalist claims’ to revert to ‘the attitude of race prejudice’ in discussions of the ‘race character’ and ‘race tendencies’ of the Celt, which Robertson termed ‘Celtophobia’.<sup>120</sup> But it was not until 1985 that W. J. McCormack introduced the term ‘Celticism’ to describe the construction of the Celt in this way, which was followed by Malcolm Chapman’s deconstruction of the Celtic ‘myth’, and Patrick Sheeran’s scrutiny of ‘the myth of the West’.<sup>121</sup>

Joep Leerssen called for the study of Celticism from the perspective of the supranational and the interdisciplinary, and since the late 1980s several important contributions to British and Irish history have been made by scholars of Celticism, many of which combined the approaches of both historians and geographers.<sup>122</sup> Ireland was, and remains, the focus of many studies of Celticism, as it is deemed ‘the most peripheral and therefore the most centrally Celtic’.<sup>123</sup> However, there is no such paradigmatic specimen, and the Celticism of Ireland differed from that of Wales, Scotland, and Brittany.<sup>124</sup> Several comparative studies have drawn out important political, cultural, and social links between two or more national case studies within the British-Irish Isles,<sup>125</sup> but there is a danger that the very process of comparison – with its discrete national units – tends to reiterate the assumed uniqueness of each nation, and is consequently inextricable from the idea of national exceptionalism.<sup>126</sup> While historians have long used the Celtic as a

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<sup>119</sup> Quotation from Joep Leerssen, ‘Celticism’, in Terence Brown (ed.), *Celticism* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 4-5. For Celticism, also see George Watson, ‘Celticism and the annulment of history’, *Irish Studies Review* 3.9 (1994), pp. 2-6. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978); Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. xi-xiii, 12, 89. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1993), pp. 4-7.

<sup>120</sup> John Mackinnon Robertson, *The Saxon and the Celt: A Study in Sociology* (London, 1897), quotations at pp. ix-xii, 2; see the ‘Preamble’ and the first chapter for Robertson’s summary of contemporary views, pp. v-5, especially p. 5.

<sup>121</sup> W. J. McCormack, *Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish Literary Tradition from 1789 to 1939* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 219-38. Also see W. J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History* (2nd edn, Cork, 1994), pp. 224-56. Malcolm Chapman, *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (Basingstoke, 1992). Patrick Sheeran, ‘The Idiocy of Irish Rural Life Reviewed’, *The Irish Review*, 5 (1988), pp. 27-33, quotation at p. 30. For an early example of research into ‘internal colonialism’, see Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1996* (London, 1975). For a summary of this historiography, see Amy Hale and Philip Payton, ‘Introduction’, in Amy Hale and Philip Payton (eds), *New Directions in Celtic Studies* (Exeter, 2000), pp. 4-9.

<sup>122</sup> Some examples of these contributions include: Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, 1999); David Harvey, Neil McInroy, and Christine Milligan (eds), *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times* (London, 2002); and Terence Brown (ed.), *Celticism* (Amsterdam, 1996).

<sup>123</sup> Leerssen, ‘Celticism’, pp. 8-13. Some examples of research on Celticism in the context of the Irish Revival include: Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge, 2001); Deane, *Celtic Revivals*; Andrew Tierney, ‘The Gothic and the Gaelic: Exploring the Place of Castles in Ireland’s Celtic Revival’, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 8.3 (2004), pp. 185-98; Emer Nolan, ‘Modernism and the Irish Revival’, in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 157-72. Also see Terence Brown, ‘The Literary Revival: Historical Perspectives’, in Terence Brown, *The Literature of Ireland: Culture and Criticism* (Cambridge, 2010), especially pp. 17-19.

<sup>124</sup> Leerssen, ‘Celticism’, pp. 8-13.

<sup>125</sup> For other examples of comparative work, see: Claire Connolly and Katie Gramich, ‘Introduction’, *Irish Studies Review* 17.1 (2009), pp. 1-4; Garry Tregigda, ‘Reconstructing West Wales’, in Marion Gibson, Shelley Trower, and Garry Tregigda (eds), *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* (London, 2013), 187-98; Mike Adamson, ‘Mist Across Celtic Waters’, in Colin Younger (ed.), *Border Crossings: Narration, Nation, and Imagination in Scots and Irish Literature and Culture* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 18-28; Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*; Tania Scott, ‘The Fantasy of the Celtic Revival: Lord Dunsany, Fiona MacLeod and W. B. Yeats’, in Colin Younger (ed.), *Border Crossings: Narration, Nation, and Imagination in Scots and Irish Literature and Culture* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 127-41; Colin Younger, ‘Introduction’, in Colin Younger (ed.), *Border Crossings: Narration, Nation, and Imagination in Scots and Irish Literature and Culture* (Newcastle, 2013), pp. 1-15.

<sup>126</sup> Akira Iriye, ‘The Internationalisation of History’, *The American Historical Review* 94.1 (1989), p. 4; Jürgen Kocka and Henz-Gerhard Haupt, ‘Comparison and Beyond’, in Henz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (eds), *Comparative and Transnational*

comparative theme, in recent years scholars have increasingly called for scales of analysis which transcend the internal political borders of the British-Irish Isles.<sup>127</sup> There have been several attempts to conduct transnational analysis in this way, in approaches to the Land Question in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the comparison of modern Irish and Welsh literature, and the numerous manifestations of Arthurian myth in these islands.<sup>128</sup> This has also led to innovative approaches to *The Other British Isles* – comprising the Hebrides, Orkney, Shetland, Man, Wight, Scilly, Anglesey, and the Channel Islands – and to the recognition of infrastructure such as the Holyhead Road as representing both a ‘material and metaphorical’ connection between Wales and Ireland.<sup>129</sup>

More recently, there has been increasing interest in the ‘symbolic, ideological, and political connotations’ of cardinal directions, and this interest in symbolic geographies has found in the ‘imagined North’ a fruitful theme for discussions of European discourses of otherness and power.<sup>130</sup> From the nineteenth century, new saga translations stimulated the discovery of the Old North, as travelling to places such as Iceland became an adventurous alternative to the European tour of the South.<sup>131</sup> Building on the rich heritage of Celticism studies and on the recent interest in cardinal directions, this thesis explores the West as an important symbolic geography in the cultural history of the British-Irish Isles.

### *Playing with scales: beyond the framework of the nation*

In the context of the British-Irish Isles, there are extensive historiographies which explore travel and its attendant literature within the framework of the nation. Many of these studies have analysed the construction of western peripheries and their function within a national culture or set of identities – be it English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh.<sup>132</sup> In this way, scholars have often reflected the organisation of their

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History (New York, 2012), p. 20; Simon MacDonald, ‘Transnational History: past and present scholarship’, *UCL Centre for Transnational History* (2013), [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/centre-transnational-history/objectives/simon\\_macdonald\\_tns\\_review](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/centre-transnational-history/objectives/simon_macdonald_tns_review) [29 May 2019].

<sup>127</sup> For a comparison based on the Celtic Revival movements, see Philip O’Leary, ‘“Children of the Same Mother”: Gaelic Relations with the Other Celtic Revival Movements 1882-1916’, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 6 (1986), pp. 101-30. For recent calls for a transnational approach, see Niall Whelehan (ed.), *Transnational Perspectives on Modern Irish History* (London, 2015); Enda Delaney, ‘Directions in historiography: Our island story? Towards a transnational history of late modern Ireland’, *Irish Historical Studies* 37.148 (2011), pp. 599-621.

<sup>128</sup> David W. Howell, ‘The Land Question in nineteenth-century Wales, Ireland and Scotland: a comparative study’, *Agricultural History Review* 1.2 (2013), pp. 83-110; Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (New York, 2010); Katie Gramich, ‘Creating and destroying “the man who does not exist”: the peasantry and modernity in Welsh and Irish writing’, *Irish Studies Review* 17.1 (2009), pp. 19-30; Darryl Jones, ‘Borderlands: spiritualism and the occult in *fin de siècle* and Edwardian Welsh and Irish horror’, *Irish Studies Review* 17.1 (2009), pp. 31-44; Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2009).

<sup>129</sup> David W. Moore, *The Other British Isles* (Jefferson NC, 2005); Claire Connolly [podcast], ‘Via Holyhead: Material and Metaphoric Meanings between Ireland and Wales’, (2013), *UCDscholarcast*, <http://www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/scholarcast35.html> [29 May 2019].

<sup>130</sup> Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, Danielle Marie Cudmore, and Stefan Donecker, ‘Introduction’, in Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, Danielle Marie Cudmore, and Stefan Donecker (eds), *Imagining the Supernatural North* (Alberta, 2016), pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 284, 287-8, 292, 301; Angela Byrne, *Geographies of the Romantic North: Science, Antiquarianism, and Travel, 1790-1830* (New York, 2013). Also see William Morris, ‘The Early Literature of the North – Iceland’ (9 October 1887). For the twentieth-century appeal of ‘going north’, see Tom Paulin, ‘“Letters from Iceland: Going North”, in John Lucas (ed.), *The 1930s: A Challenge to Orthodoxy* (New York, 1978), pp. 59-77. For the ‘Celtic north’, see Angela Byrne, ‘Imagining the Celtic North: Science and Romanticism on the Fringes of Britain’, in Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, Danielle Marie Cudmore, and Stefan Donecker (eds), *Imagining the Supernatural North* (Alberta, 2016), pp. 131-48. For Scotland and Ireland as an alternative to the Grand Tour, see Glenn Hooper, ‘The Isles/Ireland: the Wilder Shore’, in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 174-90.

<sup>132</sup> For examples, see: Shelley Trower, ‘On the Cliff Edge of England: Tourism and Imperial Gothic in Cornwall’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 40.1 (2012), pp. 199-214; Pádraigín Riggs and Norman Vance, ‘Irish Prose Fiction’, in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 245-66; Diarmuid Ó Giolláin,



source material. By producing itineraries and maps, by reciting distinctive national historical narratives, and by describing a series of well-established stock experiences, travel texts expressed and also took part in the construction of national territories as coherent spaces. In the pages of the guidebook and the travelogue, tourism and the nation ‘met on hallowed cultural ground’.<sup>133</sup>

However, regional studies of Northumberland and the Scottish Borders have shown that analysis on the scale of the nation can obscure as much as it reveals, and that the complexity and diversity of concepts such as ‘Englishness’ are more fully articulated at the scale of the region.<sup>134</sup> This is also evident in the border regions of the Welsh Marches, where the writers of travel texts perceived the county of Shropshire as possessing both English and Welsh characteristics, drawing on historical narratives of medieval borderland conflict, the varied landscapes of hills and plains, and the evidence of both English and Welsh place-names. Travel texts of Wales invariably recommended the Shropshire town of Shrewsbury as an ideal start or end point of a Welsh tour, and dedicated many pages to its description despite its location in England.<sup>135</sup> Unable to find the precise location of the border between England and Wales, H. V. Morton felt caught in ‘the wildness of a No Man’s Land between two countries’.<sup>136</sup> Shropshire was a liminal space, one which eludes articulation by the neat language of English or Welsh ‘national identity’, and encourages us to question the scale of the nation as a framework of analysis.<sup>137</sup>

The western peripheries of the British-Irish Isles share the liminal quality associated with borderlands, as ‘crucibles for multiple agendas and ideologies’ in which identities are constructed, contested, and defy ‘categorical, ideological or national definitions’.<sup>138</sup> In this way, a ‘four nations’ approach to the history of the West is especially pertinent, at a time when ‘the matter of Britain’ is no longer taken for granted.<sup>139</sup> Travel texts constructed the history, culture, and mythology of the western peripheries, and the ideological power of the West was mobilised by those seeking to revitalise a sense of diverse ‘Britishness’, as well as by those who rationalised calls for political independence based on claims of Celtic difference.<sup>140</sup> The ‘four nations’ perspective suggests that some regions were incorporated into narratives of Britishness less problematically than others,<sup>141</sup> and a transnational approach to the West sheds light on the complex interweaving of identities in the British-Irish Isles, as well as the overlapping imagined geographies which existed at a variety of spatial scales. This approach establishes links between cultures that cross national

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‘Folk Culture’, in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 225-44; Christopher Harvie, ‘Anglo-Saxons into Celts: The Scottish Intellectuals 1760-1930’, in Terence Brown (ed.), *Celticism* (Amsterdam, 1996), 231-256; Prys Gruffudd, ‘Remaking Wales: Nation-Building and the Geographical Imagination, 1925-50’, *Political Geography* 14.3 (1995), pp. 219-39.

<sup>133</sup> Koshar, ‘Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities’, p. 339.

<sup>134</sup> Paul Readman, ‘Living in a British Borderland: Northumberland and the Scottish Borders in the Long Nineteenth Century’, in Paul Readman, Cynthia Radding, and Chad Bryant (eds), *Borderlands in World History, 1700-1914* (Basingstoke, 2014), pp. 169-91; Robert Colls (ed.), *Northumbria: History and Identity, 547-2000* (Chichester, 2007). For the difference between cultural and political borders, see Joep Leerssen, ‘Europe as a Set of Borders’, in Joep Leerssen and Manet van Montfrans (eds), *Borders and Territories* (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 10, 14.

<sup>135</sup> For example, see Henry Irwin Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s Practical Guide to North Wales* (3rd edn, London, 1883), p. 393.

<sup>136</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>137</sup> Gareth Roddy, ‘“Westward on the high-hilled plains”: the literature of Shropshire and the early twentieth century imagination, 1896-c.1939’, *Contemporary British History* 33.1 (2019), pp. 28-51.

<sup>138</sup> Younger, ‘Introduction’, in Younger, *Border Crossings*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>139</sup> For a historiographical summary of ‘four nations’ history, see Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, vol. 2, *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London, 1998), pp. 21-40, quotation at p. 37. For a more recent example of ‘four nations’ history, see Naomi Lloyd-Jones and Margaret M. Scull (eds), *Four Nations Approaches to Modern ‘British’ History* (London, 2018).

<sup>140</sup> Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*; Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London, 2004); Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford, 2002); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (2nd edn, New Haven, 2005 [1992]); Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2006 [1989]); Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 98-105, 133-4.

<sup>141</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*; Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, pp. 143, 159, 168; Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, pp. 221-2, 235, 240-1; Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 149.

borders, and enables us to comprehend the concept of the West as it was understood in the period 1880-1940.

### III – Case study regions and geographical parameters

This thesis explores the West through four case study regions, located in the western peripheries of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Cornwall, West Connacht, the Isle of Skye, and North West Wales constitute important examples of the West within their immediate national contexts. When taken together, these regions were also part of a western periphery that transcended the British-Irish Isles. The case studies provide manageable areas of focus, and allow for analysis at a range of spatial scales, from the local to the regional, the national, and the transnational. Brittany was also included in descriptions of the European West, but the focus of this thesis is on the cultural significance of the West in the context of the British-Irish Isles, and the relationship between the Breton West and the French state lies beyond the scope of this study.<sup>142</sup>

In setting out the geographical parameters of the four case study regions, it is important to consider the problems and possibilities intrinsic to the process of landscape description. In doing so, this thesis builds on the developments of the related disciplines of environmental history and historical geography, and the changing approaches to the concept of the ‘cultural landscape’. Scholars have long explored the importance of landscapes, from the deterministic nineteenth-century models of Carl Ritter and Friedrich Ratzel of the relationship between the environment and society.<sup>143</sup> In the early-twentieth century, Carl Sauer distinguished between nature and culture, emphasised ‘human activity’ and agency, and described culture as the ‘agent’, nature as the ‘medium’, and cultural landscape as the outcome.<sup>144</sup> More recently, Gramsci’s concept of cultural hegemony influenced the research of scholars such as Nicholas Green, who explored the complexity of the links between countryside and city landscapes.<sup>145</sup> During the cultural turn, Stephen Daniels, Denis Cosgrove, and others built on Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital and explored how meanings of landscapes were generated ‘through historically situated ways of seeing and social practices’, while environmental historians also considered the assumptions of gender, race, class, and nation which shaped concepts such as the ‘wilderness’, as well as the imaginative (in addition to the material) consumption of landscapes.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> For a classic account of the relationships between French regions such as Brittany and the centralising French state, see Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernisation of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford, 1976). For more recent scholarly engagement with Weber’s book, see the articles collected under the title ‘Revisiting Eugen Weber’s Peasants into Frenchmen’, in *French Politics, Culture and Society* 27.2 (2009), pp. 84-141.

<sup>143</sup> Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller, ‘Region, Scenery, and Power: Cultural Landscapes in Environmental History’, in Andrew C. Isenberg (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History* (Oxford, 2014), p. 338. For a short summary of these early approaches to landscape, see Carl Sauer, ‘Cultural Geography’, in William Denevan and Kent Methewson (eds), *Carl Sauer on Culture and Landscape* (Barton Rouge, 2009), p. 137.

<sup>144</sup> Peter Howard, *An Introduction to Landscape* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 9-10; Sauer, ‘Cultural Geography’, p. 138.

<sup>145</sup> Lekan and Zeller, ‘Cultural Landscapes in Environmental History’, p. 345; Nicolas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth Century France* (Manchester, 1990).

<sup>146</sup> For cultural capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1986), p. 4. For the approach of Cosgrove and Daniels and the links between landscapes and power, see Denis Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape: Geographical Change and Its Cultural Representations in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 3-4, and Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1988). For the example of wilderness, see William Cronon, ‘The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature’, *Environmental History* 1.1 (1996), pp. 7-28. For brief summaries of these developments, see Howard, *An Introduction to Landscape*, pp. 19-20; and Lekan and Zeller, ‘Cultural Landscapes in Environmental History’, pp. 347-50.

Building on the work of Simon Daniels, Denis Cosgrove, Mike Pearson, and others, David Matless has written insightfully about the challenges and possibilities inherent in landscape description.<sup>147</sup> Attempts to write about landscapes in ‘conventional terms’ inevitably slip into the ‘impressionistic’, and as historians we must be sensitive to various aesthetic principles and hierarchies of value, even in the most prosaic passages of description.<sup>148</sup> Drawing on Daniels, Matless recognises that landscape is a ‘tangle’ of both subject and object, and suggests that we must beware attempts to separate ‘theory and description’, to resolve the contradictions of landscape, and instead embrace its multiplicity.<sup>149</sup> This multiplicity is evident in the recognition of different perspectives, and Matless adapts Pearson’s articulation of landscapes as constructed through ‘a matrix of related stories as much as topographic details’.<sup>150</sup> The landscape ‘shuttles between the aesthetic, the political and the economic’, and it is a ‘terrain of financial and emotional value’, which is expressed through a multitude of different voices and disciplines, including the academic and popular, historical and contemporary, political and poetic, factual and fictional.<sup>151</sup>

With this in mind, the following exercise in geographical description outlines the four case study areas that are the focus of this thesis. Drawing on the information contained in travel texts, the descriptions take the perspective of the traveller and the tourist as they followed the contemporary railway, road, and steamer routes, while drawing attention to the surrounding landscapes and the associational values that were commonly expounded in the source material. These descriptions are not exhaustive, and nor do they aim to be. Their composition is informed by the diverse and hierarchical aesthetic values of writers in this period, who constructed landscapes through a range of descriptive approaches, drew attention to different objects, attached meanings to landmarks, and provided information on the various subjects they deemed important. These brief descriptions of the western case studies themselves constitute a corpus of overlapping and interlocking narratives of the contemporary and the historical, of geology, archaeology, topography, architecture, demography, folklore, economics, politics, poetry, and fiction.

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<sup>147</sup> For an example of Matless’s description of six Broadland landscapes, see David Matless, ‘Describing Landscape: Regional sites’, *Performance Research* 15.4 (2010), pp. 73-5.

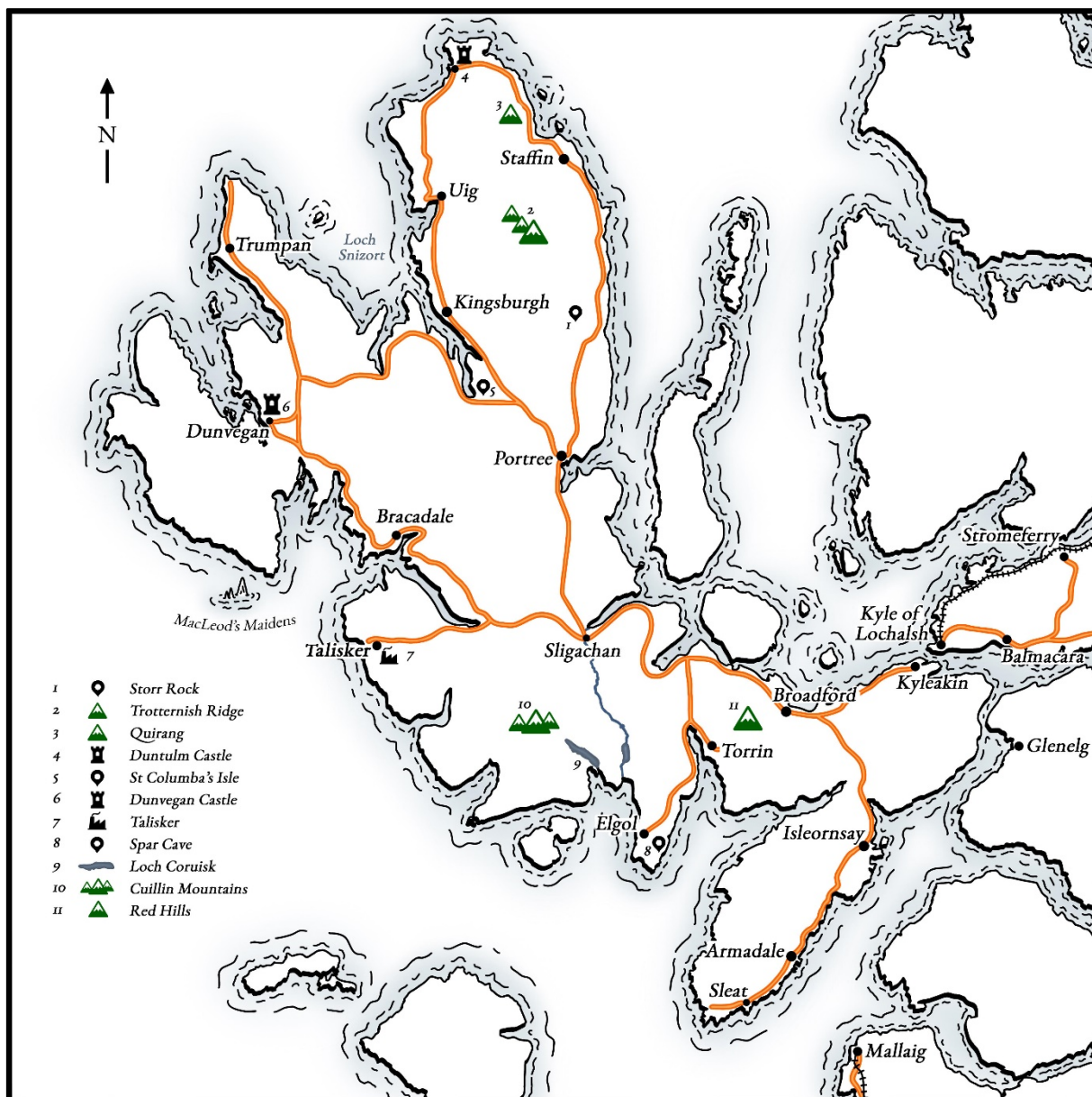
<sup>148</sup> David Matless, *In the Nature of Landscape: Cultural Geography on the Norfolk Broads* (Chichester, 2014), p. 16, 29. Here, Matless comments on Cosgrove’s attempt to describe the Palladian landscape in what he called ‘conventional terms’; see Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape*, pp. 5, 24-6.

<sup>149</sup> Matless, *In the Nature of Landscape*, p. 6; Here, Matless draws on Stephen Daniels, ‘Marxism, Culture and the Duplicity of Landscape’, in Richard Peet and Nigel Thrift (eds), *New Models in Geography* (London, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 196-220, especially p. 218.

<sup>150</sup> Pearson, *In Comes I*, pp. 15, 17.

<sup>151</sup> Matless, ‘Describing Landscape’, pp. 74-8; Matless, *In the Nature of Landscape*, pp. 6-7.

Map 0.1



The Isle of Skye (*Eilean a' Cheò*) comprised a coherent area, both culturally and geographically. Skye was often part of wider Hebridean or Highland tours, but guidebooks were written specifically for Skye, while those that were national in scope contained information for Skye in a dedicated chapter or section. This was reinforced by the physical reality of Skye as an island, which underpinned the traveller's sense of visiting a self-contained place, 'over the sea to Skye'.<sup>152</sup>

On board the steamers 'Clansman' or 'Claymore', the approach to the 'Misty Isle' of Skye<sup>153</sup> was made from Mallaig on the Scottish mainland. After stopping at Armadale and Isleornsay on the southern Slea Peninsula – the so-called 'garden of Skye' – the steamer called at the mainland ports of Glenelg, Balmacara,

<sup>152</sup> The lyrics to *The Skye Boat Song* and also the name of a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson (1892), quoted in various publications such as J. A. MacCulloch, *The Misty Isle of Skye: Its Scenery, Its People, Its Story* (3rd edn, Stirling, 1927 [1905]), pp. 49, 269-70; Donald MacKinnon, *How to See Skye: A Guide* (Portree, 1937), pp. 14, 90; Kenneth MacRae, *Handbook and Guide to the 'Misty Isle' of Skye* (Portree, 1921), p. 57.

<sup>153</sup> MacRae, *'Misty Isle' of Skye*.

and Kyle of Lochalsh, before returning to Skye at Kyleakin, whose name comes from the Gaelic *caol* (a strait) and a corruption of the Norse *Haco*, the Norwegian king ‘whose Armada passed through these straits’ in 1263.<sup>154</sup> After calling at Broadford, the principal centre for excursions in the southern portion of Skye, the tourist and traveller customarily disembarked at Portree – ‘the king’s port’ – which was claimed to derive its name from James V’s visit in 1540.<sup>155</sup> The town was famous for its ‘intimate associations with the weary odyssey’ of Bonnie Prince Charlie in the aftermath of his defeat at the Battle of Culloden.<sup>156</sup> Above the town, the hill called Fingal’s Seat was associated with the Ossian saga, in which Fingal ordered a deer drive.<sup>157</sup> After exploring Portree and its immediate surroundings, Skye’s principal town was the base for several excursions. To the north, the Trotternish peninsula offered several attractions for the traveller such as the Storr and Storr Rock, ‘a black pinnacle cliff’, and part of the Trotternish Ridge.<sup>158</sup> Further north, after passing the war memorial at Staffin, the rock scenery of the Quiraing escarpment was famed for the Needle Rock, ‘a colossal, hoary sentinel’ overlooking the sea.<sup>159</sup> Rounding the head of the peninsula, the traveller passed Duntulm Castle, formerly one of the seats of the MacDonalds, through Uig to Kingsburgh where ‘the Royal fugitive slept for a night’ in a house that no longer stands, which was also where Dr Johnson ‘sat listening with eager attention to Flora MacDonald’, who assisted the Prince’s escape.<sup>160</sup> Before returning to Portree, the island of St Columba at Loch Snizort was said to be where the saint stood on an isolated boulder ‘and preached the gospel to the heathen Celts’.<sup>161</sup> To the west of Trotternish is the Vaternish peninsula, accessible from Portree by the Great North Road and known for the historical associations of Trumpan, which comprised the mysterious prehistoric monolith as well as the church in which the MacDonalds burnt their MacLeod enemies, ‘with the exception of one woman, who managed to escape’.<sup>162</sup> Further along the Great North Road, west of Vaternish, lies Dunvegan Castle, the seat of the MacLeods ‘from time immemorial’, one of Skye’s most popular attractions. Dunvegan was notable for its thirteenth-century keep with walls ten feet thick, and objects of interest included letters from Dr Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, Bonnie Prince Charlie, as well as the famed ‘Fairy Banner of mysterious origin’.<sup>163</sup> Those who ventured into the seldom-visited Glendale district could imitate the Napier Commission of 1883 by collecting stories of the Crofters’ War.<sup>164</sup> An extension of this route took the traveller southwards towards Bracadale, along which MacLeod’s Maidens were visible, ‘three conical rocks rising sheer out of the sea... like three maidens standing with the waves surging and foaming about their feet’.<sup>165</sup> This stretch of desolate moorland was ‘cleared of its inhabitants’, and was peopled by a small number of those who travelled to Skye to hunt and fish.<sup>166</sup>

From the alternative headquarters of Broadford, a trip to Loch Scavaig, Loch Coruisk, and the Cuillin mountains was the pre-eminent excursion, which took in the ‘gloomy glories of Skye’.<sup>167</sup> The initial segment from Broadford to Torrinn passed through ‘a moor wide and bare’, after which two routes were recommended, the first of which approached Scavaig by boat from Torrinn. Those travellers who

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<sup>154</sup> Harry Batsford and Charles Fry, *The Face of Scotland* (2nd edn, London, 1934 [1933]), pp. 34-5.

<sup>155</sup> David MacBrayne, *Official Guide. Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow to the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1881), p. 53.

<sup>156</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 37.

<sup>157</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 285-6.

<sup>158</sup> *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Scotland* (5th edn, London, 1883), p. 403.

<sup>159</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 134.

<sup>160</sup> MacRae, *Misty Isle of Skye*, p. 57.

<sup>161</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 55.

<sup>162</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), p. 245.

<sup>163</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 382.

<sup>164</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. 151-2.

<sup>165</sup> David MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow and the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1903), pp. 79-80.

<sup>166</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 159.

<sup>167</sup> A. R. Hope Moncrieff and Sutton Palmer, *Scotland* (2nd edn, London, 1922 [1904]), p. 163.

continued on land could see the Spa Cave – described as ‘The mermaid’s alabaster grot’ in Scott’s ‘The Lord of the Isles’ – before taking the boat from Elgol. Approaching Scavaig from the sea, the traveller entered a ‘magnificent amphitheatre of jagged peaks, rising sheer up from the loch at its head’. A seaward approach was necessary in order to properly comprehend its ‘peculiar grandeur’.<sup>168</sup> After Scavaig the traveller entered Loch Coruisk, ‘a gloomy lake’ of ‘black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone’. In ‘The Lord of the Isles’, Bruce encountered ‘the murderous Cormac Doil and his “down-look’d” men’ on the banks of Coruisk.<sup>169</sup> Above Coruisk stand the ‘wild, black, storm-swept peaks and corries’ of the Cuillin,<sup>170</sup> where mountaineers could test themselves on the ‘bristling crescent ridges’ of peaks such as Sgurr nan Gillean, Sgùrr Dearg, and Sgurr Alasdair.<sup>171</sup> Warnings were given about the famous ‘Bad Step’, ‘a dangerous little shelf of rock with a sheer drop beneath’.<sup>172</sup> The Cuillins were also accessible by land from Broadford, ‘a route fatiguing and missing the impressive entrance to Loch Scavaig from the sea’, or from Sligachan, where the traveller passed through Glen Sligachan – which separates the Black Cuillins from the Red Hills – and Harta Corrie, where the Bloody Stone served as a memorial to a great battle between the MacLeods and MacDonalDs, where ‘the two clans fought, until, it is said, blood ran like water’.<sup>173</sup> Following the excursions from Portree and Broadford, the traveller would either continue along the steamer’s trajectory towards Stornoway and the Outer Hebrides, or return by land or sea to Kyle of Lochalsh.

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<sup>168</sup> *The Complete Scotland: A Comprehensive Survey, Based on the Principal Motor, Walking, Railway and Steamer Routes* (London, 1933), p. 246.

<sup>169</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 380.

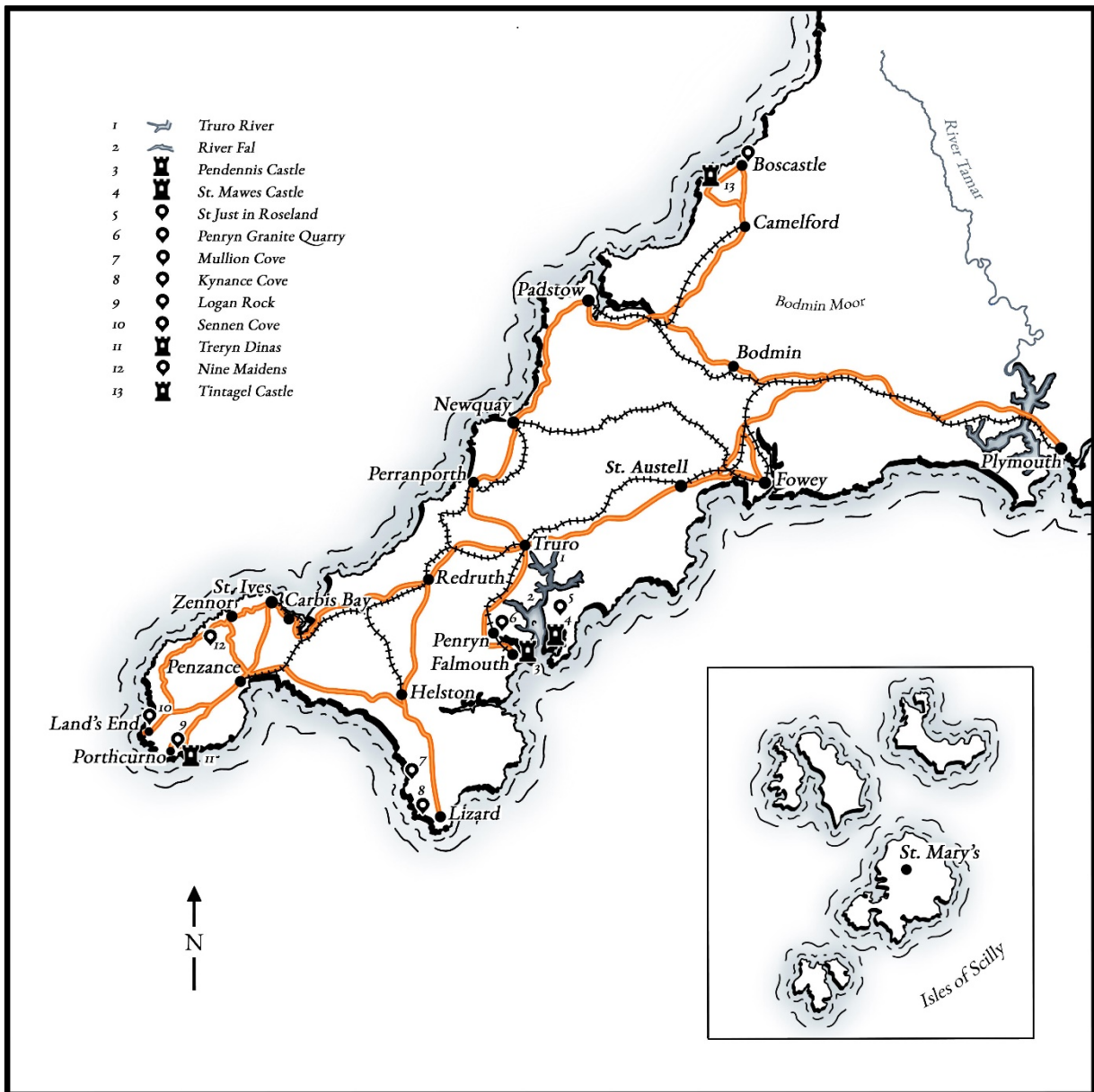
<sup>170</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 244.

<sup>171</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, pp. 37-8.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>173</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 379. For the Bloody Stone reference, see MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 53.

Map 0.2



Cornwall was a popular tourist destination in this period, and the region which comprises this case study keeps largely to the coastline, as ‘it is the cliff-line that is the chief *raison d’être* of these places as tourist rendezvous’.<sup>174</sup> Entering Cornwall at Plymouth, this description proceeds westwards along the south coast through Truro, Falmouth, and the Lizard, in a route recommended by travel texts such as Walter H. Tregellas’s *Guide to Cornwall* (1878) and *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879). From the western extremity of Penzance, the Land’s End, the Scilly Isles, and St Ives, this description returns along the northern coast and terminates ‘with the crowning grandeur and stupendous cliff scenery of Tintagel and Boscastle’.<sup>175</sup> Extended train lines and numerous roads made alternative routes possible, while many chose to make

<sup>174</sup> C. S. Ward (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. North Devon and North Cornwall* (7th edn, London, 1896), pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>175</sup> Quotation from *Murray’s Handbook for Travellers in Cornwall* (9th edn, London, 1879), introduction, pp. 10-11. Also see Walter H. Tregellas, *Tourist’s Guide to Cornwall and the Scilly Isles* (London, 1878), pp. 43-4.



excursions from tourist centres such as Penzance, Truro, or Falmouth, but the traveller who reached Land's End by the south coast was 'strongly advised to return by the N. coast'.<sup>176</sup>

The traveller entered Cornwall by railway from Plymouth, once the River Tamar – which 'divides from the rest of Great Britain an ancient land'<sup>177</sup> – had been crossed. This was the threshold to the region, the western gateway, beyond which travellers were able to perceive the 'strangeness about Cornwall',<sup>178</sup> and were 'fain to fancy themselves in another country'.<sup>179</sup> The railway line proceeded down the Cornish peninsula to the once-great harbour of Fowey, which sent 47 ships to Edward III's fleet for the siege of Calais – more than any other English port.<sup>180</sup> Fowey was once the residence of the writer Arthur Quiller-Couch, and appeared in his stories as 'Troy Town'.<sup>181</sup> Nearby St Austell was 'the centre of the kaolin or china-clay industry',<sup>182</sup> which was 'one of the foremost Cornish industries' and exported to 'every part of the world'.<sup>183</sup> The main tourist route continued westwards to the excursion centre of Truro, 'the cathedral city of the Cornish Riviera' from 1876.<sup>184</sup> 'Quiet, residential Truro' declared for Charles I during the Civil Wars, and surrendered to Fairfax in 1646.<sup>185</sup> The popular excursion between Truro and Falmouth could be taken in either direction, commonly by steamer, which plied along the Truro River and the River Fal. The creeks of Falmouth Harbour spread inland like tree branches, 'some wooded, others banked with sloping fields and villages', while Pendennis Castle 'rises dark over a fretwork of golden furze'.<sup>186</sup> Across the harbour stands Henry VIII's St Mawes Castle and nearby St Just in Roseland, where he spent his honeymoon with Anne Boleyn.<sup>187</sup> Alongside Cheesewring in the north, nearby Penryn was 'the most celebrated' granite quarry in the area, and contributed the stone for the Duke of Wellington's sarcophagus in St Paul's Cathedral, among other structures in London.<sup>188</sup> The route westwards from Truro passed through Redruth along the main railway line, which was situated in the 'tin and copper district' of the region, and was considered to be 'the Cornish mining centre' where Wesley 'used to preach to large congregations of miners'.<sup>189</sup> The traveller then made south for Helston, where the 'Furry Dance' took place, during which 'couples, moving to a tune probably as old as the fête itself, solemnly dance along the streets and through the houses and gardens',<sup>190</sup> during which 'the spirit of Merrie England lived again in Cornwall'.<sup>191</sup> Helston was also 'a convenient starting-point for a visit to the Lizard',<sup>192</sup> where a coastal walk around the peninsula took the traveller to the 'splendid recess' of Mullion Cove and the 'cliff-bound bay' of Kynance Cove, 'guarded on its farther side by Old Lizard Head'.<sup>193</sup> At Lizard Head – 'the

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<sup>176</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 188.

<sup>177</sup> Havelock Ellis, 'The Men of Cornwall', *The New Century Review* 1.4 (April 1897), p. 328.

<sup>178</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), p. 76.

<sup>179</sup> A. R. Hope Moncrieff (ed.), *Black's Guide to Cornwall* (22nd edn, London, 1919), p. 1.

<sup>180</sup> Arthur H. Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall* (London, 1897), p. 236; Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 36.

<sup>181</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 35.

<sup>182</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 180.

<sup>183</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 34.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>185</sup> C. S. Ward and M. J. B. Baddeley (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. South Devon and South Cornwall* (9th edn, London, 1924), pp. 232-3.

<sup>186</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, pp. 257-8.

<sup>187</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 85-7.

<sup>188</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 13.

<sup>189</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 182.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>191</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 91-3.

<sup>192</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 182.

<sup>193</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), pp. 264-70.



‘Ocrunim of Ptolemy’ and the southernmost point in England<sup>194</sup> – the ‘beautiful and somewhat rare serpentine occurs’.<sup>195</sup>

Penzance, ‘the most westerly town in England’,<sup>196</sup> marked the terminus of the Great Western Railway, and was also reachable from Helston by road via Mount’s Bay. Penzance was ‘a great resort of residents for the winter’ due to the ‘mildness of the climate’.<sup>197</sup> From Penzance, coaches and motorbuses transported tourists directly to and from the Land’s End, but it was recommended that the traveller walk the six or seven miles between the Logan Rock, near Porthcurno, to the Land’s End and Sennen Cove. The Logan Rock is composed of ‘rent and shattered’ granite, ‘split into spires and pinnacles and minarets and towering gigantic blocks of masonry’,<sup>198</sup> next to which stands Treryn Dinas, one of the region’s cliff-castles, ‘by whom or what purposes they were made is utterly unknown’.<sup>199</sup> The headland of Porthgwarra carried associations of ‘witches gathering to watch and help the growing storms’,<sup>200</sup> while at the Land’s End the ‘jagged rocks of granite polished by the waters’ jut out into the ‘steamy sea’, in an ‘eternal wildness of granite and waves’.<sup>201</sup> Gazing out towards the sea, the traveller was reminded of the ‘vanished land of Lyonesse’, which once occupied the area between the Land’s End and the Scilly Isles.<sup>202</sup> In between Penzance and the ends of the land there were ‘numerous cromlechs, hill forts and stone circles’ within easy reach.<sup>203</sup> To the north, near Zennor, the Nine Maidens stone circle represents ‘people who danced or played the ancient game of hurling on a Sunday, and were turned to stone as a punishment’.<sup>204</sup> Before returning along the northern coast, an additional excursion could be taken aboard the SS Lyonesse from Penzance to the Scilly Isles – ‘the peaks of the submerged realm’, which was ‘one of the mysterious scenes of the great Arthurian legend’.<sup>205</sup> On the northern coast, St Ives and Carbis Bay were popular destinations for tourists and the annual ‘colony of artists’, and the Great Western Railway established a hotel in eighteenth-century Tregenna Castle.<sup>206</sup> For those who found Penzance and Falmouth ‘too “soft” in August’,<sup>207</sup> the northern coast provided more bracing and less crowded conditions. The route passed through Perranporth to Newquay, a seaside resort of growing popularity, evident in ‘the many new villas that are springing up’.<sup>208</sup> Further north, Padstow ‘is slumberously bemoaning its departed ship-building business’,<sup>209</sup> while Tintagel was approached by road from the railway station at Camelford. At Tintagel – ‘the scene of the Arthurian legend’ – the ‘weird enchantment of the scenery of North Cornwall can be fully realised’.<sup>210</sup> The traveller ‘will recall the romantic stories of King Arthur and his knights’ and ‘re-erect the castle’ in this ‘most romantic scene in Cornwall’.<sup>211</sup> Finally, walking northwards along the cliffs the traveller reached Boscastle, a ‘curious and intricate little harbour, flanked by picturesque cliffs and sometimes compared to Balaclava on a small scale’.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 184.

<sup>195</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), pp. 13, 306.

<sup>196</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *Cambridge County Geographies: Cornwall* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 155.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>198</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 300.

<sup>199</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 306.

<sup>200</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 301.

<sup>201</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), p. 93.

<sup>202</sup> C. Lewis Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (London, 1907), p. 15.

<sup>203</sup> C. S. Ward (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. North Devon and North Cornwall* (London, 1883), p. xv.

<sup>204</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 176.

<sup>205</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 69.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>207</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 12.

<sup>208</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. 96.

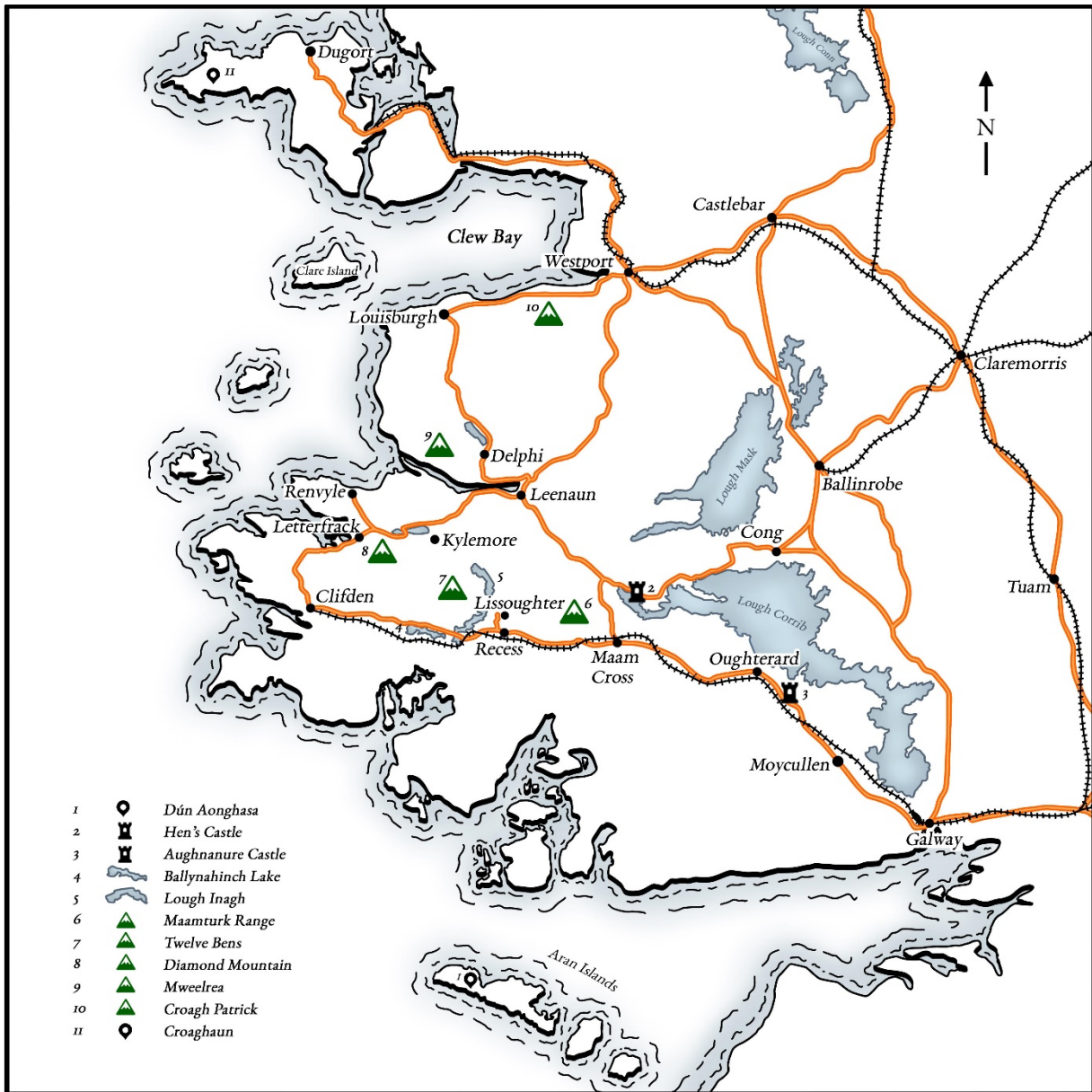
<sup>209</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1896), p. xvi.

<sup>210</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), pp. 78-80.

<sup>211</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), pp. 11-12.

<sup>212</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 193.

Map 0.3



The appellation ‘West Connacht’ denotes an area which is larger than Connemara, spills from County Galway into County Mayo, and includes the Islands of Aran and Achill. This area does not coincide with the name of a pre-existing region, but the Midland Great Western Railway made this area convenient for travellers and tourists, as the main line from Dublin split at Athlone, with the southern branch reaching Galway – the ‘entrance’ to the region – and the northern line reaching Westport – from where the traveller could return to Dublin after exploring West Connacht. Achill Island and the Aran Islands were typical excursions from Westport and Galway, respectively. Travel texts recommended tours of this region which took in Galway in the south, Lough Corrib in the east, Clifden in the west, and Westport and Achill in the north,<sup>213</sup> while *Murray’s Ireland* (1906) advertised an offer for ‘Connemara and Achill’ tourist tickets, which travellers could use on steamers in Galway Bay and Lough Corrib, as well as for cars

<sup>213</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), pp. 215-33.

between Clifden, Westport, and Achill Island.<sup>214</sup> There were, of course, variations in the routes between these destinations, and this portion of Ireland's 'West' was often part of larger tours. Some texts recommended travelling north to Sligo in addition to the places listed above, whereas others split the region into separate sections on Galway, the Aran Islands, Connemara, and Achill Island. However, the places within the geographical parameters of this case study were generally considered as a coherent whole.

The Midland Great Western railway line from Dublin to Galway was the 'principal route to Connemara and the Western Highlands'.<sup>215</sup> Galway was a 'quaint and peculiar city' of red petticoats and Spanish architecture.<sup>216</sup> The former status of the port as 'the Bristol of Ireland' had since declined,<sup>217</sup> and the town was in a somewhat 'dilapidated state'.<sup>218</sup> Lynch Castle reminded the traveller of James Fitzstephen Lynch, who 'hanged his only son' from one of the windows, in the sixteenth century.<sup>219</sup> Near the harbour, the Claddagh community preserved 'many of the manners and practices' of the past, and retained superstitious beliefs.<sup>220</sup> Their best-known custom was the marriage ring, made of gold and 'decorated with a heart supported by two hands', and which passed from mother to daughter.<sup>221</sup> The first major excursion from Galway was to the Aran Islands, 'emeralds in the crystal waters of the Atlantic'.<sup>222</sup> The Aran Islands were reachable by 'the fishing boats that visit Galway' or – later in the period – via the Galway Steamship Company.<sup>223</sup> On Inis Mór, Dún Aonghasa was regarded as 'one of the finest prehistoric forts in Western Europe',<sup>224</sup> and its 'barbaric rudeness' was associated with the adventures of Aonghas (anglicised 'Aengus' in travel texts), Conor, and the heroes of the Fírbolg race, which 'seems to carry us back almost to the beginning of time'.<sup>225</sup> The second popular excursion left Galway for Lough Corrib, a name derived from the giant Oirbsen, from whose grave the waters of the lake 'gushed out and overspread their present surface'.<sup>226</sup> The excursion was made via the Eglinton, the steamer which plied to Cong and afforded views of Corrib's 'enchancing shores' along the way.<sup>227</sup> On a small island is the Hen's Castle, which was protected from the Joyces by the sixteenth-century pirate queen Grace O'Malley.<sup>228</sup> Cong Abbey was the final residence of Roderick O'Connor – the last monarch of Ireland – and nearby was the site of the Battle of Magh Tuireadh, fought between the Fírbolgs and the invading Tuatha Dé Danann.<sup>229</sup> North of Lough Corrib is Lough Mask, where the land agent Charles Boycott lived, whose name provided the term for 'the peasantry's most effective weapon' in the Land War.<sup>230</sup> After having explored the town and made excursions to the Aran Islands and Corrib, Galway was the place 'whence the tour to the Western Highlands is commenced'.<sup>231</sup> Before the railway connected Galway with Clifden in 1895, the traveller commonly took the 'long car' – otherwise known as 'public cars' or

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<sup>214</sup> John Cooke (ed.), *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Ireland* (7th edn, London, 1906), advertiser p. 4.

<sup>215</sup> *Murray's Handbook for Travellers in Ireland* (4th edn, London, 1878), p. 132.

<sup>216</sup> *Black's Picturesque Tourist of Ireland* (15th edn, Edinburgh, 1877), p. 263.

<sup>217</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 163.

<sup>218</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 264.

<sup>219</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 144.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>221</sup> John O'Mahony, *The Sunny Side of Ireland. How to See It by the Great Southern and Western Railway* (2nd edn, Dublin, 1903), see section 'Galway and District', pp. 235-45; Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 145; Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. 208.

<sup>222</sup> H. B. H., *Holiday Haunts on the West Coast of Clare, Ireland* (Limerick, 1891), pp. 57-8.

<sup>223</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 146; Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. v.

<sup>224</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), pp. 210-11.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11; T. O. Russell, *Beauties and Antiquities of Ireland* (London, 1897), pp. 392-3.

<sup>226</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), pp. 234-5.

<sup>227</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 146.

<sup>228</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1902), pp. 260-1.

<sup>229</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), pp. 147-8.

<sup>230</sup> Stephen Gwynn, *Connaught* (London, 1912), p. 24.

<sup>231</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 143.

‘mail cars’ – which were drawn by two or more horses and were more popular than the coach.<sup>232</sup> The route passed through Moycullen to Oughterard and the nearby Aughnanure Castle – the ‘ancient stronghold’ of the ‘furious O’Flaherties’ overlooking Lough Corrib.<sup>233</sup> Further along the road, Maam Cross offered an alternative route from Galway and Cong, and it was also the location at which the traveller chose either to proceed westwards to Clifden or strike north to Leenaun.<sup>234</sup> The westward road to Clifden passed through Recess, a good ‘rendezvous for travellers and anglers’, who could access the famous fishery at nearby Ballynahinch Lake.<sup>235</sup> Recess was also a convenient place from which to ascend Lissoughter or make an excursion to Lough Inagh, surrounded by ‘the sternly barren and blunted quartzite summits of the Maamturk range’ on one side,<sup>236</sup> and the ‘Twelve Bens’ – a ‘jagged wall of grey lichenized quartzite’ – on the other.<sup>237</sup> The westward road culminated at Clifden, where the castle overlooking the sea was ‘formerly the property of the D’Arcy family’.<sup>238</sup>

From Clifden, the road turned northwards to Letterfrack, which was ‘a barren rock’ turned into ‘a crown of beauty’ with ‘a well-fed, and a well-paid peasantry’ by the investment of ‘Mr Ellis, of the Society of Friends’.<sup>239</sup> From Letterfrack, an ascent of the Diamond Mountain was recommended.<sup>240</sup> To the north was Mrs Blake’s Renvyle House, run as a hotel from 1883 as a means of combatting the challenge posed to her estate by the Land League.<sup>241</sup> The ‘unrivalled Pass of Kylemore’ was ‘endowed with a beauty peculiarly its own’,<sup>242</sup> and was considered ‘one of the gems of Connemara’, where Mitchell Henry led the reclamation of the bogland.<sup>243</sup> In the heart of the mountains, Leenaun was a popular centre for ‘an expedition up the Twelve Bens’,<sup>244</sup> and was situated ‘on the very edge of the great Killary inlet’,<sup>245</sup> which ‘stretches like a blue tongue some nine miles into the heart of Connemara’.<sup>246</sup> There was a shorter route which left Leenaun and traversed the Erriff Valley to Westport, but the route through Delphi and Louisburgh ‘is the one a visitor should take’.<sup>247</sup> From the northern shores of Killary Bay, the road strikes north to Delphi, from where Mweelrea – the ‘extensive tableland’ composed primarily of Silurian slates – may be ascended.<sup>248</sup> In between Louisburgh and Westport was some of the most celebrated scenery in the region, as the road hugged the southern shore of Clew Bay, with ‘the lofty cone’ of Croagh Patrick to the right, ‘the most distinctive landmark of Mayo’.<sup>249</sup> It was from this quartzite peak – ‘one of the most sacred places in the country’ – that St Patrick famously banished all the serpents from Ireland, and the mountain was climbed by pilgrims who were sometimes barefooted and in some places went ‘on their knees’.<sup>250</sup> The summit ‘commands one of the widest panoramas of the West’,<sup>251</sup> across the ‘numerous

<sup>232</sup> Murray’s *Ireland* (1878), introduction, p. 11.

<sup>233</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), pp. 148-9.

<sup>234</sup> Floyd chose to strike north, Michael Floyd, *The Face of Ireland* (London, 1937), pp. 60-1. ‘Most tourists’ continued westwards to Clifden; see C. S. Ward (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. Ireland (Part II)* (5th edn, London, 1906), p. 181.

<sup>235</sup> Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara: The Famed Holiday Resort amid the Western Irish Highlands* (n.d. [1913-22?]), p. 8.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>237</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 63-4.

<sup>238</sup> M. D. Frazar, *Practical Guide to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 2, *Ireland and Scotland* (Boston MA, 1909), p. 89.

<sup>239</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1877), pp. 282-3.

<sup>240</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 150.

<sup>241</sup> This is referred to in E. E. Somerville and Martin Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart* (London, 1893), pp. 136-7.

<sup>242</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 180.

<sup>243</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), p. 254.

<sup>244</sup> O’Mahony, *Sunny Side of Ireland*, pp. 245-56.

<sup>245</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, pp. 226-7.

<sup>246</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 61.

<sup>247</sup> Frazar, *Ireland and Scotland*, p. 89.

<sup>248</sup> W. P. Haskett Smith and H. C. Hart, *Climbing in the British Isles*, vol. 2, *Wales and Ireland* (London, 1895), p. 160.

<sup>249</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 65.

<sup>250</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), 206.

<sup>251</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 65.

islets' of Clew Bay.<sup>252</sup> After reaching Westport, the final excursion was to Achill Island, where the Croaghnaun cliffs were thought to be 'perhaps the highest marine cliffs in the world'.<sup>253</sup> The ground is 'suddenly cut away leaving a vast and tremendous cleavage' of over two thousand feet,<sup>254</sup> and below the traveller may be seen 'clouds floating' and 'ledges or crevices' on which eagles build, as 'the great ocean spent its fury' on the cliffs, which had 'waged war with the Atlantic for ages'.<sup>255</sup> If the traveller looked across the sea to the western horizon, 'according to legend... in calm sunset' the 'Enchanted Island' of Hy Brasil might be glimpsed.<sup>256</sup> From Westport, the traveller could return to Galway, or to Dublin via the Midland Great Western Railway, or continue the journey towards Sligo and Ulster.

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<sup>252</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1912), p. 98.

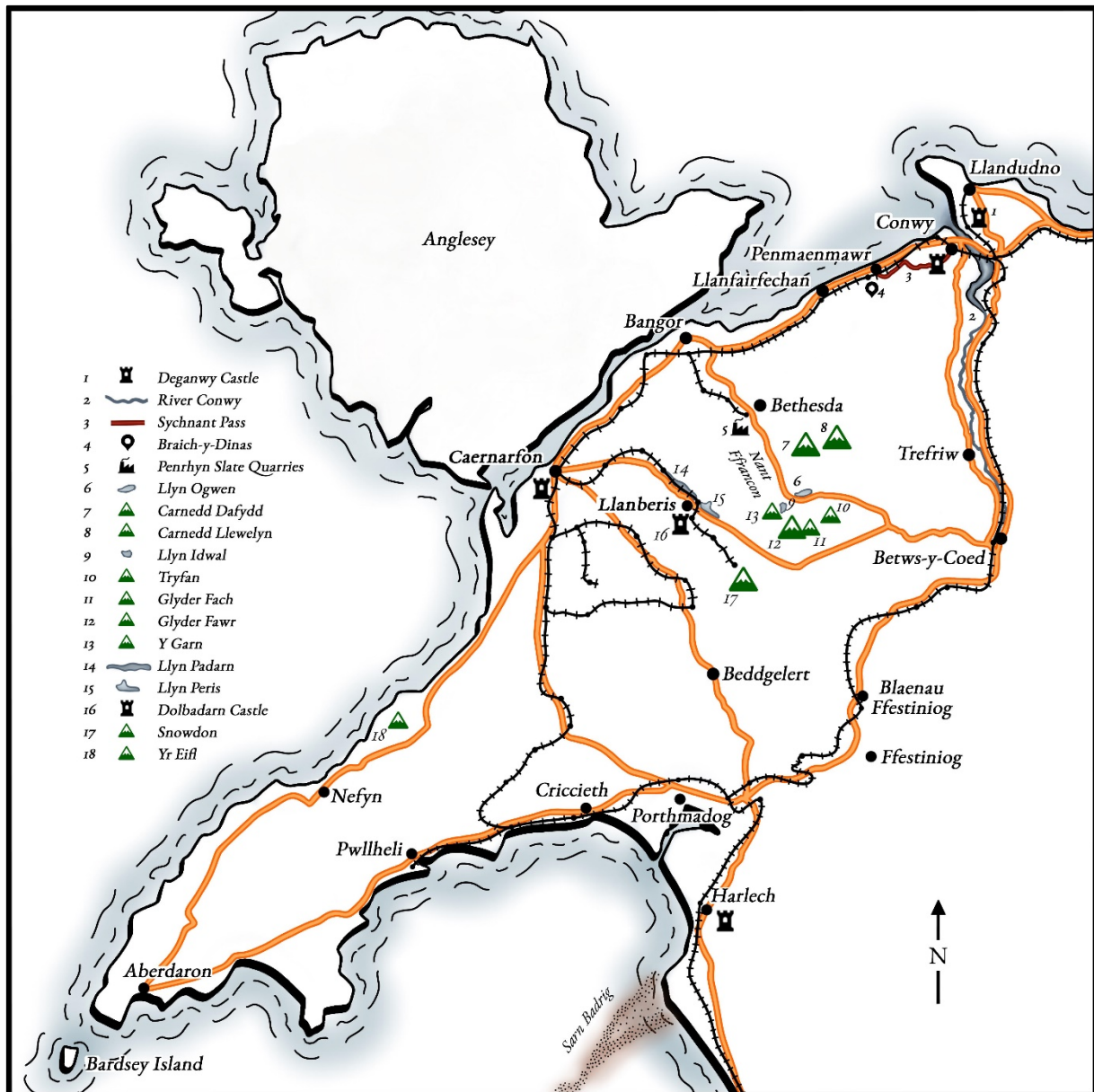
<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>254</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), p. 274.

<sup>255</sup> Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, pp. 272-3.

<sup>256</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 301.

Map 0.4



The traveller typically entered North Wales via Chester, and travelled westward along the London and North Western Railway route, towards ‘the magnificent group of mountains’ in North West Wales, composed of Cambrian rock, some of the ‘oldest rocks in the British Isles’.<sup>257</sup> The railway followed the coast to Colwyn Bay, ‘one of the finest watering-places on the North Wales Coast’,<sup>258</sup> and Llandudno, ‘the Queen of Welsh watering-places’, where the Promenade, the ‘Happy Valley’ pleasure resort, and the cable tramway to the summit of the Great Orme were popular tourist attractions.<sup>259</sup> This stretch of coastline became ‘the playground of the industrial cities of the Midlands and the North’.<sup>260</sup> At nearby Deganwy Castle Henry III was besieged by the Welsh, and ‘the castle was taken by Llewelyn [ap Iorwerth],

<sup>257</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), pp. lxxviii-lxx.

<sup>258</sup> London and North Western Railway, *Tourist Guide to North Wales* (London, 1908), p. 53.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 60; Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 25.

<sup>260</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 60-1.

and destroyed'.<sup>261</sup> Across the estuary the 'weather-beaten and grey' walls of Conwy Castle – built when Edward I was 'swinging his heavy sword through Wales'<sup>262</sup> – overlook Telford's suspension bridge, built between 1822 and 1826.<sup>263</sup> Turning south, away from the sea, the Conwy Valley offered a path which penetrated 'into the mountain heart of "Wild Wales"',<sup>264</sup> an excursion which was made by road, rail, or steamer.<sup>265</sup> Along the valley the traveller reached Trefriw, a village settled by the stream which descends from Llyn Geirionydd, 'renown as the abode of *Taliesin*', the famous sixth-century Welsh bard.<sup>266</sup> The traveller continued through the vale to Llanrwst, where 'suspended against the wall of the chapel are a pair of antique spurs which belonged to Davydd-ap-Jenkin, the "Rob Roy" of Wales'.<sup>267</sup> For most, the object of this excursion was to reach Betws-y-Coed, 'a very popular station for anglers, artists, and tourists',<sup>268</sup> and the surrounding 'beauty-spots' such as the Swallow Falls, the Fairy Glen, the 'romantic' Conwy Falls, and Pandy Mill.<sup>269</sup> Following the excursion to Betws-y-Coed, the traveller departed Conwy to continue westward, leaving 'friendly scenery' and travelling along the Sychnant Pass, 'a miniature mountain gorge' where 'the hills are strewn with great boulders' above the narrow mountain road,<sup>270</sup> through which Dr Johnson passed in 1744.<sup>271</sup> The road led the traveller to Penmaenmawr, a place to which Gladstone sojourned and 'bore public testimony' to its 'great salubrity'.<sup>272</sup> On the mountain above the village 'relics of Celtic days' included tumuli, druidical circles, and the stone settlement of Braich-y-Dinas at the summit.<sup>273</sup> The traveller passed through Llanfairfechan – 'a pleasant family resort'<sup>274</sup> – and the scenic waterfall above Abergwyngregyn, to the next popular excursion centre, Bangor, where in 1884 the University College of North Wales was established.

The excursion inland from Bangor took the traveller to Bethesda and the Penrhyn slate quarries, which employed thousands of men and boys, the noise of which was 'calculated to agitate the nerves'.<sup>275</sup> Further along the road the traveller arrived at the lower end of Nant Ffrancon, and entered 'an amphitheatre of steep and rugged mountains, scarred by torrents and broken by jagged splintered rocks'.<sup>276</sup> Following the road into the mountains, the traveller reached Llyn Ogwen, where there was good fishing to be had,<sup>277</sup> and where ascents of Carnedd Dafydd and Carnedd Llywelyn were begun. Nearby was Llyn Idwal, a lake surrounded on three sides by the mountains Tryfan, Glyder Fawr, and Y Garn, which 'throw a savage tumult of rocks and crags upon its mirror'd surface as imagination could desire'. The 'dark tragedy' associated with the lake is of Idwal, the son of Owain ap Gruffudd, who was drowned by his foster father. Local shepherds later claimed that 'no bird would fly across its damned waters'.<sup>278</sup> From here, the ascent

<sup>261</sup> George Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland by the West Coast Royal Mail Route* (London, 1903), pp. 81-2.

<sup>262</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 63.

<sup>263</sup> *Black's Picturesque Guide to North Wales* (8th edn, Chester, 1883), pp. 45-6.

<sup>264</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), pp. 75, 81.

<sup>265</sup> *Abel Heywood's Tourist Guide to North Wales* (Manchester, 1877), p. 29. For steamer, see *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to North Wales (Northern Section)* (5th edn, London, 1909), pp. 64-6.

<sup>266</sup> *Black's Guide to North Wales* (21st edn, London, 1897), p. 47.

<sup>267</sup> *A Guide to Betws-y-Coed and Llanrwst* (Manchester, 1903), p. 20.

<sup>268</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson's North Wales* (1878), pp. cxii-cxiv.

<sup>269</sup> Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, pp. 33-4.

<sup>270</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>271</sup> *Heywood's North Wales* (1877), p. 52.

<sup>272</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to North Wales (Northern Section)* (6th edn, London, 1912), p. 147. Also see London and North Western Railway, *Where to Spend the Holidays* (London, 1906), p. 25.

<sup>273</sup> Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, facing p. 49. This text referred to Braich-y-Dinas as 'Dinas Penmaen'.

<sup>274</sup> *Black's North Wales* (1897), pp. 52-3.

<sup>275</sup> *Heywood's North Wales* (1877), pp. 42, 48.

<sup>276</sup> M. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. North Wales (Part I)* (3rd edn, London 1889), p. 102.

<sup>277</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), pp. liv-iv, 64.

<sup>278</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, pp. 178-179; Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. 64.



of Glyder Fach and Glyder Fawr ‘requires care’, and Glyder Fach ‘is almost as chaotic a wilderness of crag and boulder’ as the ‘adamantine ranges of Skye and Arran’.<sup>279</sup>

Back along the main route which hugs the northern coastline between Bangor and Caernarfon, the traveller’s attention was directed towards the Menai Straits and Anglesey, where once Roman invaders ‘beheld it crowded with the Druid priests who had been driven thither as a last refuge, and who stood weaving spells and chanting incantations against the conquerors’.<sup>280</sup> At Caernarfon – ‘a favourite centre for tourists’<sup>281</sup> – the ‘ancient walls’, ‘heavy doors’, and ‘four portcullises’ of Edward I’s ‘impregnable’ castle were the chief attractions, and the fortress resisted two sieges by Owain Glyndŵr. It was here that Edward I presented his new born son to the Welsh chiefs, who would ‘acknowledge no prince but one born in Wales’.<sup>282</sup> From Caernarfon, a popular inland excursion skirted Llyn Padarn for Llanberis, where the castle of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth at Dolbadarn overlooks Llyn Peris and the ‘great terraced hillsides of quarried slate’ above the northern shores.<sup>283</sup> Llanberis was the common starting place for an ascent of ‘the far-famed Snowdon’, and from 1896 the Snowdon Mountain Railway took passengers to the summit.<sup>284</sup> The second popular excursion from Caernarfon was to the picturesque Pass of Aberglaslyn and Beddgelert, where the tragic legend of the faithful hound Gelert was adopted by ‘an enterprising innkeeper’, who ‘built up’ a grave ‘in the adjoining meadow’, to which he directed tourists.<sup>285</sup>

The Llŷn Peninsula – accessible from Caernarfon in the north or Criccieth in the south – was regarded as ‘almost wholly unexplored’ and ideal for ‘the traveller who wishes to deviate from the beaten track’,<sup>286</sup> as the railway did not extend beyond the seaport and holiday town of Pwllheli.<sup>287</sup> As the traveller approached Nefyn, where Edward I held his ‘grand triumphant festival’ in 1284,<sup>288</sup> the ‘triple-peaked’ Yr Eifl came into view, ‘falling grandly’ into the sea.<sup>289</sup> From Aberdaron, boats ferried travellers to Ynys Enlli, or Bardsey Island, where it was rumoured some 20,000 saints were buried.<sup>290</sup> Continuing down the western coast, Criccieth was known for its ‘Druidic stones or Bardic gorsedds, ancient houses and churches, and mysterious caves, with all of which some stirring story of sanguinary warfare or legend of Welsh heroism is associated’.<sup>291</sup> The main tourist route passed through Tremadog and Porthmadog (from where inland trips to Ffestiniog and Blaenau Ffestiniog were made) to Harlech, where the imposing castle served as another reminder of conflict, from Edward I’s conquest to its seizure in 1404 by Owain Glyndŵr and its capture by Parliament in 1647, since when it ‘has played no part except in tourist story’.<sup>292</sup> Out to sea lies Sarn Badrig, a raised portion of the seabed and ‘one of the fabled embankments of the legendary kingdom’ of Cantre’r Gwaelod, the sunken land.<sup>293</sup> The tourist then continued the journey to mid- and south-Wales via Aberystwyth, or alternatively crossed the southern portion of North Wales via Barmouth, Bala, and Llangollen, exiting the country for Shrewsbury.

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<sup>279</sup> Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), pp. x, 193.

<sup>280</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), p. 89.

<sup>281</sup> Alfred T. Story, *The Little Guides: North Wales* (2nd edn, London, 1920 [1907]), p. 111.

<sup>282</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), pp. 86-7.

<sup>283</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 47.

<sup>284</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), pp. 86-8.

<sup>285</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 49; London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), p. 123.

<sup>286</sup> Great Western Railway, *North Wales. The British Tyrol* (London, 1906), p. 102.

<sup>287</sup> *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), pp. 146-7.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>289</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 214.

<sup>290</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), pp. 126-7.

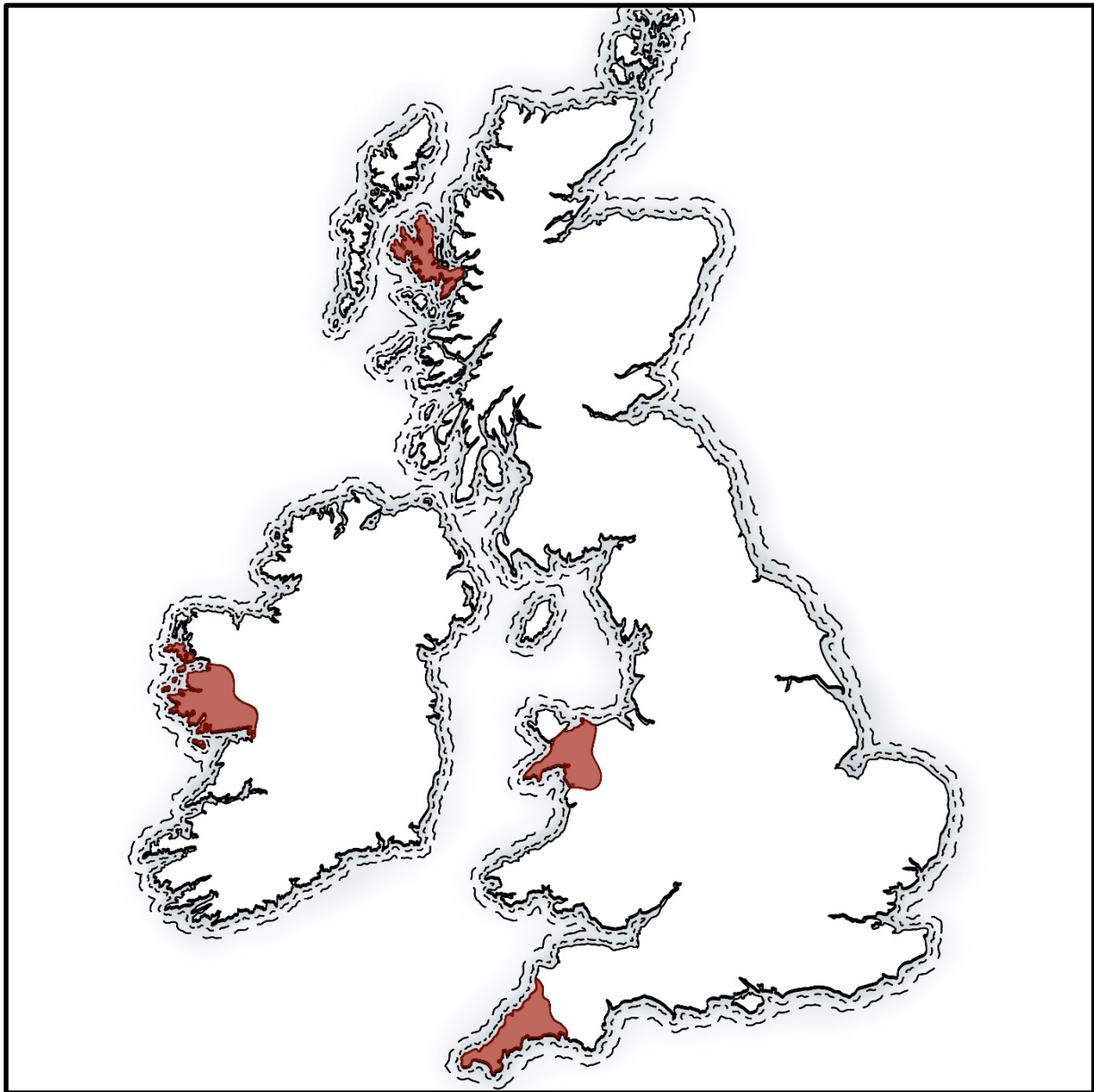
<sup>291</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), p. 99.

<sup>292</sup> M. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. North Wales (Part II)* (2nd edn, London, 1887), p. 65.

<sup>293</sup> *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), pp. 100-1.



Map 0.5: *The West*.



#### IV – Periodisation

##### *Beginning in the 1880s*

From the 1880s, the intertwined developments in technology, infrastructure, education, and publishing led to a proliferation of both travel and travel texts in the British-Irish Isles. Travel, tourism, and its attendant literature have a history which stretches back into the early-eighteenth century, when the first seaside resorts appeared in England and Wales.<sup>294</sup> But by the 1880s these developments had intensified, as travel texts were read by a newly literate public at the same time as the railways – originally developed for carrying heavy freight – were extended to the western extremities of the British-Irish Isles. At a time when travellers were largely dependent on forms of public transport, these years of construction at the

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<sup>294</sup> Peter Nigel Borsay, 'Welsh Seaside Resorts: Historiography, Sources and Themes', *Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru / Welsh History Review* 24.2 (2008), p. 92; Heiss, 'Tourism', pp. 1021-2.

periphery were accompanied by a sense of discovery, bringing the curious and adventurous to hitherto isolated regions, and extending both the practical and imaginative reach of travel texts in a period of an increasing interweaving of the tourism infrastructure.<sup>295</sup> In the early decades of the twentieth century, travel became cheaper and more widely available, as travel companies offered an extensive range of tour routes and specialist tourist tickets, while government legislation and incentives from employers led to the normalisation of the holiday as an annual expectation for a larger section of the population.<sup>296</sup> Bicycles, motorcycles, and motorcars were introduced and quickly became popular, liberating travellers from pre-determined railway routes, while motorbuses provided quicker and more extensive transport for those who could not afford their own vehicle.<sup>297</sup> By beginning in 1880, this thesis focusses on the changes – and the reactions of writers to such changes – which intensified in the final decades of the nineteenth century, while recognising the place of travel, tourism, and its attendant literature within its longer historical trajectories.

### *Irish history and the Great War*

Writing a history of Ireland which begins in 1880 and ends in 1940 liberates the historian from the strictures of the narrative of state formation. Political borders are precise and volatile, but this is not the only framework with which to understand cultural histories.<sup>298</sup> Travel in Ireland, and the themes explored in travel texts, transcend the Home Rule debates, the Irish War of Independence, the Irish Civil War, and the establishment of the Irish Free State. Independence did not utterly discourage British tourists and writers from travelling to and writing about Ireland, as British tourism was actively promoted by those in the Free State with business interests in hotel and transport.<sup>299</sup> Moreover, after the establishment of the Irish Free State, economically-minded tourism developers considered the political border secondary to their industry, which served as a ‘model of cooperative success and a source of dialogue’ after partition.<sup>300</sup> Many Irish writers wrote for British publishers who sold books to an Anglophone reading public which transcended the British-Irish Isles. When H. V. Morton travelled around Ireland in his popular *In Search of Ireland* (first published in 1930), he included both Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State in his narrative, and Stephen Gwynn did the same during his *Ireland in Ten Days* (1935).<sup>301</sup> Findlay Muirhead’s *Blue Guides: Great Britain* (1930) was restricted to ‘England, Wales, and Scotland’, leaving Northern Ireland for inclusion alongside the Free State in the *Blue Guides: Ireland* (1932).<sup>302</sup> In 1924, Stephen Gwynn suggested that ‘Ireland is virtually grouped into Eastern and Western’, as ‘any eastern county is more like to any other eastern county than to any western’.<sup>303</sup> The Irish Free State was, Morton made clear, ‘a foreign country’, and after crossing into the North he ‘seemed to be in England again’, but he also

<sup>295</sup> Heiss, ‘Tourism’, p. 1022. These themes will be fully explored in chapter one.

<sup>296</sup> Eric G. E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism* (London, 2016), pp. 60-1, 143-4; Irene Furlong, *Irish Tourism 1880-1980* (Dublin, 2009), pp. 56-9.

<sup>297</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 112-14; John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, *Imagining Scotland: Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism since 1750* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 116; Sean O’Connell, *The Car and British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 1, 11-15, 19-25; Esme Coulbert, ‘“The Romance of the Road”: Narratives of Motoring in England, 1896-1930’, in Benjamin Colbert (ed.), *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* (New York, 2012), pp. 202-4.

<sup>298</sup> Leerssen, ‘Europe as a Set of Borders’, p. 10.

<sup>299</sup> Spurgeon Thompson, ‘“Not Only Beef, But Beauty...”: Tourism, Dependency, and the Post-Colonial Irish State, 1925-30’, in Michael Cronin and Barbara O’Connor (eds), *Irish Tourism: Image, Culture and Identity* (Clevedon, 2003), pp. 263-4.

<sup>300</sup> See Eric G. E. Zuelow, ‘Ingredients for Cooperation: Irish Tourism in North-South Relations, 1924-1998’, *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 10.1 (2006), pp. 17-39, quotations from p. 17.

<sup>301</sup> For Gwynn’s schedule, see Stephen Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days* (London, 1935), p. 13.

<sup>302</sup> Findlay Muirhead, *The Blue Guides: Ireland* (London, 1932), pp. vii-ix; Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: Great Britain* (London, 1930), p. v.

<sup>303</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland*, p. 52.

suggested that the border – far from representing a clear distinction between altogether different peoples – ‘has all the elements of the game’, in which those on either side ‘play at being foreigners’.<sup>304</sup> For the purposes of travel, many writers found no issue with treating the island of Ireland as a coherent whole, while the internal Irish border was described in terms comparable to the River Tamar, across which travellers left England for ‘foreign’ Cornwall.<sup>305</sup>

The importance of the Great War as a threshold in cultural history has been the subject of debate among British historians.<sup>306</sup> Certainly, the Great War did much to disrupt tourism, and this was recognised by contemporaries. J. Inglis Ker described how ‘the progress of motor touring was interrupted by the tragedy of the war’, and A. Newlands wrote in 1921 of the Scottish railways that ‘at present these times are not quite so good as they were immediately prior to the war’.<sup>307</sup> Nevertheless, organisations such as the Automobile Association resumed their work ‘with renewed vigour’ in the 1920s,<sup>308</sup> and while the practical opportunities for physical travel were impeded by the Great War, this enhanced the imaginative appeal of travel texts, as discussed above. Furthermore, while there were important changes in the content of travel texts in this period that will be discussed in the main body of the thesis, there was also great continuity. As this introduction has shown, publications such as Muirhead’s *Blue Guides* kept alive into the 1930s elements of the style of earlier publications such as *Murray’s* and *Baedeker’s*, while throughout the period the values and the language of Edmund Burke and Romantic writers remained largely in use, even if they were updated and reformulated with the language of new, ‘scientific’ disciplines. Similarly, the narratives of nations, identities, and Britishness experienced a significant shift not after 1918 but after 1945, when the national consciousness became captivated by the heroic stories of the Battle of Britain, the Blitz, Hitler, and the Nazi enemies, all of which became part of the ‘mythic moment of national becoming’. The preoccupation with the ‘glories’ of the Second World War is all the more conspicuous for its omission of Britain’s colonial past, in what Paul Gilroy describes as a post-war ‘perennial crisis of national identity’.<sup>309</sup>

### *Ending in the 1940s*

In British and Irish history, government involvement in the promotion of tourism is largely a post-1945 phenomenon. In contrast to the significant government involvement in inter-war Germany and Italy, chapter one discusses the government’s *laissez-faire* approach to early tourism initiatives in the British-Irish Isles. State involvement in tourism marks an important threshold in the history of leisure in the British-Irish Isles, and the Irish Tourist Board was established by the Tourist Traffic Act in 1939, while the Development of Tourism Act established a British Tourist Authority and Tourist Boards for England, Scotland, and Wales in 1969. In the case of the United Kingdom, this was part of more fundamental changes in British identity outlined by David Edgerton, who sees the creation of the British nation as a process of the post-1945 period, in which projects such as the welfare state and nationalisation represented a transition from an imperial nation to the ‘British nation’, which projected its identity in new

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<sup>304</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, pp. vii, 230-1.

<sup>305</sup> For ‘foreign’ Cornwall, see Moncrieff, *Black’s Cornwall* (1919), p. 1.

<sup>306</sup> For example, see Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling between the Wars* (Oxford, 1980); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2014); Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London, 1991).

<sup>307</sup> J. Inglis Ker, *Scotland for the Motorist* (3rd edn, London, 1922 [1910]), p. 4; A. Newlands, *The Scottish Railways: A Sketch of their Growth and Recent Development* (London, 1921), p. 1.

<sup>308</sup> Ker, *Scotland for the Motorist*, p. 4.

<sup>309</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York, 2005), pp. 87-95. For a personal account of this ‘generational affliction’ of interest the Second World War, see Paul Gilroy, *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race* (London, 2004), pp. 1-6.

ways.<sup>310</sup> Moreover, the statutory monarchical link which provided a bridge for writers constructing the historical narratives of the British-Irish Isles between 1880 and 1940 was finally severed with the Republic of Ireland Act (1948).

The greater involvement of the state in matters of tourism in the British-Irish Isles in the post-war period is also reflected in the creation of National Parks, National Scenic Areas (NSA), and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – a development which was closely linked with a desire to provide leisure spaces for urban and suburban workers. Calls for national parks grew in the inter-war period, supported by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (henceforth CPRE), in the context of the increasing concept of ‘national’ ownership and protection of those places that occupied a place in the imagined landscapes of the ‘nation’, and were seen as ‘the heritage of the whole community’.<sup>311</sup> As early as 1911, Sidney Heath called for some form of government ownership when he threw his support behind W. H. Hudson’s ‘plea for a national fund’ to purchase the Land’s End, in order to protect the area from the continued development of ‘conveniences’ designed for ‘bands of health-seeking and somewhat noisy tourists’. Heath feared that ‘much water will have flowed around the historic headland before a “Society for the Preservation of Noble Landscape” becomes an accomplished fact’.<sup>312</sup> In the inter-war period, there were increased calls for ‘a national park like those of the Yosemite Valley and Mount Rainier in the United States’ (established in 1890 and 1899, respectively), in which ‘disappearing wild species might be preserved among their native scenery’. In 1926, the journalist and author Anthony Collett suggested that ‘the Welsh mountains beyond Bala’ and ‘certain rocks and caves in the Scilly Isles’ as candidates for national park status.<sup>313</sup> The poet Hugh MacDiarmid suggested ‘the Hebrides might well be made an international wilderness sanctuary and peace memorial’, but warned against ‘anything in the nature of “Switzerlandisation” or the reservation of national parks’.<sup>314</sup> By 1937, the scientist and environmentalist R. G. Stapledon recognised that ‘the question of national parks and of land improvement are not new and have been long debated’, and claimed that ‘State ownership’ was necessary alongside ‘a central authority responsible for the whole undertaking’ of tackling ‘the problem of our uplands to the best national interest’.<sup>315</sup> In this period, the growing sense of national ownership of the landscape was reflected in the debates on Labour Party policies, which declared public land ownership as the long term goal, and proposed land value taxation as the practical expression of socialist land reform.<sup>316</sup>

The development of these discussions into the creation of public landscapes as legislative and geographical realities is, however, a process which began after the Second World War. In the immediate post-war period, Snowdonia National Park was established in 1951, and the Llŷn Peninsula AONB followed in 1956, and Cornwall AONB in 1959. In the final decades of the twentieth century, further AONBs were established in the Isles of Scilly (1975) and the Tamar Valley (1995). In Scotland, the Cuillin Hills NSA and Trotternish NSA were established in 1981, while in the Republic of Ireland Connemara National Park was established in 1990.

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<sup>310</sup> David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London, 2018), pp. xx-xxi.

<sup>311</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 137-42. For quotation about the ‘heritage of the whole community’, see J. B. Priestley, ‘Beauty of Britain’, in J. B. Priestley (ed.), *The Beauty of Britain* (London, 1935), p. 2. For the CPRE’s support for national parks, see Vaughan Cornish, *The Scenery of England: A Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country* (Letchworth, 1932), pp. 11-13.

<sup>312</sup> Sidney Heath, *The Cornish Riviera* (London, 1911), pp. 40-1.

<sup>313</sup> Anthony Collett, *The Changing Face of England* (London, 1926), pp. 264-5.

<sup>314</sup> MacDiarmid, *Islands of Scotland*, p. xix. Hugh MacDiarmid was the pseudonym of Christopher Murray Grieve.

<sup>315</sup> R. G. Stapledon, *The Hill Lands of Britain: Development or Decay?* (London, 1937), pp. 95-7.

<sup>316</sup> Clare Griffiths, ‘Socialism and the Land Question: Public Ownership and Control in Labour Party Policy, 1918-1950s’, in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (New York, 2010), pp. 237-41, 252-3.

## V – Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into five thematic chapters. Chapter one charts the increasing accessibility of the western peripheries of Britain and Ireland, focussing on the four case study areas and placing their development within the wider context of the growing tourism industry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In broad historical narratives of tourism, the developmental stage is often situated in the early- and mid-nineteenth century. However, this chapter suggests that the final decades of the nineteenth century were important for the popularisation of travel in the West, which was in part driven by infrastructural developments. This chapter also explores the emergence of modern tourism in the West, using travel texts published by companies such as *Murray's*, *Black's*, *Baedeker's*, *Bradshaw's*, and others, to shed light on the increasing speed of travel, the proliferation of advertisements and the marketing of tourist destinations, the diversification of travel providers, the variety of tourist routes and tourist tickets on offer, as well as accommodation facilities, affordability, and the changing modes of transport throughout the period, from steamboats and railways to motorcars and motor coaches. This chapter explores the increasing interconnection and interdependence of the modern tourism network, and the increasing popularity of the West in the period 1880-1940. In doing so, chapter one provides the tangible framework, after which a thematic approach may be taken.

Chapter two builds on the framework of increasing accessibility and the emergence of the modern tourism industry by placing these developments within the wider set of experiences termed 'modernity'. The analysis in this chapter focuses on moments in travel texts when the writer commented upon particular aspects of what was perceived as 'modern society'. Western peripheries have generally been studied within the context of their national political frameworks, and have therefore been understood in relation to Irish, Welsh, and Scottish political nationalisms. In contrast, this chapter explores how the West provided a set of images, metaphors, and experiences for writers to articulate their reactions to the changes that were taking place in the metropolitan centres, associated with the notion of 'modernity'. In particular, this chapter explores the ambivalent attitudes towards economic development in the largely rural landscapes of the West. In addition, the West served as a device through which anxieties were expressed about the decline of Britain, while the pervasive sense of transitoriness made it difficult to forge meaningful connections between the past and the present, which led to a sense of disorientation, and modern urban and suburban life was perceived as alienating and mundane. At the same time, this was a period of innovation and creativity, which offered new ways of being modern that anchored the present in the stability of the historical West.

Chapter three shifts the focus away from the places of origin and the perceived social, cultural, and economic problems of the urban centres of Britain and Ireland, instead focussing on the travellers and tourists and their destinations, exploring what they did, how they acted, and the ways in which they presented themselves to their readers. In doing so, this chapter draws on the conceptual literature of travel as performance, which addresses the ways in which identities are inscribed in space, and suggests that the behaviour of travellers and tourists represents a process of enactment and narration. The West offered a particular type of stage upon which travellers sought authenticity away from the beaten track, and this chapter explores the moral geographies of moving through the landscape, focussing in particular on walking and the ambivalent attitudes towards motoring, drawing on the recent literature of the rural modern. This chapter also explores the role of 'danger' and 'adventure' in narratives of travel in the West, and ends by considering the interactions between tourists and hosts, as well as the attendant power dynamics, in which power and agency were unequally distributed but were certainly wielded by both groups.

Chapter four continues to explore travel as performance, and focuses on the single most distinctive performative act of travelling in the West throughout the period – the westward gaze. The westward gaze may be dissected into three stages. Firstly, travellers and writers physically or imaginatively gazed westwards in the direction of their destination from afar. Secondly, they described the process of gradually entering ‘the West’ and the changes in landscape that marked the transition, as well as the specific sites which acted as ‘gateways’ to the western peripheries. Finally, once they had reached the edge of the land, travellers and tourists continued to look across the sea and towards the distant horizon. This was a performance that was heavily stylised, and once these three stages had been completed, the westward gaze carried with it specific associational values. In particular, this chapter explores the legendary lands beyond the horizon, Hy Brasil and Tír na nÓg, and the sunken lands of Lyonesse and Cantre’r Gwaelod. The exploration of the westward gaze in this way reveals the array of voices which emerge from the travel text, and which shaped travel and tourism in the West, from the academic to the popular, encompassing the literary, geological, geographical, touristic, and mythological.

Finally, chapter five moves away from the theme of travel as a form of individual self-fashioning, and towards the role of travel texts in cultural and national projects of self-fashioning. Narratives of geology, history, national development, and monarchy occupied the minds of travellers and thus affected the experience of travel. Narratives of the nation that formed an important part of travel texts constituted a component of nation building, and served to construct the nation in the minds of both readers and travellers. This chapter explores the ways in which a depoliticised, multinational Britishness was constructed in many travel texts during this period. It argues that travel texts were a site at which a flexible sense of Britishness was constructed, which allowed for and even celebrated national cultural diversity, as long as this remained apolitical and did not serve as a foundation for political nationalism. Travel texts played an important role in constructing a Britain of geological, racial, and linguistic layers as well as historical interconnections, which aimed to simultaneously promote a diverse sense of Britishness while defusing the arguments for separatist nationalism in the Celtic periphery.

## **I – Introduction**

Transport and tourism are closely connected, as improvements in transport encourage tourism, while tourism also stimulates further developments in transport.<sup>1</sup> This chapter explores the increasing accessibility of western peripheries in Britain and Ireland, and places this development within the wider context of the burgeoning tourism industry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It maps the emergence of the modern tourism industry in the West, while connecting this development to some of the broader transformations associated with modernity, including rapid changes in technology, the growth of democracy, and the increasing commercialisation of society.

The growth of British and Irish tourism is often placed in the early- or mid-nineteenth century, alongside important infrastructural developments. In his introduction to the 1968 reprint of *Bradshaw's Railway Guide* for August 1887, David St John Thomas explained that in the period 1830-1850 British and Irish railways were constructed, while 'the years 1860-1890 were largely those of consolidation'.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the construction of Telford's road network from 1815, regular steam packets connecting Britain and Ireland, and the rapid expansion of the railway system brought distant areas of the British-Irish Isles closer together than ever before.<sup>3</sup> However, this chapter argues that the final decades of the nineteenth century were particularly important years for the popularisation of travel in the western peripheries of the British-Irish Isles. These years were still very much years of construction, particularly in western Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

After establishing the growing transport infrastructure of the West, the second aim of this chapter is to shed light on how developments in the West were part of the wider emergence of modern tourism in Britain and Ireland, focussing in particular on the increasing speed of travel, advertisements and the marketing of tourist destinations, the diversification of travel providers, the variety of tourist routes and tourist tickets on offer, accommodation facilities, affordability, and the changing modes of transport across the period, from railways and steamboats to motorcars and motor coaches.<sup>5</sup> This chapter aims to sketch the increasing interconnection and interdependence of the tourism network, and to show that travellers and tourists made use of this infrastructure in increasing numbers throughout the period 1880-1940. To do so, this chapter draws on material contained in well-known travel text series by publishers such as John Murray and Adam and Charles Black, as well as those texts produced by transport companies such as David MacBrayne and the Great Western Railway. At a time when travellers were largely dependent on public forms of transport, these years of construction at the periphery were accompanied by a sense of discovery, of bringing the curious and adventurous to hitherto isolated regions, and extending both the practical and imaginative reach of travel texts in a period of an increasing interweaving of the tourism infrastructure.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alastair J. Durie, *Scotland and Tourism: The Long View, 1700-2015* (Abingdon, 2017), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> David St John Thomas (ed.), *Bradshaw's August 1887 Railway Guide* (Whitstable, 1968), n.p., see introduction. Also see Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven CT, 1999), pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> John K. Walton and James Walvin considered the benefits of undermining 'over-generalised' accounts in favour of 'the rich variety of regional and local experiences'; see John K. Walton and James Walvin, 'Introduction', in John K. Walton and James Walvin (eds), *Leisure in Britain 1780-1939* (Manchester, 1983), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, many of these developments were not new in 1880, and were not unique to the West. This chapter explores the position of the West within the broader extension and proliferation of the tourism industry.

<sup>6</sup> Heiss, 'Tourism', p. 1022.

## II – Increasing Accessibility

### *Accessibility in the 1880s*

At the beginning of the period, there was significant variation in the accessibility of western regions. Popular Victorian destinations in Cornwall and North West Wales were far more accessible than the more remote regions of West Connacht and the Isle of Skye.

In 1859, Cornwall became the last English county to be connected to the main railway system, after which Thomas Cook established a package tour to the Land's End in 1860.<sup>7</sup> For much of the nineteenth century, it was said that 'more Englishmen had visited Paris than Truro'.<sup>8</sup> However, Cornwall was one of the more accessible western regions of the British-Irish Isles for the tourist by the late-nineteenth century, and as early as 1871 the occupation 'Guide to Land's End' appeared on the census.<sup>9</sup> In the early 1880s, many of Cornwall's most popular destinations were readily accessible by rail, with the main railway line leaving Plymouth and reaching as far west as Penzance. In the south of the county, the tourist frequented towns such as Fowey, St Austell, Truro, Penryn, and Falmouth, while St Ives, Portreath, and Newquay were also reachable on the northern coast. In 1879, *Murray's Cornwall* declared that 'even the remote corners of Cornwall can now be nearly reached by the ramifications of the Great Western and South Western Railways'.<sup>10</sup> Coach and omnibus services connected the railway stations with many of Cornwall's most famous destinations such as the Land's End, the Lizard peninsula, and Tintagel, which lay 10, 18, and 25 miles beyond their closest respective train stops.<sup>11</sup> In 1883, at a cost of 3s 6d for a return ticket, tourists wishing to visit the Land's End could take the omnibus service which left Penzance at 0900 and arrived at the Land's End two hours later (having also stopped off at Logan Rock). Along the northern coastline, the longer coach journey between Newquay and Tintagel cost 8s 6d for a return ticket.<sup>12</sup>

North Wales, claimed *Ward and Lock's North Wales* (1883), 'is very easily reached', and tourists seeking to explore the north-west had two possible routes to consider. The first – serviced by the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) – entered Wales via Chester and ran along the North Wales coast through popular holiday towns such as Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, and Llandudno towards Bangor and Caernarfon, 'throwing out branches to the most interesting spots, as it proceeds'.<sup>13</sup> The second route was serviced by a combination of the Great Western Railway (GWR) and Cambrian Railways, which entered mid-Wales via Shrewsbury, calling at Bala, Dolgellau, and Barmouth on the west coast, before turning northwards and passing through Harlech and Porthmadog, after which the lines met at Caernarfon. It was common for a tour of North Wales to begin at either Chester or Shrewsbury, and end at the other, as the railway networks of North Wales linked the area to urban centres in England, rather than with South Wales.<sup>14</sup> Along these two main routes there were several branches which penetrated the heart of the region, enabling travellers to visit well-known destinations such as Betws-y-Coed, Llanberis, and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Some of the scenes most treasured by travellers and writers – such as the Pass of

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<sup>7</sup> James Vernon, 'Border crossings: Cornwall and the English (imagi)nation', in Geoffrey Cubitt (ed.), *Imagining Nations* (Manchester, 1998), p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> Jack Simmons, 'Railways, Hotels, and Tourism in Great Britain 1839-1914', *Journal of Contemporary History* 19 (1984), pp. 213-15.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Ireland, 'Land's End, Cornwall, England', in Nieves Herrero and Sharon R. Roseman (eds), *The Tourism Imaginary and Pilgrimages to the Edges of the World* (Bristol, 2015), p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> *Murray's Cornwall* (1879), introduction, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> *Ward and Lock's Illustrated Guide to North Wales* (London, 1883), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1981), p. 8. For the importance of infrastructure in Wales, see Kathryn N. Jones, Carol Tully, and Heather Williams, 'Travel Writing and Wales', *Studies in Travel Writing* 18.2 (2014), pp. 101-2.



Llanberis – were traversable by coach, and in 1883 the typical charge for a one-horse car or cab was 1s per mile, with the driver's fee set at 1d per mile (half-fare was typically charged for the return leg).<sup>15</sup>

West Connacht was less easily accessible than Cornwall and North West Wales in this period, although from the 1880s 'concerted efforts' were made by local development associations, railway companies, and other industry bodies to develop tourism in Ireland.<sup>16</sup> In 1890, W. F. Wakeman's *Picturesque Ireland* explained that 'until a comparatively few years ago, access to the highlands of Ireland' as well as the 'inland pastoral districts' was 'difficult, tedious, and expensive'.<sup>17</sup> At this time, there were two railway lines of particular significance for travellers bound for West Connacht. The lines began as one, which originated in Dublin and ran westwards across central Ireland, operated by the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR). The MGWR line split at Athlone, with the southern branch heading to Galway, and the northern line reaching its terminus at Westport. At this time, West Connacht was largely beyond the reach of the railway, and was consequently not a destination for the casual tourist seeking a convenient holiday resort. As E. B. Ivatts explained in his *Western Highlands* (1869), the reader is 'not invited to visit an inland fashionable watering place' that may be 'gone over and seen in a carriage in a couple of hours'. This is not the location of 'a straggling sea-side resort... nor a spa where old ladies drink chalybeate waters by the gallon'. Such was the remoteness of the region that 'three or four friends can easily spend there a fortnight without meeting'.<sup>18</sup> From the railway terminus, coaches and long cars transported travellers further westwards, twice daily from Galway through Connemara to Clifden.<sup>19</sup> The daily coach service from Clifden to Westport linked up the two MGWR railway lines, while private cars were available for hire at a cost of '6d per mile for one person, 8d or 9d for two', to which the driver's fee 2d per mile was added.<sup>20</sup>

In the late-eighteenth century, the journey from London to Edinburgh took ten days by coach, and an additional week was required to reach the Highlands.<sup>21</sup> Even by the mid-nineteenth century, when Thomas Cook began to organise Scottish tours, it was said that it was 'easier to get to Jerusalem than to Skye'.<sup>22</sup> Skye was approachable by train from eastern Scotland via Inverness (which became a tourist centre for those travelling to the west coast as well as the north east), and at Strome Ferry the Highland Railway terminated, 'whence there is direct communication with Skye' by steamer.<sup>23</sup> However, most travellers approached Skye from Glasgow on one of David MacBrayne's steamers, which transported goods and passengers throughout the region's highlands and islands. It was generally considered that to 'Mr David H. MacBrayne is due the credit of opening up Skye and the Western Isles to the public'.<sup>24</sup> From 1878, the firm published official guides on an annual basis, providing the latest information on

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<sup>15</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson's North Wales* (1878), pp. xv, facing p. i; *Ward and Lock's North Wales* (1883), pp. 24-6.

<sup>16</sup> For a summary of tourism development in Ireland, see Hooper, 'The Isles/Ireland', pp. 174-90. Also see Stephen W. Boyd, 'Tourism and Political Change in Ireland, North and South: Identity, Modernity, Contrast and Moving Toward Convergence', in Richard Butler and Wantanee Suntikul (eds), *Tourism and Political Change* (2nd edn, Oxford, 2017), pp. 154-7. Quotation from Kevin J. James, "'Wilds of Ireland": Tourism and Western Terrain in the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries', in Richard C. Allen and Stephen Regan (eds), *Irelands of the Mind: Memory and Identity in Modern Irish Culture* (Newcastle, 2008), pp. 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> E. B. Ivatts, *Guide to the Western Highlands (Connemara)* (Dublin, 1869), n.p.; see section 'Main Route for Circular Tour through Highlands'.

<sup>19</sup> Otherwise known as 'public cars' or 'mail cars', long cars were drawn by two or more horses, and according to *Murray's Ireland* (1878), they were more popular than the coach; see introduction, pp. 10-11.

<sup>20</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), introduction, p. 11, and p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, 'Introduction', p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> The aphorism was attributed to Dean Stanley, in A. R. Hope Moncrieff and W. Smith Jr., *The Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London, 1907), p. 17. Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> *Murray's Scotland* (1883), introduction, pp. 11-12. Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 14. Durie recognises the importance of the steamboat in the context of Scottish tourism, in Durie, *Scotland and Tourism*, p. 30.

routes, times, and costs for the new tourist season.<sup>25</sup> While there were other steamer providers, MacBrayne's was renowned for its 'fleet of steamers exclusively for tourists', which enabled visitors to 'navigate the fiords and inlets of the Western Highlands with perfect ease'.<sup>26</sup> The steamers left Glasgow and passed through Oban, the 'Charing Cross of the Highlands'. Stops were made at Armadale, Isleornsay, Kyleakin, Broadford, and the principal town of Portree on the Isle of Skye.<sup>27</sup> In 1881, the cost of the cheaper 'steerage' tickets between Glasgow and Portree were 17s for a single ticket and 25s 6d for return.<sup>28</sup> Once on the island, travellers visited the best known tourist sites by boat or by coach, which served to fill 'the gap between railways and steamers'.<sup>29</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century, the Highlands transformed from a region visited by 'a score' of travellers, to one which expected 10,000 tourists annually.<sup>30</sup>

### *Increasing accessibility*

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, it was a commonplace that European destinations were more popular than domestic ones (see Image 1.1). But there was also a consciousness of rapid change, a sense of optimism and confidence that western peripheries were being made more accessible as a result of developments in transport infrastructure and technology.<sup>31</sup> In 1878, *Murray's Ireland* boasted that 'eighteen hours will even now take the Londoner to the Atlantic shore, and twenty will soon carry him to the furthest promontory of the island'.<sup>32</sup> This was part of the wider context of the growth of tourism. In 1883, *Murray's Scotland* put the increasing 'influx of tourists to all parts of the country' down to 'the rapid development of Railway and Steamboat facilities', as well as 'the issue of a varied and comprehensive series of Circular Tour Tickets', and the 'extension and improvement of Hotel accommodation'.<sup>33</sup> The remainder of this chapter analyses the broad changes which took place across the period 1880-1940, placing travel in the West within the wider context of the emerging tourism industry.

Within this broader narrative of growth, it is important to recognise that more immediate fluctuations in levels of tourism also occurred as a result of particularly good weather, or deterrents in Europe such as the outbreak of cholera in southern France, both of which effected a sharp increase in tourism within Britain and Ireland in 1884.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, spikes in violence or the fear of violence could deter tourism, though there is little evidence that the Crofters' War of the 1880s deterred tourists from visiting Skye.<sup>35</sup> In Ireland, travel texts described 'agitations' such as the 'Kilvine Rioters', the Carraroe and Maam Riots, and land agents who went around 'guarded by two policeman armed with double-barrelled guns loaded with slugs', while in 1885 the journalist and author Alexander Innes Shand suggested that the lack of

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<sup>25</sup> 'Time Table and Tourist Programme', in MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), pp. 3-48.

<sup>26</sup> *Murray's Scotland* (1883), introduction, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1881), pp. 1, 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Murray's Scotland* (1883), introduction, pp. 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> This is Christopher Smout's estimation, quoted in Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland*, p. 49. For the growth of tourism in the Highlands, see R. W. Butler, 'Evolution of Tourism in the Scottish Highlands', *Annals of Tourism Research* 12.3 (1985), pp. 380-8.

<sup>31</sup> The perception of these changes, and especially the speed of change, will be explored in chapter two.

<sup>32</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), p. vi.

<sup>33</sup> *Murray's Scotland* (1883), p. iii.

<sup>34</sup> See Johnnie Gray [Harry Speight], *A Tourist's View of Ireland* (London, 1885), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Katherine Haldane Grenier, "'Scottishness', 'Britishness', and Scottish Tourism, 1770-1914", *History Compass* 4.6 (2006), pp. 1010-11.

tourists around Westport and Clew Bay was a result of ‘the land agitation and the general depression’.<sup>36</sup> When such issues were alluded to, it was often with the aim of reassuring readers that ‘whoever else may get trouble in Ireland, it will not be the stranger come there for enjoyment’.<sup>37</sup>

Image 1.1



*Source:* W. K. Haselden, ‘Departing for the Holidays’, *Daily Mirror*, 1 July 1904. John Bull (to the departing holidaymakers): ‘Why not stop in your own country, and see something of its beauties?’

### *Extension of the railways*

Originally developed for carrying heavy freight (especially coal), the railways were important to the emerging tourism industry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>38</sup> As Jack Simmons stated, ‘tourism was not at all a creation of the railways’, but ‘the basis’ of the growth in tourism was ‘steam transport’, and ‘above all transport by railway’.<sup>39</sup> Contemporaries such as Sidney Heath went further, claiming that ‘it is not too much to say that Cornwall owes its favourable position as a health resort almost entirely to the genius of Brunel and the enterprise of the Great Western Railway’.<sup>40</sup> In Cornwall, the railway was extended to St Ives in 1877, and the extension to Helston in 1887 brought travellers closer to the Lizard Peninsula. In the north, the new station at Perranporth (which opened in 1903) provided a

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<sup>36</sup> For the Kilvine Rioters, the Carraroe and Maam Riots, and the well-guarded land agent, see Tuke, *Irish Distress*, pp. 85, 87-8. For a lack of visitors to Westport and Clew Bay, see Alexander Innes Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland 1884* (Edinburgh, 1885), p. 102.

<sup>37</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days*, p. 7. Also see Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland*, pp. 102-3; and Madame de Bovet, *Three Months’ Tour in Ireland*, trans. and ed. Mrs Arthur Walter (London, 1891), p. 211; and Agness Greene Foster, *By The Way* (2nd edn, San Francisco, 1911), p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Simmons, ‘Railways, Hotels, and Tourism’, p. 201.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 210.

<sup>40</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, pp. 6-7.

railway route along the northern coast when it was linked up to Newquay in 1905.<sup>41</sup> The ‘steady expansion of the Cornish holiday traffic’ is reflected in passenger statistics. Between 1860 and 1869 there was an average of 565,821 annual passengers on the Cornwall railway, which increased to 852,429 for the period 1880-1888. This growth continued, so that the average annual receipts from passengers booked at Penzance between 1904 and 1910 were 57.6 percent higher than for the period 1890-1896.<sup>42</sup> In North West Wales, Betws-y-Coed was linked up to Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1881, creating a railway loop around much of the Snowdonia region, which ‘opened a fresh route for tourists’ by facilitating circular tours beginning and ending at popular tourist towns such as Caernarfon.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, in 1922 an alternative route to the London and North Western Railway’s main line – which ‘skirts the coast’ – was ‘made possible by the formation of the Welsh Highland Railway’. This ‘long-cherished scheme’ resulted in a line from Porthmadog to Caernarfon, via Beddgelert, which created more possibilities for travelling through the Snowdonia region as well as around it.<sup>44</sup> The development of such infrastructure bred confidence that North Wales would ‘become one of the most popular of our great national pleasure and health-giving districts’.<sup>45</sup>

In Ireland, the development of the railways was attributed to Arthur Balfour and the Light Railways and Tramways Acts (1896), which decreased both the time and the cost of building new light railways.<sup>46</sup> In the West, railway lines were extended from Galway and Westport to their respective western extremities of Clifden and Achill in 1895, which promised to be of ‘inestimable service’ for travellers ‘in search of wild and picturesque scenery’.<sup>47</sup> Both stations remained in use until the mid-1930s, and in 1912 *Black’s Ireland* claimed that ‘Galway and the West’ was ‘fast superseding Killarney in popularity’.<sup>48</sup> Access to Achill Island was improved by the opening of the bridge across Achill Sound in 1888, before which ‘visitors had to cross in ferry boats’.<sup>49</sup> There were, however, continued calls for the Congested Districts Board to do more to ‘open up the country’ through the development of railways and roads in Connemara.<sup>50</sup>

Writing in 1937, Donald MacKinnon remarked that places once ‘accessible only to the few are now within the reach of the many’.<sup>51</sup> The Isle of Skye was gradually approached by the extending railway lines, which reached Kyle of Lochalsh in 1897 (serviced by the Highland Railway Company) and Mallaig in 1901 (North British Railway Company) – from where the steamer to Skye could be boarded – while steamer services direct from Edinburgh and Glasgow had been available for decades.<sup>52</sup> In 1920, *Black’s Scotland* explained that while ‘the majority of Highland tourists do not go beyond Inverness’, the ‘far north of

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<sup>41</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 51; V. L. Whitechurch, ‘The West Cornwall Railway’, *Railway Magazine* 4 (1899), p. 167.

<sup>42</sup> Simmons, ‘Railways, Hotels, and Tourism’, pp. 214-15.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Blaenau Festiniog’, *North Wales Express*, 1 April 1881, p. 5; quotation in London and North Western Railway, *Tours in North, South, and Central Wales* (London, 1899), p. 27.

<sup>44</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (9th edn, London, 1925), p. x.

<sup>45</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), p. viii.

<sup>46</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Herbert H. Bassett (ed.), *Bradshaw’s Railway Manual, Shareholders’ Guide and Official Directory, 1905* (57th edn, London, 1905), pp. 251-2; Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 9. Before the extensions of 1895, James Tuke described the journey from Westport to Achill as ‘a tedious drive’; see Tuke, *Irish Distress*, p. 58. Even after the railway was introduced, some tourists chose the jaunting car; see Taylor Jr., *British Isles Through an Opera Glass*, p. 150.

<sup>48</sup> The Galway-Clifden extension was closed in 1935, while the Westport-Achill extension closed in 1937. For the growing popularity of Galway and the West, see *Black’s Ireland* (1912), p. x.

<sup>49</sup> Hayes, ‘Holiday in the Far West’, p. 637.

<sup>50</sup> J. Harris Stone, *Connemara and the Neighbouring Spots of Beauty and Interest* (London, 1906), pp. 73-4.

<sup>51</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 14.

<sup>52</sup> David MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow and the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1903), pp. 101-2; D. T. Timins, ‘The Mallaig Extension of the West Highland Railway’, *Railway Magazine* 8 (1901), pp. 401-2. Also see Newlands, *The Scottish Railways*, pp. 17-18.

Scotland is becoming more and more frequented'.<sup>53</sup> Steamer travel remained, however, less reliable in that it depended upon 'settled weather'.<sup>54</sup>

### *Speed of travel*

Alongside the extension of travel facilities within these western regions, there was also a steady decrease in the amount of time it took to travel to them from the major urban centres of Britain and Ireland. This was part of a wider obsession with technology and speed in the late-nineteenth century, a period in which Germany began to challenge British control of the seas – a matter of national prestige, and symbolic of the shifting international balance of power.<sup>55</sup> In 1897, the German passenger steamer Kaiser Wilhelm der Große replaced the British Cunard Line as the fastest steamer to cross the Atlantic.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, R. T. Lang began *Black's Ireland* (1902) with a description of the Holyhead to Dublin sea routes, provided by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company and the London and North Western Railway, both of which 'possess a truly magnificent passenger steamer service'. It may have comforted the reader to hear that 'in these days when Germany is claiming the records of the sea, it is good to know that on the mail route we still have the fastest boats sailing from any port'. Emphasising the point, Lang boasted that the City of Dublin Company steamers 'are twin-screw steamers'.<sup>57</sup> Screw propellers replaced paddle wheels in the late-nineteenth century, which allowed for taller and wider ships.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, compound steam engines led to increased engine power, as turbines sequenced the 'compression and decompression of steam cylinders', which turned a succession of turbine rings in order to extract maximum energy from the steam. This had the effect of increasing wattage without a drastic increase in fuel consumption.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, the steamers plying to Dublin commanded '9000 horse-power, and an average speed of 24¼ knots'.<sup>60</sup> Engineering performance was matched by interiors of 'the most sumptuous style', while the sheer size of the vessels (372 feet in length and 3000 tons) and 'special build' ensured a smoother 'steady roll' rather than the pitching which often resulted in '*mal de mer*'.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, steamer services to Skye also improved, with MacBrayne's guide for 1938 boasting of the new steamer S.S. Lochgarry's 'salt water baths, smoke room, lounge and spacious dining saloon', while electrical lighting was provided throughout the vessel.<sup>62</sup> Passenger steamers were often at the forefront of technological developments, and installed electric lighting 'before they were introduced on city streets'.<sup>63</sup>

The preoccupation with speed is most clearly seen in the development of trains and railways. The first trains travelled at around 20-30 miles per hour, and by the 1850s trains on certain routes averaged 40-50 miles per hour. By the turn of the twentieth century, railway travel was quick, comfortable, and within reach of most travellers.<sup>64</sup> As Tables 1.1 and 1.2 indicate, the reduction of travel times continued into the

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<sup>53</sup> Mitton, *Black's Scotland, North* (1920), p. 126.

<sup>54</sup> *Black's Guide to Scotland* (15th edn, London, 1920), pp. 128-9

<sup>55</sup> For an account of Britain's relative decline, see Aaron L. Friedberg, *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905* (Princeton, 1988). For sea power, see pp. 135-208, and a brief summary at pp. 298-300.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (London, 1983), pp. 109-10.

<sup>57</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1902), pp. v-vi. *Ward and Lock's* guide to Cork explained that the deep harbours allowed for larger vessels than those which crossed the English Channel; see *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Cork, Cobh (Queenstown), Glengariff, Killarney, and the South-West of Ireland* (9th edn, London, n.d. [1937?]), p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 56.

<sup>59</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 56.

<sup>60</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1902), pp. v-vi.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

<sup>62</sup> MacBrayne, *Royal Route* (1938), p. 27.

<sup>63</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 57-8.

<sup>64</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 52. For a brief discussion of train speeds in Britain at the beginning of the period, see Thomas A. Crol (ed.), *A Book About Travelling Past and Present* (London, 1877), pp. 583-4.

twentieth century, and bound up with improvements of speed were changing perceptions of distance. *Murray's Ireland* (1878) claimed that, as a result of quicker transportation, the tourist in Ireland 'will not be practically further from London than the many seats of our nobility in the North-Midland counties were thirty years ago'.<sup>65</sup> Writing in 1930 during his visit to the Claddagh just outside Galway, H. V. Morton considered it 'almost inconceivable to realise that a man can breakfast in London and lunch the next day within sight of this Gaelic village'.<sup>66</sup> The influence of these developments on perceptions of time and space will be explored further in chapter two.

Combined with technological innovation, competition was a crucial ingredient which led to a reduction of both travel times and ticket prices.<sup>67</sup> These developments were accentuated in Cornwall by the competition between GWR and South Western Railway, which both ran services from London to the south-west. That competition led to quicker railway services is indicated by the GWR's significant reduction of travel times from London Paddington to Penzance between 1883 and 1924 (see Table 1.2), which was surpassed only after high-speed trains were introduced in the late 1970s, cutting the journey time to around 5 hours. The competition was particularly fierce, as SWR offered passengers a route from London to Exeter (one of the gateways to Cornwall) that was 12 miles shorter and 15 minutes quicker than GWR's route, in 1896.<sup>68</sup> The figures for 1893 also show that SWR also provided the quicker service from London to Plymouth, which was widely regarded as the ideal place from which to begin a tour of Cornwall.<sup>69</sup>

Competition between the two companies intensified until 1906, when a late SWR train derailed after the driver failed to reduce speed at Salisbury, killing himself along with 27 others. This damaged SWR's reputation – a train company already notorious for running late. Shortly after the Salisbury disaster, a new GWR line opened between Castle Cary and Langport, which provided GWR with a shorter route to the West. Between 1904 and 1909, GWR estimated that its total traffic (passengers and goods) between London and the West Country increased 21 percent, and from 1906 the company reorganised its express services to the region, outstripping SWR for speed as well as punctuality.<sup>70</sup> In 1924, the GWR route to Exeter was only two miles longer than the SWR route, and arrived in 3 hours – 15 minutes earlier than the SWR service. Likewise, the GWR service to Plymouth arrived in 4 hours, outperforming the SWR service, which arrived 45 minutes later.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), p. vi.

<sup>66</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 165.

<sup>67</sup> Lauren Tissot, 'How did the British Conquer Switzerland? Guidebooks, Railways, Travel Agencies, 1850-1914', *The Journal of Transport History* 16.1 (1995), p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> M. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. South Devon and South Cornwall* (London, 1884), p. 1; C. S. Ward (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. North Devon and North Cornwall* (London, 1896), p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Jack Simmons, 'South Western v. Great Western: Railway Competition in Devon and Cornwall', *The Journal of Transport History* 4.1 (1959), p. 34.

<sup>70</sup> 'South-Western Boat Train Wrecked', *The Times*, 2 July 1906, p. 6; Simmons, 'South Western v. Great Western', pp. 28-30.

<sup>71</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), pp. 15-16.

Table 1.1: *Journey times to West Connacht in 1887 and 1910.*<sup>72</sup>

Route (via Holyhead steamer)	1887		1910		1887-1910
	Quickest service	Journey length (minutes)	Quickest service	Journey length (minutes)	Percentage change in journey time
Dublin Broadstone – Galway	07:40–11:30	230	07:00–10:35	215	-6.5
Galway – Clifden	-	-	10:50–12:42	112	
Dublin – Clifden	-	-	07:00–12:42	342	
Dublin – Westport	07:40–12:40	300	07:00–11:45	285	-5
Westport – Achill	-	-	10:50–12:42	112	
Dublin – Achill	-	-	07:00–13:10	370	
London Euston – Galway (Clifden)	20:20–11:30 <sup>+1</sup>	910	20:45–10:35 <sup>+1</sup> (12:42 <sup>+1</sup> )	830 (957)	-8.8
London Euston – Westport (Achill)	20:20–12:40 <sup>+1</sup>	980	20:45–11:45 <sup>+1</sup> (13:10 <sup>+1</sup> )	900 (985)	-8.2
Birmingham New Street – Galway (Clifden)	22:15–11:30 <sup>+1</sup>	795	22:15–10:35 <sup>+1</sup> (12:42 <sup>+1</sup> )	740 (867)	-6.9
Birmingham New Street – Westport (Achill)	22:15–12:40 <sup>+1</sup>	865	22:15–11:45 <sup>+1</sup> (13:10 <sup>+1</sup> )	810 (895)	-6.4
Manchester London Road – Galway (Clifden)	22:55–11:30 <sup>+1</sup>	755	22:45–10:35 <sup>+1</sup> (12:42 <sup>+1</sup> )	710 (837)	-6
Manchester London Road – Westport (Achill)	22:55–12:40 <sup>+1</sup>	825	22:45–11:45 <sup>+1</sup> (13:10 <sup>+1</sup> )	780 (865)	-5.5

Sources: David St John Thomas (ed.), *Bradshaw's August 1887 Railway Guide* (Whitstable, 1968), pp. 214, 390-1; David St John Thomas (ed.), *Bradshaw's April 1910 Railway Guide* (Whitstable, 1968), pp. 472, 911-13.

<sup>72</sup> The calculations take into account that Irish railways used Dublin Mean Time, which was 25-26 minutes behind Greenwich Time, and remained so until the Time (Ireland) Act (1916). For a short summary of Dublin Mean Time, see Ian R. Bartky, *One Time Fits All: The Campaign for Global Uniformity* (Stanford, 2007), pp. 134-5. Through carriages (from Kingston Pier) and trains (from North Wall) connected steamer services arriving in Dublin with the railway stations of the principal railway companies, in connection with the mail trains. *Bradshaw's* was recognised as 'the most complete' guide, but the ABC Railway Guide claimed 'to be easier of reference'. For these comments, see J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers by K. Baedeker* (5th edn, Leipzig, 1901), p. xxi. The difficulty of obtaining information from *Bradshaw's* was noted by M. V. Hughes, who suggested that people can be 'sharply divided into those who can understand Bradshaw, and those who cannot: and the latter are the vast majority'; see M. V. Hughes, *About England* (London, 1927), p. 354.

Table 1.2: *Journey times to Penzance in 1883 and 1924.*

Route	1883		1924		1883-1924
	Quickest service	Journey length (minutes)	Quickest service	Journey length (minutes)	Percentage change in journey time
Glasgow – Penzance	18:00–14:35 <sup>+1</sup>	1235	-	1080	-12.6
Manchester – Penzance	22:55–14:35 <sup>+1</sup>	900	-	720	-20
Birmingham – Penzance	02:45–14:35	710	-	530	-25.3
London Paddington – Penzance (GWR)	11:45–21:05	560	-	390	-30.4

Sources: C. S. Ward (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. North Devon and North Cornwall* (London, 1883), pp. 8, 10; C. S. Ward and M. J. B. Baddeley (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. South Devon and South Cornwall* (9th edn, London, 1924), p. 16.

### III – Tourism infrastructure

#### *Marketing the West*

The growing accessibility of the West laid the foundations for an increasingly sophisticated and interconnected tourism network in the early-twentieth century. In Britain and Ireland, the development of this tourism network depended primarily on ‘private efforts and on the free market’, as governments took ‘only small steps to facilitate private initiative’. For instance, when a group of hoteliers launched the ‘Come to Britain’ scheme in 1926, the Department of Overseas trade ‘supported’ the venture but did not provide financial assistance. In the same vein, the Board of Trade made a one-time payment of £5,000 to assist in the creation of the Travel Association, a meagre sum when compared with examples of government involvement in Europe. Around the same time as the ‘Come to Britain’ scheme was launched and raised just £1,945, the state-sponsored tourist programme in Germany spent £60,000 solely on publicity, while the Italian government supplied its tourist agency with £250,000.<sup>73</sup> As in Britain, tourism development in Ireland relied on the initiative of pioneering individuals such as Frederick W. Crossley, who formed the first Irish Tourist Association in 1895 along with several hotel and railway companies.<sup>74</sup> As Seán Lemass indicated at the 1938 annual general meeting of the (second) Irish Tourist Association, the state had ‘hitherto taken little more than a passive interest in tourist development’.<sup>75</sup>

In these circumstances, railway and steamer companies marketed their destinations in their own series of publications. GWR set up its own publicity department in 1886, through which the company could

<sup>73</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 144-5.

<sup>74</sup> Eric G. E. Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse, 2009), pp. xx-xxi. Also see D. J. Wilson, ‘The Tourist Movement in Ireland’, *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland* 11.81 (1901), pp. 56-63

<sup>75</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 60. Alan M. Kent, *The Literature of Cornwall: Continuity, Identity, Difference, 1000-2000* (Bristol, 2000), p. 153.



construct Cornwall in a way that both exploited and also influenced wider perceptions of the county.<sup>76</sup> Through posters which used the visual images of the Newlyn School art colony and publications which drew on the folklore collections of William Bottrell and Robert Hunt, Cornwall was advertised as ‘an exotic, sunny, and warm part of England which resembled the Mediterranean while being located conveniently close to home’.<sup>77</sup> Famously, in 1903 the GWR advertised the region as ‘The Cornish Riviera’ in the first edition of their publication by the same name, and two years later declared that the title ‘has almost achieved the distinction of becoming a household word’.<sup>78</sup> To reinforce the appellation, the GWR unveiled a new express train in 1904 called the ‘Cornish Riviera’, which took passengers from London Paddington to Penzance.<sup>79</sup> The company was pleased that ‘many thousands of travellers visited Cornwall’ during the winter of 1903-4 and that ‘a large proportion of them returned in 1904-5’. Having quickly sold approximately 250,000 copies of the first edition of *The Cornish Riviera*, GWR claimed that the 1905 edition was ‘urgently asked for’ by the travelling public, and was confident that a continued rise in the number of visits ‘may confidently be expected’ of the 1905-6 season.<sup>80</sup>

Sidney Heath explained the importance of marketing the West in his book *The Cornish Riviera* (1911), attributing Newquay’s development from ‘a very small and not very well known little place’ to ‘the great centre of attraction on the north coast’ to the GWR, who ‘gave it four trains a day from London, advertised its charms in the press, and depicted them in glowing colours on innumerable posters’.<sup>81</sup> By 1914, the company confirmed that the term ‘Cornish Riviera’ was ‘unknown and unthought of in 1904’, but is now ‘a household word with the great travelling public, both in England and America’.<sup>82</sup> J. Harris Stone used the term in his topographical book about Cornwall, describing the region as *England’s Riviera* (1912). The marketing drive continued, and the second and third editions of the GWR publication ‘enjoyed similar popularity’ to the first, being ‘entirely exhausted’ by 1914.<sup>83</sup>

Buoyed by the self-proclaimed success of their marketing of Cornwall, in 1906 GWR ‘once more... proposes to assume the rôle of pioneer’, and applied the same technique to ‘a certain portion of North Wales and the adjoining borderlands, formerly known as “The Marches”’. The company’s suggestion was that this area ‘be regarded in the light of a British Tyrol’, and claimed that the region was ‘not a whit less salubrious, invigorating, beautiful or romantic than those bracing uplands of Austria and Switzerland which have heretofore alone borne the name’.<sup>84</sup> In particular, the ‘tree-clad mountains, deep rivers, rushing torrents, limpid lakes, sacred fountains and verdant valleys’ combined to give North Wales ‘all the salient and striking characteristics of the Continental Tyrol’.<sup>85</sup>

There were some critical responses to this sort of commodification, and Findlay Muirhead quipped that the GWR’s description of Cornwall as the ‘Riviera’ was done ‘somewhat ambitiously’.<sup>86</sup> A more direct voice of dissent was that of Arthur Quiller-Couch, who hoped that the visitor to Cornwall ‘will clear his expectation of all misleading promises held out by advertisements’, and declared that ‘Cornwall is NOT

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<sup>76</sup> John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2000), p. 76. Also see R. Burdett Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of GWR Publicity* (Newton Abbott, 1970), especially chapter one.

<sup>77</sup> Trower, ‘On the Cliff Edge of England’, p. 201.

<sup>78</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 5.

<sup>79</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 33.

<sup>80</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), pp. 5-6.

<sup>81</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>82</sup> Great Western Railway, *The Cornish Riviera* (4th edn, London, 1914), p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), p. v. For a more general example of this sort of comparison, see Marks, *Gallant Little Wales*, pp. vii-viii for Welsh mountains as the ‘British Alps’. Elsewhere, Adams hinted that the Pass of Llanberis has been referred to as the ‘Chamonix of Wales’; see Adams, *Photographing in Old England*, p. 57.

<sup>85</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), pp. vi-vii.

<sup>86</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 183.

a “Riviera”... how could it be, with three of its four sides exposed to the stormy Atlantic?<sup>87</sup> The historian A. K. Hamilton Jenkin also argued that ‘the essential attributes of Cornwall are in truth the reverse of tropical luxuriance’,<sup>88</sup> and that the coastline remained ‘just as stern and rugged, its climate not appreciably changed though now being advertised as Britain’s Riviera’.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, such aggressive marketing campaigns seemed to resonate with the wider public, who according to *The Times* ‘has given the Great Western Railway the unofficial sobriquet of the “Holiday Line”’ – a title which the company had in fact bestowed upon itself in the 1914 edition of *The Cornish Riviera*.<sup>90</sup>

The monarchy was an effective marketing tool for travel companies and guidebook publishers, who encouraged tourists to follow in the footsteps of royalty on their travels. Companies such as David MacBrayne became more direct over time in their marketing of the western Highlands and islands. Earlier in the period, MacBrayne’s guidebooks went by the title *Summer Tours in Scotland by David MacBrayne’s Royal Mail Steamers*, or a variation on this general theme.<sup>91</sup> Inside these guides there was a more detailed title page, which described the journey from Glasgow to the Highlands as the ‘Royal Route’. The guide of 1903 explained that the name ‘Royal Route’ had existed ‘ever since her late Majesty Queen Victoria traversed it’ in 1847. Victoria had ‘thrice visited the Highlands’ and ‘twice sailed on the Firm’s Steamers’.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, in 1902 ‘their Majesties King Edward and Queen Alexandra cruised through the Highlands in the Royal Yacht, and visited most of the scenes of interest on the Royal Route’.<sup>93</sup> In West Connacht, the Midland Great Western Railway Company sought to capitalise on Edward VII’s visit to Galway by requesting royal patronage of their hotel in Recess, as well as for permission to advertise their Connemara line as ‘The Royal Connemara Route’. These requests were, however, denied. Moreover, using the rhetoric of royalism in this way was highly contentious in Ireland, and after 1922 there were attempts to depoliticise the way in which Ireland was represented in tourist literature.<sup>94</sup>

In their texts, travel companies drew on a range of images and associations in order to market their destinations in an increasingly commercial tourism industry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. By the inter-war period MacBrayne’s made it clear on the front cover of their guides that their steamers indeed plied along the ‘Royal Route’, and had somewhat rebranded their journey by adding the phrase ‘the Isles of Youth’. This designation was explained in an introductory section written by Donald R. MacLaren, who attempted to encourage tourists to visit the Hebrides by playing on the associations between the islands and the legends of Oisín, who travelled to *Tír na nÓg* – the Land of Youth. MacLaren attempted to seduce his readers by writing that ‘you are going to travel in a younger world’ of ‘inns and glens where (you will tell me) you would like to stay forever. I will know then that the years are falling from you’.<sup>95</sup> Additional associations were suggested by steamer names, which included the Columba and the Iona, the Clansman, the Claymore, the Fusilier, the Grenadier, and the Cavalier, as well as the

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<sup>87</sup> Arthur Quiller-Couch, ‘Introduction to Cornish Section’, in *Burrow’s Guide to Devon and Cornwall* (Cheltenham, 1921), p. 105.

<sup>88</sup> A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, *Cornwall and Its People* (London, 1948), p. ix.

<sup>89</sup> A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, *Cornwall and the Cornish* (1933), reprinted in Jenkin, *Cornwall and Its People*, p. 124.

<sup>90</sup> ‘In the West Country’, *The Times*, 31 August 1935, p. 33; Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1914), p. 5.

<sup>91</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1881), p. 5; David MacBrayne, *Official Guide. Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow to the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1889), p. 1; David MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow to the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1893); MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903).

<sup>92</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), n.p., see page after contents.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p., see page after contents.

<sup>94</sup> Kevin J. James, ‘Imprinting the Crown on Irish Holiday-Ground: Marking and Marketing the Duke of York Route 1897’, in Phil Long and Nicola J. Palmer (eds), *Royal Tourism: Excursions Around Monarchy* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 64, 74; Boyd, ‘Tourism and Political Change in Ireland’, p. 156.

<sup>95</sup> MacBrayne, *Royal Route* (1938), front cover and pp. 2-3.

Mountaineer, the Gael, and the Fingal.<sup>96</sup> The message was clear: this was a voyage of adventure into mountainous terrain, a Gaelic periphery that was steeped in the mythology of Oisín, with historical associations of Christian conversion, clan feuds, the Civil Wars, and the Jacobite rebellions.

In the same way, travel texts to Cornwall and the Scilly Isles suggested associational values to their readerships with titles such as *Lyonesse: A Handbook for the Isles of Scilly* (1900), *The Cornish Riviera* (1905), *Holiday Haunts in England and Wales* (1913), and *Legend Land* (1922).<sup>97</sup> There was a hotel in the Scilly Isles which also bore the name 'Lyonesse', and 'King Arthur's Castle' hotel was located at Tintagel, while allusions to the surrounding landscape were made in the names of the 'Headland' and 'Atlantic' hotels in Newquay.<sup>98</sup> Great Western Railway locomotives of the 3300 Bulldog Class (built 1898-1906) were called Sir Lancelot, Tintagel, Armored, Avalon, Camelot, Lyonesse, and Pendragon, as well as the famed Cornish Riviera Express.<sup>99</sup> To travel to Cornwall was to see the seaside resorts of the Riviera, but it was also to be haunted by the remains of prehistorical cromlechs and stone circles, to suspend disbelief at tales of ghost ships, to look from cliff edges over the wild Atlantic, and above all to indulge in Arthurian myth.

In North West Wales, travel texts promoted the village of Beddgelert by retelling the famous story of the same name. Quoting William Robert Spencer's poem, *Burrow's North Wales* (1922) described how 'The faithful hound the wolf had slain, to save Llewelyn's heir', before admitting that 'there was never any such incident', and the grave of Gelert visited by tourists each year 'was built up in the adjoining meadow by an enterprising innkeeper'.<sup>100</sup> 'Most tourists' believed the legend, and 'generally visit the piece of ground which is called Beddgelert... the grave of Gelert'.<sup>101</sup> Associational values were also prompted by the names of Snowdon Mountain Railway locomotives, which included Snowdon, Moel Siabod, Padarn, Wyddfa, and Eyri. These names reflected the environment of mountains and lakes, and provided a hint of the Welsh language which had been best preserved in this part of upland Wales, in the Land of Eagles.<sup>102</sup> In their commercial marketing, companies connected to the tourism industry attempted to foreground and shape the experiences of the tourist in the West.

The marketing of the West in these ways reflects the growing commercial concerns of the tourism industry. In Ireland, organisations such as the Hotel and Restaurant Proprietors' Association (established in 1894), the Irish Tourist Development Publishing Company, and both of the Irish Tourist Associations all recognised the importance of effective advertising to assist the development of the fledgling industry.<sup>103</sup> Systematic travel texts usually contained significant advertisement sections at the back of the book, which assisted publishers with the considerable cost of producing guides,<sup>104</sup> although *Pratt's Road*

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<sup>96</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1881), p. 74; David MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland, Glasgow and the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1903), p. 32.

<sup>97</sup> J. C. Tonkin and Prescott Row, *Lyonesse: A Handbook for the Isles of Scilly* (2nd edn, London, 1900); Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905); Great Western Railway, *Holiday Haunts*; G. Basil Barnham, *Legend Land* (London, 1922).

<sup>98</sup> A. R. Hope Moncrieff, *Black's Guide to Cornwall* (22nd edn, London, 1919), p. 176; C. A. Dawson Scott, *Nooks and Corners of Cornwall* (London, 1911), p. xvii.

<sup>99</sup> *Falmouth and South Cornwall* (1909), p. x. For a full list, see *The Great Western Archive* [http://www.greatwestern.org.uk/m\\_in\\_440\\_bulldog1.htm](http://www.greatwestern.org.uk/m_in_440_bulldog1.htm) [3 June 2016].

<sup>100</sup> Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, p. 49. For an earlier example, see Rev. W. J. Loftie, *Views in North Wales, from Original Drawings by T. L. Rowbotham* (New York, 1875), pp. 103-7.

<sup>101</sup> London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), p. 123. The invention of this particular tradition is also discussed in Prys Morgan, 'From Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 86-7.

<sup>102</sup> For a list of locomotive names, see *Snowdon Mountain Railway* <https://snowdonrailway.co.uk/history/> [3 June 2019].

<sup>103</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 20-5, 40.

<sup>104</sup> Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 22.

*Atlas of England and Wales for Motorists* (1905) advertised ‘Pratt’s Perfection Motor Spirit’, which was printed at the bottom of every page.<sup>105</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s it was more common for foreign locations to be advertised. For instance, in *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879) the ‘Handbook Advertiser’ insert for the 1881-1882 season consisted of 72 pages of ‘miscellaneous’ advertisements. There were sections dedicated to railways, steamboats, and hotels for destinations throughout Europe.<sup>106</sup> Over time the advertisement sections became more specific in that British and Irish locations commanded an increasing number of pages, and by the early-twentieth century, guides to Ireland advertised Connemara’s hotels to a greater extent.<sup>107</sup> In an attempt to promote tourism in Ireland, Crossley’s *Concise Guide to Ireland* (1903) was a ‘ground breaking publication’ which advertised over 100 hotels and restaurants in the country.<sup>108</sup>

The trend towards greater geographical specificity continued into the inter-war period. *Ward and Lock’s North Wales Northern* (1925) began with 16 pages of general advertisements, including Prudential insurance, Bartholomew’s maps, and Ever-Ready electric lamps and batteries. This was followed by a 20-page advertiser section after the title page of the book, which focussed on hotels, restaurants, motor garages, steamer trips, and railway excursions relating to the North Wales region. At the end of the book, there was an 80-page advertiser predominantly dedicated to steamers, railways, and hotels in England, Scotland, and Wales.<sup>109</sup>

This scale of advertising was deemed excessive by the likes of Findlay Muirhead, who in 1927 assured his readers that ‘advertisements of every kind are rigorously excluded from this and every other volume of the Blue Guides series’.<sup>110</sup> While hoteliers and railway companies had important commercial incentives to advertise in guidebooks and contribute financially to the tourist industry in general, some companies did so out of a sense of ‘patriotic obligation’, such as Arthur Guinness and Sons, which paid £200 to the Irish Tourism Association.<sup>111</sup> The advertisements in guidebooks show the important role played by various commercial interests, which combined with eye-catching epithets such as the ‘Cornish Riviera’ and the ‘Isles of Youth’ in order to market the West to a wider audience.

### *Thickening the tourism network*

As the tourism network expanded it also thickened, as companies consolidated and extended the connections between services that were first established by pioneering individuals in the mid-nineteenth century. Due to the inadequate links between different types of travel services, individuals such as Henry Gaze, John Frame, Thomas Cook, and his son John Mason Cook organised businesses dedicated to arranging travel. Cook began by organising temperance trips, but targeted middle class travellers in 1845, when he added trips to Caernarfon Castle and Mount Snowdon to a Liverpool-bound journey.<sup>112</sup> In 1846, Thomas Cook started to provide tourist services to Scotland. He recalled that ‘it was in Scotland that I first began to combine tickets for railways, steamboats, and other conveyances under one system’.<sup>113</sup> By

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<sup>105</sup> *Pratt’s Road Atlas of England and Wales for Motorists* (London, 1905), full-page advert on p. 6.

<sup>106</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), see advertiser at back of book, pp. 1-72.

<sup>107</sup> For a list of hotels in Galway, see Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. 205.

<sup>108</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 30.

<sup>109</sup> *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), pp. i-xvi, 1-20, advertiser 1-80. For a pre-1914 example of the varied contents of advertisement sections, see *Falmouth and South Cornwall* (1909), advertiser pp. 1-16, 17-39, 41-82.

<sup>110</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. vi.

<sup>111</sup> Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, p. 22.

<sup>112</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 62-3.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Simmons, ‘Railways, Hotels, and Tourism’, p. 209.

1862, Cook's business was flourishing, but the Scottish railway companies began to organise their own tours, and stopped cooperating with Cook.<sup>114</sup> It was important for companies to organise their services in relation to one another, which made travelling long distances much easier and thus encouraged more tourist traffic, to the mutual benefit of steamer and railway companies.<sup>115</sup>

This broader trend is evident in the increasing sophistication of the travel network between the Isle of Skye and major cities in Scotland and England. By 1881, railway companies such as the London and North Western, Caledonian, Midland, Glasgow and South Western, Great Northern, North Eastern, North British, Great Western, Great North of Scotland, and Highland Railway companies all allowed their customers to book tickets 'to Oban and the West Highlands, by David MacBrayne's Royal Mail steamers'.<sup>116</sup> The steamers departed at 0900 daily during the tourist season (between May and October), 'in connection with Express Trains from London and the South, Edinburgh, and Glasgow'.<sup>117</sup> By 1903, these connections remained intact and new ones had been added, as a result of the extended railway lines described above. By this time, MacBrayne's steamers also operated in conjunction with the North British Railway Company and the Highland Railway Company, offering corresponding services which sailed from Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh. The North British Railway Company ran express trains to Mallaig in connection with the daily June MacBrayne's steamer departing at 1155, which provided 'greatly increased facilities to tourists and others visiting the Western and Northern Highlands by a most attractive route'.<sup>118</sup> The Highland Railway express train to Kyle of Lochalsh enabled the traveller to board the same steamer on its way from Mallaig to Skye, which departed Kyle of Lochalsh at 1420 and arrived at Portree later that afternoon.<sup>119</sup>

Similarly, trains which departed London for Holyhead ran in connection with steamer services to Dublin, and upon their arrival travellers found another train 'waiting alongside the landing-stage'.<sup>120</sup> This was part of the wider development of European transport networks from 1850, as companies such as South Eastern Railway made agreements with the Boulogne and Amiens Railway and the Compaigne du Nord, enabling travellers to purchase through tickets for direct journeys from London to Paris, Brussels, and Cologne.<sup>121</sup>

### *Tourist routes and tourist tickets*

The connections between travel providers created the opportunity to offer a widening range of tour routes and tour tickets. This was also necessary because tourists were no longer exclusively the 'well-heeled British and American' middle and upper classes. With the introduction of one week's paid holiday, workers from industrial towns created the demand for combination tickets, which purchased train and steamer travel, accommodation, and excursions in advance, enabling tourists to accurately calculate the cost of the holiday in advance.<sup>122</sup>

At the beginning of the period, travel texts typically gave their own suggestions to readers about which places to visit, while providing one or two examples of itineraries from which the reader could gain

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<sup>114</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 66.

<sup>115</sup> Tissot, 'Guidebooks, Railways, Travel Agencies', pp. 28-9.

<sup>116</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1881), p. 91.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p., see advertisement facing contents page.

<sup>118</sup> 'Time Table and Tourist Programme', in MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), pp. 7, 28, 40.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 28, 40-1.

<sup>120</sup> *Illustrated Official Guide to the Lakes of Killarney, Glengariff and the South-West of Ireland* (3rd edn, London, 1900), pp. 1-2.

<sup>121</sup> Tissot, 'Guidebooks, Railways, Travel Agencies', p. 29.

<sup>122</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 31-2.

inspiration.<sup>123</sup> In the more remote areas of the West, tourists were expected to play a greater role in organising their own trips. In West Connacht, one of the recommended boat trips left Galway for the Aran Islands, despite there being no official public service to ply the route at the beginning of the period. Travel texts suggested that tourists may take ‘passage in the fishing boats that visit Galway’ from the islands, or alternatively ‘a boat may be hired for a half-sovereign at Roundstone, by which a party may reach the isles, view the scenery and archaeological remains, and return next morning’.<sup>124</sup>

In the early-twentieth century there was an upsurge in organised tours, as tourist routes were formalised and itineraries well-established. In West Connacht, it was no longer required to hire a private boat or seek passage with the fishermen, as the journey from Galway to the Aran Islands was serviced by the SS. ‘Dun Aengus’ of the Galway Steamboat Company, which sailed on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays ‘all the year round’.<sup>125</sup> In 1912, this service cost 4s 6d for a return ticket, and took three hours to reach the islands, after which three hours were allowed on the islands before the return service, which allowed the trip to be completed as a day excursion.<sup>126</sup> The other popular steamer route from Galway was plied by the Lough Corrib Steamboat Company, to Cong and back, and extra ‘day-excursion’ services were provided in summer for the convenience of tourists.<sup>127</sup> In North West Wales, the ‘Loop Tour Round Snowdon’ ran in connection with LNWR services, so that the tourist who boarded the 0600 service from Chester would arrive in Caernarfon at 0955, in time to take the coach tour at 1015. Appropriately, the coach tour arrived back in Caernarfon at 1800, in time for the traveller to catch the 1830 train back to Chester.<sup>128</sup>

Alongside the emergence of organised, advertised tours, there was also an increasing flexibility in both the range of tours on offer, and the ways in which they were adjustable to the needs or desires of the individual traveller. In the 1920s and 1930s, the ‘Loop Tour Round Snowdon’ could be completed exclusively by train as well as by coach, and an alternative to the ‘coastwise’ approach was made possible in 1922 ‘by the formation of the Welsh Highland Railway, a long-cherished scheme whereby through trains are run from Portmadoc viâ Beddgelert to Carnarvon’.<sup>129</sup> *Burrow’s North Wales* (1922) suggested a ‘Circular Tour by Rail from Llandudno’, which utilised the extension of the railway from Conwy through Betws-y-Coed (the previous terminus) to Blaenau Ffestiniog, which then joined the line running eastwards from Porthmadog towards Criccieth and Pwllheli.<sup>130</sup> In general, there were more types of train ticket on offer by this time, such as ‘weekly or fortnightly contract tickets in North Wales’, which enabled the purchaser ‘to visit the principal places of interest and charming scenery’ in an area which ‘extends from Prestatyn to Holyhead, and includes Ruthin, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Carnarvon, Llandudno, Bethesda, Llanberis, Bettws-y-Coed, and all intermediate stations’.<sup>131</sup>

Similarly, MacBrayne’s offered tickets which combined rail, coach, and steamer travel around circular routes, which began and ended in Glasgow. Skye was an important stopping-point on several of these cruise tours as one of the principal attractions in the Western Highlands, and became straightforwardly accessible for those tourists who wanted the ease of purchasing a pre-planned route. MacBrayne’s

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<sup>123</sup> For some early examples, see Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), pp. xvii-xviii; *Murray’s Scotland* (1883), introduction, pp. 40-7; and Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), p. xxii.

<sup>124</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 146.

<sup>125</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), pink pages, p. v; Gordon, *Wanderings of a Naturalist*, p. 181.

<sup>126</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, pink pages, p. v.

<sup>127</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 146; Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, pink pages, p. v. The running of this service could, however, be disrupted when the steamer’s captain left in order to attend the Galway races. For example, see Robert Lynd, *Rambles in Ireland* (London, 1912), pp. 61-3.

<sup>128</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1909), p. 141

<sup>129</sup> *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), p. x.

<sup>130</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 28.

<sup>131</sup> London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), p. 4.

organised these tours in coordination with the railway companies, so that one could complete the ‘Glasgow to Skye and Gairloch Tour’ with MacBrayne’s steamers and either Caledonian Railway or North British Railway trains. Both tours included steamer services to Portree, and passed through Inverness by rail on the journey back to Glasgow, but between these major calling points they varied both routes and prices.<sup>132</sup> Many shorter circular tours were also offered, such as the condensed, three-day version of the ‘Grand Circular Tour’ route, which began and ended in Oban instead of Glasgow.<sup>133</sup> Likewise, the ‘Ullapool Short Circle’ route left Oban and stopped at Portree on Skye, as well as Ullapool and Inverness, before returning to Oban via the Caledonian Canal.<sup>134</sup> The increasing sophistication of the tour and ticket system meant more choice for tourists, who could create their own loops and day excursions with increasing flexibility.

### *Affordability*

In addition to the expanding range of tours, tickets, and travel services, such amenities also became increasingly within reach for a larger section of the population. Excursions – short day or weekend package trips aimed at the working classes – quickly followed the appearance of the railways, while longer and more expensive ‘tours’ were generally reserved for the middle classes, who could afford them.<sup>135</sup> In particular, working-class tourism grew at the seaside after the Bank Holiday Act of 1870.<sup>136</sup> In 1906, the Caledonian Railway recognised that ‘the practice of taking a prolonged holiday annually and a short vacation at frequent intervals is growing enormously in this country’.<sup>137</sup>

For much of the period, employers were left to offer compensated holidays to their workers at their own discretion, and were not compelled by holiday legislation.<sup>138</sup> In the late-nineteenth century, belief was growing among employers that the incentive of holidays would boost the productivity of their workers, and after the First World War there was the added notion that time away from work was a ‘highly valued entitlement’ which fulfilled a social function and fostered ‘the idea of democratic civilisation’, while also promoting ‘patriotism and a sense of national identity’ as tourists discovered the beauties of their own country.<sup>139</sup> Employers hoped holidays would increase worker discipline, and periods of annual leave could be scheduled during seasonal periods of low demand, ensuring that holidays did not cost the company revenue.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> ‘Time Table and Tourist Programme for June’, in MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), pp. 19-20.

<sup>133</sup> This tour was also advertised in Alexander Mailer Faichney, *Mackay’s Complete Tourists’ Guide to Oban and Vicinity* (Glasgow, 1897), pp. 123-5.

<sup>134</sup> ‘Time Table and Tourist Programme’, in MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), p. 22.

<sup>135</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 60; Simmons, ‘Railways, Hotels, and Tourism’, pp. 209-10.

<sup>136</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 70.

<sup>137</sup> Caledonian Railway, *Caledonian Railway. Official Tourist Guide. The West Coast Royal Mail Route between Scotland and England* (Glasgow, 1906), p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 144.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 143-4.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 143-4.

Table 1.3: *Selected ticket prices.*

Ticket	Year									Change in price
	1881	1883	1889	1903	1906	1909	1920	1924	1938	
Paddington – Falmouth, GWR first class (return)	-	-	-	-	-	48s 3d	48s 3d	-	-	0
Penzance – Land’s End omnibus/motorbus (return)	-	3s 6d	-	-	-	-	-	3s	-	-6d
Penzance – Scilly Isles steamer (return)	-	10s 6d	-	-	-	-	-	10s	-	-6d
London – Harlech tourist ticket (first class)	-	-	70s 9d	-	70s 3d	-	-	-	-	-6d
London – Harlech tourist ticket (second class)	-	-	51s 6	-	40s	-	-	-	-	-11s 6d
London – Harlech tourist ticket (third class)	-	-	34s	-	34s	-	-	-	-	0
Glasgow – Portree steamer, return ticket (steerage)	25s 6d	-	-	25s 6d	-	-	-	-	39s 9d	14s 3d
Glasgow – Portree steamer, return ticket (cabin)	48s	-	-	45s	-	-	-	-	48s 5d	5d
Glasgow to Skye tourist tickets (cabin and first class)	82-89s	-	-	76-84s	-	-	-	-	99s 2d	10s 2d – 17s 2d

Sources: *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Falmouth, the Lizard, Truro, Fowey, and South Cornwall* (4th edn, London, 1909), p. xi; Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: England* (London, 1920), p. 178; C. S. Ward, (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. North Devon and North Cornwall* (London, 1883), pp. 13, 16; C. S. Ward and M. J. B. Baddeley (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. South Devon and South Cornwall* (9th edn, London, 1924), pp. 284-301; M. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. North Wales (Part II)* (2nd edn, London, 1887), yellow booklet, p. 1; Great Western Railway, *North Wales. The British Tyrol* (London, 1906), p. 108; David MacBrayne, *Official Guide. Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow to the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1881), pp. 1, 3; David MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland. Glasgow and the Highlands* (Glasgow, 1903), pp. 7, 19-20; David MacBrayne, *The Royal Route. The Isles of Youth. See this Scotland First* (Glasgow, 1938), pp. 42, 62.



By 1935, 1.5 million workers enjoyed paid holiday in Britain, a number which rose to 7.75 million by March 1938, which represented around 40 percent of the workforce, and some estimates put this figure as high as 60 percent.<sup>141</sup> Most Irish workers were unable to afford holidays for much of the period, and Ireland's tourism industry heavily relied on British visitors. Nevertheless, Éamon de Valera recommended the establishment of holiday savings clubs by the Irish Tourist Association, with the aim of making holidays affordable for Irish people.<sup>142</sup> The Conditions of Employment Act provided one week's paid holiday for all Irish workers, and the Irish Tourist Association recommended that the tourist season be extended due to overcrowding in many Irish resorts in the summer of 1937.<sup>143</sup> By 1938, it was estimated that 600,000 workers had the right to an annual holiday with pay.<sup>144</sup> This general trend of increasing affordability over the period 1880-1940 was, however, subject to more immediate fluctuation, such as the economic consequences of the Great Depression, particularly on the working classes, for tourism in the 1930s.<sup>145</sup>

Alongside new opportunities for leisure travel, the popularisation of tourism was also advanced by the prices of train, steamer, coach, and tourist tickets, which in terms of nominal value more or less remained static (see Table 1.3). This was accompanied by characteristically enthusiastic rhetoric in travel texts such as *Black's Ireland* (1906), which declared that the Irish railway companies are 'all hurrying their expresses and lowering their fares', to the extent that railway and steamer fares were 'remarkable' for their 'cheapness', and offered 'the English holiday-seeker of slender means' the 'most attractive facilities for travelling' to be found in Western Europe.<sup>146</sup> Notwithstanding the intense rivalry between GWR and SWR, in 1884 the two companies agreed on fares and rates for all classes of traffic between stations they both shared, which remained in place until 1910.<sup>147</sup>

### *Tourist accommodation*

The accommodation of the developing tourism industry was described using the terms 'hotel' and 'inn', sometimes interchangeably, but the nature of lodgings within these two categories varied. The well-known European and American 'Grand Hotels' signified 'urban modernity' and the 'connoisseurship' of the traveller, while less opulent commercial and family hotels typically provided accommodation in the tourist centres of the British-Irish Isles.<sup>148</sup> North West Wales and Cornwall were well supplied with hotels and there was 'rarely any difficulty in securing suitable accommodation', but the tourist was warned to book rooms well in advance during the popular months of July, August, and September.<sup>149</sup> While the

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144. Christopher Kopper estimated that by 1938 more than 60 percent of British employees enjoyed two weeks of paid holidays; see Christopher Kopper, 'Popular tourism in Western Europe and the US in the twentieth century: a tale of different trajectories', *European Review of History* 20.5 (2013), p. 779.

<sup>142</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>145</sup> Durie has explored this and mentions the effects on tourism in the Highlands; see Alastair J. Durie, 'No Holiday This Year? The Depression of the 1930s and Tourism in Scotland', *Journal of Tourism History* 2.2 (2010), pp. 67-82. For the Highlands, see p. 71.

<sup>146</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. xv.

<sup>147</sup> Simmons, 'South Western v. Great Western', pp. 26-7. For an example of similar pricing, in 1909 the first class (single) GWR service from London Paddington to Falmouth cost 48s 3d, whereas a combined ticket, which followed the LSWR line from London Waterloo to Plymouth and then switched to the GWR line to Falmouth, cost 48s 4d; see *Falmouth and South Cornwall* (1909), pp. x-xi.

<sup>148</sup> Kevin J. James, 'The Irishness of the Irish Inn: Narratives of Travel Accommodation in Ireland from Union to Home Rule', *Studies in Travel Writing* 17.1 (2013), p. 25.

<sup>149</sup> For accommodation in Cornwall, see Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. xiii. For accommodation in North Wales, and the quotation, see *North Wales (Northern)* (1909), pp. 23-4. For the need to book ahead during the tourist season,

expansion of tourist accommodation had, according to the *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1896), ruined many places in northern Devon, Cornish destinations such as Bude, Boscastle, and Tintagel faced no such danger ‘because it is the cliff-line that is the chief *raison d’être* of these places as tourist rendezvous’.<sup>150</sup>

Advertisements for hotels in Ireland invariably claimed that service was excellent, though it was generally admitted that Irish hotels were ‘inferior to those of England, Scotland, or the Continent’.<sup>151</sup> The call for the development of hotels in Ireland became part of the broader unionist aim to reconcile Britain and Ireland in the aftermath of the second Home Rule Bill’s defeat in 1893.<sup>152</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1906) claimed that, if ‘Commercial’ Ireland had the ambition to ‘become the holiday field of a large section of the British public’, the ‘first consideration in this direction must be the improvement in the accommodation of its Hotels and Lodgings for tourists’.<sup>153</sup> However, the criticism remained that ‘a considerable proportion’ of these hotels were ‘intended for the wealthier classes’, and *Black’s Ireland* (1906) called for more facilities for ‘the less luxurious section of the middle classes’.<sup>154</sup>

Inns also provided lodgings, and were considered more homely, less sophisticated, reasonably priced, and often provided additional services.<sup>155</sup> There were some areas along the Cornish coast where ‘but primitive sleeping accommodation’ could be obtained, and in North Wales, the ‘smaller and more out-of-the-way inns’ were noted for their charges, which were estimated at 30 percent less than the hotel tariffs in the popular tourist centres.<sup>156</sup> In areas such as Cornwall, the general development towards an increase in accommodation ‘tended to lower prices’, and at the more popular destinations provision was made ‘for “inclusive terms” at popular prices’.<sup>157</sup> In 1924, it was claimed that the ‘passing traveller will not often have difficulty in obtaining quarters to suit his taste and his purse’.<sup>158</sup>

Modern tourism is characterised by commercial hotels and hostels, but the landowners of the West also became hoteliers. This was especially the case in Ireland, where landed families were targeted by the Land League.<sup>159</sup> The Renvyle Hotel, established and managed by Caroline Blake in the family home, achieved particular notoriety.<sup>160</sup> The establishment of the hotel was a ‘daring’ strategy to counteract the boycotting tactics of the Land League, which was discussed in Parliament in 1881.<sup>161</sup> Blake used contributions made to the Blake Fund Committee, with Arthur Balfour among the subscribers.<sup>162</sup> Issues of land ownership in the West also surfaced in relation to accommodation which was designed for ‘sporting tenants who occupy the fishing lodges or larger residences’.<sup>163</sup> The ‘beautiful cottage’ on Inishambo Island (Lough

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see *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), pp. xxix; and Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 11.

<sup>150</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1896), pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>151</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), introduction, p. 13.

<sup>152</sup> James, ‘Irish Inn’, p. 23.

<sup>153</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. xiv. For praise of Irish hotels, see F. W. Crossley, ‘Does Ireland want Tourists? A Reply to Mr McCraith’s Article in the *New Ireland Review*, 1908’, *New Ireland Review* 30.3 (1908), p. 186.

<sup>154</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. xiv.

<sup>155</sup> James, ‘Irish Inn’, p. 25. Kevin J. James and E. Tigchelaar, ‘Cultures of Recreation in Victorian Snowdonia: Travelling, Climbing and Inscribing at the Pen-Y-Gwryd Hotel’, *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 28.1 (2016), p. 92.

<sup>156</sup> For primitive Cornish accommodation, see Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. xiii. For out-of-the-way inns in North Wales, see Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), p. xix.

<sup>157</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1896), p. xvi.

<sup>158</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 11.

<sup>159</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 15.

<sup>160</sup> Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, p. 14.

<sup>161</sup> Several texts discussed Mrs Blake and the Renvyle House Hotel. For two examples, see Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, pp. 136-7; and E. D. Jordan (ed.), *Black’s Guide to Ireland* (23rd edn, London, 1900), p. 224. For the Parliamentary discussion of the boycotting of Mrs Blake, see *House of Commons Hansard Archives*, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1881/jun/20/evictions-ireland-renvyle-co-galway> [20 June 2019].

<sup>162</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 15. The hotel was later looted and burned by anti-treaty republicans in 1922.

<sup>163</sup> Stephen Gwynn, *A Holiday in Connemara* (New York, 1909), pp. 4-5.

Corrib) was inhabited by fishing parties in summer, while Leenaun was situated in ‘the solitudes of Connemara’, and there were many hostelrys in the area for those who wished to hunt and fish.<sup>164</sup> The proprietor of the Leenaun Hotel aimed ‘to tempt both fishermen and shooters’, and offered the tourist fishing rights in nearby streams and lochs, as well as ‘10,000 acres of shooting’ stocked with grouse, hares and snipe, while ‘on the bay’ there was good seal shooting to be had.<sup>165</sup> Some texts encouraged the development of hunting grounds for the purposes of tourism, and Shand suggested that Lord Ardilaun’s land near Cong was ‘magnificent ground for a first-class deer-forest’.<sup>166</sup> As late as 1920, *Black’s Scotland North* quoted Professor Geikie, who argued that many Highland regions ‘are best left in their wild condition’, and J. Cameron Lees, who saw potential in the wealth ‘poured into the country by sportsmen who rent its forests, grouse-moors, and rivers’.<sup>167</sup>

However, while many writers enjoyed the picturesque ‘solitude’ of vast moorlands and hill lands in which ‘cottages are few and far between’, such landscapes were also indicative of the evictions, clearances, and emigration which had taken place in the Highlands of Scotland and in Ireland.<sup>168</sup> Citing the Napier Commission (1883), Cumming noted that four townships on Skye had been cleared 13 years previously in order to ‘make room for the deer’.<sup>169</sup> Travelling south from Dunvegan, Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell saw one man fishing, and another shooting across ‘miles of moorland’, and noted that the area had been ‘cleared of its inhabitants’ for the sake of ‘a fortnight’s amusement’ for these two men ‘and perhaps half a dozen more like them’.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, the shooting grounds in the Glenelg district of Skye were created by clearances. The ‘thatched roofs were set on fire and the doors locked’ to prevent any of the crofters returning.<sup>171</sup> Deer-stalking continued to trouble the crofters even after clearances had been made, as crofters were forbidden from entering the ‘vast tracts of deer forest’ in which ‘none but sportsmen and game-keepers are allowed to go’.<sup>172</sup>

Such use of the land was contested, and the crofters’ agitation in Skye prevented the Glendale shootings from being used in 1882.<sup>173</sup> By the inter-war period, Quigley stated that the changing tastes of ‘that section of the population which made this type of activity profitable in the past’ meant that the age of the deer-forest was ‘probably past’.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, broader changes in ideas of landscape ownership saw a perceptible desire of the Forestry Commission (established in 1919) to ‘make the areas under its control accessible to the public’, marking a significant shift from the previous ‘excessive preoccupation with old shooting and hunting rights’.<sup>175</sup> In the case of hunting lodges and shooting grounds, the development of infrastructure for the tourist had a dark side which signified a legacy of hardship, famine, poverty, and eviction for some of the poorest inhabitants of the British-Irish Isles in this period.

The inter-war period was characterised by the popularisation of leisure travel through hostels, which increased in both number and status, as national cultures of outdoor activity developed in response to the condition of urban modernity. The Merseyside Youth Hostels Association (YHA) was established in

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<sup>164</sup> For Corrib, see Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, p. 279. For Leenaun, see Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>165</sup> Gray, *Tourist’s View of Ireland*, p. 29; Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>166</sup> For Cong, see Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>167</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), pp. 178-9.

<sup>168</sup> For Leenaun, see Shand, *Letters from the West of Ireland*, pp. 117-18.

<sup>169</sup> Cumming, *In the Hebrides*, p. 312.

<sup>170</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 159.

<sup>171</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, p. 210.

<sup>172</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. ix.

<sup>173</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, pp. 36-7. For a summary of the Land Question in Scotland, see Ewen A. Cameron, ‘Setting the Heather on Fire: The Land Question in Scotland, 1850-1914’, in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 109-25.

<sup>174</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>175</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, p. 6.

1929, which quickly became a national body, increasing its seven North Wales hostels for a few hundred members to 150 hostels for over 20,000 members by 1932.<sup>176</sup> Hostels facilitated the popularisation of previously elite nineteenth-century Romantic pastimes such as mountaineering, and a cluster of hostels were opened in the north-west Highlands of Scotland. Carn Dearg hostel, situated on Loch Gairloch, was Scotland's busiest in 1932 and 1933, while the rather basic hostel at Uig, on Skye, consisted of 'a shed covered by corrugated iron'. Additional hostels were located at the Kyle of Lochalsh and Ullapool.<sup>177</sup> In areas such as North West Wales, hotels were never too far from the mountains, and the Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel was advertised as 'In the Heart of Snowdonia', amidst the 'wildest and grandest scenery in Wales', and as the 'best centre for rock climbing and unrestricted mountain walks'.<sup>178</sup> A further challenge to the hotel industry came with the growth of motor travel (discussed below). Hotels had hitherto existed near tourist sites and along stagecoach routes and railway lines, or provided luxurious destinations where wealthy clients could enjoy their holidays. The automobile enabled drivers to travel outside these well-established tourist trails, which in turn freed hoteliers to build in more places.<sup>179</sup>

#### IV – Changing modes of transport

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the nature of the tourism infrastructure was transformed with the introduction and proliferation of new modes of transport such as the bicycle, motorcycle, motorcar, and motorbus.<sup>180</sup> Before the outbreak of the Second World War, even aeroplanes were emerging as a possible method of travel for a small number of tourists.<sup>181</sup> These technologies of travel followed a similar trajectory in that they were first the preserve of the elites, but quickly became more widespread due to new production techniques, and soon 'caught the popular zeitgeist, became a regular part of daily life, and an accelerant for mass tourism'.<sup>182</sup>

##### *Bicycles*

Bicycles became more popular in the late-nineteenth century. From 1886 the wheels were made of equal size, and the introduction of pneumatic tyres in 1890, as well as ball bearings and new frame shapes, made bicycles much more comfortable to ride.<sup>183</sup> In addition, the introduction of assembly-line manufacturing made bicycles more efficient to produce, which brought down prices significantly and made them affordable to a mass market.<sup>184</sup> Inexpensive bicycles enabled people from nearly all socio-economic groups to extend their geographical range, whether this meant living further from their place of employment, or getting out into the countryside on weekends. Cycling clubs organised regular group

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<sup>176</sup> John Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', in Frank Gloversmith (ed.), *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New View of the 1930s* (Brighton, 1980), p. 271.

<sup>177</sup> Hayden Lorimer, "'Happy Hostelling in the Highlands": Nationhood, citizenship and the inter-war youth movement', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 113.1 (1997), pp. 42-50.

<sup>178</sup> Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, p. xix.

<sup>179</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 125.

<sup>180</sup> These are the modes of transport with which this section will deal. There were, however, other modes of transport which some of the more adventurous travellers used. For instance, see Scott-James, *Englishman in Ireland*.

<sup>181</sup> For an early example of a tour of Ireland from the air, see Corkey, *Through the Emerald Isle with an Aeroplane*.

<sup>182</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 112. For the 'loose' application of the term 'mass tourism', see John K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict* (Clevedon, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 111; Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>184</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 112-13; Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 216. Paul Smethurst, 'A flâneur on wheels? Bicycle mobility and the sociological gaze in Edward Thomas's *In Pursuit of Spring*', *Studies in Travel Writing* 18.3 (2014), p. 250.

rides alongside longer excursions to sites of interest.<sup>185</sup> This was part of the broader emergence of the individualisation of travel. For the first time, personal mobility – independent of railway timetables and stations – was no longer restricted to those wealthy enough to be able to afford a horse and carriage.<sup>186</sup> Bicycles bridged gender as well as class, as both women and men took to cycling in this period. In short, bicycles ‘promised a degree of liberty and autonomy that was entirely unavailable previously’.<sup>187</sup> Despite being a vehicle of liberation for women, discussions of cycling were often inflected by gender. Thomas D. Murphy recommended the bicycle as ‘an excellent and expeditious method of getting over the country’, but added that it was ‘out of the question for an extended tour by a party which includes ladies’ due to the ‘amount of impedimenta which must be carried along’ and the ‘many long hills which are encountered on the English roads’.<sup>188</sup>

Travel texts began to recognise the growing popularity of cycling in the early-twentieth century by providing advice to tourists on two wheels. *Black’s Scotland North* (1920) contains a chapter written by C. L. Freeston, assistant editor of *Cyclists’ Touring Club Gazette* and author of *Cycling in the Alps*, who recommended the 100-mile Isle of Skye route as among ‘the best’ in Scotland, as the ‘frequently arduous nature of the journey’ was repaid by the ‘grandly rugged scenery’.<sup>189</sup> Given the topography of West Connacht, Skye, and North West Wales, cycling was often depicted as a laborious mode of transport made worthwhile by the scenery. As *Ward and Lock’s North Wales Northern* (1925) explained, ‘glancing at a map of North Wales, the resident of the flat country of the east and middle of England might very well suppose that here, at any rate, cycling was almost an impossibility’.<sup>190</sup> While there were some perceived advantages to travelling by bicycle – such as easily carrying the ‘machine’ on steamers, ferry-boats, and along moorland paths – it was recognised that in remoter districts the distances between inns, the ‘rutted state of the by-roads’, and the often ‘terrific strength which the wind attains at times’ made cycling more strenuous than motoring.<sup>191</sup> Cyclists in western Ireland, however, could make use of the prevailing south-west winds by cycling as much as possible from south to north, but care was needed ‘particularly in the west’ when approaching country carts, as ‘the horses are unaccustomed to cycles’.<sup>192</sup>

### *Motor travel*

It has been claimed that if the nineteenth century was characterised as the ‘age of the steam engine’, the twentieth century may be described as the ‘age of the internal combustion engine’, as the motorbus, motorcycle, and motorcar replaced the railway and the steamship as the dominant modes of transport.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 113.

<sup>186</sup> Cyclists also relied on trains and steamers to some extent, and were allowed to take their bicycles on board for an additional cost. For example, see *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Oban, Fort William, the Caledonian Canal, Iona, Staffa, and the Western Highlands* (4th edn, London, n.d. [1906?]), p. 141; and *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to Oban, Fort William, the Caledonian Canal, Iona, Staffa, and the Western Highlands* (8th edn, London, n.d. [1928?]), pp. 29-30.

<sup>187</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>188</sup> Thos. D. Murphy, *British Highways and Byways from a Motor Car* (Boston MA, 1908), pp. 4-5. Frank Trentmann has also warned against seeing new forms of transportation as liberating for all women; see Frank Trentmann, ‘Gentlemen and players: The leisure of British modernity’, *Contemporary British History* 7.3 (1993), p. 687.

<sup>189</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), p. 150.

<sup>190</sup> *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), p. 9.

<sup>191</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. xlvi; Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), p. 142.

<sup>192</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 12.

<sup>193</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 116.

While the growth of motor travel was indeed significant, it must also be remembered that in the period up to 1940 the majority of holidaymakers relied on public forms of transport.<sup>194</sup>

The development of the internal combustion engine was a process which took place throughout the nineteenth century, but between 1885 and 1895 the engineers Karl Benz and Émile Constant Levassor produced commercially viable cars, even if they were only available to the very wealthy.<sup>195</sup> From the early stages of development, motor vehicles were strictly monitored by legislation. The infamous Locomotive Act (1865) introduced the ‘red flag’ rule, which stipulated that motor vehicles must be ‘preceded by a person on foot carrying a red flag’. The Highways and Locomotives Act (1878) allowed local authorities to remove the red flag regulations, but there was little legislative change until the Locomotives on Highways Act (1896), which removed the red flag rule altogether, raised the speed limit to 12mph (which was subsequently raised to 20mph by the Motor Car Act, 1903), and has been described as the act which ‘ushered in the era of modern motoring’.<sup>196</sup> Enthusiasts created a strong lobby for motorcars in the early years of the twentieth century. In Britain, the Motor Car Club lobbied for the passage of the 1896 act, alongside Sir David Salomons’ Self-Propelled Traffic Association, supported by the new publication *Autocar*.<sup>197</sup> Other enthusiast groups appeared in France, America, Australia, South Africa, Rhodesia, and Denmark, as well as the Irish Automobile Club (1901), and R. J. Macredy’s introduction of the Automobile Association in 1905.<sup>198</sup>

In this earlier period of motor tourism, motorists faced the challenge of frequent breakdowns, and often had to be not just a traveller but also ‘a mechanic and possibly even a blacksmith’.<sup>199</sup> Specialist literature was produced to aid motorists, as the Royal Automobile Club supported the publication of Charles G. Harper’s *Motoring in Wales*, described as ‘replete with the most practical information, numerous excellent maps’, and ‘many illustrations’.<sup>200</sup> Publications aimed at English travellers warned that roadside garages and filling stations are ‘generally speaking less numerous’ in the other countries of the British-Irish Isles, and recommended motorists ‘see to petrol, oil, tyres, etc., before setting out from a town’.<sup>201</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1906) was rather optimistic when it claimed that ‘motor spirit can be had almost everywhere’.<sup>202</sup>

Despite some legislative changes, in Edwardian Britain and Ireland motoring remained an elite activity, as the motorcar remained expensive. In 1906 there were 23,000 cars on British roads, while there were 19,554 motor vehicles registered in Ireland by 1913.<sup>203</sup> In this period, methods of manufacture focussed on batch production, until Henry Ford’s British managing director, Percival Perry, persuaded Ford to set up a factory in 1911 at Trafford Park, which assembled parts shipped from the USA. By 1913, Ford UK was producing 7,310 cars, more than twice the output of the biggest British manufacturer. The basic Model T Ford cost £135, and made up 60 percent of the market share for cars valued under £200 in 1913. In the face of Ford’s challenge, British companies such as Sunbeam and Wolsley attempted to move towards ‘annual-model production plans’ and improved production and distribution methods. In 1913, Morris Motors (previously a cycle retailer) cut production costs and introduced the ‘Oxford’, which

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<sup>194</sup> Kopper, ‘Popular tourism in Western Europe’, p. 780. For the growth of visitor numbers in Cornwall alongside increasing motorcar ownership between the 1950s and 1970s, see Ireland, ‘Land’s End, Cornwall, England’, p. 63.

<sup>195</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 115.

<sup>196</sup> O’Connell, *The Car and British Society*, pp. 1, 13.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>198</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 115; Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>199</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 116.

<sup>200</sup> Piggott, *Burton’s North Wales*, p. xv.

<sup>201</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 13.

<sup>202</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 13.

<sup>203</sup> O’Connell, *The Car and British Society*, p. 11; Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 33-4.

was competitively priced at £175. Inspired by the success of the Model-T Ford, Morris innovated and became Britain's biggest car producer by the mid-1920s.<sup>204</sup>

Developments in manufacturing enabled the reduction of prices, which resulted in the extension of car ownership beyond the richest in society.<sup>205</sup> In real terms, the prices of cars fell significantly during the inter-war period. By 1936, average prices were at less than 50 percent of their 1924 level, which combined with rising real income of the middle classes, and credit in the form of hire-purchase to extend the market for motorcars.<sup>206</sup> By 1939, car use had extended to around 20 percent of families, and private car ownership rose to over 2 million.<sup>207</sup> Membership of the Automobile Association and Motor Union had grown to over 300,000 by 1927.<sup>208</sup> In the 1930s, the car even extended to the working classes, as motoring became the most popular form of travel.<sup>209</sup> In 1937, *The Hampstead Gazette* visited the pickets at the Edgware bus depot during the London Transport Strike, and noted that 'quite a few of the busmen have their own cars and these are used to convey the working-class members of the public to their destinations'.<sup>210</sup> Similarly, Herbert Parker, MP for Romford, claimed in 1939 that among Ford employees at the Dagenham factory, 1,500 to 2,000 owned their own motorcar.<sup>211</sup> This growth in popularity is reflected in hotel facilities, which expanded to include motorcar hire and repair, alongside the usual facilities for fishing and bathing.<sup>212</sup> Travel texts added sections dealing with motoring, which, it was assumed, 'will prove useful' to readers, and also began to recommend tours by motorcar, such as Burrow's 'Circular Tours: London to Wales and Back'.<sup>213</sup> Alongside the perception of increasing speed, the growth of motorcar ownership also brought with it the problem of congestion on popular roads during the tourist season, which Bert Thomas satirised in his cartoon on the supposed 'rapidity' brought about by the internal combustion engine (see Image 1.2).

While many historians of travel focus solely on the growth of motorcar ownership in this period, it is important to acknowledge the motorcycle industry, which thrived before there were good quality, cheap motorcars available on the market. The number of motorcycle registrations only fell below motorcars for the first time in 1925.<sup>214</sup> Once cheap 'baby' cars such as the Austin Seven and 'Bullnose' Morris were introduced in the 1920s, the growth of registration figures for motorcycles declined, and by 1938 the number was lower than the figure for 1925.<sup>215</sup> Motorcycles fell in popularity as manufacturers failed to keep up with the advancements made in the motorcar industry, and in practical terms they provided less carrying capacity, and left riders and passengers more vulnerable to serious injury in the event of an accident.<sup>216</sup>

To a greater degree than the bicycle, the automobile and motorcycle liberated travellers from the predetermined routes, destinations, and timetables of the railway.<sup>217</sup> This meant that the (predominantly) middle classes gained a degree of control over their travel itineraries, no longer 'confined to accessible

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<sup>204</sup> O'Connell, *The Car and British Society*, pp. 15, 18-19.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 24-5.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>208</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), pp. xlvi-xlvii.

<sup>209</sup> Coulbert, 'Narratives of Motoring in England', pp. 202-4.

<sup>210</sup> O'Connell, *The Car and British Society*, p. 36.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>212</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), advertiser, p. 12.

<sup>213</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), pp. v-vi; Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, p. 109.

<sup>214</sup> O'Connell, *The Car and British Society*, pp. 17-18.

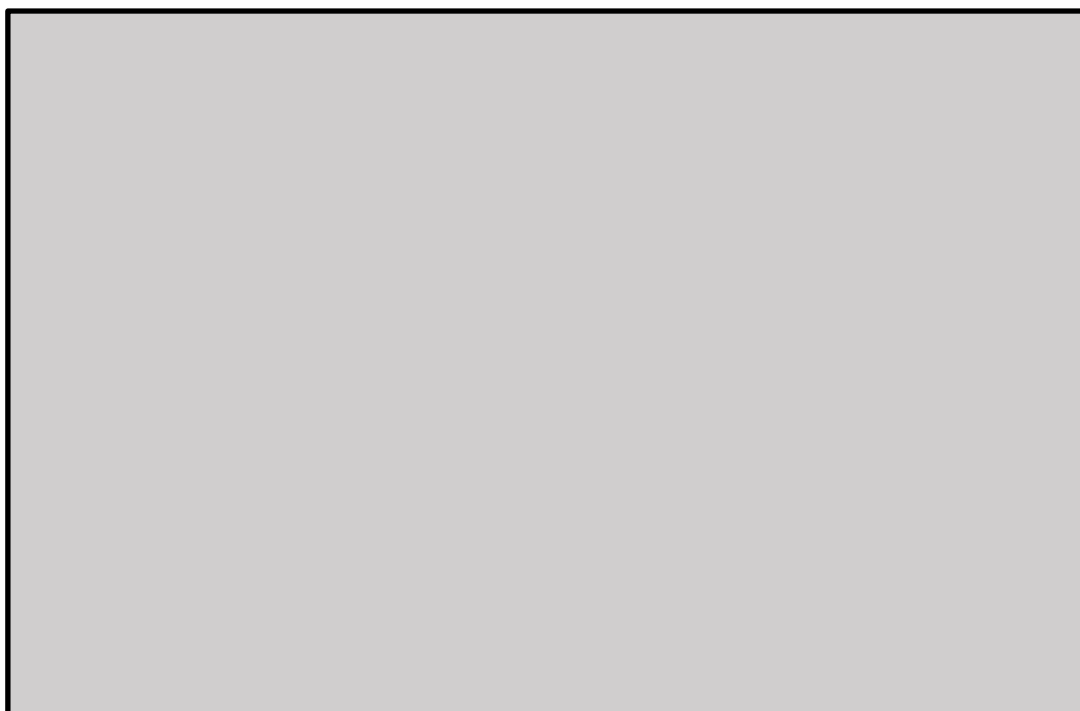
<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>217</sup> Coulbert, 'Narratives of Motoring in England', p. 201.

channels around the rail networks or organised travel parties'.<sup>218</sup> After 1921, motorists travelling from the Irish Free State to Northern Ireland found their sense of liberation somewhat stifled by having to stop and deposit one-third of the vehicle's value at the customs border, which H. V. Morton found to be 'a tiresome law'.<sup>219</sup> Even when legislation attempted to control certain elements of motor travel, the level of liberation afforded by the motorcar often meant that the rules were not adhered to. *Black's Scotland North* (1920) admitted that Scotland is 'an admirable touring ground', but it is inferior to England 'with regard the legal limitation of speed'. The speed limit at the time was 12mph in England, and just 10mph in Scotland. However, 'there are long stretches of good highway in the north, on which vehicular or pedestrian traffic is extremely scarce', so that 'rapid travelling' is 'even safer than in England'.<sup>220</sup> Similarly, *Murray's* noted that in Ireland the authorities are not 'so strict in the enforcement of the Motor Act'.<sup>221</sup>

Image 1.2



Source: Bert Thomas, 'To the Coast', *Evening Standard*, n.d. [1937?]. The caption reads: "Until recently the pace of the world was the pace a horse could travel – but the internal-combustion engine has introduced a rapidity that had not existed before". Mr Leslie Burgin [Minister for Transport]'.<sup>222</sup>

For those who did not own their own motorcar, cheaper group excursions were available. In Cornwall, motor coach tours became popular, such as the 'Five Lions' tour which began in Penzance and stopped at the Land's End, Logan Rock, Gurnard's Head, Cape Cornwall, and St Ives.<sup>222</sup> Local motor omnibus services adapted to the tourist season, and along the Penzance to Land's End service extra 'excursion-

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<sup>218</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 122.

<sup>219</sup> He also noted that 'motoring and tourist organisations will settle this for you in London'; see Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 230.

<sup>220</sup> Mitton, *Black's Scotland, North* (1920), pp. 151-2.

<sup>221</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 12.

<sup>222</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 276. For an account of a tourist who took the 'Five Lions' tour, see Arthur De Carle Sowerby, *A Naturalist's Holiday by the Sea* (London, 1923), pp. 38-47.



brakes' via the Logan Rock were offered during the summer.<sup>223</sup> In North West Wales, motor coach became 'the most popular means of enjoying the beauties of the neighbourhood' in the inter-war period. During the summer tourist season, 'thirty or forty powerful motors, built specially for the district', took visitors on daily excursions to 'beauty spots 50 or 60 miles distant'. Many of these motor coach tours exceeded 100 miles in length, and tourists in the region could choose from the 'Silver', 'Royal Red', and 'Royal Blue' motor tour companies.<sup>224</sup> Motor coach services were also 'maintained between the North Wales resorts and the principal Midland towns' during the tourist season.<sup>225</sup> As a result of the spread of the motorbus, motorcar, and motorcycle, exploring the countryside became 'a fashionable holiday pursuit', as getting away from urban or suburban areas was often more feasible by car than by train.<sup>226</sup>

### Roads

The rise of tourism – and the proliferation of motor vehicles – led to the recognition of roads as an increasingly important part of the modern tourism infrastructure. The roads that existed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were constructed for horses and buggies, and these surfaces were often not well suited to quicker vehicles, especially in the rural and remote areas of the West.<sup>227</sup> In the south of Scotland, many roads had been improved to two-lane highways, 18 feet wide with gentle gradients, whereas in the Highlands and Islands the lanes were predominantly 'winding single-track roads' 10 feet wide with passing places. These roads followed 'every undulation of the landscape', and early cars needed to be 'robust to cope'.<sup>228</sup> Travel texts warned 'owners of large cars fitted with costly pneumatic tyres' to 'avoid certain of the rougher roads', since the 'rugged grandeurs of the scenery' would 'scarcely compensate for the ruining of tyres worth £20 apiece'.<sup>229</sup> Of particular danger were the 'unscientifically constructed bridges' which cross the burns, built at a time 'when fast traffic was undreamt of', and cyclists were advised to use 'a well-fitted rim-brake'.<sup>230</sup> In this context, the image of 'cheerfully pioneering through arduous conditions' formed part of the appeal of early motoring.<sup>231</sup>

In Ireland, the Irish Road Improvement Association was formed in 1897, with Crossley and R. J. Macredy – editor of the *Irish Cyclist* – acting as honorary secretaries. Crossley saw the growing popularity of motor tourism, and worked towards the improvement of the roads, petrol and spare parts being made available in every town and village, and crossroads being provided with marking posts. Macredy anticipated that the Automobile Association would lobby for road improvements, but little progress was made, and by 1905 Crossley lamented the state of Irish roads, for which he blamed the local authorities.<sup>232</sup> Travel texts were often rather optimistic when describing the state of the roads, and *Murray's Ireland* (1906) claimed that Connemara is among the districts with 'the most suitable roads', because 'as a rule the road surface is best where the scenery is best, namely, in the mountainous districts round the coasts'.<sup>233</sup>

Later attempts to improve the roads were intertwined with the growth of the tourism industry, and this is evident in the financial decisions made by the central government in Ireland. In 1912, the Roads Board

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<sup>223</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 186.

<sup>224</sup> *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), pp. 28-9, 35.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>226</sup> Peter Mandler, *History and National Life* (London, 2002), p. 57.

<sup>227</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. 115.

<sup>228</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>229</sup> Mitton, *Black's Scotland, North* (1920), p. 152.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>231</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>232</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 25, 31-3.

<sup>233</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 13.

offered grants to county councils towards the improvement of important roads in each county. Cork was granted £9,750, while Donegal, Galway, Antrim, Mayo, and Kerry received between £4,000 and £5,200, and Wicklow received just £1,100, suggesting that established tourist areas were prioritised in the distribution of government funds.<sup>234</sup> The condition of the roads was worsened by the damage suffered during the Irish Civil War. In the aftermath, too few workers were employed in fixing them, as the Cumann na nGaedheal government was financially constrained by the need to pay for the war, repair other material damage, and house captured prisoners.<sup>235</sup> From the 1920s, the ITA encouraged the erection of signposts to aid motor touring, but the government funded programme was not far-reaching enough, and, as Zuelow put it, ‘the majority of Irish roadways were left unsigned and therefore incomprehensible to tourists and nonlocals alike’.<sup>236</sup>

### *Air travel*

For much of the period, air travel was a rare subject in travel texts, notwithstanding Alexander Corkey’s account of a tour of Ireland in 1910, in a machine sourced from the Wright brothers.<sup>237</sup> Towards the end of the period, there were attempts to utilise air travel in the tourism industry, and regulations were introduced for ‘civilian flying’, which were described in the guidebooks of the 1930s.<sup>238</sup> In western Ireland, Senator John Purser Griffith suggested a scheme ‘to promote Galway as a sea and air port’, setting up the Irish Transatlantic Air Corporation in 1931. There were discussions to this end with Seán Lemass in 1932, but the scheme never got past the planning stage.<sup>239</sup> In Scotland, air tours were also attempted in the 1930s, and Donald MacKinnon explained in his *How to See Skye* (1937) that ‘it is now possible to get to Skye by air’, by the Northern and Scottish Airways service from Renfrew (now Glasgow International Airport), which completed the journey in ‘about an hour-and-a-half’. The Skye airport was situated at Glenbrittle, ‘in the heart of the Cuillin... the most beautiful glen in Skye’.<sup>240</sup> While the roots of air travel can be seen here, air tours did not catch on in a significant way until the 1960s.<sup>241</sup>

## **V – Conclusion**

In 1880, the traveller to the West journeyed by train, steamer, and horse-and-cart. Travel was undertaken by privileged classes, who could afford to spend significant periods away from home. Certain seaside resorts in North Wales and Cornwall were well-established holiday haunts, whereas West Connacht and the Isle of Skye remained well off the beaten track. In contrast, the traveller in 1940 calculated journeys in hours that were previously counted in days. Transport was swifter and cheaper, and established modes were joined by the motorbus, motorcar, and bicycle. Companies competed for the custom of the burgeoning group of tourists, who had more time and more money to spend on annual holidays. Combination tickets designed to suit a range of budgets and time-frames made simple the business of securing accommodation and organising excursions, so that tourists and travellers could choose between the convenience of pre-prescribed itineraries and the freedom to leave the strictures of the railway line

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<sup>234</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, pp. 33-4.

<sup>235</sup> Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>237</sup> Corkey, *Through the Emerald Isle with an Aeroplane*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>238</sup> For instance, see Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Great Britain*, pp. xlix-l.

<sup>239</sup> Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 89.

<sup>240</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 18. Hugh MacDiarmid also commented on the swiftness of air travel, in MacDiarmid, *Islands of Scotland*, p. 24.

<sup>241</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 124.

and the beaten track. The available tourism infrastructure was marketed to the individual as part of an increasingly commercialised industry which emphasised the historical and mythical associations, romance, and dramatic landscapes of the West. Nevertheless, there remained important differences between the accessibility of western regions. By 1940, the popular seaside resorts of North West Wales and Cornwall remained more frequented than West Connacht and the Scottish Highlands and islands, where tourism had grown significantly but largely remained the preserve of ‘the relatively high income group who desired to fish, shoot or play golf’.<sup>242</sup>

The increasingly interlinked tourism industry is illustrated by the efforts of companies to provide their own diverse range of services, which included railways, coaches, and hotels. As L. M. McCraith wrote in 1908, ‘the company’ had ‘a desire for the absolute monopoly over tourists’ expenditure’.<sup>243</sup> This was mirrored in the development of British and Irish railways, which began as a collection of lines constructed by small companies of local promoters, which were gradually amalgamated into larger networks.<sup>244</sup> Railway companies continued to extend their influence by introducing bus and coach networks, which served as a cheaper alternative to extending the existing railway, and acted as feeders for railway traffic.<sup>245</sup> In Cornwall, GWR began providing bus services in 1903, which shuttled between tourist hotspots such as the Lizard Peninsula, the Land’s End, Carbis Bay, and Tintagel several times per day.<sup>246</sup> Similarly, in West Connacht the ‘public car’ and ‘mail car’ services between Clifden and Westport were superseded by the Midland Great Western Railway motor coach services, and railway companies even leased loughs to attract tourists with the promise of free fishing.<sup>247</sup> In addition to their attempts to monopolise travel, railway companies also played an important role in the development of tourist accommodation in the West. The GWR took a lease of Tregenna Castle in St Ives, and opened the property as a hotel in 1878.<sup>248</sup> By 1901, the MGWR had opened railway hotels at Galway, Mallaranny (on the Westport and Achill branch), and Recess (on the Galway and Clifden branch).<sup>249</sup>

Bringing the strands of this chapter together, it is clear that the tourism industry is defined by the interconnected nature of its network. The proliferation of hotels often occurred in the aftermath of the extension of the railways. Steamer services were coordinated with train times in order to facilitate smoother tours. The popularisation of the motorcar encouraged the railways to respond with campaigns such as ‘Its Quicker by Rail’ launched by the London and North Eastern Railway in the 1930s. In this sense, the tourism industry is best understood as a series of relations, while also responding to wider cultural and economic shifts.<sup>250</sup> The emergence of the modern tourism industry has ‘deep connections’ with many important characteristics of the modern age, including technological innovation, the growth of political democracy, and the growth of a commercial society. In this way, the tourism industry was ‘both shaped by and helped to create the modern world’.<sup>251</sup> Having established the infrastructural framework of modern tourism in the West, this thesis now seeks to explore the ways in which travel, tourism, and the West were placed within wider societal debates and anxieties about modernity.

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<sup>242</sup> Butler, ‘Tourism in the Scottish Highlands’, p. 388.

<sup>243</sup> L. M. McCraith, ‘Does Ireland Want Tourists?’, *The New Ireland Review* 29.6 (1908), p. 352.

<sup>244</sup> Charles H. Grinling, *The Ways of Our Railways* (London, 1905), p. 2; Furlong, *Irish Tourism*, p. 49.

<sup>245</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, pp. 122-3.

<sup>246</sup> For information on these services, see Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. 14; Muirhead, *Blue Guides: England* (1920), p. 193; and Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), pp. 232, 238, 261.

<sup>247</sup> For MGWR motorbus services, see Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, pink pages, p. vi. For railway companies leasing loughs, see William Eleroy Curtis, *One Irish Summer* (New York, 1909), p. 445.

<sup>248</sup> Simmons, ‘Railways, Hotels, and Tourism’, pp. 205-6.

<sup>249</sup> *Lakes of Killarney and South-West Ireland* (1900), p. 30.

<sup>250</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 122.

<sup>251</sup> Zuelow, *History of Modern Tourism*, p. x.



## I – Introduction

The increasing accessibility of western peripheries and the growth of the modern tourism industry were part of the wider set of developments and experiences of modernity. The travel writer George Eyre-Todd remarked that the railway was ‘perhaps the characteristic feature of modern civilisation. It is certainly one of its greatest institutions’.<sup>1</sup> The technological developments outlined in the previous chapter altered the way people travelled but also the way in which those journeys were perceived and narrated, and new modes of transport were ‘widely felt to be actively remaking the world, space, and time’.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores how the West provided a set of images, metaphors, and experiences for writers to articulate their reactions to the changes that were taking place in the metropolitan centres – changes that were associated with what was perceived as ‘modern society’. There is no settled and fixed definition of modernity, as scholars seek to avoid the earlier, prescriptive models of modernisation. Instead, we may recognise modernity as a diverse and heterogeneous series of ‘political, economic, social, and cultural transformations’ that have resulted in a variety of ‘modern’ societies. The idea of monolithic ‘modernity’ has been abandoned in favour of ‘modernities’.<sup>3</sup>

These transformations are generally located within the period 1870-1940. Stephen Kern emphasised the particular importance of the period 1880-1914, in which technological and cultural developments – such as the telephone, wireless telegraph, cinema, bicycle, automobile, and aeroplane – engendered new experiences of both space and time.<sup>4</sup> In twentieth-century Britain and Ireland, these transformations were combined with the emergence of the powerful and bureaucratic modern nation state, as well as industrial capitalism and urban growth.<sup>5</sup> Mass politics and a literate public emerged after the 1867 Reform Act and the Education Acts of the 1870s and 1880s. In addition, rising affluence led to changing patterns of popular entertainment and leisure pursuits, which in turn gave rise to the establishment of mass media and the notion of a modern commercial society in the early-twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> In this period, further imperial expansion stimulated popular imperialism at home, and as women gained more access to the public domain there were ‘contentious debates’ centred on increasingly unstable gender hierarchies.<sup>7</sup> So diverse and multifarious were the phenomena of modernity that those mentioned here represent merely a small sample of the transformations experienced between 1870 and 1940.<sup>8</sup>

Accompanying these technological, political, economic, and social transformations was an awareness of their novelty, as contemporaries were conscious of ‘living in and through an era of profound, man-made changes’, and of the increased tempo of those changes.<sup>9</sup> This was perceived as a period of ‘transformation and transition’, which led to new experiences of time and space that were articulated by contemporaries

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<sup>1</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), p. 7. He made the same comment in George Eyre-Todd, *Scotland for the Holidays* (Glasgow, 1910), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation from Hill, ‘Narratives of Travel’, p. 1. Also see Tim Youngs, ‘Where Are We Going? Cross-Border Approaches to Travel Writing’, in Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (eds), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Rieger and Martin Daunton, ‘Introduction’, in Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (eds), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001), p. 4; Brian Short, David Gilbert, and David Matless, ‘Historical Geographies of British Modernity’, in David Gilbert, David Matless, and Brian Short (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity: Space and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Short, Gilbert, and Matless, ‘Historical Geographies’, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 2-3; Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, pp. 3-22; Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 1-4.

<sup>7</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Short, Gilbert, Matless, ‘Historical Geographies’, pp. 2-3; Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

through the language of the ‘modern’.<sup>10</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, the consciousness of living in a new age was so widespread it constituted ‘a genuine and distinctive element in the mental culture of the period’.<sup>11</sup>

The reactions to this sense of transitoriness were multiple and varied. On the one hand, there were anxieties about the decline of Britain and speculation that the nation would be unable to retain its pre-eminence in the face of international competition. The transitoriness of modernity and the destructive consequences of constant change made it difficult to forge meaningful connections between the past and the present, which produced a sense of disorientation, while modern urban and suburban life was perceived by many as alienating and mundane. At the same time, this was a period of innovation and creativity, which offered new ways of being modern that anchored the present in history.<sup>12</sup> In this way, there is a ‘double-sidedness’ to modernity, an ambivalence recognised by Marshall Berman as ‘creative destruction’. This was an environment ‘that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and at the same time threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are’.<sup>13</sup>

Geography is not merely a ‘fixed spatial background over which historical processes play’, and an important aspect of the ‘spatial fabric of the modern’ is the connection between the city and the countryside. Modernity may be understood through the relationships between different places, and in this sense the literature of travel and tourism in the western British-Irish Isles is an insightful way of exploring the range of reactions to the transformations of modernity.<sup>14</sup> Writers in rural, western landscapes often paused to consider the modern metropolitan environment they had left behind, considering the wireless, suburbs, clerks, and other symbols of modernity, thus bringing together ‘different spatialities’ in juxtaposition.<sup>15</sup> Travel narratives were often framed in terms of revelation, of finding answers to general societal problems, and the West was often constructed as a space where the solutions to such problems were revealed, offering an example of simpler, more traditional ways of living that were in closer harmony with the landscape, away from the evils of urban modernity. This was not simply the construction of the West as an ‘Eden’ (though this is also evident at times). The sheer poverty of the crofters in Skye or the Claddagh and the Aran islanders was often painfully evident to travellers, who lamented the lack of industrial development in the West that could bring prosperity to the people.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the language used to articulate reactions to modernity changed over time. In the late-nineteenth century, issues of industrialisation, racial degeneration, and urbanisation had by the inter-war period shifted towards commercialism, mass culture, and the suburb.

The importance of ‘space’ in the study of modernity is, perhaps, better captured by the term ‘place’. Bernhard Rieger and Martin Daunton suggest that, because scholars have understood ‘modernity’ in so many different ways and studied it in so many different contexts, we should analyse the ways in which contemporaries understood modernity in ‘specific locales and venues’ instead of seeking a clear unanimous definition.<sup>17</sup> Where ‘space’ suggests empty, uniform landscapes to which scientific theories may be universally applied, ‘place’ captures the specificities and idiosyncrasies of the West – the

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<sup>10</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 5-8; Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1994), p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 5-8.

<sup>13</sup> Short, Gilbert, Matless, ‘Historical Geographies’, pp. 2-3. Also see Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (London, 1983), p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Short, Gilbert, Matless, ‘Historical Geographies’, pp. 3-4; see Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London’s Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York, 1998), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity* p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> For his journey through Connacht, see Tuke, *Irish Distress*, pp. 48-99.

<sup>17</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 3-4.

‘specialness of place’.<sup>18</sup> It was while journeying westwards that travellers and writers chose to discuss the perceived opportunities and problems associated with the modern cities and suburbs that they were leaving behind.

This chapter takes as its focus several aspects of ‘modernity’ that the writers of travel texts raised when they were confronted by the landscapes, buildings, and people of the West. Firstly, this chapter explores the discussions about industry and the opportunities for economic development in the rural landscapes of the West, followed by contemporary discussions of race which shed light on anxieties about urban degeneration at the *fin-de-siècle*. Secondly, this chapter turns towards the emergence of mass society, the contemporary concerns of rapid suburbanisation, and the destruction of the countryside.

## II – Industry in the West

In travel texts, discussions of industrialisation, technology and machines, urbanisation, and fears of racial degeneration shed light on some of the broader anxieties of the *fin-de-siècle*, and demonstrate how the West functioned as a space in which these themes could be discussed. These discussions reveal the desire to realise economic improvements by developing nascent industries and introducing new ones to the West, in a way that reflects the lingering of a ‘colonial discourse’. In addition, the emerging tourism industry encouraged the perception of the West as a set of places in which industrial life, with all its perceived evils, might be escaped.

### *The remote West*

In the nineteenth century, Glasgow and Clydesdale became a centre of industry and mining in the heavily-industrialised south-west of Scotland, while in Belfast and the Lagan Valley the linen and shipbuilding industries expanded as economic power shifted north from Dublin.<sup>19</sup> Contrastingly, the western regions of Ireland and Scotland offered landscapes, economies, and ways of life that differed greatly from the industrial centres of the British-Irish Isles, and seemed far removed from large-scale industry.

In western Ireland, industries were few in number and those that existed were in decline. Despite some claims that ‘the agriculture of Ireland as a whole is greatly advanced’, and that no place ‘can show more improvement than Galway’, travel texts typically drew attention to economic failings.<sup>20</sup> The philanthropist James Hack Tuke described the anxious inquiries of tenants ‘about the seed potatoes’ obtainable under the Seed Supply (Ireland) Act (1880), while Hayes referred to the ‘exodus’ which ‘takes place early every summer’, as workers from Achill sought seasonal employment in Scotland and England.<sup>21</sup> Some texts were more forthright about ‘the causes of its backwardness’, which included the system of small holdings and their subdivision, a land tenure ‘under which difficulties from time to time have arisen’, as well as ‘primitive and unscientific’ methods of cultivation.<sup>22</sup> Writing in 1924, Stephen Gwynn described the nineteenth-century cottiers of the west, ‘who gain a bare living’ from land that was ‘wholly unsuited to farming’.<sup>23</sup> In addition, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902) noted the ‘considerable natural advantages’ of Galway as a

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<sup>18</sup> See Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, 1998), which describes the ‘disdain for the genus loci: indifference to the specialness of place’, pp. 133-4.

<sup>19</sup> Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, p. 159; Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, pp. 221-2, 235.

<sup>20</sup> For the claim of advancement and improvement, see *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), introduction, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Hayes, ‘Holiday in the Far West’, p. 637.

<sup>22</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland*, pp. 54-5, 57-8.

deep sea port, with which ‘neither its industries nor its commerce are at all commensurate’.<sup>24</sup> Amid descriptions of failure, travel texts also expressed hope that legislation such as the Agricultural Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act (1899) and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (1900) would lead to ‘further improvement’ in Irish agriculture.<sup>25</sup>

In Scotland, travel texts described the legacy of the Highland Clearances and the introduction of sheep farms, which brought an end to the ‘shieling days’, when the township ‘migrated to the hill pasture with their sheep and cattle’.<sup>26</sup> The arable ground still available was ‘subject to the ravages of game’ such as deer and grouse,<sup>27</sup> as several texts described a ‘scanty, hand-to-mouth existence’ of the crofters.<sup>28</sup> These circumstances sparked the Crofters’ War in the early 1880s and the appointment of the Napier Commission (1883), a process through which grievances were raised including the reduction of pasture lands, rises in rents as a result of ‘improvements’, and landlords’ demands for payments for ‘peats, seaware, and heather for thatching’.<sup>29</sup> In his *Historical Geography of Scotland* (1913), W. R. Kermack remarked that the industrial ‘progress’ which grew out of the coal-fields and iron-mines, the deepening of rivers, the construction of harbours, and the building of railways was the story of the Lowlands.<sup>30</sup>

The lack of industrial development was idealised as ‘remoteness’ in travel texts, which promised to take tourists away from ‘the bustle and worries of business and the ‘crowded town’.<sup>31</sup> In Ireland, economic differences reinforced the idea of a distinction between an Anglicised east and the Celtic west.<sup>32</sup> For the scholar J. A. MacCulloch, the Isle of Skye was an attractive destination to ‘those who are weary of the many unnatural ways of modern life’.<sup>33</sup>

In Cornwall, the emergence of tourism coincided with the decline of the mining industry, as metal that was once distributed across Europe was brought back into the region by ‘trainloads of tourists’ and ‘conveys of bicyclists’.<sup>34</sup> The mining heritage of Cornwall was evident in slag heaps and chimneys visible to the passing traveller, and mines could be explored ‘should one’s tastes run in that direction’.<sup>35</sup> Like many writers, Arthur Norway had ‘little time for examining the mining country’, which ‘is not an unmitigated misfortune’ because ‘in the eyes of all but mining experts it is ugly to the last degree’, and ‘has few associations but poverty and exile’.<sup>36</sup> Instead, travel texts emphasised Cornwall’s remoteness,

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<sup>24</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), p. 229. Similar comments about Galway were also made in Bovet, *Three Months’ Tour in Ireland*, p. 204; and Clifton Johnson, *The Isle of the Shamrock* (New York, 1901), pp. 143-4. For an example of American tourists who travelled from New York to Queenstown, see Thomas W. Silloway and Lee L. Powers, *The Cathedral Towns and Intervening Places of England, Ireland and Scotland* (Boston MA, 1883), pp. 3-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1885), p. 9. For the Act see Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. xviii. For the Department see Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> J. A. MacCulloch, *The Misty Isle of Skye: Its Scenery, Its People, Its Story* (Edinburgh, 1905), pp. 213-15; This also occurred in West Connacht, where Clare Island was cleared by ‘a thrifty landlord’ to ‘make room for cattle’; see Wilkinson, *Eve of Home Rule*, pp. 41-2.

<sup>27</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 220-1.

<sup>28</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), p. 178; Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 220-1.

<sup>30</sup> Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland*, pp. 2-3, 62-3.

<sup>31</sup> London and North Western Railway, *Where to Spend the Holidays* (1906), p. 100.

<sup>32</sup> James, ‘Tourism and Western Terrain’, p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), p. 207.

<sup>34</sup> Baring-Gould, *A Book of Cornwall*, p. 66. Also see R. A. J. Walling, *The West Country* (New York, 1935), p. 24. For the encouragement of tourism development in the Isles of Scilly, see J. G. Uren, *Scilly and the Scillonians* (Plymouth, 1907), p. 146.

<sup>35</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, pp. 52-3. For an alternative perspective, see Charles Henderson and Henry Coates, *Old Cornish Bridges and Streams* (Exeter, 1928), p. ix.

<sup>36</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 314. In contrast, Wilkie Collins described his visit to Botallack Mine in his *Rambles Beyond Railways*, which was published in several editions in the period. For Ashley Rowe’s allusion to this visit, see Ashley Rowe, ‘Introduction’, in Wilkie Collins, *Rambles Beyond Railways, or Notes in Cornwall Taken A-foot* (London, 1948), p. ix.



and even the Great Western Railway celebrated the Scilly Isles for the ‘placid and idyllic life into which the shriek of the steam-engine’ found no place.<sup>37</sup>

In an introductory article to the *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), the geographer H. J. Fleure described the upland areas of North West Wales as ‘apparently still untouched by the stress of industrialism’, offering ‘inspiration refreshing to the jaded and overstrained business life of our perplexed modern England’.<sup>38</sup> However, this portrayal was unsustainable as there were in fact large-scale local industries that were very productive throughout the period. Industrialisation in Wales had developed most significantly in the south-east, where the coal, copper, tin-plate, and steel industries thrived.<sup>39</sup> But there were also important industries in the heart of the mountains. In 1898, A. G. Bradley grumbled that ‘the quarrying industry is altogether too much in evidence’ from Llyn Padarn. At Llyn Peris, Bradley saw the ‘lacerated’ shoulder of Elidyr Fawr, where quarrying had exposed ‘the entrails of this great mountain’:

... one might well fancy it groaning in its agony, for all the ceaseless and horrid din, the rattle of trucks, the shout of countless men, who swarm like ants along the giddy heights, the crash of falling rocks, the creaking of machinery, the roar of blasting, and when a brief interval of silence admits it, the dull splash of some avalanche of loosened debris toppling into the lake.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Ambivalent attitudes towards industry in North West Wales*

The reaction to signs of industrial modernity in the West was not always one of lamentation and horror. Travel texts celebrated the ‘extensive shipping trade’ of Porthmadog, which transported ‘thousands of tons of the famous Festiniog slates’ around the world.<sup>41</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1883) expressed ‘astonishment at the commercial enterprise’ of the Penrhyn slate quarries near Bangor, which ‘transformed these mountain-wastes into sources of industrious occupation, private wealth, and national prosperity’. Bradley’s description of ‘damage’, ‘laceration’, and ‘agony’ was instead celebrated as ‘the loud hum of busy life and industry’, which supported ‘not fewer than 11,000 individuals’, once the wives and children of the workers had been calculated. The tourist was encouraged to make an excursion to the quarries by coach from the Railway Hotel in Bangor, which would ‘fully repay the trouble and time of a visit’.<sup>42</sup>

These contrasting attitudes towards quarries in North West Wales were not necessarily antithetical. In a balanced assessment, the geographer O. J. R. Howarth conceded that the quarrying of Ordovician slate in the Vale of Ffestiniog had ‘offset much of the beauty of the vale’. Additionally, he considered the slate-working on the Snowdon massif ‘probably uglier’ than any other sort of quarrying, while ‘the harnessing of water-power for the supply of electricity has required that pylons and wires should bestride the countryside’. Nevertheless, Howarth recognised that ‘the possibility of foregoing such industrial development and the use of natural power is not arguable’, and called instead for consideration in future of ‘mitigating their effects on natural beauty’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), pp. 67-8. The notion of Cornwall being ‘beyond railways’ was called into question by Ashley Rowe; see Rowe, ‘Introduction’, in Collins, *Rambles Beyond Railways*, p. vii.

<sup>38</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. xi.

<sup>39</sup> Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, p. 143; Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, p. 240.

<sup>40</sup> A. G. Bradley, *Highways and Byways in North Wales* (London, 1898), pp. 283-4. Similar comments about the northern shores of Llyn Padarn and Llyn Peris were made in Stawell, *Motor Tours in Wales*, p. 105.

<sup>41</sup> Cambrian Resorts Association, *The Lure of the Cambrian Coast* (Oswestry, 1920), p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1883), pp. 53-8.

<sup>43</sup> Howarth, *Scenic Heritage of England and Wales*, p. 146.

Moreover, engineers and municipal leaders in Birmingham and Liverpool exploited the imagery of the rural, upland, mountain landscapes of Wales and played on notions of wild, primitive, timeless purity in order to promote the development of new water supplies. As the Mayor of Liverpool W. B. Forwood explained in 1881, such landscapes ‘were untouched by the grime and impurity of modern life’, and the Liverpool Corporation ‘emphasised the purity of this ancient and backward land’ in pamphlets of 1892.<sup>44</sup> The associations between Welsh water, purity, and health provided prominent themes with which travel texts promoted the region to urban-dwelling tourists from Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, and other industrial towns in north-west England. This was particularly resonant at the turn of the twentieth century, when diseases associated with water, such as cholera and typhoid, were dangerous in crowded urban areas.<sup>45</sup> Travel texts recognised that ‘Drainage and Water Supply are matters of vital concern to intending visitors’.<sup>46</sup>

Travel texts emphasised the altitude of various water supplies, and quoted medical professionals, combining Welsh mountain imagery with the endorsement of experts. Llandudno’s water supply originated in Llyn Dulyn, ‘a precipice-girt lake near Carnedd Llewelyn, abundant and pure’.<sup>47</sup> ‘Scientific and modern’ works costing £136,000 ensured that ‘there is probably no better drained town in the kingdom’, and ‘Professors Frankland and Wanklyn’ pronounced the town’s water supply ‘to be purer than even that of the celebrated Loch Katrine, which supplies Glasgow’.<sup>48</sup> Elsewhere, descriptions of water supplies at Penmaenmawr, Pwllheli, Nefyn, Old Colwyn, and Llanfairfechan all emphasised the purity of the Welsh mountain water, drawn from ‘unpolluted streams from unfailing springs’.<sup>49</sup>

In some locations, water was not simply pure but also boasted ‘medicinal value’, and such claims were supported by ‘strong medical testimony’. This was marked in descriptions of the chalybeate wells near Trefriw village, where the waters were ‘strongly impregnated with iron and sulphur’.<sup>50</sup> Some publications claimed that these were the ‘richest sulphur-iron waters in the world’, collected in ‘rock-hewn basins supposed to be of Roman origin’. After debris blocked the entrance to the cave which held the water, it was rediscovered in 1833 ‘under the guidance of an aged inhabitant, in whose memory lingered stories of cures effected by the water’. The waters were gradually commercialised, and the pump house and baths were fitted with ‘the most modern hydropathic appliances’. Visiting patients and tourists could purchase a glass for 2d, or take ‘small phials for home treatment’. In a letter of 1907 published in *Ward and Lock’s North Wales Northern* (1912), Dr John W. Hayward, MD, recommended the waters ‘for chronic stomach and liver diseases’, as well as ‘anaemia and rheumatism and such-like ailments’, while Dr Dobie of Chester claimed that ‘amongst my own patients I have witnessed very remarkable curative effects from their use’.<sup>51</sup> From engineering projects and seaside-town water supplies to hydropathic tourism, the subject of water in North West Wales combined industry, tourism, and the restorative power of the West.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Owen G. Roberts, ‘Developing the Untapped Wealth of Britain’s “Celtic Fringe”: Water Engineering and the Welsh Landscape, 1870-1960’, *Landscape Research* 31.2 (2006), pp. 124-5.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Fritzsche, ‘The City and Urban Life’, in Michael Saler (ed.), *The Fin-de-Siècle World* (London, 2015), pp. 29-30, 41.

<sup>46</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1909), p. 38.

<sup>47</sup> Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), p. 46.

<sup>48</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1909), p. 38. For the lengthy testimony of H. Falconer King, F. C. S., analyst to the city of Edinburgh, see London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), pp. 83-4.

<sup>49</sup> Quotation from *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), p. 155. For Penmaenmawr, see *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), p. 147. For Pwllheli, see *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), p. 149. For Nefyn, see *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), p. 160. For Old Colwyn, see London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), p. 51. For Llanfairfechan reservoir, see *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), p. 155. For the sewage system, see London and North Western Railway, *North Wales* (1908), p. 89; and London and North Western Railway, *Tourist Guide to North Wales* (London, 1909), p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1883), p. 168.

<sup>51</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), pp. 221-2.

<sup>52</sup> For hydropathy and tourism in Scotland, see Alastair J. Durie, *Water is Best: The Hydros and Health Tourism in Scotland, 1840-1940* (Edinburgh, 2006).

In West Connacht and Skye, travellers and writers bemoaned the lack of investment in these rural areas, and described opportunities for future development. *Black's Ireland* (1885) complained that the deep-sea fisheries of Galway were 'in a languishing condition', despite the fact that the fishing grounds in the bay 'are as good as any in the kingdom'.<sup>53</sup> This rhetoric had its roots in the narratives of 'improvement' in the Highlands, which were dominant after the military defeat of the Jacobites in 1746 and remained prominent into the early-nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup> In Ireland, such narratives of potential improvements had grown in number in the decades following the Famine, and reflected the wider trend of the traveller's self-appointed task as social and economic investigator.<sup>55</sup>

Narratives of improvement were also prominent in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Travel texts were an important source of information for the British reading public regarding the activities of bodies such as the Congested Districts Board (1891) in West Connacht.<sup>56</sup> The Board was created to improve conditions in western Ireland, and many of the designated districts were located on the northern coast of Galway Bay, and along the seaboard from Spiddal to Clifden.<sup>57</sup> The activities of the Board were diverse, working in areas concerning the prevention of potato disease, tree culture, livestock breeding, poultry farming, tweed and cloth weaving, and road building, as travel texts drew information from the Board's official *Annual Report*.<sup>58</sup>

The Board supported the fishing industry in West Connacht with an 'excellent pier' at Kilonan on Inis Mór, which brought the village into line with others on the west coast.<sup>59</sup> Larger vessels were also introduced by the Board, which replaced the traditional currachs, and a curing station was established at Killeany, also on Inis Mór.<sup>60</sup> Elsewhere, a station for deep sea fishing was established at Roundstone 'with marked success', and at Streamstown *Murray's Ireland* (1906) noted that 'the mackerel fishing has been greatly developed by the Congested Districts Board'.<sup>61</sup> On land, the Board was empowered to 'condemn and purchase at a fair valuation the fertile land' of the great landowners, reselling it to the tenants at favourable rates.<sup>62</sup> This was implemented on Clare Island, where the division of farm work was replaced by 'an organised tenure, by which certain lands are allotted to each tenant', which Stephen Gwynn claimed was 'one of the best examples of the Congested Districts Board's beneficent work' in this area.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1885), p. 220.

<sup>54</sup> This has been discussed extensively in Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke, 1989); for a brief summary of the 'improvement' narrative, see pp. 1-6. For the commodification of the Highlands in the eighteenth century, see Julie Rak, 'The Improving Eye: Eighteenth-Century Picturesque Travel and Agricultural Change in the Scottish Highlands', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 27 (1998), pp. 343-64.

<sup>55</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 49-50; Elizabeth Meloy, 'Touring Connemara: Learning to Read a Landscape of Ruins, 1850-1860', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 13.3 (2009), pp. 21-3.

<sup>56</sup> For example, the reviewers of Gwynn's book valued the information on the Congested Districts Board; see [Review] 'New Books, Stephen Gwynn, *Highways and Byways in Donegal and Antrim* (London, 1899)', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 15.9 (1899), p. 495. S. G. Bayne spoke to W. J. D. Walker, Inspector Organiser of Industries for the Congested Districts Board, and informed his readers that the people 'are helped in every possible way by the British government'; see S. G. Bayne, *On an Irish Jaunting-Car through Donegal and Connemara* (New York, 1902), p. 94.

<sup>57</sup> For the aims and membership of the Board, see Curtis, *One Irish Summer*, pp. 460, 464; and Gwynn, *Holiday in Connemara*, p. 5. For the preponderance of congested districts in Connemara, see Syngé, *Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara*, p. 157.

<sup>58</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. xxix. For road building, see Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), p. xii.

<sup>59</sup> Quotation from Gordon, *Wanderings of a Naturalist*, p. 185. Also see John M. Syngé, *The Aran Islands* (Dublin, 1907), p. xi.

<sup>60</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), p. 247.

<sup>61</sup> For Roundstone, see Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, p. 10. For Streamstown, see Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), p. 259.

<sup>62</sup> Quotation from Burton E. Stevenson, *The Charm of Ireland* (New York, 1914), pp. 335-6. Also see Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 31.

<sup>63</sup> For 'organised tenure' quotation, see Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. 231. For Gwynn, see Gwynn, *Connaught*, p. 47. This system was also explained in Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1902), p. 260.

Despite these successes, it was recognised that ‘much yet remains to be done’.<sup>64</sup> Plans made by the Board were not always carried through, and the playwright and travel writer John M. Synge accused both the Board and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland of neglecting the kelp industry.<sup>65</sup> In 1906, J. Harris Stone explained that the ‘one great want’ of Dooagh (the most westerly village on Achill Island) was ‘a small pier or landing-stage running some fifty or one hundred yards into the sea’. This was ‘imperatively needed, so that boats could put out to sea when there is a surf on’.<sup>66</sup> Stone also called upon the Board to construct ‘such an inexpensive storm-wall’, as it would mean that ‘clincher-built boats could be used’ and the fishing of the village could be transformed from ‘spasmodic and desultory’ to ‘an important industry’.<sup>67</sup>

In the late-nineteenth century, many travel texts echoed the British imperial destiny in their calls for improvements in the West, which were often predicated on the assumption that ‘it was the task of the Briton to make the backward regions of the world hum with industry and bloom with cultivation’.<sup>68</sup> Earlier Irish landowners such as the D’Arcys of Clifden Castle and the Martins of Ballynahinch – both of whom were granted the confiscated lands of the O’Flaherty in the seventeenth century under the Acts of Settlement – were praised for their ‘liberality’ and devotion to their tenants during the Famine, and were ‘compelled to sell their property’ to the Encumbered Estates Court, as their estates were passed to absentee landlords.<sup>69</sup> Travel texts celebrated the enterprising British proprietors who invested in western Ireland in the following decades, such as the Manchester merchant Mitchell Henry and the Leicester manufacturer James Ellis.

In Letterfrack, Ellis matched ‘philanthropic efforts’ in the aftermath of the Famine with a series of improvements to what was previously ‘but a waste of sparsely cultivated land’.<sup>70</sup> Ellis ‘built a neat village’, as well as a police-barrack and schools, ‘besides draining and planting a very large portion of moorland’.<sup>71</sup> As a result of his perseverance, ‘that which was a wilderness has become a garden’, and the ‘rude and unlettered’ people received ‘an amount of enlightenment altogether unknown before in the district’.<sup>72</sup> At Kylemore, Mitchell Henry purchased around 14,000 acres and ‘set on foot improvements on the property’, also serving as MP for Galway between 1871 and 1885.<sup>73</sup> The work for which he was praised was the reclamation of the surrounding bogland, and he was considered by several earlier texts as having effected ‘great good’.<sup>74</sup> Writers such as Tuke, however, questioned the triumphant accounts of the systematic travel texts, and suggested that the work of enterprising proprietors had not been completely successful because ‘600 out of 750 families in the district which includes Kylemore were upon the Relief lists’.<sup>75</sup>

What accompanied this sense of imperial destiny was a ‘colonial discourse’ which aestheticised the landscape, and explained scenes of poverty and desolation by looking to the inability of the local people

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<sup>64</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), introduction, p. 28.

<sup>65</sup> For plans that were not carried through, see Stone, *Connemara*, p. 216. For the kelp industry, see Synge, *Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara*, p. 189.

<sup>66</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 336.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>68</sup> William H. A. Williams, ‘Into the West: Landscape and Imperial Imagination in Connemara, 1820-1870’, *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 2.1 (1998), pp. 69-70.

<sup>69</sup> Quotations from *Black’s Ireland* (1885), pp. 234-235. Also see Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, p. 11; Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), p. 187.

<sup>70</sup> Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, p. 11.

<sup>71</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), p. 201.

<sup>72</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1877), p. 282.

<sup>73</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), pp. 190-1.

<sup>74</sup> Quotation in *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), p. 201. Also see *Black’s Ireland* (1877), p. 283.

<sup>75</sup> Tuke, *Irish Distress*, p. 74.

to realise the potential of the land. William H. A. Williams linked calls for improvement in mid-nineteenth century Connemara to David Spurr's concept of 'negation', whereby a place and its people are defined 'in terms of what the visitor feels is lacking'.<sup>76</sup> Such narrative techniques pulled landscapes 'into the perceptive domain of the writer', and implicitly claimed the territory for the coloniser.<sup>77</sup> These narrative techniques lingered into the early-twentieth century across the western British-Irish Isles, expressed through the racial stereotypes of the 'industrious' Saxon and 'lazy' Celt.<sup>78</sup> In this way, the dearth of industries in the West was put down to the temperament of the people.

Travel texts provide insight into the prevalence of such sentiments, as travellers recorded their discussions with landlords and land agents. Joynes met with landlords in Ireland who were 'denouncing the idleness of the Irish', and the notorious land agent Captain Boycott told him that 'the peasants were all utterly idle'.<sup>79</sup> During his conversation with a land agent in Westport, the historian H. Spenser Wilkinson disagreed with the agent's conclusion that the people were 'idle'.<sup>80</sup> Accusations of laziness were not the preserve of landlords and their agents, however. Travellers such as Clifton Johnson found that the land in Connemara appeared 'tilled neither energetically nor carefully', while the French travel writer and novelist Madame de Bovet suggested that Irish peasants were 'lacking in some quality essential to prosperity'.<sup>81</sup> Charles Whymper accused the Irish peasantry of lacking 'steady purpose, real perseverance, and love of labour', and Stone feared that the work of the Congested Districts Board 'tends to destroy the spirit of enterprise and plucky endeavour which makes nations', by suggesting that 'there is always the Government in the background to help in emergencies'.<sup>82</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1906) described Ireland as the land 'where no one is in a hurry', which 'is certainly true of the Hibernian agriculturalist'.<sup>83</sup>

Similar accusations were made of 'the Skyeman', who, according to MacCulloch, 'is incredibly lazy', the representative of an 'enfeebled and dying' race.<sup>84</sup> MacCulloch described the process by which peat was cut from a spot selected by the ground-officer. For a payment of half a crown, 'the crofter may take as much peat as his natural laziness or his foresight (never too keen where hard work is concerned) will permit of'.<sup>85</sup> In his assessment of the Crofters' Holdings Act (1886), which secured fixity of tenure, MacCulloch remarked that 'moderate prosperity' was now within reach of 'all who were active enough to strive for it'.<sup>86</sup> This rhetoric was more widespread earlier in the period, but as late as 1939 Quigley described the crofters of Skye as 'used to little and not expecting much', so that they 'will not labour greatly to make sour land sweet'.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Williams, 'Landscape and Imperial Imagination in Connemara', p. 69.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>78</sup> For industriousness as an 'English' characteristic, see Peter Mandler, 'The Consciousness of Modernity? Liberalism and the English National Character, 1870-1940', in Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (eds), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001), p. 128. The idea of the hard working Anglo-Saxon was prevalent in travel texts, even though nineteenth-century intellectuals such as Stubbs and Carlyle described the Angles and Jutes as lazy; see J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 143. The depiction of colonial subjects as idle has been linked to an imperial form of masculinity; see Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity', in Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, 1991), pp. 13-14.

<sup>79</sup> Joynes, *Adventures in Ireland*, pp. 9, 76.

<sup>80</sup> Wilkinson, *Eve of Home Rule*, p. 27.

<sup>81</sup> Johnson, *The Isle of the Shamrock*, p. 140; Bovet, *Three Months' Tour in Ireland*, p. 224.

<sup>82</sup> C. W., 'In an Irish Village', p. 638; Stone, *Connemara*, pp. 61-2. For the suggestion of the laziness of Claddagh fishermen, see Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), pp. 176-7.

<sup>83</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. xviii.

<sup>84</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 201-2.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-5.

<sup>87</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, p. 71.

The idleness of workers in the West extended to Cornwall and the Scilly Isles, where Jessie Mothersole described the ‘delightful Celtic leisureliness’ of the people.<sup>88</sup> Evidence for the dichotomy of the industrious Saxon and the lazy Celt was even found in the design of everyday objects. In an article for *The New Century Review* (1897), the physician and author Havelock Ellis compared the type of spade used in the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ east to the spade of the ‘Celtic’ West. The common Anglo-Saxon spade is ‘a short, powerful implement with a large oblong blade, and a cross-piece at the end of the handle’. While this is ‘not an elegant instrument’, it is ‘well adapted to obtain a maximum output of energy from arms and back and legs’. This is Ellis’s Englishman – efficient and practical, but unimaginative and inelegant. In contrast, the ‘Cornish spade – also found in Wales and Ireland – is often as long as its owner, with a slender, slightly curved handle and a small heart-shaped blade’. This is ‘a graceful instrument’ adapted to Cornwall’s shallow soil but also ‘to the lithe, slow, free movements of the Cornishmen, who possess a characteristic which has lovingly been described by a child of the land as a “divine laziness”’. This divine laziness was one of many traits ‘which bring the Cornish much nearer to the Welsh and Bretons, even to the Irish, than to the Anglo-Saxon English’.<sup>89</sup>

As explanations of poverty, racial stereotypes did not go unchallenged. Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell emphasised the crofters’ lack of incentive for improvements without the fixity of tenure that had only been available since the 1886 Crofters’ Bill.<sup>90</sup> The novelist Liam O’Flaherty suggested that English writers and historians characterised the Irish peasant as ‘a good-natured buffoon, no doubt with the desire that he might become one and remain one’, and ‘go on paying rents and living in huts and tipping his hat to officials’ – ‘such is the peasant of a conquered country’.<sup>91</sup> Morton turned the racial stereotypes on their head, suggesting that in the ‘Gaelic west’ there ‘is a strange locked-up force’, a ‘racial strength’ of the ‘same breed as the Highland crofters’, a people ‘which must influence the future of Ireland’.<sup>92</sup> Cummings declared it ‘unjust’ to call the people of the Hebrides ‘idle’, and that ‘many are hard-working’.<sup>93</sup>

Equally, Frederick Verney described relief works introduced by Major Gaskell in Connemara, which showed ‘the readiness of the people to work for a minimum of pay’. In a period of four weeks, Gaskell employed around 3,000 men in gangs of 60, who ‘worked for a stone of meal a day’, and made over 30 miles of village roads, with 100 stone-built gullets or watercourses, as well as ‘31 rough village piers for fishing-boats’, behind which ‘the boats now lie in perfect shelter’. According to Verney, the roads and village harbours show that the ‘men of Galway’ can ‘win their way from poverty by work’.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, despite his early reservations of the practical capabilities of the Irish, Speight was impressed by Mitchell Henry’s oak ceilings, panelling, and mouldings all ‘designed and finished with the most perfect care and judgement’ by local workers, and he conceded that they represented ‘exceptional examples of Irish capabilities after competent training’.<sup>95</sup>

One of the more visible problems in the eyes of travellers was the seasonal nature of work. In the Glendale district of Skye, the writer Malcolm Ferguson explained that there were ten hamlets or townships which contained ‘a pretty large number of strong, active, able-bodied men’ who spent ‘a very considerable portion of their time in comparative idleness’, with ‘absolutely nothing whatever to do’ for ‘several months of the year’. In Ferguson’s view, inspiration should be sought in the woollen manufactory

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<sup>88</sup> Jessie Mothersole, *The Isles of Scilly: Their Story, Their Folk and Their Flowers* (London, 1910), p. 107.

<sup>89</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), p. 329.

<sup>90</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 123.

<sup>91</sup> Liam O’Flaherty, *A Tourist’s Guide to Ireland* (London, 1929), p. 108.

<sup>92</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, pp. 193-4.

<sup>93</sup> Cumming, *In the Hebrides*, p. 139.

<sup>94</sup> Frederick Verney, ‘The People and the Country of West Galway and Connemara’ (1880), p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Gray, *Tourist’s View of Ireland*, p. 31.

that was established in Portree, which ‘prospered’, and employed ‘a considerable number of people’. With investment from ‘some of the successful sons of Skye’ who made their fortunes abroad, Ferguson hoped that employment, ‘welfare’, and ‘prosperity’ might be realised on the island.<sup>96</sup>

In Cornwall, A. K. Hamilton Jenkin called for government intervention and the modernisation of the fishing industry, as the Cornish fisherman’s livelihood was deemed to be of a ‘precarious and uncertain nature’ due to foreign competition. Belgian fishermen were aided by ‘governmental subsidies or cheap loans’, as their old craft were replaced by ‘the finest type of sea-going vessel, equipped with the very latest form of motive power’, which were a familiar site along the southern coast. In contrast to the £6,000 diesel-powered trawlers, the ‘English steam-driven craft’ cost more to build, ran on more expensive fuel, and required more people to work them. If the Cornish industry were to survive in the face of ‘more efficient Belgian competitors’, Hamilton suggested that ‘the fleets must be modernised, either through the assistance of the financier or by co-operative effort, unless, of course, the work can be entirely effected through state subsidies or loans, which at the moment appears unlikely’.<sup>97</sup>

In the end, many calls for economic developments were motivated by scenes of poverty and desolation in the West.<sup>98</sup> In Ireland, Stone was moved by the ‘solitary grandeur’ of Lough Inagh, and lamented the fact that ‘there are no cabins, no people, no children, no happy signs of industry, of cultivation, prosperity’.<sup>99</sup> During his ‘short excursion’ through Connemara, Frederick Verney was struck by the barrenness of the land and the ‘yearly recurring struggle for existence’.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Quigley called for developments which would ‘increase the wealth and happiness’ of the crofters in Skye.<sup>101</sup>

By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the emergence of tourism as a viable route to development brought about a marriage of ‘aesthetics and economics’ in Ireland.<sup>102</sup> This approach is evident in the calls for developments contained in *The Irish Tourist*, the publication established by Frederick W. Crossley in 1894. The journal displayed ‘an ideology of improvement’ that pervaded the development of tourism in Ireland, as it aimed to ‘link economic improvement with enhanced political harmony’ between the so-called ‘sister’ isles.<sup>103</sup> D. Edgar Flinn regretted the lack of development of Irish health resorts, so that ‘tourists and invalids’ travel to the continent, and capital ‘is thus lost to the home health-resorts’.<sup>104</sup> The Irish Tourist Association sought to respond to such calls for development, and promoted initiatives ‘from hotel improvement to game and piscatorial management to levying local fees to promote watering-place and resort development’. Alongside the Irish Tourist Association, the Irish Tourist Development syndicate and national association of hotel proprietors and restaurateurs were all active in programmes of infrastructural development and place-promotion to enhance Ireland’s reputation as a tourist destination, especially in the British market.<sup>105</sup>

In Ireland, investment remained an important theme in travel texts throughout the period. The writer Michael Floyd described the development programmes of the Free State government, which worked on ‘special grains’, the investigation of ‘diseases of animals and plants’, and produced ‘departmental reports

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<sup>96</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, pp. 124-7.

<sup>97</sup> A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, *Cornish Seafarers* (1932), reprinted in Jenkin, *Cornwall and Its People*, p. 121.

<sup>98</sup> For the crisis in western Ireland between 1879 and 1882, see Gerard Moran, ‘Near Famine: The Crisis in the West of Ireland, 1879-82’, *Irish Studies Review* 5.18 (1997), pp. 14-21.

<sup>99</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 133.

<sup>100</sup> Verney, ‘West Galway and Connemara’, pp. 3-4.

<sup>101</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 8, 71.

<sup>102</sup> Williams, ‘Landscape and Imperial Imagination in Connemara’, p. 90.

<sup>103</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 17.

<sup>104</sup> D. Edgar Flinn, *Ireland: Its Health-Resorts and Watering Places* (London, 1888), p. 10; Salthill (Galway) and Westport were featured in the guide to existing watering places and health resorts; see pp. 98-100.

<sup>105</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 50-1.

on agricultural methods and changes', while the Department of Agriculture subsidised farmers who wished to replenish their stock of cattle.<sup>106</sup> In his *Tourists' Guide to Ireland* (1929), the novelist Liam O'Flaherty advised the politically-inclined tourist to 'pose as a foreign capitalist who has money to invest in the country', if 'he wants to go among the government politicians' during a stay in Dublin.<sup>107</sup>

Elsewhere in the British-Irish Isles, suggestions to develop infrastructural links between the 'Home Countries' were more contentious. Networks of roads and canals were previously central to mid-century discourses of economic improvement and civilisation in the West, but it was feared in some quarters that infrastructural developments – such as the proposal in the 1890s for a rail tunnel under the north Channel, linking Scotland and Ireland – could in fact injure the nascent industry of tourism, as critics pointed to the undesirable consequences of the previous century of industrialisation and urbanisation.<sup>108</sup> In his *Popular Romances of the West of England* (1881), the folklorist Robert Hunt explained that the extension of the railway to Cornwall provided 'great facilities' for visiting the region, but 'robbed the West of England of half its interest, by dispelling the spectres of romance which were, in hoar antiquity, the ruling spirits of the place'.<sup>109</sup>

Such a perception of past infrastructural developments shaped attitudes to future plans. For instance, the idea to construct a north-south road in Wales was first introduced in 1917, and continued to be revived and debated throughout the 1930s. Proponents pointed to the greater connection, sense of nationhood, and more integrated economy that would result from such a project, as well as the benefits of bringing urban populations of the south within reach of their 'lost heritage' in the landscapes of the north. For sceptics such as Iorwerth Peate, whose conception of Welshness was rooted in the rural landscape, building the road would negate the geographical features of Wales that had protected Welsh culture over the centuries, making it vulnerable to the Anglicisation which had taken place in the south.<sup>110</sup>

#### *Race, degeneration, and the West, 1880-1914*

The language of 'races' or 'types' pervaded discussions of the West and its people. These discussions were part of the wider articulation of problems associated with industrialisation and urbanisation, which were in turn bound to the health of the nation, or race. Liberal, Conservative, and Labour politicians were all concerned with racial degeneration, which they linked directly to rural depopulation and the overcrowding of urban slums, and sought national renewal and revitalisation through various policies of land reform.<sup>111</sup> The consequences of racial theories for narratives of national development will be explored in chapter five. The present chapter focusses on the patterns of thought which emerged when discussions of race at the periphery are understood in their explicit or implicit context of the so-called racial degeneration in the towns and cities. These discussions shed more light on wider anxieties about the state of contemporary society at the *fin-de-siècle* than on the racial makeup of the West itself.

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<sup>106</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>107</sup> O'Flaherty, *Tourist's Guide to Ireland*, pp. 77-8.

<sup>108</sup> For the importance of infrastructural networks to mid-century narratives of improvement in Connemara, see Williams, 'Landscape and Imperial Imagination in Connemara', pp. 76-7. For the rail tunnel proposal, see James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 50-1.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (3rd edn, London, 1881 [1865]), p. 15.

<sup>110</sup> Gruffudd, 'Remaking Wales', pp. 232-235. Iorwerth Peate is also briefly discussed in Juliette Wood, 'Perceptions of the Past in Welsh Folklore Studies', *Folklore* 10 (1997), pp. 98-9. These debates about the West were part of a broader, national conversation about the development of rural areas; see Stapledon, *Hill Lands of Britain*, especially pp. 17-20, 83-92.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 74-5, 77-9, 198-9, 204-5; Paul Readman, 'The Edwardian Land Question', in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 193-4, 197.



Firstly, it is necessary to untangle the several strands of meaning contained within the term 'race', as it was used in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Earlier usages of the term referred to lines of descent (as in 'blood' or 'stock'), while biologists used 'race' to denote species of plants or animals. The term was used in general classification, as in 'the human race', but was also attached to ideas about different groups within the human species. From the late-eighteenth century, physical anthropologists such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach sought to classify groups of humans based on skull measurements and skin colour, while writers such as Arthur de Gobineau combined the findings of comparative linguistics with ideas about physical groups and inherent racial inequalities, which (it was believed) shaped behaviour and traits. To this mixture was later added social Darwinism, which reworked Darwin's theory of evolution and applied it to relations between the different races of humans.<sup>112</sup> By the late-nineteenth century, the profound influence of the philosopher and anthropologist Herbert Spencer and the biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck added another layer of meaning to the term. Uses of the term 'race' in this period ranged from more general references to the 'nation' or a group of people without allusion to ethnic division (such as a social class), to an anthropometrically measurable set of hereditary physical traits (and accompanying qualities of character) which may or may not also be altered by the immediate environment in accordance with the theory of Lamarckism.

As the etymology of the term indicates, biological determinism represented only one current of thought in the period, as racial concepts did not have the specifically ethnic connotations that were characteristic later in the twentieth century. Racial terminology and the language of competitiveness was often directed towards Britain's economic and imperial rivals such as Germany, rather than towards non-white races.<sup>113</sup> As well as nationality, the language of race was also inflected by notions of class, as racial metaphors were used by some social commentators when discussing 'the problems of the very poor', describing them as 'backward' and 'a race apart'.<sup>114</sup>

Professor W. K. Sullivan imposed ideas about class onto a racial framework in his introduction to *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish* (1873), describing the process by which 'each successive dominant race' drove 'at least part of its predecessors in power into the rent-paying and labouring ranks beneath them'.<sup>115</sup> Baring-Gould picked up on Sullivan's conflation of race with class, and claimed that in Cornwall 'it is probable that the yeomen of the land at the present day represent the Saxon', whereas 'in the great body of the agricultural labourers, the miners, the artisans, we mainly have a mixture of British and Ivernian blood'.<sup>116</sup> Baring-Gould also did the reverse, imposing ideas of race onto a framework of class in his descriptions of 'Welsh' traits as resembling 'the Anglo-Saxon of the lower class'.<sup>117</sup>

At times, the language of 'peoples', 'types', 'races', and other descriptors were used interchangeably, and did not always refer to a rigid concept of shared physical characteristics or ethnicity. In a matter of a few paragraphs, Ellis referred to the Cornish, Bretons, and Welsh as 'a compact group of peoples', then divided the Cornish into two 'types' that represent 'the two oldest races in Cornwall, or, indeed, of

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<sup>112</sup> For a discussion of the term 'race' and its several strains, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, 1988), pp. 248-50. For a discussion of the term's application to the 'Celtic' racial element in Britain and Ireland, see L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Connecticut, 1968), pp. 37-41; L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 16-21; and Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993), pp. 192-3.

<sup>113</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 235.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>115</sup> W. K. Sullivan, 'Introduction', in W. K. O'Sullivan (ed.), *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish* (London, 1873), p. xxiv.

<sup>116</sup> For Baring-Gould's recognition of Sullivan, see Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon*, p. 5. For his application to Cornwall, see Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon*, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of North Wales* (London, 1903), p. 215.

England'.<sup>118</sup> In this way, the terminology of racial progress and decline was often used without reference to ethnicity, and became part of 'the wider organic metaphor' for general discussions of the wellbeing of British citizens.<sup>119</sup> The flexibility of this language meant that discussions of race and the West were therefore compatible with more general debates about the condition of wider society.

Significantly, ideas about race in this period incorporated the belief that characteristics were acquired by individuals as a result of their surroundings. Kermack explained that 'upon the racial qualities already present in a people... there must work all the forces, products to a large extent of climatic conditions, which shape mysteriously a man's individuality'.<sup>120</sup> Unlike social Darwinism, which proposed a model of biological inheritance, Lamarckism proposed that 'organisms adapted directly to their environment and that offspring inherited the characteristics acquired by their parents'.<sup>121</sup> This line of thought was expressed by the Physical Deterioration Committee and Poor Law Commission, which feared the degeneration of the 'race', but largely pointed towards environmental factors to explain decline. Similarly, the National Birth-Rate Commission of 1912-1916 emphasised 'bad environment' as opposed to the notion that the poorest in society were the hereditary products of biological degenerates.<sup>122</sup>

The language of the collective society – the nation – emerged at the *fin-de-siècle*. Early Victorians saw 'drink' as a cause of personal sin and suffering, whereas late Victorians saw it in terms of national efficiency. The same was true of venereal disease, as issues of private morality became subjects of racial decline.<sup>123</sup> From the 1880s, poverty was also perceived as a problem of society, not of the individual. Charles Booth declared that the 'very poor' were 'dragging down the overall standard of national life'.<sup>124</sup> In the context of *fin-de-siècle* anxieties of degeneration, Lamarckism meant that problems such as 'drink, pollution, malnutrition, and disease' were hereditary, but it was also the case that such conditions could be reversed, while the beneficial effects of such changes would also be 'transmissible to future generations'.<sup>125</sup> It was not just decay and decline but also transformation and renewal that characterised discussions of degeneration at the *fin-de-siècle*.<sup>126</sup>

In this context, it was believed that western peripheries, with their unchanged landscapes, economies, communities, as well as racial types and characters, could reinvigorate the culture of the centre, which was weary and degenerating under the weight of the machine age. To be English was to 'have been nearly broken on the wheel of industry', while spiritual enrichment, cultural revitalisation, and the restoration of mental health could be achieved by travelling to, and reading about, the Celtic periphery.<sup>127</sup> After all, the preservation of racial types such as the 'Welsh' was thought to occur in greater 'concentration' in areas of geographical seclusion, in 'hilly districts', far away from 'the advance of the railways'.<sup>128</sup> The 'revitalisation' offered by the West came in the form of physical health and moral well-being, which will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, discussions of the 'health of the people' in the West reflected the wider concern with the national health and the crisis of degeneration in the cities, as domestic social policy regarding infant mortality and education was 'increasingly suffused with concern about whether conditions of life in urban Britain were

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<sup>118</sup> Ellis, 'The Men of Cornwall' (April 1897), pp. 329-30.

<sup>119</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, pp. 236-7.

<sup>120</sup> Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland*, p. 3.

<sup>121</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243-4.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242-3.

<sup>126</sup> Marius Turda, 'Biology and Eugenics', in Michael Saler (ed.), *The Fin-de-Siècle World* (London, 2015), p. 467.

<sup>127</sup> Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 279.

<sup>128</sup> William Boyd Dawkins, *The Place of the Welsh in the History of Britain* (London, 1889), pp. 46-7.

adequate for the physical nurture of a modern imperial race'.<sup>129</sup> The birth-rate more than halved between 1871 and 1914, and official concerns with degeneration saw the establishment of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1903.<sup>130</sup> Contrastingly, the people of Skye were 'a strong, healthy, hardy-looking race', and in western Ireland 'the Joyces' of Joyce Country 'have the reputation of being the tallest and strongest race in Ireland'.<sup>131</sup> Drawing on Henry D. Inglis's *A Journey Throughout Ireland* (1834), *Black's Ireland* (1877) described the Joyces as 'a magnificent race of men, the biggest, stoutest, and tallest he had seen in Ireland, eclipsing even the peasantry of the Tyrol'.<sup>132</sup> Concerns about the national fitness centred on the British Army at the turn of the twentieth century. Although anxieties about the physical health of British Army recruits had existed within military circles since the Crimean War, the Boer War (1899-1902) brought the 'spectre of biological degeneration' to the attention of the general public, reinforcing a more general sentiment that perceived a general decline in the physical health of the British population.<sup>133</sup> In contrast, it was claimed that 'the Cornish are a broad-shouldered race, above the average in stature', and that 'west country regiments, when drawn up on parade, cover a greater space of ground than would those of other counties, the number being equal'.<sup>134</sup>

Secondly, physical degeneration was closely linked with the perceived decline in morality. In 1888, *The Lancet* raised the question 'Are We Degenerating Physically?' and claimed that degeneration is 'undoubtedly at work among town-bred populations'. Degeneration was the result of 'unwholesome occupations', 'improper food', 'over-pressure in education', and 'the abuse of alcohol and tobacco'. Such conditions led to 'widespread evils' including 'juvenile vice', 'sexual indulgence in early life, premature marriages', and 'increased tension', which in turn posed 'serious dangers to the public health'.<sup>135</sup> This anxiety about the immorality of urban life stood in contrast to the high level of morality shown by the people of the West. The author of *An Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall* (1884) claimed that 'I have never seen, in any part of England or Scotland, such an honest, independent, respectable race as the working people on this coast'.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, the Welsh labourers and small farmers avoid 'races and football matches', 'horse-play' and 'the vulgarities and riot of a collection of Anglo-Saxons out for a junketing', instead gathering in 'thousands to hear music and poetry'.<sup>137</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1906) quoted the antiquarian and archaeologist George Petrie's description of the Aran islanders, who retained their 'high moral character' in their remoteness.<sup>138</sup> Verney's report on Connemara devoted a section to the 'Health and Morality of the People', and noted that 'there is little or no drunkenness', 'no thieving', while 'unchastity among the women is a thing almost unheard of, and 'honesty in this sense is almost universal'. When the district doctor lost his purse containing £7 in gold, it was returned the next day, 'and the finder could hardly be induced to take any reward'. Crime, if it did occur, was due to poverty, whereas in England 'crime is closely connected with vice'.<sup>139</sup> Ferguson found a similar situation in Skye:

In the course of all my rambles, in nearly every district and corner of Skye, I don't remember ever seeing a tipsy person, and very rarely ever heard anything like swearing or

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<sup>129</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 235.

<sup>130</sup> Turda, 'Biology and Eugenics', pp. 460-1.

<sup>131</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, pp. 74-6; Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), pp. 227-8

<sup>132</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 285. Also see Henry D. Inglis, *A Journey Throughout Ireland, During the Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1834* (5th edn, London, 1838 [1834]), p. 226

<sup>133</sup> Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 235; Turda, 'Biology and Eugenics', pp. 460-1.

<sup>134</sup> Baring-Gould, *Cambridge County Geographies: Cornwall*, p. 71

<sup>135</sup> 'Are We Degenerating Physically?', *The Lancet* 132.3405 (1888), pp. 1076-7. Also see Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 201.

<sup>136</sup> Dinah Maria Craik, *An Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall* (London, 1884), p. 35

<sup>137</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, p. 213.

<sup>138</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), pp. 209-10.

<sup>139</sup> Verney, 'West Galway and Connemara', pp. 7, 11.

coarse language – forming a pleasant contrast to the shocking scenes, and the outrageous and blasphemous swearing, often heard in some of the streets of our large cities, which makes one actually shudder.<sup>140</sup>

As Ferguson indicated, the morality of western people was often directly contrasted with the vices to be found in the towns and cities. Havelock Ellis drew out the contrast at several points in his article ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (1897). Ellis explained that the ‘volatility’ of the Cornish ‘rarely passes into the rowdyism and horseplay which are still so painfully common among the true-born English’. According to Ellis, Cornish ‘lads’ were not known to engage in ‘creating the maximum of noisy mischief’, and if you were in the West End of London, and were awoken ‘in the early hours of Sunday morning by ugly voices howling discordantly the noisiest music-hall song to the cackling accompaniment of reckless laughter’, you could be ‘fairly’ certain that ‘these people were not born in Cornwall’. Likewise, Cornish wrestling was ‘graceful and vigorous’, and ‘there is nothing of the reckless barbarity of football so dear to the hearts of the northern English countrymen’.<sup>141</sup> The depiction of the West in this way was part of a wider trend in English culture, which continued to value the periphery as a site of renewal and revitalisation, finding the spirit, as Robert Colls put it, ‘richer for a little neck-stretching towards the Scottish border, the Irish Sea, or the Welsh Marches’.<sup>142</sup>

Discussions of race in the travel texts of the West provide valuable insight into the perceived problems of urban society in this period. Passages of social commentary in Cornwall, West Connacht, North West Wales, and the Isle of Skye comprised either thinly veiled or explicit criticisms of physical health and morality in the towns and cities. The detachment from modern society in the remote regions of the West gave these writers a sense of perspective when they looked back to the places they had left behind, and also provided them with first-hand knowledge of rural communities and an accompanying sense of authority when it came to the matter of finding solutions to the problems of modern urban life. The answers were to be found in a collection of peripheral regions that had remained isolated from the degenerative effects of modernity, preserving the heath and morality that was provided by their racial makeup and reinforced by their rural environment.<sup>143</sup>

### III – The emergence of mass society, 1880-1940

The shift from an emphasis on the ‘individual degenerate’ to concerns about society and the nation characterised the anxieties of the *fin-de-siècle*. This was reflected in the idea of ‘the crowd’, the multitude, in which humans regressed into disorder. In this period, the crowd became a sociological category that represented the dangers of socialism, mass democracy, and of modernity itself.<sup>144</sup> Concerns about racial decline were matched by the displeasure and aversion expressed towards mass modern culture, which emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century and intensified in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The emergence of mass culture grew out of political and social changes, and manifested itself in the new popular mass media. The Second Reform Act (1867) gave the vote to urban, working-class men in England and Wales, doubling the size of the electorate, while the Third Reform Act (1884) and

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<sup>140</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 127.

<sup>141</sup> Havelock Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’, *The New Century Review* 1.5 (May 1897), pp. 413-14.

<sup>142</sup> Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 279.

<sup>143</sup> When writers used the West as a way of discussing the problems of the towns and cities, this often led to a romanticised construction of the West. The perceived racial shortcomings of the western populations will be discussed in chapter five.

<sup>144</sup> Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, pp. 222-3.

Redistribution of Seats Act (1885) ensured that the same voting rights were extended to the countryside. These reforms did not amount to universal suffrage, but they increased the size of the electorate to over five million for the first time, in which we may see the germ of mass political democracy and modern political campaigning.<sup>145</sup> At the same time, the Education Acts of 1880, 1893, and 1899 made school attendance compulsory for young children nationwide, the last of which required education up to the age of 12. While some children continued to work instead of attend school, and many more laboured outside the hours of the school day, the introduction of universal elementary education brought into being ‘a huge literate public’ for the first time. As John Carey put it, ‘literacy’ was the difference between the nineteenth-century ‘mob’ and the twentieth-century ‘mass’.<sup>146</sup>

The popular newspaper emerged at the end of the nineteenth century to cater for this new reading public, and in 1896 the *Daily Mail* was established – the daily newspaper with the largest circulation at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>147</sup> The new mass newspaper departed from the style of the Victorian national morning press, which was aimed at the ‘man of affairs’ and covered Parliamentary debates, politics, diplomatic and imperial events, financial and business news, as well as the affairs of high society. In contrast, the popular ‘circulation-getter’ newspaper was based on commercial principles, and expanded the coverage of sports, cinema, and fashion in an attempt to exploit the untapped female market and turn young readers into life-long subscribers.<sup>148</sup>

In the inter-war period, the commercialisation of entertainment and fashion intensified, as the emotional and material strains of the First World War were released in a growing demand for popular entertainment.<sup>149</sup> By 1925, there were 11,000 nightclubs in London, and the number of cinemas increased from 3,000 to 5,000 between 1914 and 1939. By the end of the period, some 23 million people went to the cinema on a weekly basis, and the so-called ‘Americanisation’ of British culture was also seen in the increasing popularity of jazz music, as the wireless brought music and entertainment into the home. The 1920s and 1930s saw the development of ‘a leisure-orientated society’ in Britain, as falling living costs and average weekly working hours increased spending power and the time in which to visit dance halls, cinemas, and holiday camps. In the 1930s, the principal destinations for the growing number of holidaymakers included the beaches of the south coast, the south-west, Essex, Kent, the east coast, Lancashire, and North Wales.<sup>150</sup>

The changes in politics, education, and the media were revolutionary in that they created a culture based on sales figures, which bypassed the traditional cultural elite of intellectuals.<sup>151</sup> In response, there was widespread hostility towards ‘the masses’ and mass culture among intellectuals across Europe, who deplored advertising and entertainments that were considered vulgar, trivial, and of low-level satisfaction.<sup>152</sup>

In this context, the West promised an escape from mass, commercial society, and was often constructed in direct opposition to the culture of the cities and suburbs. In a book of collected radio talks about Cornwall, the historian and author A. L. Rowse explained the public’s interest in such regions because they provided ‘character’, ‘idiosyncrasy’, and ‘diversity’ in an age when popular culture was characterised

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<sup>145</sup> J. P. D. Dunbanin, ‘Electoral Reforms and their Outcome in the United Kingdom, 1865-1900’, in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O’Dan (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* (Basingstoke, 1988), pp. 93-125.

<sup>146</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 5.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>148</sup> Bingham, *Popular Press in Inter-War Britain*, pp. 23, 55.

<sup>149</sup> Martin Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (London, 2008), p. 217.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4, 216-17, 232, 239.

<sup>151</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

by ‘the shamelessness, the vulgar and cheap insipidity of a Hollywood civilisation’, the ‘spawning of suburbia and industrial slumdom’, and the ‘ruin of towns that had both integration and integrity’.<sup>153</sup> Daphne du Maurier explored Cornwall’s otherness and its pagan, exotic, wild marginality in works such as *Jamaica Inn* (1936) and *Rebecca* (1938), finding in old Cornwall a place from which to reject modernity.<sup>154</sup>

Railway companies styled themselves as the facilitators of ‘a renewal of the zest of life’ for the urban population, emphasising in their travel texts the need for a holiday ‘in these strenuous days of city life’.<sup>155</sup> In this sense, travel texts had a fine line to tread, on the one hand attempting to tap into the increasing belief in the necessity of an annual escape in the form of a holiday, while on the other not wanting to criticise too heavily urban and suburban everyday life, which would alienate their own clientele. Nevertheless, the Great Western Railway also recognised that ‘year after year’ a period of rest becomes ‘more and more a necessity of human existence’ for ‘the busy toilers in great cities’. To the people of London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Manchester, the Great Western Railway stated that ‘it will assuredly be tidings of comfort and joy’ that Wales was within easy reach.<sup>156</sup> Travel was an escape from the ‘daily labour’ that was ‘made necessary by the artifice of civilisation’, from the ‘complex social machinery which has screwed you to your place among its cog-wheels’.<sup>157</sup>

In the more accessible regions of Cornwall and North West Wales, escaping from modernity frequently required more creative and imaginative instincts, as the isolation so valued by the Romantic writers became more difficult to achieve (see Image 2.1).<sup>158</sup> W. H. Hudson used the symbolic and imaginative power of mist to describe his escape from mass culture in his 1908 account of a trip to the Land’s End, in Cornwall. Hudson ‘blessed the furious winds’, which served to ‘keep the pilgrims away, and half blot out the vulgar modern buildings with rain and mist from the Atlantic’. Hudson’s ‘pilgrims’ were the crowds of tourists visiting the Land’s End, a popular excursion destination and one that was increasingly within easy reach for the tourist.<sup>159</sup> Rather than limiting visibility, the mist and rain invigorated Hudson’s imaginative sight, enabling him to conjecture his own isolation as the last person at the edge of the world, without being disturbed by crowds of tourists. Heath was initially disappointed by ‘the first aspect of Land’s End’, with the turf ‘worn smooth by the feet of many trippers’, and began to appreciate the ‘granite boulders’ and ‘onrushing waves of the Atlantic’ once he proceeded to ‘wander around the lesser used trackways’.<sup>160</sup> Morton, too, was glad that he did not see the Land’s End in sunlight, ‘for then, no doubt, it would have looked just like any other stretch of rocky coast’. The ‘white mist’ and ‘thin rain’ drenched Morton’s body and mind ‘in melancholy’, and made the Land’s End seem ‘like the end of all things’.<sup>161</sup> Hudson began to feel that he was ‘the “last man” in that most solitary place’, removed not just from modern tourists but also from ‘vulgar modern buildings’ that were otherwise visible in clear weather.<sup>162</sup> Hudson associated the modern buildings and tourists with ‘Saxon England’, and his escape – however fleeting and fragile – was achieved at “‘the westeste point of the land of Cornwall’”.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> A. L. Rowse, ‘Introduction’, in A. L. Rowse (ed.), *The West in English History* (London, 1949), p. 14.

<sup>154</sup> Kent, *Literature of Cornwall*, pp. 179-81; Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 279; Light, *Forever England*, p. 203.

<sup>155</sup> Caledonian Railway, *Caledonian Railway. Illustrated Official Guide to Summer Resorts* (Glasgow, 1914), p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), p. viii.

<sup>157</sup> Scott-James, *Englishman in Ireland*, p. 1.

<sup>158</sup> Similar themes have been noted regarding the more recent popularisation of mountaineering; see Barbara R. Johnston and Ted Edwards, ‘The Commodification of Mountaineering’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 21.3 (1994), pp. 470-3.

<sup>159</sup> Hudson, *Land’s End*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>160</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, p. 38.

<sup>161</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 93-4.

<sup>162</sup> Hudson, *Land’s End*, pp. 57-60.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

Image 2.1



Source: W. K. Haselden, 'This Week's Quiet Holiday for Easter', *Daily Mirror*, 14 April 1919.

While the coastlines of North Wales and Cornwall were within easy reach of the city crowds, the Isle of Skye, West Connacht, and the Scilly Isles promised full detachment from any indication of modern commercial life.<sup>164</sup> As MacDiarmid noted, in the Hebrides 'we are more or less completely removed from the megalopolitan madness' of modern Europe.<sup>165</sup> Even the name of Skye was 'dimly suggestive of something remote and savage and windy', a land where 'the comforts of civilisation are not to be had for love nor money'.<sup>166</sup> Using similar adjectives to George Orwell in his description of modern British life, MacBrayne's steamer guidebook for 1938 explained that, in Skye, 'the harassments of the hour and the dull routine of the day are not known... these seas and these isles are full of healing'.<sup>167</sup> In the Scilly Isles, 'a greater change from stereotyped holiday resorts can hardly be imagined'.<sup>168</sup>

In western Ireland, H. V. Morton described the transition from civilisation to wildness:

It begins suddenly as soon as you leave Galway due west by the coast road... It is a part of the earth in which Progress – whatever we mean by it – has broken in vain against grey

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<sup>164</sup> E. W. Lynam described Ireland as 'on the north-west verge of Europe, remote from the highroad of progress and civilisation'; see E. W. Lynam, 'The O'Flaherty Country', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 3.10 (1914), p. 13.

<sup>165</sup> MacDiarmid, *Islands of Scotland*, p. x.

<sup>166</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), p. 9.

<sup>167</sup> MacBrayne, *Royal Route* (1938), p. 2. For Orwell's adjectives, see Fussell, *Abroad*, p. 17. MacDiarmid also linked the isolation from modernity with psychological health; see MacDiarmid, *Islands of Scotland*, pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>168</sup> Tonkin and Row, *Handbook for Scilly*, p. 15.

walls; it has been arrested by high hills and deep lakes to the east and by the sea on the west. These people have been locked away for centuries by geography and poverty. I have been into the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt, but entering Connemara gave me a finer feeling of discovery and a greater sense of remoteness from modern life!<sup>169</sup>

Similarly, Floyd described how ‘in the wilder parts of the West the life assumes a simple primitive quality’, with agricultural tools and methods that ‘remained unchanged for a thousand years or more’. These communities ‘occupy no more than the coastal fringe between a wild mountain region and the sea, and communications with the outside world are restricted in the extreme’.<sup>170</sup> Charles Whympster admired the ‘quiet country village’ in which he stayed, where ‘life seemed so simple and wants were few’.<sup>171</sup> It was for this measure of isolation that R. A. S. Macalister was wary of tourism development in Ireland. He feared Ireland would be opened up to the ‘boisterous cockney crowd’ and that ‘picturesque little cottages’ would be replaced by ‘a stucco nightmare of lodging-house atrocities’. The ‘rampant commercialism’ was ‘going on rapidly’ in England, and Macalister asked, ‘are we to imitate her example in this?’<sup>172</sup>

### *Suburbanisation and the destruction of the countryside, 1900-1940*

As part of the cultural reaction to the emergent mass modern society, suburbs and their inhabitants – the ‘suburbans’, as the politician and leading figure of New Liberalism C. F. G. Masterman called them – were often the particular focus of derision and ridicule. Robert Colls suggested that anti-suburban prejudice peaked before 1914, and that by the 1930s ‘those well-swept avenues and striped green lawns came to be seen as the heart of England itself’.<sup>173</sup> However, as David Gilbert and Rebecca Preston pointed out, it is clear that anti-suburban sentiment maintained its intensity throughout the period, which is evident not just in the publications of the literary intelligentsia, but in the architectural and planning professions, too.<sup>174</sup>

The growth of suburbs on the outskirts of major towns and cities was a process that predates 1900. The development of electric trams and cheap train ticket fares supported a culture of ‘commuterism’, creating the demand for construction that affected the surrounding areas of London in particular. In 1851, there were fewer than 3,000 houses in outer-west London (comprising Acton, Chiswick, Ealing, and Hanwell) whereas by 1911 the number exceeded 33,000.<sup>175</sup> Societies which aimed to preserve the threatened heritage emerged in the nineteenth century, such as the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society (1865), the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877), the Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising (1893), as well as the National Trust (1895).<sup>176</sup> The phenomenon of ‘the spoiling of the suburbs’ saw older, established, middle-class suburbs tarnished by speculative builders.<sup>177</sup> Older suburbs and the older countryside they replaced ‘shimmer in a nostalgic haze, where the stem and gaslight of early railway waiting rooms mingle with sepia views of leafy lanes in Pinner, and glimpses of white,

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<sup>169</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 173.

<sup>170</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 13, 15, 60.

<sup>171</sup> C. W., ‘In an Irish Village’, pp. 637, 641.

<sup>172</sup> R. A. S. Macalister, ‘The Debit Account of the Tourist Movement’, *The New Ireland Review* 8.2 (1897), pp. 87-92.

<sup>173</sup> Colls, *Identity of England*, pp. 217-18.

<sup>174</sup> David Gilbert and Rebecca Preston, “‘Stop being so English’: Suburban Modernity and National Identity in the Twentieth Century”, in David Gilbert, David Matless, and Brian Short (eds), *Geographies of British Modernity: Space and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 190-1.

<sup>175</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 46.

<sup>176</sup> John Ranlett, “‘Checking Nature’s Desecration’: Late-Victorian Environmental Organisation”, *Victorian Studies* 26.2 (1983), pp. 208-10; Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’, p. 265.

<sup>177</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 47.



weather-boarded mills in Edwardian Essex'. In contrast, modern suburbs were described as 'monstrous', 'harbouring a mixed bag of atrocities' such as advertisements, cars, litter, and 'people who wear public-school ties to which they are not entitled'.<sup>178</sup>

In particular, the speed of change was the cause of outrage, as centuries-old farms, fields, and woods were lost within a matter of a few decades.<sup>179</sup> The philosopher and broadcaster C. E. M. Joad warned that 'suburbs sprawl like a vast red rash over the fair face of the land', destroying the 'true country'.<sup>180</sup> Suburbanisation intensified in the inter-war period, as the urban area of England and Wales grew by 26 percent while the town population only rose by 15 percent.<sup>181</sup> After the 1909 Town Planning Act and the First World War, the number of new houses increased from an annual average of 200,000 in the 1920s, to over 300,000 in the 1930s, with the peak of 350,000 in 1936.<sup>182</sup> Local authorities replaced slums, as the promise of 'Homes for Heroes' saw the development of suburban estates around large cities, such as Moulescoomb in Brighton, Wythenshawe in Manchester, and Kirby in Liverpool.<sup>183</sup> In the 1930s, the advent of widespread motor transport and construction companies who could complete a semi in the matter of a few days saw suburbia fling its 'tentacles' across the countryside at a rate of 60,000 acres per year.<sup>184</sup> In 1939, the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales warned of urban sprawl along the north coast of Wales, and that the once quiet Llŷn Peninsula was in danger of being ruined by the spread of bungalows.<sup>185</sup>

In the inter-war period, there were several efforts to limit the suburban sprawl, including: the East Kent Regional Plan (1925); the saving of Stonehenge after the opening of the 'Stonehenge Café' (1927); the Norbury Park and the Surrey County Council Act (1931); the South Downs Preservation Bill (1934); and the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Population (from 1937), in response to the growth of Greater London.<sup>186</sup> The problem of growing town populations and the preservation of the countryside were seen to be closely connected, and therefore town and country planning grew alongside one another.<sup>187</sup> The Restriction of Ribbon Development Act (1935) and the Green Belt, London and Home Counties Act (1938) marked major legislative steps to limit the spread of suburbs, and in 1926 Eastbourne Town Council purchased Beachy Head to prevent a chain of bungalows being built along the famous stretch of coast.<sup>188</sup> As Gilbert and Preston explained, the semi-detached house became 'emblematic of all that was wrong with English architecture', as it 'reeked of timidity, compromise, and profit-centred pandering to the uneducated tastes of the lower middle classes', as the 'tudorbethan', 'half-baked' style with fake half-timbering was ridiculed by architects such as John Gloag.<sup>189</sup>

Concerns about the emergence of mass society often picked up on the idea of the 'rootless' suburbs, which threatened to make the nation itself rootless. The historian Esmé Wingfield-Stratford described the inhabitants of suburban London as 'a community without traditions, without self-respect, without

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<sup>178</sup> These views are attributed to John Betjeman; see Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 66.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>180</sup> C. E. M. Joad, 'Pains and Pleasures of a Middle-Aged Walker', *The Bookman* 84.500 (May 1933), pp. 94-5.

<sup>181</sup> Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p. 258.

<sup>182</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London, 1994), pp. 12-13.

<sup>183</sup> Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p. 258.

<sup>184</sup> For the 'tentacles' comment, see Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 47. For the statistic of 60,000 acres, see Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p. 259.

<sup>185</sup> Pyrs Gruffudd, 'The Battle of Butlin's: Vulgarly and Virtue on the North Wales Coast, 1939-49', *Rural History* 21.1 (2010), pp. 76-7.

<sup>186</sup> Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 236.

<sup>187</sup> Crawford and Balcarres, 'Foreword', in Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 8; Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 11-13; Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, 'Foreword', in O. J. R. Howarth, *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (London, 1937), pp. v-vi.

<sup>188</sup> Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', p. 266; Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 236.

<sup>189</sup> Gilbert and Preston, 'Suburban Modernity', p. 192.

ideals'.<sup>190</sup> This idea of 'placelessness' was a widely applied concept, from Victorian 'villadom', late-nineteenth century and Edwardian terraced suburbs, inter-war semi-detached suburbs, to the New Towns and suburban public estates of the 1950s and the owner-occupied estates of the building booms of the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>191</sup> It was not just the buildings themselves that were despised, though, as the antagonisms and sense of loss generated by suburbanisation fuelled hostility that was directed towards the people living there.<sup>192</sup>

C. F. G. Masterman dedicated a chapter to 'the Suburbans' in *The Condition of England* (1909), which summarised the characteristics of suburban life so despised by many writers and social commentators in the period. In characteristically overblown language, Masterman described a 'homogenous civilisation' living lives of 'security', 'sedentary occupation', and 'respectability'. The men were 'sucked into the City at daybreak', worked in 'small, crowded offices, under artificial light', and added up 'other men's accounts', before scattering again 'before darkness falls'. The women engaged in 'excursions to shopping centres in the West End' and occupied themselves with 'pious sociabilities', 'occasional theatre visits', and 'the interests of home'. In August, the family visited 'the more genteel of the southern watering-places', putting up with 'cramped lodging and extortionate prices'.<sup>193</sup>

In such lives of 'comfort' and 'affluence', the 'atmosphere often becomes stifling and difficult', and this existence carried with it 'the seeds of futility and decay'.<sup>194</sup> Instead of dedicating energy to 'social services', 'public duty', 'one of the great causes of the world', or anything of 'permanent worth', the suburbans engaged in neighbourly feuds about garden fences and criticised each other for their 'fashion, dress and deportment'.<sup>195</sup> Nowhere was the cultural debasement of the suburbans clearer than in their 'chosen literature'. In the mass media publications that 'exploit and encourage the hunger of the suburban crowd', the reader found 'spectacular sport and silly gambling', a sensational divorce case, 'a woman adventurer on the music-hall stage', 'frivolous gambling competitions', picture puzzles, and missing-word competitions. In such publications, the reader passed 'from one frivolity to another', and the inhabitant of the 'artificial city civilisation' became detached from 'the realities of life'.<sup>196</sup>

Masterman's tirade expressed, albeit in exaggerated form, contemporary anxieties about suburbs and the suburbans, but such dramatic cultural commentaries did not reflect the very real rise in living conditions that the suburbs represented. Writing in 1938, Edward Shanks was more balanced in his assessment of the suburbs. He admitted that 'our cities are sprawling out across the fields' with the erection of 'shoddy and ugly' houses, but he also recognised that this was an expression of 'love of the English countryside', an 'ancient instinct' which offered to many 'improved standards of living and improved methods of communication'. In any case, 'new buildings do seem to conflict with the landscape', and Shanks suggested that Norman castles, medieval cathedrals, and Tudor houses at one time 'probably seemed raw and garish to many sensitive conservative eyes'.<sup>197</sup> The writer and broadcaster J. B. Priestley also argued that 'there is a great deal to be said for the suburb', and cited the 'civilised way of life' that it afforded the 'salesmen or the clerk', enabling them to have 'one foot in the city and one in the country'.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Quoted in Colls, *Identity of England*, pp. 63-4.

<sup>191</sup> Gilbert and Preston, 'Suburban Modernity', p. 188.

<sup>192</sup> John Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, pp. 50-1.

<sup>193</sup> C. F. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (3rd edn, London, 1909 [1909]), pp. 68-71.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>197</sup> Edward Shanks, *My England* (London, 1938), pp. 72-80.

<sup>198</sup> Priestley, 'Beauty of Britain', p. 7.

John Carey suggested that ‘the uglification of England drove young writers abroad’, where Evelyn Waugh (East Africa), Grahame Greene (West Africa), Robert Byron (India, Tibet, Persia, Siberia, China, and Greece) found ‘wild and remote locales’.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, Paul Fussell argued that for Eliot, Auden, and Lawrence, England had become too domestic and inspiration was sought abroad.<sup>200</sup> However, it is also true that wild and remote locales were to be found closer to home, in the western regions of the British-Irish Isles. In Skye, Ferguson came across a crowd of visitors at Sligachan Hotel, ‘chiefly English people’, among whom were ‘two landscape painters from London’ who were ‘busy sketching some of the lofty peaks and lonely eerie corries’ in the surrounding area. Here, the isolation, remoteness, and lack of inhabitants were valued by the English tourists and London painters, who travelled to see the ‘remarkable and striking surroundings of grand and wild mountain scenery’.<sup>201</sup> In their journeys to the West, travel writers also took the opportunity to comment on the ‘uglification’ that was occurring through the spread of suburbia. The appreciation of architecture in the West was accompanied by a streak of anti-suburban rhetoric, as peasant dwellings were romanticised as ‘natural’, in direct contrast to the artificiality of ‘life in the metropolis’.<sup>202</sup>

The emergence of the ‘touristic gaze’ and romanticised images of vernacular architecture in a quiet landscape flourished in the years after the Famine, which produced an ‘empty landscape’ that was reconfigured as picturesque, at the same time that the railways and more reliable steamship passenger services increased the accessibility of such landscapes.<sup>203</sup> The romanticised image of the cottage in the ‘ancient and authentic west’ was also an important motif in Irish nationalism, and represented an imagined ‘image of the homeland’.<sup>204</sup> To this may be added the notion of harmony within the rural landscape, which explicitly challenged the so-called rootless and placeless nature of suburban estates. The prevailing image of picturesque architecture in Ireland was the ‘simple country cottage’ of whitewashed walls and a thatched roof, which was ‘buried amidst the mountains’ of the surrounding landscape (see Image 2.2).<sup>205</sup> Michael Floyd encountered this traditional Irish dwelling, made of ‘thick whitewashed walls and honey-coloured thatch’, and he described the cottage as ‘entirely in harmony with its setting’.<sup>206</sup> The Claddagh buildings were similarly romanticised in travel texts as ‘a curious network of little streets of whitewashed and thatched cottages’.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 50.

<sup>200</sup> Fussell, *Abroad*.

<sup>201</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 81.

<sup>202</sup> Hirsch discusses the dichotomy of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ in relation to representations of the Irish peasantry; see Edward Hirsch, ‘The Imaginary Irish Peasant’, *PMLA* 106.5 (1991), p. 1120.

<sup>203</sup> Patrick Joyce, ‘The Journey West’, *Field Day Review* 10 (2014), p. 67. In this article, Joyce shows the photographs of Josef Koudelka, who refuses to idealise the West, recognising that ‘the western fringe is no Eden’, p. 68.

<sup>204</sup> Tricia Cusack, ‘A “Countryside Bright with Cosy Homesteads”: Irish Nationalism and the Cottage Landscape’, *National Identities* 3.3 (2001), pp. 221-38; quotations from pp. 221, 223-4.

<sup>205</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 149. For this style as an important characteristic of the Irish inn, see James, ‘Irish Inn’, p. 28.

<sup>206</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 7.

<sup>207</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), pp. 176-7. Also see *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), p. 186.

Image 2.2



Source: Michael Floyd, *The Face of Ireland* (London, 1937), frontispiece.

In Scotland, the ‘Highlandism’ which promoted landscape scenery and so-called ‘traditional’ dwellings flourished as the Jacobite political threat disappeared and the landscape was cleared.<sup>208</sup> In the Isle of Skye, the organic quality of the crofters’ huts was evident in their ‘low, lichen-covered walls’, and roofs ‘thatched with the materials of the surrounding moor’, which gave the impression that they ‘have grown’ out of the surrounding landscape (see Image 2.3). MacCulloch suggested that the crofter’s hut ‘is a product of nature, not of art’ as it ‘rhymes with the sober landscape, and partakes of its shaggy wildness’.<sup>209</sup> Travel texts described crofters’ houses alongside ‘their picturesque stripes of cultivated land’.<sup>210</sup> Between Portree and the Quiraing the lateral valleys contained ‘more than one “bothy” hamlet, occupied by the real *aborigines*’,<sup>211</sup> while in the Outer Hebrides ‘one may observe crofter life under its most primitive conditions’.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 93-110, especially pp. 109-10.

<sup>209</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 16-18.

<sup>210</sup> MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1881), p. 81; slightly reworded in MacBrayne, *Summer Tours in Scotland* (1903), p. 81.

<sup>211</sup> M. J. B. Baddeley (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. The Highlands of Scotland* (London, 1881), p. 216; M. J. B. Baddeley (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. Scotland (Part I)* (London, 1885), p. 251; M. J. B. Baddeley (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. Scotland (Part I)* (10th edn, London, 1903), p. 273.

<sup>212</sup> Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903), p. 318.

Image 2.3



Source: J. J. Bell, *Scotland's Rainbow West* (London, 1933), facing p. 305. 'Primitive Dwellings in the Outer Isles'.

While the structures and their distinguishing features varied greatly in different regions of the West, they were all valued for their perceived organic nature. In Cornwall, the church architecture conveyed to Howarth 'a progressive westward tendency toward severity of style and paucity of ornament', which was consistent with 'the intractable stone in which western builders had to work', and in their 'exposed positions... are often of a piece with the harsh landscape'.<sup>213</sup> G. E. Mitton found the same organic quality in the 'seashore' village of Bodinnick, near Fowey. The village walls 'are lined with bladder seaweed', which 'hangs in black masses above the incoming water', while above it 'rise woods and trees, and ivy and ferns, and all the paraphernalia of a country lane'. The cottages were 'covered with rose bushes', and 'candytuft and violets come out in their season to creep over the rough stone walls'. This was far from the isolated crofter's hut in the moorlands or seashores of Skye, which seemed to have emerged from the landscape of their own accord.<sup>214</sup> But Bodinnick, too, was organic, rooted in its place, and Mitton declared that 'there is nothing conventional or suburban about Bodinnick'.<sup>215</sup>

Whether in desolate moorland or a seaside fishing village, harmony with the surrounding landscape served to give meaning to the buildings, and imbue them with character befitting their setting. The rooted sense of place that writers and travellers valued in such buildings emanated from their longevity, and their connection with 'many generations' of the past. To live in such buildings 'is to call up a hundred phantoms of the past, to touch bygone years, to listen unawares to Time's stolen flight'. Unlike the new, rootless suburban houses, 'no old house is ever without these sad memories and pallid gleams of past years'.<sup>216</sup> In Skye, the 'larger houses' were also appreciated in this way, for their 'unadorned character', built 'for use not beauty'. For example, Dunvegan Castle 'has the same natural appearance' as the crofters' huts, forming 'no break in the landscape', resembling 'only a more shapely form of the rock on which it stands'. There were no 'bird-haunted lawns', no terraces or stairways, and instead 'grim keep and ancient tower

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<sup>213</sup> Howarth, *Scenic Heritage of England and Wales*, p. 132.

<sup>214</sup> For crofters' huts with walls made of 'boulders from the seashore', see The 'Governor', *Cruising in the West Highlands*, p. 129.

<sup>215</sup> Mitton and Nicholls, *Cornwall*, pp. 115-16.

<sup>216</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 16-18.

and worn battlements join hand-in-hand with the brown moorland, the shaggy woodland, and the lapping waves'.<sup>217</sup>

At the same time, many refused to romanticise the dwellings of crofters and tenants, and instead emphasised the poverty of the regions in which they were situated. This reflected more general tensions between romanticism and realism in revivalist and modernist writing.<sup>218</sup> Descriptions of 'tumble-down, tenantless houses' and 'wretched dwellings' drew attention to the plight of the poor, and of the evicted who crowded into hovels for shelter at night.<sup>219</sup> Some travellers were surprised to find that cottages with collapsed roofs were in fact occupied, and it was common for writers to remark that some cottages were 'unfit for cattle at home'.<sup>220</sup> But they were writing against a strong strain in which such conditions were deemed the natural abode of the peasants of the West. The author and photographer Mary Donaldson described the life of the crofter as 'exactly suited to the Highland temperament', and, for MacCulloch, the crofter was 'a son of the soil', who's lot was pleasant in comparison with 'slum-dwellers in towns', and who had 'learned contentment apart from ease and luxury'.<sup>221</sup> By romanticising the peasant and peasant dwellings, many writers homogenised the diverse group of the rural poor, with its many social and economic gradations which comprised 'small farmers, labourer-landholders, landless labourers, and itinerant workers'.<sup>222</sup>

### *The encroachment of modernity*

Travellers and writers framed their descriptions of the West in relation to the metropolitan centres they had left behind. As Wakeman wrote, the attraction of Ireland lay in its 'scenes of magic, loveliness, and grandeur', which had the ability to 'transfer the veriest attorney's clerk into a poet, or cause the eyes of even an undertaker's assistant to merrily jump in their sockets'.<sup>223</sup> Just as the suburban house was the architectural epitome of a meaningless mass culture, so the clerk became the term to describe the typical suburban inhabitant. Between 1860 and 1910, there was a marked rise in the number of lower-middle class workers employed in commerce, banks, insurance, and property. In 1911, 'the clerical profession, including 124,000 women, was one of the most rapidly expanding occupational groups' in England, as 'clerk culture' became a frequently-used pejorative term in the period.<sup>224</sup> Cremation also came to be associated with modern mass culture – as a modern, efficient way of disposing of the dead. England's first crematorium was built in Woking in 1885, and the 1902 Cremation Act formalised the regulations for the practice. The masses had 'reduced even death to the conveyor-belt level', and writers such as Grahame Greene saw the practice as symptomatic of a declining culture.<sup>225</sup> Wakeman knowingly tapped into this language, claiming that even the 'veriest attorney's clerk' and the 'undertaker's assistant' may be revitalised by a trip to the West.

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>218</sup> See Gramich, 'The Peasantry and Modernity in Welsh and Irish Writing', pp. 19-30.

<sup>219</sup> Quotations from Ward, *Thorough Guide: Ireland II* (1906), p. 196; and Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 120. For other examples, see Verney, 'West Galway and Connemara', pp. 6-7; Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 6; Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. 146-7; and Gray, *Tourist's View of Ireland*, p. 16. For a discussion of travel writers, Irish cabins, and poverty in an earlier period, see William H. A. Williams, *Tourism, Landscape, and the Irish Character: British Travel Writers in Pre-Famine Ireland* (Madison WI, 2008), especially pp. 89-91.

<sup>220</sup> Quotation from Michael Myers Shoemaker, *Wanderings in Ireland* (New York, 1908), p. 58. Also see Tuke, *Irish Distress*, p. 54; and Johnson, *The Isle of the Shamrock*, p. 152.

<sup>221</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, p. 131; MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1905), pp. 222-4.

<sup>222</sup> Hirsch, 'The Imaginary Irish Peasant', p. 1117.

<sup>223</sup> Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, p. 20.

<sup>224</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Morton claimed that ‘if the kingdom of Kerry’ were in England, ‘it would become a kind of Riviera’, rich but ‘ruined’ like Windermere and Loch Lomond, which are ‘almost the suburbs of cities’.<sup>226</sup> Nevertheless, in the travel texts of the West there was an anxious sense that even in regions far from urban centres, vernacular architectural styles were in danger. Several writers were hostile to the encroachment of ‘modern conditions’ in the West, which threatened ‘the old obvious distinctions of local colour’.<sup>227</sup> In particular, the replacement of thatch with corrugated iron was a change ‘not loved by an artist or a devotee of the picturesque’. In Skye, Holmes explained that the traditional ‘thatch, held down by ropes weighted with heavy stones’ was giving way to ‘a roofing of tarred cloth or corrugated iron’.<sup>228</sup> In West Connacht, too, travel texts complained that ‘corrugated iron is unfortunately superseding thatch’.<sup>229</sup> The improvements of the Congested Districts Board were, in this instance, criticised by Synge, who stressed that ‘there is no pressing need to substitute iron roofs... for the thatch that has been used for centuries’.<sup>230</sup> Stone concurred, describing the ‘alas, not artistic’ substitution of ‘galvanised iron roofs for the old leaky sod or doubtfully thatched coverings’ (see Images 2.4 and 2.5).<sup>231</sup>

In *The Sunny Side of Ireland* (1903), John O’Mahony described the ‘low-thatched cottages’ of the Claddagh community, and explained that ‘with them neither old times are changed nor old manners gone’.<sup>232</sup> But by the time Morton visited the Claddagh less than three decades later, his visit was marred by the realisation that ‘many of the lovely white houses have been pulled down and in their place have come the most hideous little modern houses I have seen – worse and more hateful to the eye even than the atrocious bungalows of Sussex’.<sup>233</sup> Similarly, in 1937 Floyd warned that while the Irish whitewashed cottage was ‘still easily in the preponderant’, efforts were being made to replace them with ‘new two-storey houses’.<sup>234</sup> Of the Claddagh, Floyd claimed that their buildings were ‘largely demolished to make way for concrete roads and a mushroom-growth of doubtless sound, sanitary, but by no means beautiful new dwellings’. In his view, ‘anyone who knows Galway only from the “picturesque” views of its Claddagh, or old fishing quarter of thatched and whitewashed cottages and cobbled ways, knows Galway not at all’.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 136.

<sup>227</sup> Edmund Vale, ‘England and Wales Coastwise’, in J. B. Priestley (ed.), *The Beauty of Britain* (London, 1935), p. 12.

<sup>228</sup> D. T. Holmes, *Literary Tours in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Paisley, 1909), pp. 29-30.

<sup>229</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, p. 244.

<sup>230</sup> Synge, *Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara*, p. 201.

<sup>231</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 93.

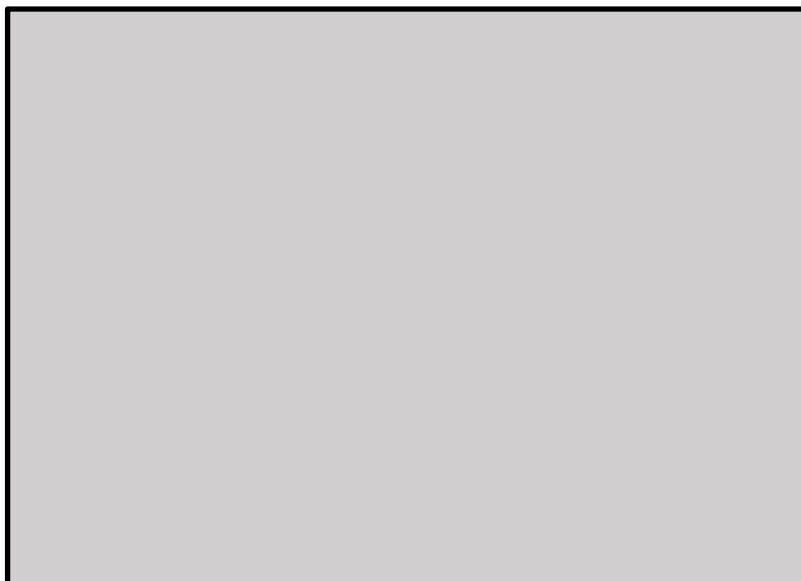
<sup>232</sup> O’Mahony, *Sunny Side of Ireland*, p. 242.

<sup>233</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 168.

<sup>234</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 7.

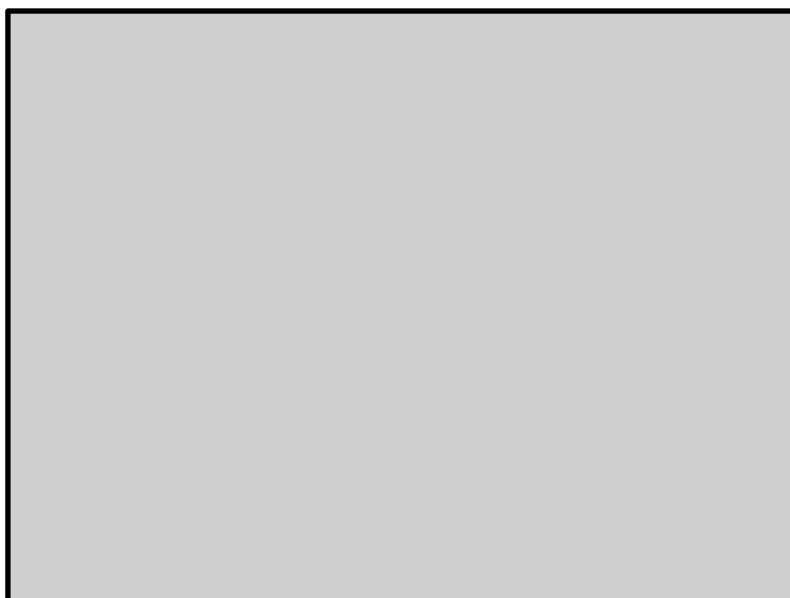
<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

Image 2.4



*Source:* William Eleroy Curtis, *One Irish Summer* (New York, 1909), facing p. 470. 'The Old: A Labourer's Sod Cabin'.

Image 2.5



*Source:* William Eleroy Curtis, *One Irish Summer* (New York, 1909), facing p. 470. 'The New: Example of the Cottages built in Connemara by the Congested Districts Board'.

As the buildings of the Claddagh were modernised, so their culture began to suffer, and Morton discovered that the old world had begun to give way to the new. He observed a woman returning from work, and on her head was 'a big round wicker-work basket in which the Galway women sell fish'. Despite the traditional occupation, 'she was going home to put on stockings, high-heeled shoes, and a tight little black felt hat!' Morton felt it 'unfortunate' that after 'resisting the world for so long' the Claddagh have



‘capitulated to Mr Selfridge’.<sup>236</sup> Morton tapped into the language of social commentators who drew attention to Selfridge’s department store as a typical ‘component of clerk culture’.<sup>237</sup> Similarly, in Cornwall, Morton spoke with a ‘packman’, who, ‘before the railway came to Cornwall and killed the fairies’, trudged around the countryside offering ‘vanity cloths and trifles from the distant town’ to the locals. After the extension of the railways, ‘the motor-car and the charabanc dealt the profession its heaviest blow’, and in the inter-war period ‘shops now canvass the wilderness with Ford vans’, while the rural population ‘take the omnibus to the nearest village and return with the shopping in brown-paper parcels’.<sup>238</sup> Mr Selfridge and Ford crept into the West, and Morton’s preoccupation with this infiltration reflects wider cultural anxieties about suburbia and commercialisation.<sup>239</sup> Additionally, these passages are indicative of a wider connection that was made between suburbia as an emasculated space. The growing recruitment of female clerks triggered a ‘crisis in masculinity’ in their male counterparts, and suburbs were depicted as ‘the site not just of triviality but of specifically female triviality’.<sup>240</sup> D. H. Lawrence called suburban houses ‘horrid little mantraps’, and this view was also expressed in Orwell’s *Coming Up For Air* (1939), where the suburban male is suppressed by his wife ‘and the children suck his blood like leeches’.<sup>241</sup>

### *Rural modernities*

The rejection of the suburb and celebration of vernacular architecture was not necessarily indicative of an ‘anti-modern middle class culture’ or a wholesale rejection of modernity.<sup>242</sup> We gain a fuller understanding of the anti-suburban rhetoric outlined above when it is placed within the context of the influential network of people who were active in groups such as the National Trust and the CPRE, who wrote academic papers and popular books about landscape in order to promote planning as well as preservation, and argued that the rural should chime in harmony with the urban. David Matless has shown that groups such as the CPRE often praised the building of new roads, which had the potential to refine the distinction between town and country that was increasingly blurred by suburban developments, and bring harmony to the landscape.<sup>243</sup> As its chairman the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres explained, the CPRE was a ‘combination of societies and individuals who strive to maintain the beauty of rural England, and at the same time to promote its thoughtful and orderly development’. This was the marriage of ‘technical knowledge and good sense’.<sup>244</sup> More specifically, ‘good sense’ meant the planning of suburbs ‘as compact urban units’ as opposed to ribbon development along country roads and ‘bungalow buildings of the worst type’, grouped ‘in the worst manner’.<sup>245</sup>

<sup>236</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 169.

<sup>237</sup> Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, p. 59.

<sup>238</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 97-8.

<sup>239</sup> For further discussions of commercialism, gender, and middle-class culture, see A. James Hammerton, ‘The English weakness? Gender, satire and “moral manliness” in the lower middle class, 1870-1920’, in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 164-78; Jill Greenfield, Sean O’Connell, and Chris Reid, ‘Gender, consumer culture and the middle-class male, 1918-1939’, in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 183-95; and Rachel Bowlby, *Shopping with Freud* (London, 1993).

<sup>240</sup> For female clerks, see Roper and Tosh, ‘Historians and the politics of masculinity’, p. 19. For ‘triviality’, see Carey, *Intellectuals and the Masses*, pp. 52-3.

<sup>241</sup> Gilbert and Preston, ‘Suburban Modernity’, p. 191.

<sup>242</sup> For the statement of this argument, see Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2004 [1981]); quotation at p. xv. For a critique, see John Baxendale [review], ‘Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981)’, *History Workshop* 21 (1986), pp. 171-4.

<sup>243</sup> David Matless, ‘Definitions of England, 1928-89: Preservation, Modernism and the Nature of the Nation’, *Built Environment* 16.3 (1990), pp. 182-5.

<sup>244</sup> Crawford and Balcarres, ‘Foreword’, in Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 7.

<sup>245</sup> Cornish, *Scenery of England*, pp. 9-11.

Alongside propaganda campaigns, lobbying the government, and acting as an advisory body to public authorities responsible for planning, ‘nature books’ were deemed an important strategy for mobilising the support of the general public, such as the CPRE’s publication written by Vaughan Cornish, *The Scenery of England: A Study of Harmonious Grouping in Town and Country* (1932).<sup>246</sup> Another such book was called *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (1937), which contained a foreword written by the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, an introduction by Vaughan Cornish (representative of the Geographical Association), and the content of which was influenced by a sub-committee containing H. J. Fleure.<sup>247</sup> O. J. R. Howarth (Secretary of the British Association) was trusted with the task of preparing the book.

Clough Williams-Ellis, the architect who built Portmeirion in North West Wales from 1925, criticised new housing as resembling ‘disfiguring eruptions on the face of the land’ in his *England and the Octopus* (1928). He was an advocate of ‘effective town and country planning’, and was one of the founders of the ‘councils for the preservation of rural England and of Wales’, while he supported both the National Trust and the creation of national parks.<sup>248</sup> The arguments put forward by Williams-Ellis and in books such as *The Scenery of England* (1932) and *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (1937) were influential, and are indicative of a wider cultural response to modernity in which discussions of conservation and landscape protection, as well as anti-suburban rhetoric and the glorification of the architecture of the West, were not simply nostalgic, conservative, and anti-modern.

In a collection of travel texts called *The Beauty of Britain* (1935), J. B. Priestley declared that ‘the battle for the preservation of beautiful Britain has now begun’. Priestley chastised the suburbs for eating into the countryside ‘in the greediest fashion’, which served to ‘immensely enlarge the bounds of their cities’ with ‘higgledy-piggledy and messy’ collections of bungalows, ‘thickly sown for miles’.<sup>249</sup> Yet, in the same volume, Edmund Barber recognised that ‘new social arrangements as well as agricultural and industrial changes demand corresponding changes in human surroundings’, and that faster travel, higher living standards, and new technologies of manufacturing and agriculture ‘have come to stay, and it is futile to ignore them’.<sup>250</sup> The grassland scientist R. G. Stapledon captured the importance of the compatibility of preservation and development in the final lines of his book *The Hill Lands of Britain: Development or Decay?* (1937):

It is not enough that houses should be warm and damp-proof; that roads should stand up to heavy and fast traffic; not enough that everything should be within the dictates of a machine driven age, but all must still be in accord with the inner and unchanging depths of human nature.<sup>251</sup>

The historical, natural, and rural are not necessarily ‘at odds with the modern’, as many writers who valued the rural landscapes and vernacular architecture of the West simultaneously celebrated ‘proper planning’ and development, or at least recognised that complete opposition was unfeasible.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Crawford and Balcarres, ‘Foreword’, in Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 7; Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 9.

<sup>247</sup> Vaughan Cornish, ‘Introduction’, in O. J. R. Howarth, *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (London, 1937), p. xv.

<sup>248</sup> Clough Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus* (London, 1928), p. 41; Lionel Esher, ‘Ellis, Sir (Bertram) Clough-Williams’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/refodnb/31839> [15 June 2019].

<sup>249</sup> Priestley, ‘Beauty of Britain’, p. 7.

<sup>250</sup> Edmund Barber, ‘The West Country’, in J. B. Priestley (ed.), *The Beauty of Britain* (London, 1935), p. 50.

<sup>251</sup> Stapledon, *Hill Lands of Britain*, p. 138.

<sup>252</sup> Matless, ‘Definitions of England’, pp. 179-85; David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London, 1998), pp. 14, 16, 17.

#### IV – Conclusion

In 1932, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres wrote that ‘the Preservation of Rural England is fundamentally an urban problem’.<sup>253</sup> This chapter has attempted to highlight this mind-set, drawing links between the places of modernity, and has argued that accounts of travel in the West were used as a way of reflecting upon developments at home. Discussions of industrialisation, technology, and machines in the travel texts of the West reveal both the desire to bring economic improvements to impoverished rural regions, and the remoteness from modern industry for which the West was valued by the travelling public. The depiction of racial types in the West is only fully understood in the context of perceived physical and moral degeneration in urban environments and the broader concern with national fitness in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Finally, thatched roofs, whitewashed walls, and their position within the surrounding landscapes take on new importance when read in connection with the fears of suburban sprawls and the rise of mass commercial culture. This has implications for our understanding both of landscapes and of modernity. To fully comprehend the travel texts of the West, we must also consider developments in the metropolitan centres. To understand the rural, we must consider the urban and the suburban. As the writers of travel texts revealed, those who journeyed to the periphery were often thinking about the centre. The next chapter moves away from discussions of the problems of urban degeneration and suburban destruction, and towards the ‘performance’ of travel at the periphery.

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<sup>253</sup> Crawford and Balcarres, ‘Foreword’, in Cornish, *Scenery of England*, p. 8.



## I – Introduction

### *The art of travel*

The previous chapter examined the ways in which writers used the theme of travelling in the West as a technique with which to address the social, cultural, and economic problems faced by the urban centres of Britain and Ireland. In this chapter, the focus shifts to the travellers and their destinations, exploring what they did, how they acted, and how they presented themselves to their readers.

In recent years, ideas about dramaturgy and social performance have been applied to travel in insightful ways, as scholars explore identities as they are inscribed in space, and seek to explain the behaviour of travellers and tourists as processes of ‘enactment and narration’.<sup>1</sup> Several studies of travel as performance draw on Judith Butler’s notion of gender as ‘a stylised repetition of acts’ in a ‘corporeal field of play’, embodied in gestures and movements which constitute ‘the illusion of an abiding gendered self’.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu’s writing on patterns of cultural behaviour have also influenced scholars of travel and tourism, who see the performance of travel as connected to the ‘performance of self’.<sup>3</sup>

As Judith Adler has written, the art of travel constitutes performance in that it ‘entails movement through space in conventionally stylised ways’, and we can shed light on the production, reproduction, and alteration of travel styles by considering ‘the social worlds of their producers’.<sup>4</sup> Although the act of travel may only take place once in a person’s lifetime, or as infrequently as once per year, travel is a form of ‘dramatic play with the boundaries of selfhood’, which is powerful enough to construct durable long-term identities.<sup>5</sup> With this in mind, we may perceive what Kevin J. James described as ‘the politicised character of even the most prosaic recreational tour’.<sup>6</sup>

### *The importance of travel texts to performance*

Within this concept of travel as performance, tourist destinations serve as the stages for the performance of tourists, and these stages possess a set of expectations which shape that performance.<sup>7</sup> Many of these expectations were constructed in the pages of travel texts, which informed tourists of the appropriate way to travel, the places in which to stay, and the objects worthy of attention.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, travel texts led travellers along a beaten track, mediating the destination via sites that were deemed culturally significant, and provided vicarious participation for the armchair tourist.<sup>9</sup> By outlining a conventional set of expectations and experiences, these texts provided travellers with the opportunity to reinforce or reject

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent example, see James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory’, *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988), pp. 519-20, 531.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Edensor, ‘Staging Tourism: Tourists as Performers’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27.2 (2000), p. 323; James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Judith Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, *American Journal of Sociology* 94.6 (1989), p. 1366.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1383, 1385.

<sup>6</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Edensor, ‘Tourists as Performers’, pp. 341-2.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Kroeg, ‘Cockney Tourists, Irish Guides, and the Invention of the Emerald Isle’, *Eire-Ireland* 44.3-4 (2009), p. 205. For an example of a text describing the type of conduct for countryside walkers, see S. P. B. Mais, ‘The Footpath Way’, in *The Countryside and How to Enjoy It* (London, 1948), p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Edensor, ‘Performing Rurality’, in Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (eds), *The Handbook of Rural Studies* (London, 2006), pp. 486-7; Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1367.

dominant meanings – to stay on the beaten track, or step away from it.<sup>10</sup> However, as this chapter will discuss, the very act of stepping off the beaten track – and the purportedly authentic experiences gained from doing so – constituted the performance of well-established patterns of behaviour.

To spend time travelling was to move through a liminal space, where everyday systems of authority could be questioned, and where alternative identities and practices were produced. Travellers had the space to play at different roles and identities, away from their everyday routine.<sup>11</sup> While this chapter focuses on the sites, performances, and accounts of travellers at the periphery, it is important to recognise that these performances did not occur in an isolated sphere of tourism, separated from everyday life at home and work. The idea of ‘escaping’ to the periphery carried with it a series of cultural judgements and attitudes towards the world of everyday life, which often focussed on the sedentary and repetitive nature of modern work. The powerful notion of ‘getting away from it all’ during a period of travel has the ability to generate ‘the taking on of transgressive roles’, and in order to understand the transgressive behaviour we must also understand the everyday social norm that is transgressed during travel.<sup>12</sup> The significance of travel as performance is thus comprehensible in the context of the everyday.

### *Multiplicity of performances*

The performances that constitute travel are notable for their multiplicity. On a basic level, ‘performance’ is an activity, something done. But performance also often involves repetition, which may differ slightly with each enactment. In addition, performances can be varied, unpredictable, and spontaneous.<sup>13</sup> Judith Adler recognised the diversity of what she called the ‘art of travel’, which has been represented by personal small-scale accounts and grand, sweeping narratives, written by naïve amateurs as well as professionals who knowingly placed themselves within the literary tradition of travel texts.<sup>14</sup> The ideas about place contained in these narratives are multiple and varied, and travel is a diverse set of practices in which performative norms can coexist but also clash.<sup>15</sup> Today, in the mountain landscapes of Britain and Ireland, there are adventure tourists, rambles, hunters, and farmers all of whom possess contrasting ideas about what constitutes appropriate activity in these areas.<sup>16</sup>

For many travellers at the periphery in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, dwelling in and moving through rural landscapes did not constitute performance at all. Instead, the predominantly urban and suburban dwellers wanted to escape from what they perceived as the artificiality and false performance of everyday life, which stifled more natural forms of behaviour. This binary understanding of the rural and the urban emerged in the Romantic era, when the urban was first depicted as the realm of alienation and the fake, opposite the physical and mental freedom from convention to be found in rural landscapes.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the desire and the effort to escape the perceived urban restraints entailed the adoption of cultural norms and assumptions, which directed the performance of escaping to the West.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kroeg, ‘Cockney Tourists, Irish Guides’, p. 206; Edensor, ‘Tourists as Performers’, pp. 341-2.

<sup>11</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Edensor, ‘Tourists as Performers’, p. 341.

<sup>13</sup> Bronislaw Szerszynski, Wallace Heim, and Claire Waterton (eds), *Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Adler, ‘Travel as Performed Art’, p. 1385.

<sup>15</sup> For varied performances undermining a coherent sense of place, see Kirsty Sherlock, ‘Revisiting the Concept of Hosts and Guests’, *Tourist Studies* 1.3 (2001), p. 272. For the idea of a host of competing performative norms, see Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (London, 2002), pp. 84-5, 99.

<sup>16</sup> Edensor, ‘Performing Rurality’, p. 485.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 486.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 486.

This performance is evident in the emotional engagement of travellers with the surrounding landscape, the use of transport technologies, the style of movement through the landscape, and the ways in which these experiences were communicated and shared.<sup>19</sup>

### *Power and tourist-host relations*

Travel involves interaction with a 'host' population, and the narration of these interactions is an important part of travel as performance. In considerations of performance and tourism (and also in travel narratives themselves), the emphasis is often placed on the authority and agency of the author or traveller over the host population. This has led scholars to depict the relations between hosts and tourists as a form of colonialism.<sup>20</sup> Concerns about the consumption and destruction of local cultures are often raised when a society begins to host increasing numbers of tourists, and the dynamic between the two groups is often understood as a unilateral power relation, with the tourist acting upon the host society.<sup>21</sup> However, host-tourist relations are more complex than this, and more recent scholarship emphasises the agency of the local population. Kevin J. James's case study of tourism in Killarney recognised the ways in which locals 'exerted profound influence' on the way in which Killarney was experienced, as they 'honed performances' that derived in part from Victorian cultural stereotypes, which satisfied the expectations of visitors and ended in 'a request for loose change'.<sup>22</sup> Host societies have also adapted their culture in response to tourism, in a pragmatic response to the emergence of new economic opportunities. Certain groups have wilfully drawn tourist attention towards specific ethnic, regional, or national cultural traits, which has also heightened the ethnic awareness of the hosts, strengthening their culture.<sup>23</sup> As Susan Kroeg argued, in exclusively focussing on the anti-Irish attitudes of British tourists, as well as their exploitation of Irish people and the countryside, we ignore the ways in which Irish hosts not only forged but also profited from their own 'touristic identity'.<sup>24</sup> Cultural influence does not flow in a single direction, and in this way the interactions between hosts and guests are more accurately understood as a diverse set of dialogues in which power and agency may be unequal but are wielded by both groups.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars have questioned the binary categories of 'host' and 'guest' themselves, recognising the ways in which these groups can overlap, as well as acknowledging the shared experiences of locals and tourists.<sup>26</sup>

### *Rural modernities*

Earlier studies of attitudes to the rural emphasised the dichotomy between the unspoilt countryside and the industrial, commercial cities and suburbs, which led historians such as Martin J. Wiener to describe a conservative, 'anti-modern middle class culture', and a mentality that rejected modernity.<sup>27</sup> While this view was certainly expressed through the performance of travel in the West, it formed only part of

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 486.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland: The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy* (Philadelphia, 1976).

<sup>21</sup> Valene L. Smith, 'Introduction', in Valene L. Smith (ed.), *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (2nd edn, Philadelphia, 1989 [1977]), pp. 1-17.

<sup>22</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>23</sup> For an example of Ireland, see Kroeg, 'Cockney Tourists, Irish Guides', p. 207. For the example of the Pataxó Indians of Porto Seguro in Brazil, see Rodrigo de Azeredo Grünwald, 'Tourism and Cultural Revival', *Annals of Tourism Research* 29.4 (2002), pp. 1004-5, 1017-18.

<sup>24</sup> Kroeg, 'Cockney Tourists, Irish Guides', pp. 227-8.

<sup>25</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 151-2.

<sup>26</sup> For the binary, see Smith, 'Introduction', pp. 1-17. For an example of this binary being questioned, see Sherlock, 'Revisiting the Concept of Hosts and Guests', pp. 271-2, 287.

<sup>27</sup> Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, p. xv.

complex attitudes in which the rural and the commercial, preservation and progress, coexisted.<sup>28</sup> As Theodore Watts-Dunton wrote in 1906, ‘physical science strengthens rather than weakens the magical glamour of the Spirit of Antiquity’.<sup>29</sup> More recently, as noted in chapter two, historians and cultural geographers have recognised that there is often no clear line between pro-modern and anti-modern sentiments, and many writers who valued the rural landscapes of the West simultaneously celebrated the growth of modern tourism and new technologies of travel.<sup>30</sup>

As chapter one argued, travel in the West was made more convenient and accessible by the development of trains, steamers, motorcars, motorbuses, and an increasingly sophisticated and interconnected commercial tourism industry. At the same time, the West was often venerated for its difference, its peripheral rurality, and its apparent remoteness from many characteristics of modern society.<sup>31</sup> The apparent contradictions within this type of modern travel are personified by H. V. Morton, who conducted his search for old villages and thatched roofs from behind the steering-wheel of his Bullnose Morris. While travel offered an escape from one type of modernity in Britain, this also represented the performance of an alternative form of modernity – one which was conscious of the tension between the attempt to elude emblems of modernity such as the motorcar, and the reliance on those same technologies to achieve such an escape.<sup>32</sup> This chapter argues that, notwithstanding the important notion of ‘escaping’ into rural landscapes, tourism and leisure travel were products of modernity, and represented the performance of a rural modernity – not anti-modernity. What emerges in the literature of the West is the ability for writers to make ‘ambiguous evaluations of the present’, using the rhetoric of the modern and the performance of travel to appropriate certain ‘aspects of the age’ while ‘selectively rejecting others’.<sup>33</sup>

This chapter explores performances at the periphery in five sections. Firstly, this chapter considers the pursuit of authenticity and the attempted escape from the beaten track, as well as the consequences this had for discussions of the role of guidebooks. Next, this chapter considers the moral geographies of movement through landscape, followed by the historical imagination, and then the narration of misadventure. Finally, this chapter considers the interactions between guests and hosts.

## II – Escaping the beaten track

In the period 1880-1940, tourism became a highly developed industry in many areas of Europe, and the notion of the ‘beaten track’ was well established in travel texts, as country roads became increasingly crowded (see Image 3.1). James Buzard explained that the ‘beaten track’ referred to spaces of tourism where ‘all experience is predictable and repetitive’, and all cultures and objects are inauthentic ‘self-parodies’.<sup>34</sup> As outlined in the introduction of the thesis, the popularisation of tourism led to the development of strategies to distinguish ‘true travellers from mere tourists’, which emphasised the ‘superior emotional-aesthetic sensitivity’ of the traveller.<sup>35</sup> Of course, this did not necessarily denote

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<sup>28</sup> Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> Theodore Watts-Dunton, ‘Talk about “Wild Wales”’, in George Borrow, *Wild Wales* (New York, 1906), p. xiii.

<sup>30</sup> David Matless, ‘Definitions of England’, pp. 181-5; Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>31</sup> The names given to trains and steamers (discussed in chapter one, above) neatly captures the atmosphere of pre-modern history which furnished the characteristically modern practice of travelling in the West.

<sup>32</sup> Peter H. Hansen, ‘Modern Mountains: The Performative Consciousness of Modernity in Britain, 1870-1940’, in Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (eds), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 185-6.

<sup>33</sup> Rieger and Daunton, ‘Introduction’, pp. 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> Buzard, *Beaten Track*, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 80-1.



‘objective differences’ in patterns of tourism and travel, but instead served as a dichotomy through which ‘unique’ travellers could differentiate themselves from ‘popular’ tourism, and regard their own cultural experiences as authentic, while ‘setting them against a backdrop of always assumed tourist vulgarity, repetition, and ignorance’.<sup>36</sup> This chapter explores how, in this symbolic economy, travellers performed, described, and displayed authenticity and originality, as travel destinations functioned as ‘parts of a market-place of cultural goods’.<sup>37</sup> The West promised the opportunity for the traveller to step away from the so-called beaten track, and was depicted as a set of regions where original, authentic experiences were the reward for the more adventurous traveller. At the same time, the general increase in tourism in the West prompted many writers to emphasise their own physical separation from well-worn routes and tourist crowds, as well as display the cultural gulf between informed travellers and the unthinking tourists who ventured into the West.

Image 3.1



Source: W. K. Haselden, ‘As Road Travel Grows More Popular’, *Daily Mirror*, 13 August 1920.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

In the travel texts of the West, writers typically presented themselves as making for ‘the unfamiliar shrines’ and ‘odd corners’, rather than ‘covering the beaten track’.<sup>38</sup> As less frequented parts of the West, the Isle of Skye and West Connacht were valued for the opportunities they provided for physical separation from the tourist crowds of popular resorts. Floyd argued that tourism in Ireland was largely concentrated ‘on a few “beauty spots”’, and in her article ‘Off the Beaten Track’ (1894), Eleanor Foster noted that ‘many do see and admire the “show” places’ of Ireland, but ‘very few ever get to know her heart’.<sup>39</sup> The increasing popularity of tourist destinations such as Killarney – a process which was known as ‘Cockneyfication’ – encouraged those who sought a more ‘authentic’ experience to travel to less frequented regions, such as Connacht in the West, in the hope of finding an uncorrupted Irish peasantry.<sup>40</sup> Morton relished the notion of leaving the beaten track, suggesting that ‘I now know where the world ends’ upon entering West Connacht, and pitying ‘those comfortable tourists who believe that Braemar and Ballater are the Scottish Highlands’ on his journey to Fort William, Ben Nevis, and eventually to Skye.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, it was still necessary to avoid more conventional tourists in West Connacht, where ‘Tourist Cars’ ran throughout the season to places such as Dugort on Achill Island, advertised for the ‘exceptionally fine sands, and facilities for bathing’.<sup>42</sup> It was the aim of travellers to be counted among the ‘very few’ who left the beaten track, and the ‘irregular shape’ of Skye, with its ‘sprawling peninsulas’, inhibited the development of circular tours, providing the traveller with opportunities to escape the presence of those who had made the same journey.<sup>43</sup> Well-known attractions such as Loch Scavaig and Coruisk attracted ‘a large number of tourists’ during the season, with MacBrayne’s providing a ‘special passenger steamer’ from Oban, and Ferguson noted that the lochs were ‘a favourite resort of yachts’ that cruised around the Hebrides ‘with pleasure parties on board’.<sup>44</sup> Alternatively, the Vaternish peninsula in the north of Skye was considered ‘less known’ than the rest of the island, and Ferguson remarked that ‘I don’t think it is even once mentioned in some of the well-known guide books to the far North’. It lacked ‘special sights or “lions” in the locality to attract the tourist or the traveller bent on sight-seeing’, and was ‘isolated from any of the principal highways throughout the island’.<sup>45</sup>

Mary Donaldson distanced herself from the ‘Cockney tourist’, whom she described as ignorant of local issues such as the ‘crofter question’, and instead dedicated a chapter of her book to ‘Places of Unique Interest Out of the Beaten Track’. She sought ‘places remote from the tourist track’, where local crofters ‘retreated hastily’ out of shyness or ‘advanced upon me threateningly’ due to their unfamiliarity with tourists.<sup>46</sup> The terms ‘cockney tourist’ and ‘cockneyfication’ were inflected by both place and social class, evoking the prejudicial notion of an unthinking, uncultured urban mass. This language was also mobilised by the self-professed ‘educated world’ against American tourists, who were deemed by some to be ‘on a

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<sup>38</sup> Thos. D. Murphy, *In Unfamiliar England* (Boston MA, 1910), n.p., see preface. Those who were bound to the road discussed the ways in which they too could leave the ‘beaten track’; see Bertram Smith, *Caravan Days* (London, 1914), pp. 9–10.

<sup>39</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. v–vi, 1; Eleanor Foster, ‘Off the Beaten Track’, *The Irish Monthly* 22.254 (1894), p. 432.

<sup>40</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 63. Stephen Gwynn described the area between Cong and Oughterard as ‘far richer in antiquarian interest than Killarney, and infinitely less tourist-ridden’; see Gwynn, *Connaught*, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 172; H. V. Morton, *In Search of Scotland* (15th edn, London, 1931 [1929]), p. 193.

<sup>42</sup> London and North Western Railway, *Where to Spend the Holidays* (1906), p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 35. For the lack of circular tours in the island, see Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 377.

<sup>44</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 85.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>46</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, pp. 130–1, 135, 436–85.

par... with the ordinary Cockney tourist, to whom nothing is sacred provided he can amuse himself by disfiguring it'.<sup>47</sup>

In Skye, travellers such as Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell emphasised the authenticity of their accounts by describing 'the actual condition of the population', in contrast to the 'civilised society' of the hotels, where the rich tourists 'ignored the existence of the Highland crofters'.<sup>48</sup> However, such claims to authenticity based on detailed and sympathetic depictions of poverty received mixed responses, due to the political sensitivity of landlord-tenant relations in Skye. In general, systematic travel texts seldom mentioned the poverty of the people,<sup>49</sup> and those travellers who did risked criticism, as such narratives were not always recognised as the hallmark of authenticity.<sup>50</sup> Wilkinson was keen to stress to the reader that he was not 'writing a sentimental journey', while Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell were called 'sickly sentimentalists' for their account of poverty in Skye. They maintained that 'in dwelling upon the misery of the people... we merely state what we saw'.<sup>51</sup>

In the more accessible regions of the West, the northern coastline of Wales was a well-established and popular destination for tourists from the industrial centres of north-west England – the 'hordes who descend on the obvious show-places' – in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>52</sup> Railways transported the 'hordes' to the principal watering resorts, from where shorter trips were made by horse-drawn carriage or, later in the period, motorbus. Similarly, the railway had 'opened up' much of Cornwall to tourism, meaning that 'local peculiarities are fast disappearing', as coaches transported visitors between tourist hot-spots along pre-determined routes.<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, achieving a sense of physical remoteness from the tourist crowds was also possible in North West Wales and Cornwall. Along the northern coastline of Cornwall, away from the more popular resorts of the south, there was 'many an out-of-the-world spot', ready to be discovered by 'the tourist who wanders out of beaten tracks'.<sup>54</sup> When D. H. Lawrence moved to Cornwall he was keen to avoid areas of what he called 'sea-sideness'.<sup>55</sup> For those seeking further remoteness, the Scilly Isles were far off the beaten track. Jessie Mothersole declared that 'no smoke from city, factory, or railway contaminates their pure air, or dims the brilliancy of their sunshine' in these 'virgin-isles, still unspoiled and inviolate in this prosaic age, when beauty and charm are apt to flee before the path of progress'.<sup>56</sup> In North West Wales, the railway lines never extended further westwards than Pwllheli, meaning that the Llŷn Peninsula retained an air of remoteness and 'intense interest' for the traveller 'who wishes to deviate from the beaten

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<sup>47</sup> 'North American Scenery and the Yellowstone Park', *The Times*, 16 August 1883, pp. 3-4. To the contrary, Bradley labelled Americans 'the most intelligent of travellers' in Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 134. American tourists were also highly valued as a lucrative tourist market. The first issue of *Irish Travel* addressed 'complaints that Ireland has not been sufficiently advertised as a tourist resort this year in the United States', and other issues provided itineraries of tours for American tourists, which recommended several days in West Connacht; see 'Notes and News', *Irish Travel* 1.1 (1925), pp. 2-4; and 'Tours in Ireland: No. 1 Series – For American Tourists landing at Cobh', *Irish Travel* 1.6 (1926), p. 126. For other examples of the desire to attract American tourists to Ireland in the first volume of the publication, see 'Let America Know', *Irish Travel* 1.3 (1925), pp. 53-4; 'Information', *Irish Travel* 1.4 (1925), p. 84; 'Ireland a World Centre', *Irish Travel* 1.5 (1926), p. 97; and 'Notes and News', *Irish Travel* 1.9 (1926), p. 186.

<sup>48</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. vi-vii, 154, 160.

<sup>49</sup> One exception is Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), which recommended that if the reader wished to see in 'what stricken condition the least fortunate of his own countrymen exist', Gorumma Island in southern Connemara was one place in which 'the experience is a painful one'; see p. xxix.

<sup>50</sup> For instance, Mitton remarked that MacLeod's *Gloomy Memories of Skye* 'draws a most lurid picture from the crofters' point of view', but 'his picture is too highly coloured to carry much conviction'; see Mitton, *Black's Scotland, North* (1920), p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> Wilkinson, *Eve of Home Rule*, pp. 9-10; Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>52</sup> Quotation from Rhys Davies, *My Wales* (London, 1937), p. 229.

<sup>53</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. xv.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xv.

<sup>55</sup> Ella Westland, 'D. H. Lawrence's Cornwall: dwelling in a precarious age', *Cultural Geographies* 9.3 (2002), p. 275.

<sup>56</sup> Mothersole, *Isles of Scilly*, p. 3.

track'. This was a promontory described by the Great Western Railway as 'almost wholly unexplored, but entirely enchanting', and it 'abounds in archaeological and historical associations'.<sup>57</sup> A. G. Bradley was one of numerous writers who ventured down the peninsula, finding in the 'remote, romantic, and historic little port and bay of Aberdaron' a gateway to 'the *ultima thule* of North Wales – its Land's End'. Bradley explained that this area was 'unknown to tourists but for a recent and still negligible few', and it was 'unknown in journals that bristle... with the oft-told tales of familiar scenes'.<sup>58</sup>

The growth of tourism in this period meant that physical separation from the tourist crowds was increasingly rare, particularly in North West Wales and Cornwall. If travellers could not physically avoid the beaten track, it became increasingly important to define the qualitative differences of their own travel practices. For instance, even if tourists did venture to more remote places off the so-called beaten track in West Connacht, several writers claimed that such places did not offer much 'to the ordinary tourist', in contrast to the perceptive traveller who found 'the sense of remoteness... extraordinarily moving'.<sup>59</sup> This was particularly important in North Wales, where the proximity of popular, tourist-filled resort towns and so-called 'remote', isolating wildernesses was particularly striking. As the writer and broadcaster S. P. B. Mais wrote, in North Wales 'you can have all the wildness you want and yet regain civilisation almost at once if too much wildness bewilders you'.<sup>60</sup> Morton explained that, along the northern coast of Wales, just a short journey inland from the 'friendly scenery' of Conwy is the Sychnant Pass, where the traveller is 'plunged into a miniature mountain gorge as grim in its way as anything in Scotland'. On either side 'the dark hills rise' and 'the wind comes through the Sychnant Pass with that chill whistle which mountaineers know so well'. Then, suddenly 'the pass ends, and you find yourself running into pretty Penmaenmawr, where people are playing golf and where at least one mansion guards the memory of Gladstone', who was a famous visitor to the coastal town.<sup>61</sup>

Travellers adapted to the popularisation of tourism in ways that enabled them to retain a sense of isolation and authenticity in the West. Leaving the beaten track was not simply a matter of physically removing oneself from the more frequented places, but was also signified by the superior authenticity of experience that the traveller was able to achieve even when on the same trail as the conventional tourist. In more popular tourist regions such as Cornwall, escaping the beaten track was not simply a matter of where one travelled, but also a matter of when. In summer, the visitor to Cornwall 'finds Tintagel overrun with tourists', and 'one sees trails of tourists' making their way to Gurnard's Head.<sup>62</sup> Hind adapted to these circumstances by travelling in spring, when 'there are very few strangers' in Cornwall. He was 'the only guest at the hotel' during his visit to Tintagel, and later in his narrative he strolled from Sennen to the Land's End 'after sunset when the last of the daily tourists has departed'.<sup>63</sup>

Morton employed a similar strategy during his visit to Helston, which coincided with the Furry Dance, a folk dance and 'pagan festival of greeting the spring',<sup>64</sup> which 'some archaeologists' claim 'is the oldest custom in England'.<sup>65</sup> However, as A. K. Hamilton Jenkin warned in his *Cornish Homes and Customs* (1934),

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<sup>57</sup> Great Western Railway, *The British Tyrol* (1906), p. 102; Great Western Railway, *North Wales. The British Tyrol* (2nd edn, London, 1911 [1906]), p. 102.

<sup>58</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 220.

<sup>59</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 60. E. S. Roscoe also claimed that Connemara has 'some of the best sea-trout fishing in the United Kingdom', but has 'few attractions for the ordinary tourist'; see E. S. Roscoe, *Rambles with a Fishing-Rod* (Edinburgh, 1883), p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> S. P. B. Mais, *This Unknown Island* (London, 1922), p. 306.

<sup>61</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>62</sup> Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1907), pp. 97, 158.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 170.

<sup>64</sup> Hughes, *About England*, p. 206.

<sup>65</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), p. 89.

the Furry Day ‘must prove somewhat disappointing to those who are interested in these ceremonies as an expression of the folk-spirit’. The popularity of the Folk Dance movement meant that the Furry Dance ‘may be said to enjoy a national reputation’, which ‘made for a certain self-consciousness about the proceedings at Helston’. Recognising the importance of this festival for ‘attracting visitors’, Jenkins felt it had lost a measure of authenticity and had become ‘something in the nature of a “spectacle”’.<sup>66</sup> In order to avoid the inauthentic tourist-show and retain a measure of authenticity, Morton took part in the early morning ‘Servants’ Dance’ with the locals, which was ‘all sweet and innocent and un-modern’. For the midday Floral Dance, crowds of visitors arrived by motorbus to watch the proceedings, but for Morton ‘the best moment of all’ was the earlier dance, when ‘the visitors had not arrived’ and ‘the eyes of the world were not fixed on the dancers’, so that ‘for an hour or so the spirit of Merrie England lived again in Cornwall’.<sup>67</sup>

### *Travel texts and the mediation of experience*

The notion of the ‘beaten track’ was closely intertwined with debates over the usefulness of travel texts, which at once contained information which equipped the traveller with the knowledge to perform travel as a means of social and cultural differentiation, yet simultaneously threatened the authenticity and originality of the traveller’s experience.

Instructing people on appropriate behaviour in the countryside was often an explicitly-stated objective of many publications of the period, such as the authoritatively titled *The Countryside and How to Enjoy It* (1948), which in its subtitle claimed to provide the reader with *A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide for all Country Lovers dealing with the Features of Historic Interest and Various Phases of Nature and Landscape*.<sup>68</sup> The desire to instruct the public was part of the growing presentation of rural leisure as a matter of citizenship, which equally revealed the anti-citizen, embodied by stock figures such as the ‘thoughtless middle-class “motor-picnickers” not clearing their litter’, and the ‘working-class charabancers making a racket and leaving their empties’.<sup>69</sup> Vaughan Cornish complained of the ‘disgusting legacy of litter’ left by ‘the flood of town trippers by private car and charabanc’, while Edward Shanks grumbled about day trippers ‘by car or bicycle or motor-coach’, who ‘leave litter’, ‘pull up primroses and violets by the roots’, ‘damage hedges’, and ‘leave gates open’.<sup>70</sup> Rather than dismiss these people altogether, the town trippers’ interest in the countryside was perceived as the expression of an ‘ancient instinct’ that ‘sometimes takes a crude and unfortunate shape’.<sup>71</sup> Nature books and travel texts could therefore be used to educate the population accordingly. Clubs and associations for rambling, youth hostels, and other groups published ‘rules of conduct’, while motorcar and motorcycle clubs urged members to ‘Leave no Litter’.<sup>72</sup> Writing in 1937, R. G. Stapledon explained that the development of ‘a proper network of paths, tracks and rides for hikers, cyclists and riders’, and hostels, would help in ‘humanising and de-urbanising at least the more venturesome of the urban masses’, and would ‘begin to make some sort of a stand against the baneful influences of mass psychology’.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, *Cornish Homes and Customs* (London, 1934), p. 224.

<sup>67</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 89-93.

<sup>68</sup> *The Countryside and How to Enjoy It* (London, 1948).

<sup>69</sup> David Matless, ‘Moral Geographies of English Landscape’, *Landscape Research* 22.2 (1997), pp. 141-3.

<sup>70</sup> Cornish, *Scenery of England*, pp. 9-10; Shanks, *My England*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>71</sup> Shanks, *My England*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>72</sup> Cornish, *Scenery of England*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>73</sup> Stapledon, *Hill Lands of Britain*, pp. 84, 90-2.

However, the ultimate aim of the informed traveller would be to no longer require the guidance of literature, and to be able to move freely with all the agency and knowledge that would enable unique experiences. As W. H. Hudson wrote, 'I can recall a hundred little adventures we met with during those wanderings, when we walked day after day, without map or guide-book as our custom was'.<sup>74</sup> This idea was expressed in E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908), in which Lucy Honeychurch was only able to achieve her own personal experiences of Florence once she dispensed with her *Baedeker's Handbook*, which symbolises her character's growth in the course of the novel.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, to divert completely from the well-established motifs of travel narratives was to risk disapproval among the readership. Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell complained that many of their critics and readers desired not the honest accounts of travellers, but 'second-hand descriptions' of the fashionable features of Scotland that may be written by 'staying at home and manufacturing our journey in the British Museum'.<sup>76</sup>

The desire to escape the beaten track focussed on achieving personal, original, and authentic experiences in the landscapes of the West, which brought into question the role of the conventional guidebook. W. H. Hudson explored the traveller's desire to pursue this Romantic ideal in his *Afoot in England*, which was first published in 1909 and was republished several times in the period. Hudson claimed that guidebooks were useful, even 'invaluable', and 'we readily acquire the habit of taking them about with us and consulting them at frequent intervals'. But in doing so, something 'comes between us and that rarest and most exquisite enjoyment to be experienced amidst novel scenes'. Hudson argued that the 'highest degree' of pleasure was only obtainable by the traveller 'who goes without book', because the 'mental pictures' and set of expectations created by travel texts undermined 'the element of surprise', and consequently 'the delight has been discounted'. The 'shock of pleasure' and the 'charm of the unknown' enabled a scene to be viewed 'emotionally', and this intense emotional engagement made it 'a permanent possession of the mind'. Hudson's own experience of Stonehenge was ruined by the expectations that had formed in his mind when he was a child, and he emphasised that 'discovering the interesting things for ourselves' was an 'infinitely greater pleasure' than becoming informed 'by reading'.<sup>77</sup> The classical scholar Arthur Hugh Sidgwick was more direct in his dismissal of systematic travel texts, and described those who attempted to walk and talk as 'desecrating the face of nature with sophism and inference and authority and regurgitated Blue Book'.<sup>78</sup> These debates concerning the role of travel texts were commented upon even in formulaic travel texts themselves. *Murray's Cornwall* (1879) wrote that 'the walks around Penzance are so numerous that we must leave to the visitor the pleasant task of discovering and exploring them for himself, enumerating only a few'.<sup>79</sup> *Black's North Wales* (1897) recognised the limited use of a guidebook to 'more out-of-the-way adventurers', to whom 'we are able to offer only hints and guidelines'.<sup>80</sup>

The expression of disappointment was an effective way for writers to indicate to their reader that they were aware of expectations raised by previous travel texts, and that they had experienced something rather different, thus displaying their knowledge of the prevailing wisdom as well as their unique experience. In West Connacht, the essayist Robert Lynd explained that 'many travellers, I am afraid, are disappointed in Galway when they arrive'. Instead of 'an historic Spanish city with streets of courtly marbles' there are 'houses one might see anywhere'. Instead of the 'wild, fierce, and most original town' described by Thackeray, there was for Lynd 'at first a feeling of disenchantment'. Lynd's reading of Mr

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<sup>74</sup> Hudson, *Afoot*, p. 26.

<sup>75</sup> E. M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (London, 1908).

<sup>76</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. v.

<sup>77</sup> Hudson, *Afoot*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> A. H. Sidgwick, *Walking Essays* (London, 1912), pp. 10-11.

<sup>79</sup> *Murray's Cornwall* (1879), p. 80.

<sup>80</sup> *Black's North Wales* (1897), pp. v-vi.

and Mrs S. C. Hall raised expectations of ‘the dark features and coal-black hair of the people’, who were ‘so finely formed, so naturally graceful, that almost every peasant girl might serve as a model for a sculptor’. But Lynd was far more struck by ‘the wrinkled old woman who sits huddled in her shawl on the pavement’, with ‘very little hair’ and a figure ‘as graceful as the gnarled body of a tree’. Lynd fell ‘from depth to deeper depth of disappointment’ in what he described as ‘an age of realism’.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, in Skye, the author and journalist J. J. Bell warned his readers that ‘distinguished people, conjurers with words’, had written about Loch Coruisk and provided a set of expectations for travellers, who would then ‘be taken back by the reality’. Bell made it clear that, ‘since many people seem to have been misled, all the soaring peaks do not actually overhang the loch’, and the surrounding steepes are ‘in no place impassable’ as previous descriptions might have suggested. Descriptions of Coruisk might serve as ‘an allurements’ beforehand, and ‘afterwards as a souvenir’, but attest to ‘the futility of fine words as an introduction to Coruisk’.<sup>82</sup> The writer S. G. Bayne found the Twelve Bens ‘a disappointment’, as he had ‘heard too much about them’ in advance,<sup>83</sup> while the *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889) accused the Vale of Llanrwst of having been ‘a little... over-praised’, and attempted to ‘ensure the tourist against disappointment’ by admitting that the Llŷn Peninsula ‘looks its best from a distance’.<sup>84</sup>

The expression of disappointment signified divergence from the established and the expected, and served to add a sense of verisimilitude to the traveller’s account. Over time, disappointment became a well-established part of the traveller’s panoply of performance. This was particularly evident at Tintagel, which Tennyson found underwhelming during his visit ‘to absorb the atmosphere of the Arthurian legends’ in 1848.<sup>85</sup> Later writers such as Arthur Salmon drew on Tennyson’s experience, admitting to ‘a slight feeling of disappointment on first making acquaintance with the reality’ of the ruin.<sup>86</sup> Morton, too, found Tintagel to be ‘the most disappointing castle in England’, but, in his divergence from the expectations raised by ‘the gentlemanly knights of Tennyson’ and ‘the paladins of Malory’, claimed that he came closer to ‘the rough chieftains of history from whom the epic sprang’. In the end, Tintagel was ‘a disappointing ruin, but a great experience’.<sup>87</sup>

Travel texts occupied a curious place in the symbolic economy of authentic travel experiences. Taken as a diverse whole, travel texts at once outlined the beaten track, and described the process of leaving it, which itself became a common motif in the literature. These examples reflect wider practices of travel that were enacted across Britain and Ireland and beyond, but they also demonstrate how the West in particular was important as a space in which it was possible to leave behind the conventional tourist trails. Departing the beaten track was not simply a general desire that writers felt the need to express. It was also encoded in specific performances, which included the various modes of moving through the landscape, the historical imagination, and the negative portrayal of alternative and competing forms of travel.

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<sup>81</sup> Lynd, *Rambles in Ireland*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>82</sup> Bell, *Scotland’s Rainbow West*, pp. 234-5, 240.

<sup>83</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, p. 77.

<sup>84</sup> Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), pp. x-xi, 150.

<sup>85</sup> Valerie Purton and Norman Page, *The Palgrave Literary Dictionary of Tennyson* (London, 2010), p. 48.

<sup>86</sup> Salmon, *Literary Rambles*, pp. 211-12.

<sup>87</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), p. 101.

### III – Moving through the landscape

#### *Walking and rushing*

Moving through the landscapes of the West involved value-laden performances, and the moral geographies of walking, rushing, and motoring in the countryside shed light on travel in the broader context of rural modernities. As fast and cheap travel became more widely available, walking became ‘a deliberately selected mode of travel’. No longer associated with poverty and vagrancy, the new variety of speeds offered new ‘perceptual frameworks’, shifting the traveller’s focus ‘from destination to process’.<sup>88</sup> Walking as recreation emerged alongside the middle classes, who walked in public gardens as well as in the countryside and wilderness, seeking the sublime and picturesque, antiquities and geological formations, or simply ‘repose and solace’ in places which ‘breathed of an older, less urbanised way of life’.<sup>89</sup> Walking offered ‘an escape from the increasing speed, rationalisation and alienation of modern life’, and yet as a recreational practice it was both a product, and expression of, modernity. Hostels and hotels, trains and motorbuses, commercially manufactured equipment, and travel texts encouraged the popularisation of recreational walking, the cultural significance of which was informed by the experience of urban modernity.<sup>90</sup> By the 1930s, some estimates count over 500,000 regular country walkers in Britain, as walking became ‘a mass working-class activity’ in the inter-war period, which brought with it cultural tensions as well as ‘open clashes’ regarding access to land.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to affordability,<sup>92</sup> the true benefits of walking lay in its authenticity as a mode of transport. In *Afoot in England*, Hudson suggested that what society had gained in technological innovation, it had also lost in its understanding of the land and its people. ‘There cannot be progression without retrogression, or gain with no corresponding loss’, he wrote. When cycling along the roads ‘at a reckless rate of very nearly nine miles an hour’, Hudson realised that ‘flying’ along in this manner meant that ‘I do not feel so native to the earth as formerly’. Pedestrianism – once seen as a ‘limitation’ – was increasingly valued by Hudson as ‘a method of seeing the country’ which ‘made us more intimate with the people we met and stayed with’. Being ‘poor’ and ‘footsore’ meant that, as a walker, Hudson was ‘nearer’ to the poor cottagers in ‘small remote villages’ than if he had ‘travelled in a more comfortable way’.<sup>93</sup> Hudson’s treatise on walking was part of a wider literary tradition that drew on the foundational writings of Wordsworth, who influenced nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers such as William Hazlitt, Henry David Thoreau, Leslie Stephen, Robert Louis Stevenson, G. M. Trevelyan, and Edward Thomas. These writers suggested that the ‘natural, primitive quality’ of walking reconnected the individual with the physical world and ‘human life before mechanisation’, affording the walker ‘an enhanced sense of self, clearer thinking, more acute moral apprehension, and higher powers of expression’.<sup>94</sup> Mais declared that the England worth discovering was ‘the England who refuses to disclose her naked beauty in its full glory to any but the devout worshipper on foot’. Such an England was ‘hidden from all except the few who follow in the footsteps of George Borrow, Richard Cobbett, Edward Thomas, W. H. Davies, W. H.

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<sup>88</sup> Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1994), p. 10. These arguments are also made in the expansive introduction to Joseph A. Amato, *On Foot: A History of Walking* (New York, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman, ‘Introduction: Modern Walks’, in Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman (eds), *Walking Histories, 1800-1914* (London, 2016), pp. 3-4.

<sup>90</sup> Bryant, Burns, and Readman, ‘Introduction: Modern Walks’, pp. 14, 16, 22.

<sup>91</sup> Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’, p. 268.

<sup>92</sup> For the financial benefits of walking, see *Ward and Lock’s (Late Shaw’s) Illustrated Guide to, and Popular History of North Wales* (London, 1883), pp. 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Hudson, *Afoot*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>94</sup> Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture*, pp. 13, 15.



Hudson, Gilbert White, Richard Jeffries, William Hazlitt, the youthful Belloc and their like'.<sup>95</sup> Of course, writers also recognised that travellers would often require the use of rail and road in order to reach landscapes in which walking could be properly conducted. Anthony Collett made it clear that 'car or train' could be 'an aid to unhurried and observant rambling'.<sup>96</sup>

Hudson's argument – that pedestrianism was a method of travel which brought greater understanding of and intimacy with landscapes and people – was a recurrent theme in the travel texts of the West. Walking enabled Edmund Vale to consider 'my position on the map' and achieve 'a sort of general feeling and knowledge of the place I am travelling through'. These elements combined to provide 'an atmosphere for my spirit to dwell in'.<sup>97</sup> In Skye, Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell claimed that walking 'made the people meet us on more friendly terms than if we drove in coaches or sailed in yachts'. They were not separated from the locals as 'sportsmen or moneyed tourists' were.<sup>98</sup>

The relative inconvenience of walking was in fact where its cultural value lay. In Skye, MacCulloch made it clear to his readers that convenience did not mean superiority. He remarked that the easiest way to get to Loch Coruisk 'is to land at Loch Scavaig by the tourist steamer', but 'there is nothing romantic in that'. An alternative route for the 'more venturesome' was to 'come round the cliffs by Camasunary, past the Bad Step, where a false move will precipitate you from the ledge into the sea far below', while others may wish to arrive by rowing boat. But 'the best way by which to let the grandeur of the mountains and the loch be impressed by degrees upon one, is to proceed from Portree by Sligachan' on foot. By this method:

... every step of the way takes you into a wilder country; the savage mountains draw nearer; at last you walk under their shadow; you penetrate their depths; and for reward, after tough climbing, the strange grandeur of Coruisk breaks full upon your prepared spirit.<sup>99</sup>

Just as Hudson valued walking as a slower, less convenient, and more wearisome method of travel, so the *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903) revelled in the inaccessibility of Scottish mountains when compared with the Lake District. In the latter, 'however rough and steep the climb may be, the tourist has always the comfortable satisfaction of feeling that he is within a few hours' walking distance of some house of entertainment'. On the other hand, in Scotland the best ascents can only be made 'by really good pedestrians, who do not shrink from devoting a whole day to the expedition'.<sup>100</sup> Anticipating Hudson's valorisation of being 'footsore', physical exertion was perceived as a way of furthering the traveller's engagement with the landscape, which is explored more fully in the section on 'danger and adventure', below. In these ways, walking enabled the traveller to reach otherwise inaccessible spots, see the landscape 'thoroughly', and – most importantly – to fully understand its 'grandeur'.

Some systematic travel texts were, at times, keen to point out the gentle nature of certain walks so as not to deter the tourist who prioritised convenience. *Murray's Cornwall* (1897) advised that the 'grandest cliff scenery' between the Land's End and the Logan Rock was earned after 'a rough walk of ups and downs'.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, the *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924) reassured the reader that 'the nature of the cliff-top

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<sup>95</sup> S. P. B. Mais, *Oh! To be in England: A Book of the Open Air* (London, 1922), p. 10.

<sup>96</sup> Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. x.

<sup>97</sup> Edmund Vale, 'A Welsh Walk', *Blackwood's Magazine* 195.1180 (1914), pp. 258-9.

<sup>98</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 150.

<sup>99</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 134-5.

<sup>100</sup> Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903), pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>101</sup> *Murray's Cornwall* (1879), p. 108.

is such that it can be fully seen without overtaxing the endurance or the nerves of the least valiant pedestrian'.<sup>102</sup>

In these ways, walking was the antidote to that great sin of the traveller – rushing. Rushing was associated with the tourist crowds, as tourist associations made preparations for the annual 'rush of traffic'.<sup>103</sup> In the Scilly Isles, rushing was associated with 'cheap day-excursions from the mainland', as 'crowds of trippers' spent a few hours on the islands, arriving at St Mary's before 'rushing off to the steam-launch for Tresco' to see the gardens and Cromwell's Castle, and they returned to St Mary's 'dead-beat, just in time to go on board for the homeward journey. And they call that a day's holiday!'<sup>104</sup>

To rush through the landscape was to be unable to appreciate it in the appropriate manner. As *Black's Ireland* (1902) explained, 'it is possible for the tourist to "do" Ireland in ten days, but such can only be with a rush'. In order to obtain 'any sense of enjoying all its main beauties, not less than a month is necessary'. The guidebook was conscious of the reality that many readers would be unable to afford a month or more of continuous travel, and instead recommended that the tourist 'take the country in sections' for full appreciation.<sup>105</sup> This sentiment was echoed by Stephen Gwynn, who began the introduction of his *Ireland in Ten Days* (1935) by stating that, instead of encouraging a nationwide tour, he would instead recommend 'ten days in Dublin and its district, ten days in Antrim and Down, ten days in Donegal, in Connemara and West Mayo, or in Kerry and West Cork'. By taking the time to travel around the country in this way, the traveller 'would, in my opinion, really see more of Ireland than by a more extensive tour; would get the feel of the country, learn more about it, and enjoy it better'.<sup>106</sup> In the Scottish book of the same *In Ten Days* series, J. J. Bell remarked that some people 'cross over to Skye, to spend an hour or so on its soil, just to be able to say you have been there'.<sup>107</sup>

Earlier in the period, rushing was associated with railway travel. Railway travel encouraged the speedy movement between the main towns and attractions, which led to an experience that was criticised as superficial. Concerns were raised about the extension of the railway from Llanrwst to Betws-y-Coed, and the plans to further extend the line 'mountain-ward'. The majority of tourists 'perversely stick to the rail withersoever it may lead them', in their 'hurry of sight-seeing against time', but to do so might lead them past Betws-y-Coed into 'a tangle of branch-lines' and 'mineral traffic', and find themselves 'shunted into a quarry, or, if somewhat careless, even spirited away from Taffyland altogether'. To tie oneself to the railway was 'not always a wise course'.<sup>108</sup> The *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903) also discouraged tourists from 'rushing about', and suggested that they 'would derive more physical benefit and more genuine enjoyment from their holiday' if more time was spent 'exploring the neighbourhood of their several halting-places'.<sup>109</sup>

Despite such recommendations, systematic travel texts catered for all types of traveller, and could not necessarily carry the same set of judgements as individual authors. The author of a personal travel narrative had the option to clearly and decisively prioritise walking over other forms of transport. Edmund Vale declared unequivocally that 'to walk into Wales is much more exciting and much more delightful than any other way of approaching the land of lovely scenery and lovely voice'.<sup>110</sup> Systematic

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<sup>102</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> For two examples, see 'Notes and News', *Irish Travel* 1.3 (1925), p. 50; and 'Notes and News', *Irish Travel* 1.1 (1925), p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> Mothersole, *Isles of Scilly*, p. 8.

<sup>105</sup> Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1902), p. vi.

<sup>106</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days*, p. 15.

<sup>107</sup> J. J. Bell, *Scotland in Ten Days* (London, 1934), p. 172.

<sup>108</sup> *Guide to Bettws-y-Coed* (1903), p. 12.

<sup>109</sup> Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903), p. xviii.

<sup>110</sup> Vale, 'A Welsh Walk', p. 254 – Vale made 'horseback' the only exception to this rule.

travel texts, however, were obliged to provide information on ‘cycling, walking and driving routes’, without exception.<sup>111</sup> *Murray’s Scotland* (1883) was written for ‘the tourist, whether vehicular, equestrian, or pedestrian’,<sup>112</sup> and *Ward and Lock’s North Wales Northern* (1912) combined information on ‘Walks’ with ‘Excursions by Rail, Road or Steamer’.<sup>113</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1897) was frank about the realities of putting together a systematic travel text, and explained that the ‘main difficulty’ of deciding ‘what must be left out of notice’ was resolved by the consideration of ‘what nine tourists out of ten wish to see... our rule being to consult for the greatest number’.<sup>114</sup> A semblance of balance was found by the *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), which aimed for ‘fullness and accuracy in practical detail’, but also pointed out that ‘directions for the tourist’ had been devised ‘especially for the pedestrian, by whom alone much of the finest scenery can be adequately explored’.<sup>115</sup>

### *Motoring*

In the twentieth century, complaints about rushing which had previously focussed on the railways gave way to debates about the consequences of motor travel. For many writers, the motorcar was an important part of their identity as an adventurous traveller, independently moving through and exploring the landscapes of the West, as the idea of ‘the open road’ suggested possibility and adventure.<sup>116</sup> The motorcar was celebrated as a vehicle of liberation, which removed the traveller from the restrictions of the railway and coach routes, where the traveller was ‘not entirely his own master’, as the ‘old encampment, the cluster of grave-mounds, or the ancient cross’ appealed ‘in vain’ as the traveller passed by helplessly.<sup>117</sup> Thomas D. Murphy explained that, when used properly, motoring allowed the traveller to gain ‘actual knowledge of the people and country that can hardly be attained in any other way’.<sup>118</sup> Rather than representing a departure from earlier forms of travel, many motorists saw themselves as experiencing the countryside in a way that resembled Pennant and Boswell, moving through the landscape while remaining in touch with local inhabitants.<sup>119</sup>

Bradley looked back on the early days of motor travel, when roads were seen as ‘a sort of historic relic’. The ‘sentiment of the old coaching period lay thick’ upon the Holyhead Road, and ‘the romance of old times still lingered’. In those ‘earliest journeys of blessed memory’, motorists such as Bradley ‘thought we were the last word in road travel’, and were helping to ‘keep many of the historic highways from becoming grass-grown and their houses of entertainment from falling into decay’.<sup>120</sup> Bradley’s ‘heavily dramatised mysticism’ was characteristic of motor travel narratives, as freedom on the road led to ‘greater understanding and awareness’.<sup>121</sup>

Floyd demonstrated how the motorcar, when properly used, could enhance the traveller’s experience. He explained that ‘if you are made at all like me, you will seldom feel the necessity for “scorching” along the Irish roads’. In direct contrast to those who speed along, Floyd depicted himself as driving in a way that

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<sup>111</sup> See *Guide to Bettws-y-Coed* (1903), front cover.

<sup>112</sup> *Murray’s Scotland* (1883), introduction, p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> *North Wales (Northern)* (1912), pp. 141-2.

<sup>114</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1897), pp. v-vi.

<sup>115</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. v.

<sup>116</sup> Coulbert, ‘Narratives of Motoring in England’, p. 208.

<sup>117</sup> Francis A. Knight, *In the West Country* (Bristol, 1896), p. 259.

<sup>118</sup> Murphy, *British Highways and Byways*, p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, pp. 130-1.

<sup>120</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 27.

<sup>121</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, pp. 130-1.

did not compromise his ‘antiquarian eye’, and he was ‘absorbed by the wealth of half-forgotten antiquities’, such as:

... the dolmen and standing-stone in a nearby field, the great green mound of some early culture, the broken round tower among the trees, or the castle ruin on the far hill, for which you may often search on your map or in your guidebook in vain.<sup>122</sup>

In this way, many motorists preferred older roads to the new ‘polished tarred surface’, across which ‘lightening traffic’ rushed.<sup>123</sup> For example, the ‘rough lonely road’ from Recess to Kylemore, which passes between the Maamturks and the Twelve Bens, resembled a ‘bumpy crawl’. But this was seen in a positive way by Floyd, as the apparent constraint in fact ‘gives you leisure to drink in the beauty of the mountains on either hand in slow draughts’. The leisurely pace enhanced Floyd’s perception of ‘the real loneliness of the way’ and the ‘primeval simplicity of the landscape’. On reflection, if this bumpy track were to be ‘replaced by a broad concrete affair up which you can race at fifty’, that ‘would be a pity’.<sup>124</sup> Part of the appeal of motoring, especially along the ‘winding single-track roads’ of Scotland and Ireland, was in the ‘cheerful pioneering through arduous conditions’.<sup>125</sup>

Crucially, Floyd noted that Ireland remained a place which lacked ‘that massed congestion, made perilous by crawlers and “cutters-in”, that can make some of the big English roads on occasions so detestable’.<sup>126</sup> Morton, too, enjoyed motoring around Ireland while defining ‘the charm of Ireland’ as ‘the charm of a country that is still living, spiritually, in the eighteenth century’, which exhibited a ‘refreshing’ mentality that was not ‘machine-mad and speed-mad’.<sup>127</sup> Floyd, Morton, Bradley, and many other writers valued the agency afforded them by their motor vehicles, but only in the sense that it enabled them to explore and discover places that were not themselves tarnished by the machine age.

Used incorrectly, the motorcar became detrimental to the discovery and appreciation of rural landscapes. Superficial travel was still possible from the seat of the motorcar, as many motorists were criticised for restricting themselves to the itineraries outlined in travel texts. Publications such as the *Michelin Guide to the British Isles* (1913) and Thomas Cook’s *How to See Great Britain: Escorted Motoring Tours* (1927) prescribed routes which shaped travel, and undermined the notion of the liberated motorist.<sup>128</sup> In particular, motoring limited the traveller along the sprawling coastlines of western Scotland, who after ‘running over every possible road’ would need to spend just a few days on the water ‘to realise how little of the West Coast he has already discovered’.<sup>129</sup>

Criticisms of improper motor travel increased along with the number of motorists, perceptible to Bradley in Llangollen, where the ‘quiet and serene’ spot near the river had been spoiled by the ‘hoot of the motor’, which has ‘changed everything’.<sup>130</sup> Moving through the landscape at high speed encouraged travellers to rush, and prevented the driver and passengers from properly appreciating their surroundings. MacCulloch described how ‘petrol-driven vehicles now rush about’ Skye ‘in great numbers’, on newly-

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<sup>122</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>123</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 27.

<sup>124</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 63.

<sup>125</sup> Gold and Gold, *Imagining Scotland*, p. 124.

<sup>126</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 10.

<sup>127</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 157.

<sup>128</sup> For examples of guidebooks prescribing motor itineraries within the case study areas, see *Michelin Guide to the British Isles* (London, 1913), pp. 105-6, 107-8, 124-5, 125-6; and *How to See Great Britain. Escorted Motoring Tours* (1927), pp. 10-11, 14-15, 22, 29, 31.

<sup>129</sup> Bell, *Scotland’s Rainbow West*, p. 301. Bell also differentiated motorists from ‘the independent tourist’ who is not tied to a car, in Bell, *Scotland in Ten Days*, p. 8.

<sup>130</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 8.

built roads which were preferred to the ‘former steep and rough’ ascents.<sup>131</sup> The damaging effects of building new roads at the expense of narrow village lanes, hedges, and pedestrian paths were satirised by W. K. Haselden in his cartoon ‘For Speed Maniacs’, which appeared in the *Daily Mirror* in 1930 (see Image 3.2). In these critiques, fast motor travel was connected to superficiality of experience.

Image 3.2



Source: W. K. Haselden, ‘For Speed Maniacs’, *Daily Mirror*, 28 August 1930.

Once motor travel had grown to the point of speed restrictions and roads ‘congested with motor traffic’,<sup>132</sup> many writers depicted the motorcar as detrimental to the discovery and appreciation of rural landscapes. The principal criticism of motor travel was its sheer speed. Mais described how ‘furiously do the motor chars-à-banc charge along our lanes’ and how ‘vainly do hordes of motorists penetrate to the remotest slopes’.<sup>133</sup> This was criticised as a reckless and dangerous way of travelling, which was dramatised in travel narratives such as S. G. Bayne’s *On an Irish Jaunting-Car through Donegal and Connemara* (1902). ‘As we were returning to the hotel’ at Recess, wrote Bayne, ‘a white automobile approached us at high speed’, which caused the horse to ‘become panic-stricken’. The horse was ‘about to plunge down the embankment along which we were driving’, at which point the quick-thinking driver ‘jumped from

<sup>131</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. xi.

<sup>132</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), pp. liii-liv.

<sup>133</sup> Mais, *Oh! To be in England*, p. 10.

his seat, whipped off his coat, and wrapped it round the horse's head'. The horse was calmed, and the 'white ghost' continued upon its way.<sup>134</sup> Floyd recoiled at the thought of long-distance motor buses – 'juggernauts charging across the country at such breakneck speeds'. He admitted that motorbuses were 'working something like a revolution in the life of the countryside', but admitted that 'I hope that it will be a long time still before motor transport entirely replaces the little dull-red cart that you see in such numbers, drawn by a shaggy pony or an impassive ass'.<sup>135</sup>

A. G. Bradley expanded on the connection between swift motor travel and superficiality in his *In Praise of North Wales* (1926), though he travelled around North Wales in a motorcar himself.<sup>136</sup> Bradley claimed that it was 'impossible' for a majority of motorists to 'imbibe much beyond fresh air or feel anything but the pleasant thrill of rapid motion' as they travelled in their motorcars, 'passing some of the masterpieces of nature'.<sup>137</sup> Bradley was shocked when, at a vantage point which 'commands one of the finest valley and river views in all Wales', he counted 'thirty or forty private cars' which passed by, and 'not a single passenger bestowed as much as even a sidelong glance', in what was an 'unconscious' way of travelling.<sup>138</sup>

Similarly, at Beddgelert, Bradley suggested that 'the Welsh mountains, off the roads, seemed to be now almost deserted', as 'all day long cars of every size and motor-cycles went tearing and roaring by my inn door, mostly as if the devil were behind them'.<sup>139</sup> Exasperated, Bradley asked 'what were they here for?'<sup>140</sup> The answer was that they were here to see as much as possible in as little time as possible, and even the texts which advertised such travel warned of its superficiality. The *Blue Guides* series advertised 'Public Motor Tours' so that tourists could take advantage of 'an easy and rapid, though perhaps superficial, method of seeing the country'.<sup>141</sup> Given the ambitious scope of many of these motor tours, it was no wonder that speed was necessary. On day four of Thomas Cook's 'Tour 53' by private automobile, tourists were taken through Llandudno, Caernarfon, Llanberis, Beddgelert, Ffestiniog, Betws-y-Coed, Llangollen, and Chester – 135 miles in total. This was but one day out of 14, in a tour which began in London and reached Oban before returning to the point of origin.<sup>142</sup>

Such attitudes towards motor travel were inflected by cultural prejudice. The lack of proper appreciation of the landscape as a result of fast motor travel was linked by Edmund Vale to the superficiality of the popular tourist. Upon arriving in Dolanog, in North Wales, Vale purchased a 'pictorial post-card' – 'a thing that is really an abomination unto me'. For Vale, the postcard was a 'miserable device for distorting people's impressions of rural England', and 'only fit to be trafficked in by those who aver that they can see the country from a motor-car'. The depiction of 'flat anaemic landscapes', and 'dull buildings and hideous streets' on postcards lack 'life or light or perspective or atmosphere'. For Vale, this is 'the exact replica of the impressions one records in one's mind of the country when travelling in a motor-car, or still more when driving one'.<sup>143</sup>

At the same time, the introduction of speed limits was criticised as it undermined the liberation of the motorist. While Murphy appreciated the speed limit signs which served as a 'deterrent upon due haste',<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>135</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 10.

<sup>136</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 17.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-9.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-9.

<sup>141</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. xliii; Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. xli.

<sup>142</sup> *Escorted Motoring Tours*, pp. 14-15. For similar itineraries relating to the case study areas of this thesis, see pp. 10-11, 22, 29, 31.

<sup>143</sup> Vale, 'A Welsh Walk', pp. 257-8.

<sup>144</sup> Murphy, *British Highways and Byways*, p. 147.

Floyd enjoyed the liberty of Irish roads, which ‘are a paradise for the motorist’, particularly along the ‘tarred or concrete highway along which you can bowl unhindered at any pace’.<sup>145</sup> ‘There are’, he wrote, ‘with a few minor exceptions, no tiresome speed limits’, and he found the police to be ‘almost always courteous, helpful and uninterfering, provided you comply with a few simple regulations’.<sup>146</sup> The imposition of restrictive speed limits was indeed controversial, and *Black’s Scotland North* (1920) argued that ‘rapid travelling’ was safe along ‘stretches of good highway’ along which ‘vehicular or pedestrian traffic is extremely scarce’. Indeed, in the event that the motorist needed to stop immediately, ‘no one who is familiar with the amazing brake-power which all motor-cars possess, and the ease with which they can be steered, will regard the exceeding of the technical limit in the open country as unjustifiable’.<sup>147</sup>

Criticisms of motor travel which centred on speed did not go uncontested, as a variety of travel texts appreciated the benefits of the popularisation of motor tourism. The *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922) noted that the ‘stream of motor-coach traffic over the passes’ around Capel Curig ‘has lately made the mountains even more accessible’.<sup>148</sup> By the inter-war period, tourists in North Wales could ‘run through charming scenery to beauty spots 50 or 60 miles distant’ on powerful motor coaches ‘built specially for the district’, and this was ‘the most popular means of enjoying the beauties of the neighbourhood’.<sup>149</sup> In *The Face of Scotland* (1934), the publisher Harry Batsford and sportsman Charles Fry celebrated the fact that ‘the improvement of the roads and rapid development of the light car have brought its remotest districts within comparatively easy reach of most southerners’.<sup>150</sup>

The relative speed and ease of motor travel meant that the tourist could save time passing through dreary landscapes, and could spend more time appreciating those places deemed ‘beauty spots’. The *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924) claimed that the 10 miles between Penzance and the Land’s End made for ‘a dull walk’, and ‘the motors are to be preferred’, while Kenneth MacRae explained that Loch Coruisk can be visited from Broadford ‘by motor and boat without the fatigue of a trudge over the moors’.<sup>151</sup> Priestley argued that ‘with some types of landscape’ such as ‘dullish, rolling country’, fast motor travel meant that the landscape ‘becomes alive’ and ‘there has been a gain, not a loss’, for the traveller.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, the road from Galway to Clifden was, according to Floyd, ‘frankly dull’, and ‘the motorist may keep his foot hard on the accelerator all the time’ in the knowledge that ‘you can soon leave it for what is perhaps Ireland’s grandest glen’.<sup>153</sup> The replacement of ‘old horse-vehicles that jogged along so leisurely’ by an ‘excellent service’ of motor coaches in Connemara resulted in ‘time-saving, exhilarating, and really luxurious travelling’.<sup>154</sup>

Hugh Quigley dismissed the complaints made about ‘the intrusion of a motor civilisation’ by ‘the lover of the old desolate amenities’. The notion, he argued, that the ‘silence of the glens’ was being ‘destroyed by the raucous clamour of mechanical transport’, was refutable on the grounds that ‘the Highlands can absorb this type of activity with ease’. The Highlands were, he wrote, ‘so imposing in their magnificence that the most spectacular and noisy of human activities is as nothing beside them’. To support his

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<sup>145</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. John Cooke also noted that there was ‘not the same stringency on the part of the authorities in the enforcement of the Motor Act’; see John Cooke, ‘Ireland as a Tourist Resort’, in William T. Macartney-Filgate (ed.), *Irish Rural Life and Industry. With Suggestions for the Future* (Dublin, 1907), p. 18.

<sup>147</sup> Mitton, *Black’s Scotland, North* (1920), pp. 151-2.

<sup>148</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. 70.

<sup>149</sup> *Llandudno and North Wales (Northern Section)* (1925), p. 28.

<sup>150</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. vii.

<sup>151</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 284; MacRae, ‘Misty Isle’ of Skye, p. 39.

<sup>152</sup> Priestley, ‘Beauty of Britain’, pp. 2-3.

<sup>153</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 63.

<sup>154</sup> Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, pp. 12-13.

argument, Quigley pointed to the ‘enormities of corrugated iron steadings and hamlets’, the ‘water-power works’, or the ‘ghastly monastery built at Fort Augustus’, all of which the ‘beauty’ of the Highlands had ‘survived’.<sup>155</sup> Along similar lines, *Ward and Lock’s Complete Scotland* (1933) rejected the notion that motor travel precluded the appreciation of the ‘mountains, lochs and rivers’ which characterised ‘Scottish Highland scenery’, and stated that ‘almost every one of the lochs has a road running along its rim, enabling the motorist to taste the cream of Highland scenery from the seat of his car’.<sup>156</sup>

These debates reveal an ambivalence of attitudes towards motor travel, which do not align with the simple dichotomy of the modern and anti-modern. Motorcars liberated travellers from the restrictions of railway and coach travel, yet encouraged rushing with their excessive speed. A vehicle of liberation in the hands of the conscientious traveller, many writers argued that motorcars were agents of superficiality in the hands of mass tourists. In travel texts, the fundamental issue was not motor travel itself, but the appropriate use of the technology. Motoring had the potential to conform to the aesthetic framework of appropriate engagement with the landscape, and could even enhance travel, but it also had the ability to destabilise it.

#### IV – The historical imagination

In this period, rural landscapes were widely understood as spaces which preserved intimate links with the pre-industrial past, and walking through them could trigger historical insight.<sup>157</sup> This idea drew on the perceived permanence of the rural landscape, evident in the continuity in architecture, the continued use of non-mechanised agricultural methods, and the culture of the rural peasantry, who were mined for their folk songs and dances, which were understood as unchanged remnants of the national spirit that had been passed down through the generations.<sup>158</sup> In the inter-war period, improvements in aerial photography made visible the residual traces of historical villages and fortifications that had hitherto remained unseen, reinforcing the idea of ‘the recoverable past’.<sup>159</sup> An understanding of the past was an important part of the traveller’s performance at the periphery. This was the highly stylised way in which writers conveyed their knowledge and also their ability to apply this expertise to the interpretation and proper perception of their historical surroundings. In travel texts, the historical imagination took several forms, such as a description or survey of local artefacts, standing stones, landscapes, and buildings, while more immersive performances of the historical imagination described the journey westwards as a voyage in time as well as in space. Writers made it clear that the perception of the past was not something that

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<sup>155</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, p. 13.

<sup>156</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 12.

<sup>157</sup> For G. M. Trevelyan, walking, and his connection with the past, see David Gange, ‘Retracing Trevelyan? Historical Practice and the Archive of the Feet’, *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* 21.3 (2017), pp. 248-50. For a more recent example of the historical imagination, see the account of Dún Aonghasa in Tim Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage* (London, 1990 [1986]), pp. 64-5.

<sup>158</sup> For the importance of the rural image in English culture, see Alun Howkins, ‘The Discovery of Rural England’, in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (2nd edn, London, 2014 [1986]), pp. 85-111; and Catherine Brace, ‘Finding England Everywhere: Regional Identity and the Construction of National Identity, 1890-1940’, *Ecumene* 6.1 (1999), pp. 90-109. For a counter-argument, see Peter Mandler, ‘Against “Englishness”: English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997), pp. 155-75. For folk song collecting and the national spirit, see Mark Freeman, ‘Folklore Collection and Social Investigation in Late-Nineteenth Century and Early-Twentieth Century England’, *Folklore* 116.1 (2005), pp. 51-65; John Francmanis, ‘National Music to National Redeemer: The Consolidation of a “Folk-Song” Construct in Edwardian England’, *Popular Music* 21.1 (2002), pp. 1-25; and Vic Gammon, ‘Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914’, *History Workshop Journal* 10.1 (1980), pp. 61-89.

<sup>159</sup> Kitty Hauser, *Shadow Sites: Photography, Archaeology, and the British Landscape, 1927-1955* (Oxford, 2007), 174-6.



just anyone could do – this was an intellectual, sensitive, and exclusive cultural practice that carried with it its own set of moral geographies.

The connections with the past intensified as one travelled westwards. As chapter five discusses in more detail, the West was where geologists found the most ancient layers of rock, and where ethnologists and travellers alike found a preponderance of prehistoric racial types in the local population. The linguistic evidence assembled by philologists reinforced sweeping schemes of historical development which depicted waves of ancient peoples whose descendants had lingered longest in the far reaches of the West. The geographer H. J. Fleure defined what he called the ‘Celtic West’ by its slow assimilation of new ideas ‘without letting them utterly destroy the old pattern of life and work’.<sup>160</sup> W. R. Kermack suggested that the historical continuity of the West was based on the geographical structure of the British-Irish Isles. He wrote that in the south and east ‘the British plain slopes to meet the north-west portion of the great European plain’, which encouraged change by providing ‘a gateway for the entrance of continental influences’. In contrast, the ‘north-west oceanic border’ which comprised areas of Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall ‘has found expression in resultant differences, agricultural, industrial, racial, and historical’.<sup>161</sup> What emerged from many of these texts was the historical narrative of the westward movement of peoples, from ‘short’, ‘dark’, ‘Iberian’ groups to the waves of Goidelic and Brythonic Celts, ‘pushed’ to the western ends of the land by the Anglicising influence of the ‘Saxons’ – a process which was evident in the contemporary survival of vernacular languages and racial ‘types’ in the West.<sup>162</sup>

These grand narratives were reinforced by the contemporary archaeological interest in cromlechs, prehistoric forts, and standing stones – physical evidence of the prehistoric past which was more abundant in the West. In Ireland, ‘the builders of the Dolmens, or cromlechs, seem to have moved westwards’, casting the ‘last wave of their art’ along the western coast. For the traveller interested in late-Celtic forts, the western coastlines of Sligo, Galway, Clare, and Kerry were where they were ‘chiefly found’.<sup>163</sup> In North West Wales, Penmaenmawr mountain was described as ‘covered with the relics of Celtic days’ including tumuli, druidical circles, and ‘a great stone-walled settlement or camp – Dinas Penmaen’ (Braich-y-Dinas), at the summit of the mountain.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, the *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883) explained that Devon and Cornwall contain ‘few’ objects of archaeological or antiquarian interest ‘until we reach its western limits’.<sup>165</sup> Arthur Salmon – referencing Arthur G. Langdon’s *Old Cornish Crosses* (1896) – counted over 300 stone crosses, and 22 inscribed pillar-stones in Cornwall, while *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879) claimed that ‘there are more dolmens in the district west of Falmouth and north of Penzance than in all England beside’, recommending in particular the Trethevy Stone, and quoits at Zennor, Pendarves (or Carwynnen), Chûn, and Lanyon.<sup>166</sup> The Handbook also recommended stone circles such as the Hurlers in Bodmin Moor near Liskeard, as well as the Boskednan Circle, the Nine Maidens of Boscawen-Ûn, and the Dawn’s Men (or Merry Maidens), which were all within a short distance of the Land’s End. All of this supported the perception of the West as ‘the last stronghold of a race driven to bay at the extreme corner of their country’.<sup>167</sup>

Physical historical remnants were powerful sites of historical imagination, and it was the proper comprehension of ruins and megalithic monuments which marked out the informed traveller from the

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<sup>160</sup> Fleure, ‘The Celtic West’, p. 882.

<sup>161</sup> Kermack, *Historical Geography of Scotland*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>162</sup> Bowen, ‘Early Christianity’, p. 273. Also see Skene’s description of ‘Celtic tribes’, who ‘gradually retreated’ until they were ‘confined to the mountains and western islands’; see Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, vol. 1, p. 17.

<sup>163</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), pp. xxiv-xxv.

<sup>164</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, facing p. 49.

<sup>165</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. xv.

<sup>166</sup> Arthur L. Salmon, *Cornwall* (New York, 1925), p. 37; *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), introduction, pp. 14-15.

<sup>167</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), introduction, pp. 14-15.

tourist. In his *Picturesque Ireland* (1890), W. F. Wakeman described how the traveller's historical imagination may be inspired by ruins such as those of Aughnanure Castle, in the Connemara town of Oughterard:

The tourist, if of archaeological proclivities, while surveying the courtyard... and pacing through its moss-grown and grey lichen-clad mementos of the past – can, by an easy transition of fancy, restore the now desolate and beautiful ruin with phantoms of the past – history with its myriads of recollections will mentally crowd upon him; and he may, without difficulty, realise... what they were when it constituted the home of the Irish chieftain of by-gone days.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, at Tintagel, Murphy 'strove to reconstruct in imagination the castle as it stood in the days of the blameless king'. The recognition of Arthurian associational values enhanced Murphy's experience, as 'the wild old stories crowded upon me in that lonely twilight hour!'<sup>169</sup> In his description of Dún Aonghasa (which he anglicised to 'Dun Aengus') on the Aran Islands, Bayne placed himself in the position of an invader during his march among the ramparts and 'entanglement' of sharp stones, which were designed to 'hinder the approach of the enemy for an assault on the fort and make them an easy target for the bowmen to shoot at'. Bayne 'experienced considerable difficulty in getting through it', and felt 'fully qualified to appreciate the intrepidity of an attacking party who would brave such an obstruction to their progress when storming the fort'.<sup>170</sup>

The 'perceived encroachment' of popular forms of tourism into the West 'nourished the urge to delineate'.<sup>171</sup> One such strategy was the historical imagination, which served to distinguish the informed traveller from the conventional tourist, and the level of qualification achieved by Bayne was not open to everyone. In his book on the *Islands of Scotland*, Hugh MacDiarmid even called for the restriction of access to 'those who can pass a fairly strict examination in appropriate subjects'.<sup>172</sup> Being able to 'see' the past was an intellectual endeavour for the traveller, who was aided by archaeological and historical settings that forged 'imaginative connections between the individual mind in the present and the grander sequence of past human life'.<sup>173</sup>

Such tensions were particularly marked in Cornwall and North West Wales, which were constructed as regions of the West while at the same time offering accessible seaside towns for weekend tourists. As Mais explained, 'the majority of people, however, don't see Cornwall at all', because they 'laze in deck-chairs on the sands or promenade' at Penzance and St Ives.<sup>174</sup> The Cornwall 'unknown to the golfer, the bather, the tripper, the motorist and the promenade' was characterised by stone circles, ancient wells, cromlechs, tumuli, cairns, and stone crosses 'that baffle the historian and defy all attempts to account for them'. This Cornwall was appreciated by writers such as Mais, who expressed his comprehension through his historical imagination:

Surrounded by these, the visitor recalls the legends, superstitions and traditions that the crowded streets of Penzance and St Ives have caused him to forget, and begins to see the long train of Phoenician miners, weighted down with their treasure of tin, descending to

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<sup>168</sup> Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, p. 302.

<sup>169</sup> Murphy, *In Unfamiliar England*, p. 73.

<sup>170</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, p. 110.

<sup>171</sup> Buzard, *Beaten Tracks*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>172</sup> MacDiarmid, *Islands of Scotland*, p. xix.

<sup>173</sup> Rebecca Welshman, 'Dreams of Celtic Kings: Victorian Pre-History and the Notion of "Celtic"', in Marion Gibson, Shelley Trower, and Garry Tregidga (eds), *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* (London, 2013), p. 62.

<sup>174</sup> Mais, *Oh! To be in England*, pp. 91-2.

the shore from the Ding-dong mine, watches the last desperate stand of the British at Boleigh against the victorious Athelstan, repeoples the hill-tops with the cave and the hut dwellers, and watches the Spanish and French merchant venturers sail into St Mount's Bay to harry and burn the busy ports of Mousehold and Marazion.<sup>175</sup>

Similarly, at Conwy Castle in North West Wales, Morton explained that the first tourists of the year, staying nearby at the popular resort town of Llandudno, 'roam vaguely on the walls, trying hard to understand Conwy's place in history, feeling that, like all old dead things that have influenced the present, it is important but dim and elusive'. He went on: 'They want to see the men and women who fought and suffered, failed or succeeded within these mighty walls; and all they see is something that might once have been a kitchen'.<sup>176</sup> In this passage, Morton distanced himself from conventional tourists, who in his view lacked the ability to reconstruct and imagine adequately the past. For the conventional tourists, the dim past never emerged from the mists of time, betraying their lack of vision. The reactions of Wakeman, Morton, Mais, and many other writers shed light on the importance of travel as a set of cultural performances which were inflected by class.<sup>177</sup> Those who considered themselves to be 'informed' often used the historical imagination – their ability to reconstruct and 'see' history using the surviving ruins and remnants of the past – as a cultural signifier of their superior knowledge, and as evidence of their distinction from the passive, unthinking variety of tourist.

Alongside the imagination of the past triggered by archaeological remnants, there was a more immersive strain of the historical imagination which treated the West as a set of spaces in which the historical past still lived. In this sense, the past was not entirely 'imagined' but was also to some extent 'perceived'.

In travel texts, the narrator typically described their movement through spaces in which time was perceived as slow moving or even static. This narrative drew on the writings of Ernest Renan and Matthew Arnold, who described the journey westwards as one in which the traveller 'leaves the present and the quotidian pace of temporal progress, and moves out of time, into the past or into some mythical or primordial timelessness'.<sup>178</sup> The conflation of the spatial and the temporal was inflected by the dichotomy of the Celt and the Saxon, and was often illustrated through the use of mist and haze as images which suggested the existence of a historical land which gradually emerged as the traveller journeyed westwards. During a visit to the popular North Wales tourist town of Llandudno, Arnold faced eastwards towards Liverpool and saw 'swarms' issuing from 'that Saxon hive'. When he turned westwards, 'everything is changed'. The 'eternal softness and mild light of the west' gave mystery to the horizon, as the line of mountains faded away, 'hill behind hill, in an aerial haze'. This was Wales 'where the past still lives', where the population 'still knows this past, this tradition, this poetry, and lives with it, and clings to it', while the 'prosperous Saxon' has 'long forgotten this'.<sup>179</sup>

The influence of Renan and Arnold, and their depiction of temporal travel, is evident in the travel texts of the West. E. Sidney Hartland wrote that the 'Celtic fringe' was interesting because 'its comparative seclusion from modern influences has enabled it to preserve much that has elsewhere passed away for ever',<sup>180</sup> and Robert Flaherty sought (and staged) romanticised scenes of preindustrial, primitive life on

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>176</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 64.

<sup>177</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> Leerssen, 'Celticism', p. 7.

<sup>179</sup> Matthew Arnold, *The Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1900), pp. 1-2.

<sup>180</sup> E. Sidney Hartland, 'Introduction', in Marie Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore and Folk-Stories of Wales* (London, 1909), p. xi. For more general fears of folklore dying out, see the comments of Alice, Countess Amherst and Jonathan Ceredig Davies, in Jonathan Ceredig Davies, *Folklore of the West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911), pp. vi-vii.

the Aran Islands in his documentary *Man of Aran* (1934).<sup>181</sup> In their book *The Land of Wales* (1937), Eiluned and Peter Lewis described the westward journey from London to Wales as travelling in time as well as space:

The traveller who buys a ticket at Paddington or Euston should be warned that he is about to travel backwards, as well as westwards, for Wales is a storehouse of the past wherein he will find recorded the movement of European peoples.<sup>182</sup>

In MacBrayne's guides the Hebrides were styled 'the Isles of Youth', a 'younger world' belonging to 'a race that thinks other thoughts',<sup>183</sup> and *Ward and Lock's Highlands of Scotland* (1931) quoted Alexander Smith's *A Summer In Skye* at length, in which the journey to Skye is also a journey into the past:

To visit the island... is to turn your back on the present and walk into antiquity... you are surrounded by MacLeods, MacDonalds, and Nicholsons; you come on grey stones standing upright on the moor, marking the site of a battle or the burial-place of a chief. You listen to traditions of ancient date in which Ossian might have sung. The loch yonder was darkened by the banner of King Haco. Prince Charles wandered over this heath or slept in that cave... And, more than all, the island is pervaded by a subtle, spiritual atmosphere... There is a smell of sea in the material air, and there is a ghostly something in the air of the imagination.<sup>184</sup>

In this way, travel texts employed literary techniques that are more commonly associated with writers of Gothic fiction and the Celtic Revival novel, in which ruined castles in the West provided dramatic settings of 'strange temporal distortion', which encouraged a consideration of the relationship between the past and the present.<sup>185</sup> Thomas Hardy also exploited the imaginative power of prehistorical archaeological remains in the landscapes of south-west England in *Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Well-Beloved* (1897), which reconciled human life with the natural world.<sup>186</sup>

The imagery of mist was an important technique through which writers conveyed their temporal travel, and the connotations of increasing vagueness and murkiness were well-suited to the depiction of the so-called 'Celtic' past, for which historical sources were scarce. Donald Mackinnon described the history of Skye as one which 'stretches far back into the mists of past years', and while listening to schoolgirls singing in Caernarfon Morton was struck by what he described as the sounds of 'the old romantic and darkly passionate voice of Britain', which seemed to emerge from 'a faint mist'.<sup>187</sup> In their use of mist imagery, travel texts may be read alongside the broader aestheticisation of the incomplete 'visual sensations' of ephemeral scenes, characteristic of Impressionist artists, as well as Turner, Whistler, and novelists such as Joseph Conrad.<sup>188</sup>

The history of the West was not, however, completely obscured by mist, and in fact the vision of the traveller was sharpened when it was realised that contemporary surroundings bore the traces of the past.

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<sup>181</sup> *Man of Aran* [film], directed by Robert J. Flaherty (1934). The film is available to watch online at <https://archive.org/details/manOfAran1934> [21 June 2019]. For a brief comment on the romantic primitivism of the film, see Luke Gibbons, 'Projecting the Nation: Cinema and Culture', in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 210.

<sup>182</sup> Eiluned and Peter Lewis, *The Land of Wales* (London, 1937), pp. 1-2.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2; MacBrayne, *Royal Route* (1938), pp. 2-3.

<sup>184</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to the Highlands of Scotland* (7th edn, London, n.d. [1931?]), p. 180.

<sup>185</sup> Tierney, 'The Gothic and the Gaelic', pp. 185-7.

<sup>186</sup> Welshman, 'Dreams of Celtic Kings', pp. 60-4.

<sup>187</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 8; Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>188</sup> Christine Corton, 'London Fog and the Impressionists', lecture delivered at the Museum of London (27 June 2016); Ian Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1979), pp. 169-70.

As the antiquarian Walter Johnson explained in his *Folk-Memory* (1908), evidence of this past was tangible in the culture of the contemporary ‘folk’ in myths, customs, and folk-songs, which act like ‘a faint halo of semi-consciousness’ linking history with the present.<sup>189</sup> In this sense, to travel to the West was to come into contact with people who seemed to exist outside ‘public time’ and were detached from the deep sense of belonging to ‘an age of unprecedented material, scientific, and imperial progress’ as well as ‘decadence and spiritual decline’.<sup>190</sup> Such rural, peripheral communities had not developed what E. P. Thompson described as a new ‘time-discipline’, which emerged alongside the industrial-scale division, synchronisation, and supervision of labour in the nineteenth century.<sup>191</sup> Instead, writers such as John M. Synge singled out the communities of the Aran Islands for their pre-industrial ‘task-orientated’ measurements of time, which seemed closely linked to the rhythms of nature. Writing in 1907 about his visit to ‘these worlds of mist’, Synge described how the inhabitants rise at dawn, eat ‘whenever they are hungry’, and monitor the passing of the day by watching ‘the shadow of the door-post moving across the kitchen floor’, which ‘indicates the hour’.<sup>192</sup> Intrigued by Synge’s modern watch, local inhabitants would occasionally ‘ask the time of day’, but few of the people were ‘sufficiently used to modern time to understand in more than a vague way the convention of the hours’. Dissatisfied with Synge’s clarification of ‘what o’clock it is by my watch’, they instead ‘ask how long is left them before the twilight’.<sup>193</sup>

A. J. Hayes made similar comments during his trip to the island of Innishkea, 16 miles from Dugort, where ‘there was neither watch nor clock among the people, who had a happy-go-lucky idea of time and troubled themselves little as to Greenwich regulations’. The people worked ‘when the sun was high in the heavens’, and ‘when he sank into the great waste of waters they could sleep’.<sup>194</sup> Contemporary sociologists such as Émile Durkheim recognised the ‘social relativity of time’, and suggested that ‘the foundation of the category of time is the rhythm of social life’.<sup>195</sup> As E. P. Thompson explained, ‘such disregard for clock time’ would only be possible in a community ‘whose framework of marketing and administration is minimal’. The crofting and fishing islanders must instead ‘integrate their lives with the tides’, with the dawn and the twilight, and with the ‘rhythms of the sea’.<sup>196</sup> Not merely a tool for distinguishing the informed traveller from the unthinking tourist, the historical imagination was also a powerful set of experiences in the West, through which travellers sought a past that was more in sync with the landscape. This was not necessarily a ‘regressive, atavistic phenomenon’, but was instead part of a desire and a sense of spiritual need to repair the connection in modern society.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Walter Johnson, *Folk-Memory, or the Continuity of British Archaeology* (Oxford, 1908), p. 19.

<sup>190</sup> Fionntán de Brún, ‘Temporality and Irish Revivalism: Past, Present, and Becoming’, *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 17.4 (2013), pp. 25-6.

<sup>191</sup> E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), pp. 394-401. For the more general musings of a walker on the artificiality of time, see Arnold Haultain, *Of Walks and Walking Tours: An Attempt to find a Philosophy and a Creed* (London, 1914), pp. 92-3.

<sup>192</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), pp. 26-8, 37.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. For a fuller treatment, see Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, *Primitivism, Science and the Irish Revival* (Oxford, 2004), chapter four.

<sup>194</sup> Hayes, ‘Holiday in the Far West’, p. 640.

<sup>195</sup> Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>196</sup> Thompson, *Customs in Common*, pp. 356-7.

<sup>197</sup> For Synge and modernity as concerned with both past and present, see Elaine Sisson, ‘The Aran Islands and the travel essays’, in P. J. Matthews (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 52-63. For revival movements as a way to ‘renegotiate the present by means of a radical synthesis with the past’, see Brún, ‘Temporality and Irish Revivalism’, pp. 17-47. For a contemporary expression of this argument, see William Sharp [Fiona MacLeod], ‘Celtic’, *Contemporary Review* 77 (1900), p. 669, which is also discussed in Welshman, ‘Dreams of Celtic Kings’, p. 68.

## V – The sublime, danger, and (mis)adventure

Between 1880 and 1940, the landscapes of the West were described using language derived from Edmund Burke's writing on the sublime and the beautiful, which was republished throughout the period. For Burke, the excitement of pain, danger, terror, and horror provoked 'the strongest emotion' of delight, in a powerful combination of 'pain as well as pleasure', when experienced at the appropriate magnitude.<sup>198</sup> In particular, Burke's passages on 'Terror', 'Obscurity', 'Power', 'Magnificence', and 'Colour' provided a set of descriptive terms and aesthetic principles which characterised descriptions of dramatic mountain and cliff landscapes in the period. The 'terror', 'violence', 'fear', 'profusion', and 'danger' of the sublime prioritised 'dark' and 'gloomy' phenomena such as a 'cloudy sky' over a blue one, and bare rugged mountains over those 'covered with a shining green turf'.<sup>199</sup> In their descriptions of desolate mountains, precipitous cliffs, and wild seascapes in the West, travellers constructed the image of the adventurer-traveller. Burke's aesthetic hierarchy reinforced 'the spirit of exploration and adventure' in a 'modern age of mass production and standardisation'.<sup>200</sup> While many writers depicted adventurous travel as a masculine endeavour, there were also notable examples that subverted this gendered narrative.

In the mountains of the West, the language of Burke remained in use, and the language of dark and gloomy violence emerged strongly in descriptions of the Cuillins, the 'gloomy glories of Skye',<sup>201</sup> consisting of 'black and frowning', 'rocky splintered precipices' with 'broken tops', 'serrated edges', and crevices 'like gashes in their sheer faces'.<sup>202</sup> Around each corner there was 'another wild ridge' with 'threatening imminence', or 'giddy glimpses' of high mountains.<sup>203</sup> The 'bristling ridges of the Cuillins' were considered the 'most splendid mountain scenery' in Skye,<sup>204</sup> while J. J. Bell felt an atmosphere of 'horror' on his journey through Loch Scavaig, which was a 'dread place' where Nature 'threatens'.<sup>205</sup> In the northern peninsula of the island, the most prominent precipice of the Trotternish Ridge was 'the Old Man of Storr', a 'giddy height' among a 'series of ghostly pinnacles, broken and weather-worn'. This was a violent scene of 'weird desolation', where 'shattered rocks' lay in the ravine below.<sup>206</sup> In Snowdonia, Dora Benson described the 'rugged peak' of Tryfan, the striking 'crag and precipices' of Snowdon, and the 'wilderness of rock and boulders' called Glyder Fawr.<sup>207</sup> Bradley found 'a perfect welter of rock and crag' which filled 'the tortured surface between the heights' of the Glyders and Tryfan.<sup>208</sup> The mountains of Connemara were also valued for their conformity to Burkean boldness and ruggedness, such as the 'singularly barren' chain known as the Maamturk range, on which the going was 'excessively rugged and wearisome' due to the 'loose detritus of heavy, angular quartzose blocks'.<sup>209</sup>

The reputation of mountains conventionally rests on their height, but in an age when the Alps were well-known to the general public and George Mallory made his attempts on Mount Everest, the mountains of the West could not rely on height alone to capture the imaginations of the travelling and reading public.

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<sup>198</sup> Edmund Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (New York, 1885), 'Sublime', pp. 23-33; 'Passion Caused by the Sublime', pp. 50-1.

<sup>199</sup> See Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, 'Terror', pp. 51-2; 'Obscurity', pp. 52-3; 'Power', pp. 58-65; 'Magnificence', pp. 72-4; 'Colour', pp. 76-7.

<sup>200</sup> E. W. Steeple, G. Barlow, H. MacRobert, and J. H. Bell, *Island of Skye. The Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide* (Edinburgh, 1935), pp. 127-8.

<sup>201</sup> Moncrieff and Palmer, *Scotland*, p. 163.

<sup>202</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 132-3.

<sup>203</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, p. 67.

<sup>204</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, pp. 37-8.

<sup>205</sup> Bell, *Scotland's Rainbow West*, pp. 239-40.

<sup>206</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 32-3.

<sup>207</sup> Piggott, *Burrow's North Wales*, pp. 75-6, 83.

<sup>208</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>209</sup> Smith and Hart, *Wales and Ireland*, p. 165.

As Michael Floyd admitted, ‘in comparison with the Alps’ the mountains of Ireland ‘may be little more than hummocks, and in comparison with the Himalayas little more than warts’.<sup>210</sup> In response, writers shifted the criteria by which mountains were judged in order to justify their dramatic descriptions of the West, focussing not on raw height but on ‘the true character of mountains’.<sup>211</sup> The ‘true character’ of a mountain resided in dramatic viewpoints and peaks grouped in aesthetically pleasing combinations. ‘Boldness’ of contour and ‘stark ruggedness’ were particularly valued characteristics of mountains in the Scottish Highlands, which Mais argued ‘approach more nearly than any other British mountains to sublimity’.<sup>212</sup> No match for the mountains of Central Europe and Asia in terms of height, instead their dramatic rise ‘from deep glens or marshy flats’, made them ‘overwhelming’.<sup>213</sup> Similarly, Snowdon was not the highest peak in Britain, but it was ‘the finest’ as it formed ‘a grand group’ with its subsidiary peaks, ‘the grace and beauty of outline of which is unsurpassed in this country’.<sup>214</sup> It was widely recognised that a mountain of 12,000 feet or more would ‘be a horrible monster here’.<sup>215</sup>

Just as important as the mountain peaks and cliff edges were ‘the attendant ravines, valleys, gorges, glens, passes, caves, rocky precipices, and chasms’.<sup>216</sup> On Achill Island, Croaghnaun was ‘better worth ascending’ than the highest mountain, Slievemore, as the former ‘forms a tremendous precipice’ overlooking the ocean thousands of feet below.<sup>217</sup> The ‘bare and windswept’<sup>218</sup> cliffs descended to the sea, ‘in some places at an angle of 60 degrees’.<sup>219</sup> The sheer drop made it seem ‘as if the rest of the mountain had been suddenly cut away’, as travellers preferred wild combinations of mountain and cliff scenery to raw altitude.<sup>220</sup> Descriptions of ‘grotesque’ precipitous cliffs and ‘stern coasts’ in Cornwall also drew on Burke’s landscape aesthetics.<sup>221</sup> Arthur Norway described the ‘rent and shattered’ granite, which was ‘split into spires and pinnacles and minarets’.<sup>222</sup> Elsewhere, Cornwall was characterised by ‘wood-clad valleys’ and ‘almost tropical vegetation’ in more sheltered parts, but the landscapes which excited writers and travellers were those which conveyed ‘a wild – often a savage – beauty’.<sup>223</sup> As a result, the more rugged appearance and ‘bracing’<sup>224</sup> conditions of the northern coast were favoured over the gentler south, which was considered ‘too “soft” in August for some people’.<sup>225</sup> Just as the language of harmony, character, and aesthetic combination bolstered the legitimacy of British and Irish mountains, so the endorsement of cliffs by renowned adventurers legitimised the landscape as a wild and adventurous periphery. *Black’s Ireland* (1906) noted that ‘the great African traveller’ Sir Harry Johnstone visited the cliffs of Achill Island in 1902, and wrote in the Slievemore Hotel visitors’ book that ‘the side view of Croaghnaun cliffs I include amongst the thousand bits of choice scenery I have met in all my travels’. In addition, *Black’s Ireland* (1906)

<sup>210</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 2-3. For an example of this sentiment regarding Snowdon, see M. J. B. Baddeley and C. S. Ward (eds), *Thorough Guide Series. North Wales (Part I)* (London, 1884), p. ix.

<sup>211</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 2-3. For an anecdote about the Lake District, see Priestley, ‘Beauty of Britain’, pp. 4-5.

<sup>212</sup> S. P. B. Mais, ‘The Varied Scene’, in *The Countryside and How to Enjoy It* (London, 1948), p. 21, 27.

<sup>213</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 67-9.

<sup>214</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 76. Also see R. Merfyn Jones, ‘The Mountaineering of Wales, 1880-1925’, *Welsh History Review / Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* 19.1 (1998), p. 44.

<sup>215</sup> Priestley, ‘Beauty of Britain’, pp. 3-4.

<sup>216</sup> Ivatts, *Western Highlands (Connemara)*, n.p., see section ‘Main Route for Circular Tour through Highlands’.

<sup>217</sup> Shaw, *Guide to the London and North Western Railway* (1875), p. 152. Also see Smith and Hart, *Wales and Ireland*, pp. 158-60.

<sup>218</sup> R. Lloyd Praeger, ‘Topography’, in George Fletcher (ed.), *Connaught* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 28.

<sup>219</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. 233.

<sup>220</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), p. 274.

<sup>221</sup> Hunt, *Popular Romances of West England*, p. 15.

<sup>222</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 300.

<sup>223</sup> Hunt, *Popular Romances of West England*, p. 15.

<sup>224</sup> Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Cornwall* (1883), p. xiv.

<sup>225</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 12. A notable exception was in 1891, when a blizzard killed hundreds of people and thousands of animals, while railway companies suffered thousands of pounds in damages and lost earnings, as ‘terror and destruction’ spread through Devon and Cornwall; see *The Blizzard in the West* (London, 1891), pp. 1, 9, 31, 40, 98, 110, 115, 117, 118.

claimed that, before embarking upon his final, fatal, voyage, the Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin had said that ‘the view from the summit of Croaghnaun was the grandest panorama he had met with in all his travels’.<sup>226</sup> Such endorsement by explorers validated Croaghnaun, Achill, and western Ireland as a site of spectacular cliff scenery and adventure that was within a day’s travel for the Londoner.

In their accounts of dangerous landscapes, travellers drew on what Carl Thompson described as the desire for ‘misadventure’ – the valorisation of discomfort, danger, accidents, and narrow escapes, popularised in British culture in the writings of Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley.<sup>227</sup> In their influential writings, Romantic writers impressed ‘cultural and existential prestige upon seemingly disagreeable and undesirable travel experiences’. In drawing on this heritage, writers between 1880 and 1940 utilised the trope of misadventure to distinguish themselves from less adventurous tourists, in a process of self-fashioning that often revealed ‘a masculine agenda’, and which privileged the ‘perilous and sublime mountain ascent’.<sup>228</sup> This was the performance of what Peter H. Hansen called an ‘ambivalent’ modernity, combining traditional veneration of mountains with the modern desire to climb them.<sup>229</sup> Travel texts were generally concerned with mountain walking or climbing as opposed to ‘mountaineering’, which was a distinctive sport requiring specialist skills and equipment, and sought increasingly technical challenges.<sup>230</sup>

Systematic travel texts were particularly ardent in their warnings of danger in the mountains, many of which were, like Croagh Patrick, ‘without danger except in mist’.<sup>231</sup> Dora Benson warned that ‘in misty weather it is particularly easy to lose one’s way’ during an ascent of Carnedd Llywelyn or Carnedd Dafydd, in the ‘extensive and unfrequented mountain tract’.<sup>232</sup> In the Cuillins, the ‘greatest risk for pedestrians’ was to be ‘overtaken by mist’, which could disorientate seasonal hikers.<sup>233</sup> For this reason, *Black’s Scotland* (1887) recommended that no ascent of Blaven should be attempted ‘without a guide’.<sup>234</sup> Prospective travellers were warned that ‘wisps of mist’ rise ‘wraithlike from the corries’, and rainclouds ‘drift with maddening stealth’ as climbers attempted ‘rock-climbing and strenuous ridge-walking’ on ‘a saw’s edge’, far from the ‘backs of whales as in the Grampians and in the Inverness Highlands’.<sup>235</sup>

Along the northern shores of Cornwall, readers were warned of the dangerous ‘blow-holes’, ‘sinister cavities’ formed by erosion, which threatened the careless traveller. The locals ‘do not safeguard the blow-holes’, since they ‘do not imagine that any one could be so foolish as to walk along this dangerous coast after dark’.<sup>236</sup> In many places along the northern and western shores of Cornwall, ‘both boating and bathing are unsafe’ on this ‘dangerous coast’. As a result, ‘very few boats are kept, and these are seldom

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<sup>226</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. 234.

<sup>227</sup> The Romantic writers drew on Radcliffe, Shakespeare, Spenser, as well as medieval and classical literature; see Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 1-5, 11-12.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

<sup>229</sup> Hansen, ‘Modern Mountains’, pp. 186-7. For mountaineering and modernity as mutually constituting one another, see Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge MA, 2013), p. 11. For a treatment of the more recent development of mountain adventure tourism, see Paul Beedie and Simon Hudson, ‘Emergence of Mountain-Based Adventure Tourism’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 30.3 (2003), pp. 625-43.

<sup>230</sup> For the distinction between mountain-walking and mountaineering, see Jones, ‘The Mountaineering of Wales’, p. 46. Kelly uses the term ‘mountaineering’ in a broader sense, which includes both ‘technical ascents by advanced climbers and casual scrambles by novices’; see Caralyn Jane Kelly, ‘“Thrilling and Marvellous Experiences”: Place and Subjectivity in Canadian Climbing Narratives, 1885-1925’, PhD Thesis (University of Waterloo, Canada, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>231</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. 230.

<sup>232</sup> Piggott, *Burton’s North Wales*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>233</sup> *Murray’s Scotland* (1883), introduction, p. 16.

<sup>234</sup> *Black’s Scotland* (1887), p. 440.

<sup>235</sup> Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 67-9.

<sup>236</sup> Scott, *Nooks and Corners of Cornwall*, p. vi.



let out to strangers’, while ‘in the matter of bathing the tourist depends upon his own wisdom’.<sup>237</sup> In the Hebrides, the writer and journalist J. Ewing Ritchie warned that ‘in rough weather it requires no little courage to make one’s way in a steamer from Tobermory to Portree’,<sup>238</sup> while off the coast of Achill Island there was almost an ‘entire absence of passenger steam-boats on these coasts’ given that the cliffs rise from ‘one of the stormiest oceans in the world’, which ‘even in summer-time is often rough and dangerous’.<sup>239</sup>

The warnings of danger were not just hypothetical. Many writers emphasised the danger of the landscape by listing accidents and retelling stories of recent deaths. MacCulloch described how ‘one experienced climber slipped over a precipice in mist one August day in 1903; another met the same fate in 1902; and a third some years before’. In the case of the third climber, ‘two days after his mangled body was discovered below a precipice near the peak’.<sup>240</sup> In Snowdonia, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1883) recalled an incident in 1874, when ‘Mr Wilton, a tourist, lost his life amongst the crags of Cwm Glas’.<sup>241</sup> The authors Edith Somerville and Martin Ross described another such incident in Connemara:

[The hills] hid their heads and shoulders in the odious mist, leaving only their steep sides visible... It was on one of these hills that a tourist missed his footing last year in trying to get to the bottom faster than someone else; the heather clump broke from the edge of the ravine, and the young fellow went with it. They searched for him all the summer night, and next morning a shepherd found him, dead and mutilated, at the foot of the cliff.<sup>242</sup>

Accidents occurred when tourists set out ‘alone without proper food or equipment, or in doubtful weather’, in order to ‘attempt feats which at a distance looked quite easy’ but that were in fact ‘quite beyond their powers’.<sup>243</sup> Travellers were particularly susceptible to making this mistake between Loch Coruisk and Sligachan Inn. The view from the top of Drumhain afforded ‘a clear view all the way down the glen’, revealing ‘an apparently unbroken and unmistakable path’, which was in fact ‘frequently interrupted by small patches of boggy ground’. The tourist ‘may wander on for hours through a veritable “slough and despond”, and if the light of the Sligachan Inn, welcome as solitary, gleams through the darkness before midnight, he is more fortunate than many have been’.<sup>244</sup> Many texts advised that ‘a guide should be always procured, unless some of the party are well-accustomed to hill walking, or have a knowledge of the route they propose to take’. In the Cuillins, even those equipped with compasses may find it unreliable, ‘owing to the magnetic nature of the rock’.<sup>245</sup>

The dangers of the landscape were also narrated in dramatic and hazardous episodes of adventure and misadventure, which entertained readers and warned of mountains, cliffs, and seas that were particularly treacherous in conditions of mist, fog, darkness, high winds, and storms. In their dramatic fictional account of ascending Snowdon, Somerville and Ross described the ‘chaos heaped in grey vapour’ and a

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>238</sup> J. Ewing Ritchie, *The Cruise of the Elena, or Yachting in the Hebrides* (London, 1877), p. 59.

<sup>239</sup> Russell, *Beauties and Antiquities of Ireland*, pp. 311-13.

<sup>240</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 143-4.

<sup>241</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1883), pp. 217-18.

<sup>242</sup> Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, p. 61. Martin Ross was the pseudonym of Violet Martin.

<sup>243</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 247.

<sup>244</sup> Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Highlands of Scotland* (1881), p. 210.

<sup>245</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 247; this advice also appears in Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903), p. 267. Information on procuring local guides was also provided in *Black’s Guide to England and Wales* (12th edn, Edinburgh, 1881), p. 140; and *Black’s Road and Railway Guide to England and Wales* (14th edn, Edinburgh, 1886), p. 140.

ridge which ‘grew more and more slender’, as the mountaineers ‘picked’ their ‘aching steps more and more carefully’.<sup>246</sup>

Writers were keen to express the potential danger of the landscape in imaginative ways. The principal narrative motif deployed to this end was the imaginative depiction of rolling boulders and collapsing cliffs. Bradley described Carnedd Dafydd as ‘a stupendous wall, unbroken by ravines or buttresses, with just slope enough to hold the wild litter of rocks in place’. He had ‘a sort of feeling’ that ‘it would not take much to set this huge company of giants, these thousands of detached crags and boulders, all toppling down with a wild roar into the lake’.<sup>247</sup> Such dramatic imaginative episodes were not entirely without foundation – the rock climber W. P. Haskett Smith and the explorer H. C. Hart warned prospective mountaineers that Benchoona in the Maamturk range was ‘uncommonly dangerous’ and ‘unfit to climb’, since it is ‘loosely constructed and apt to disintegrate in unexpectedly massive segments’.<sup>248</sup>

These various accounts of danger did not deter travellers, who often sought out danger and attempted to fulfil the role of the explorer-traveller, who ventured into lands more primitive and wild than home, and sought adventure in havens untouched by the modern world, where there was space to be ‘men’.<sup>249</sup> Despite his famous denunciation of the popularisation of Alpine mountaineering, John Ruskin also espoused the masculine ideal, in a letter to his father written from Chamonix in 1863. Ruskin claimed that if you turn back from a dangerous place – even if this is the wise decision – your character will suffer a slight deterioration: ‘you are’, he wrote, ‘to that extent weaker, more lifeless, more effeminate’. However, if you face the danger and come through, you will be ‘a stronger and better man... nothing but danger produces this effect’.<sup>250</sup> The male adventurer was an image that was associated with countryside travel more generally. As H. V. Morton remarked in *The Call of England* (1928), ‘how much of Hamlet, how much of Quixote, how much of Robin Goodfellow is in him never appears until a man finds himself alone in the country’.<sup>251</sup>

For Ruskin, Nature provided a test of masculine character, which many travellers were determined to face. In an adventurous account of being ‘Camped Out Under the Coolins’ (1889), T. Pilkington White recommended the ‘formidable spur’ of Druim nan Ramh for ‘any future Skye tourist... ambitious to try the stoutness of his boots, the soundness of his lungs, and the toughness of his sinews’.<sup>252</sup> Similarly, in his ‘Welsh Walk’ (1914), Edmund Vale continually faced up to hazards and danger, revelling in the wildness and sublimity of his situation. On his way to Bala, in North Wales, he wrote:

I caught a vision of great hills like flying buttresses descending into the lake, with snow and desolation and smoking cloud upon their shoulders, and I was amazed at my stupidity in wanting to cross such things at such a time of night... I plunged into an avenue of dripping trees, dark as pitch, while a swollen river that I could not see roared past me on the right... ‘Ah’, I thought, as I ground my way up the hills and felt the snow go deeper and deeper, ‘now I am in a wilderness!’<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Martin Ross and E. CE Somerville, *Beggars on Horseback: A Riding Tour in North Wales* (Edinburgh, 1895), p. 108.

<sup>247</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, pp. 177-8.

<sup>248</sup> Smith and Hart, *Wales and Ireland*, p. 165.

<sup>249</sup> For the emergence of middle-class mountaineering which adopted the language of exploration and adventure, see Peter H. Hansen, ‘Albert Smith, the Alpine Club and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain’, *Journal of British Studies* 34.3 (1995), p. 304.

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Robert Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind: The History of a Fascination* (London, 2003), pp. 85-6.

<sup>251</sup> H. V. Morton, *The Call of England* (New York, 1936), p. 16.

<sup>252</sup> T. Pilkington White, ‘Camped out under the Cuillins’, *Blackwood’s Magazine* 146.886 (1889), p. 215.

<sup>253</sup> Vale, ‘A Welsh Walk’, p. 261.

Vale recognised the recklessness of his path, but he faced up to the challenge nevertheless. Nature, in this case, was an enemy to be conquered. Danger was an important ingredient in the construction of masculinities that were relational in nature,<sup>254</sup> as travel texts recited Ruskin's conflation of danger and masculinity, and warned that testing landscapes such as the mountains of Skye were 'not suited for ladies'.<sup>255</sup> Similarly, at the base of the Quiraing, Watt and Carter wrote that 'timid ladies and ladies' men had better remain below and enjoy the scenery'.<sup>256</sup> T. Pilkington White noted that the 'Bad Step' also bore the alternative name 'The Ladies' Step', which he considered 'a fine touch of irony'.<sup>257</sup> But performing the role of the adventurous traveller was also about differentiating the suffering traveller from the comfortable tourist. Holmes suggested that rough conditions facilitated adventure, and differentiated brave sailors from the 'summer tourist', who 'knows Skye very imperfectly, for he goes there in a commodious steamer' when 'the days are long and the weather benign'.<sup>258</sup>

These gendered depictions of danger did not go unchallenged. There was an important difference between facing character-building danger and engaging in reckless risk. Several writers proudly described their 'growingly reckless short cuts from summit to summit',<sup>259</sup> and their defiance of warnings in favour of the 'nobility of independence'.<sup>260</sup> But Dinah Craik directly challenged these glorified depictions of risk, danger, and masculinity. In her conversation with an 'old gentleman' in Cornwall, both expressed their disapproval of the 'foolhardy bravado' of young men, while at the same time the gentleman encouraged his own daughters to go out scrambling on the rocks:

I like to see girls active and brave; I never hinder them in any reasonable enjoyment, even though there may be risk in it – one must run some risk – and a woman may have to save life as well as a man.<sup>261</sup>

The Liberal polymath James Bryce also encouraged his own enjoyment of 'alpine adventure' in his younger sisters and his wife Marion Ashton.<sup>262</sup> The judgements of Craik and the old gentleman drew on broader debates about risk, which gained publicity in the aftermath of the Matterhorn tragedy of 1865 and played out within the Alpine Club in the nineteenth century, between the technical approach of so-called 'gymnasts' such as Herbert Wicks and the 'more aesthetic and reflective approach' of Martin Conway. These debates continued into the inter-war period, as the reckless assaults of German climbers on Eiger-Nordwand were condemned by British climbers as 'toxically bound up with a crude nationalism'.<sup>263</sup> In addition, the conflation of danger and masculinity was undermined by women writers such as Dora Benson, who protected her readers (many of whom were male) from 'courses classified by experts as exceptionally severe' in the rock-climbing guide, on account of 'their extreme difficulty or danger'.<sup>264</sup> As Ann C. Colley demonstrated in her study of mountaineering, the picture which emerges

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<sup>254</sup> For masculinity as relational, see Roper and Tosh, 'Historians and the politics of masculinity', pp. 1, 13.

<sup>255</sup> Murray's *Scotland* (1883), p. 410.

<sup>256</sup> Watt and Carter, *Picturesque Scotland*, p. 505.

<sup>257</sup> White, 'Camped out under the Cuillins', p. 219.

<sup>258</sup> Holmes, *Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 26.

<sup>259</sup> Smith and Hart, *Wales and Ireland*, p. 165.

<sup>260</sup> Vale, 'A Welsh Walk', p. 267.

<sup>261</sup> Craik, *Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>262</sup> Paul Readman, 'Walking and Environmentalism in the Career of James Bryce: Mountaineer, Scholar, Statesman, 1838-1922', in Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman (eds), *Walking Histories, 1800-1914* (London, 2016), pp. 298-9.

<sup>263</sup> Arthur Burns, 'Accidents Will Happen: Risk, Climbing and Pedestrianism in the "Golden Age" of English Mountaineering, 1850-1865', in Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman (eds), *Walking Histories, 1800-1914* (London, 2016), pp. 165-94; quotations from pp. 166, 191-4.

<sup>264</sup> Benson, 'Mountain Walks and Rock Climbs in North Wales', p. 74.

from these discussions of risk and danger is ‘more complicated and inclusive’ than has previously been assumed.<sup>265</sup>

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, representations of risk, danger, and masculinity were contested, and the role of the adventurer was flexible, both adopted and undermined by male and female writers.<sup>266</sup> Among the rugged mountains, precipitous cliffs, and treacherous seascapes of the West, the opportunities to perform adventurous travel were more numerous. The mountains and cliffs of the West occupied a liminal space, neither as outwardly heroic and imperial as the more exotic expeditions to the Alps or Himalayas, yet not quite domestic enough to be situated comfortably within Alison Light’s inward-looking, domestic ‘conservative modernity’ of popular suburban outdoor recreation.<sup>267</sup>

## VI – Interactions between hosts and guests

Finally, this chapter considers the interactions between hosts and guests as important social encounters which are revealing as sites of performance in the West. Some narrators focussed on the picturesque cottage in an unpeopled landscape, as discussed in chapter two, but many writers described humorous encounters with colourful local characters in great detail. In these scenes, the authenticity of the traveller’s experience was paramount, but these narratives also shed light on the agency of the host population, whose influence is detectable beneath the veneer of confidence which characterised many travellers’ accounts. In the West, these interactions were inflected by gender, race, and class, and this chapter focuses on recurring characters including the various deceptive and comical servants, proprietors, and drivers, as well as the old man from whom information and authentic folklore might be collected, and the young voiceless woman who was gazed upon by the traveller.

The narrator was customarily in a position of social and cultural superiority in relation to the host, which was expressed in terms of historical or literary knowledge, often with the intention of creating comic effect.<sup>268</sup> C. Lewis Hind narrated one such interaction at the hotel near Tintagel, where he remarked that the waiter was ‘not an Arthurian enthusiast’. This was demonstrated by his lack of literary knowledge, and when Hind ‘spoke of Tennyson’, the waiter replied:

Mr Tennyson? Yes, sir! I have heard that he was knighted here.

Hind found the waiter ‘amusingly ignorant’ and no doubt expected the same conclusion to be reached by his reader.<sup>269</sup> Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell also found amusement in the ignorance of two old men in the Hebrides, who had not heard of Dr Johnson, whose name they pronounced ‘Toctor Shonson’.<sup>270</sup> Instead of literary knowledge, Bradley used ideas of race to emphasise his dissimilarity to the young gillie who became petrified during an episode at a Welsh tarn, where the crags echoed the ‘hoarse cries’ of the raven’s croak:

I remember the sudden change from sunshine to mist and gloom once having a most startling effect on a very youthful gillie of mine in this very district... the clouds came

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<sup>265</sup> Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Farnham, 2010), see pp. 101-41; quotation from pp. 5-6.

<sup>266</sup> Roper and Tosh explain that masculinity ‘exists in divergent, competing, and changing forms’; see Roper and Tosh, ‘Historians and the politics of masculinity’, p. 1.

<sup>267</sup> Light, *Forever England*, p. 8.

<sup>268</sup> One notable exception was Mrs Blake, a landowner who opened her Renvyle House to guests in 1883. Somerville and Ross were greeted ‘as friends’ by Blake, which gave them an ‘advantage over the ordinary tourist’; see Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, p. 143.

<sup>269</sup> Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1907), p. 97.

<sup>270</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 63.

down upon the tarn, racing low in filmy shrouds against the black precipice of Aran and blotting out the world.<sup>271</sup>

The young boy became terrified ‘at the lonely and gruesome aspect of the place’, having been ‘left so long to his imaginings’. In explanation, Bradley suggested that this tarn was the place where – according to the poet Spenser – Timon inspired ‘the youthful Arthur’, and it represented therefore ‘a very haunt of magic memories’:

So who knows but that this little Goidel or Iberian, this insignificant representative of a primitive race, may have seen and heard things not revealed to a Saesenog.<sup>272</sup>

Such attitudes towards folklore and superstitions, and the people whose culture they represented, reflected the approach of the Folk-Lore Society, which published *The Handbook of Folklore* (1914), written by the Society’s vice-president and former president, Charlotte Sophia Burne. Burne’s book was designed for ‘all educated persons whose lives and duties bring them into touch with the uneducated’, whether they were ‘among uncivilised or half-civilised populations abroad’ or ‘in country places at home’.<sup>273</sup>

The kindly, quick-witted, yet error-prone and uneducated host was a stock character in the travel texts of the West, and in his journey *On An Irish Jaunting-Car through Donegal and Connemara* (1902) the American writer S. G. Bayne related several humorous anecdotes of this type of interaction. At the Slievemore Hotel, Bayne’s ‘comic boots’ was ‘puzzled’ at Bayne’s instruction to call room number 41 at six o’clock the next morning, which he noted incorrectly as ‘Call 46 at 1’. After realising his mistake, the quick-witted ‘boots’ excused his blunder with the quip:

Shure, you Yankees do be givin’ us sich quare orders these days, we’re prepared for almost annythin’.<sup>274</sup>

The phonetic spelling of local dialects simultaneously signalled the cultural and social gap which existed between guest and host, and aided the light-hearted tone of humorous anecdotes.<sup>275</sup> This was an important indication of cultural inferiority in the West in the absence of a physical, racialised marker.<sup>276</sup>

Alongside the blundering servant, the dishonest host played an important role in humorous anecdotes. Bayne recounted his interactions with the proprietor of the Slievemore Hotel, ‘one Captain Sheridan’, whose ‘iridescent splendour’ of imagination and ‘contempt for detail’ made Baron Munchausen seem like ‘a practical monument of truth and accuracy’.<sup>277</sup> Among his comically mischievous fabrications was the age of the Scotch he gave to Bayne, which began the evening at five years old, but was soon aged to 10. By the end of the night, Sheridan disclosed ‘in a confidential whisper’ that when the prime minister had visited he had pronounced it 20 years old, and that ‘he did not know how old it really was – we must be the judges’.<sup>278</sup> Sheridan’s entertaining mischievousness extended to his ‘contempt for rival attractions’

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<sup>271</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>273</sup> Charlotte Sophia Burne, *The Handbook of Folklore* (London, 1914), p. v.

<sup>274</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, p. 115. ‘Boots’ is an antiquated term for a hotel employee who cleaned boots and shoes, carried luggage, and performed other such menial tasks.

<sup>275</sup> This technique was used extensively by *Punch Magazine*. For example, see Charles Keene, John Leech, George du Maurier, W. Ralston, L. Raven-Hill, J. Bernard Partridge, E. T. Reed, G. D. Armour, Cecil Aldin, A. S. Boyd, *Mr Punch in the Highlands* (London, n.d. [1910?]).

<sup>276</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 73.

<sup>277</sup> Baron Munchausen is a character from Rudolf Erich Raspe’s *Baron Munchausen’s Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia* (1785), based on a real German aristocrat who became famous in Germany for telling lies about his military career.

<sup>278</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, pp. 78-80.

such as the puffins and seals of Dunfanaghy. According to Sheridan, the former ‘were corn-fed’ and the latter ‘were chained to the bottom’ of the sea ‘to attract visitors’.<sup>279</sup>

Finding amusement in their interactions with the locals was a common motif for writers in the travel texts of the West, as the traveller was self-depicted as aware of the machinations and strategies of the mischievous hosts, which provided amusement for both writer and reader.<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless, the agency of the host is also perceptible in travel texts, and many of these narratives shed light on the ways in which locals ‘exerted profound influence’ on the experience of the tourist. Locals ‘honed performances and rituals to signify peasant hospitality’, told a ‘fanciful tale embedded with an elaborate elocutionary performance’, and played up to the cultural stereotypes that were expected by guests, all of which were ‘inevitably followed by a request for loose change’.<sup>281</sup>

During his ‘Dash Through Connemara’ (1881), Nugent Robinson was faced with several of the conventional interactions that travellers had come to expect in Ireland, which shed light on the diffuse agency and power dynamics that characterise tourist-host relations. In order to secure for himself the ‘box-seat’ in the lobster-car for the journey from Galway to Clifden, Robinson ‘dexterously’ placed a half-crown in the hand of the driver.<sup>282</sup> This interaction was no doubt an astute move on Robinson’s part, with the favourable seat effectively purchased with a simple tip, yet the host also succeeded in making the encounter financially beneficial. This dynamic became a recurrent theme in travel texts, as writers were keen to display their discernment and sensitivity to attempts on the part of hosts to extract money from them. John Higinbotham displayed his awareness when, on the way to Leenaun, the horse fell and the driver exaggerated the injuries, ‘moaning out his dread of what “the boss” would do to him, largely for the purpose of increasing his tip, as we afterward ascertained’.<sup>283</sup> Armed with the knowledge of such strategies, Higinbotham confronted a driver later in his narrative, who pleaded for an extra payment after two shillings had been handed over. Higinbotham, wise from his previous experience, convinced the driver ‘that one and sixpence is all he will turn into his employer, and he goes away, grumbling but satisfied’.<sup>284</sup>

Similarly, Bayne was mindful of Sheridan’s opportunistic response to his interest in the collection of ‘stuffed birds and horns’. The proprietor claimed that they were ‘priceless’ specimens from the dominions of ‘the Grand Llama of Thibet’, while also mentioning that he would let Bayne ‘have the pair for forty guineas, packed up and ready for the steamer’.<sup>285</sup> Just as mischievous was the ‘boots’, who stole quietly into Bayne’s room on the morning of his departure. Having spotted Bayne, who ‘lay in bed half asleep’, the ‘boots’ ‘soliloquised in a tender tone, suggestive of a tip if I should hear him’:

Sure, his honour is slapin’ loike a baby, an’ ‘twould be nothin’ short of a crime to wake him up this wet mornin’; I haven’t the heart to do it.<sup>286</sup>

The most direct appeal came from groups of beggars and those selling homespun wares. When Robinson’s lobster-car was ready to leave Galway, ‘a group of excited and curious bystanders surrounded the vehicle’, some of whom were gesticulating, while others begged and some offered woollen knitted

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<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>280</sup> For examples of drivers in Ireland requesting tips, see John U. Higinbotham, *Three Weeks in the British Isles* (Chicago, 1911), pp. 235, 241.

<sup>281</sup> James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 62.

<sup>282</sup> The lobster-car was an ‘overgrown outside jaunting-car, capable of containing eight or ten persons on each side’. Nugent Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* 11.3 (1881), p. 280.

<sup>283</sup> Higinbotham, *Three Weeks in the British Isles*, p. 235.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>285</sup> Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

socks for sale.<sup>287</sup> Later, as the car was bowling along the road, ‘two colleens’ ran after the car ‘for miles’, taking short cuts across the bogs ‘to intercept the vehicle on winding roads, now clinging to the step’. When they got close enough, they ‘silently extended a couple of pairs of bluish-gray worsted stockings in mute appeal’. The driver explained that the girls would follow the car all the way to Clifden for a shilling.<sup>288</sup> This was a common experience in Connemara, which was also related by Noel Ruthven, who succumbed to the peddling of the colleens and ‘bought largely of their wares’ during his ten day ‘Dash’ in 1887.<sup>289</sup>

The subtler and more effective agency of the hosts in shaping the experiences of the traveller was demonstrated during a detour suggested by Robinson’s driver, in characteristically rough Irish brogue:

‘Would yer honor like for to taste a dhrop av rale potheen?’ demanded the driver.

‘Where could I get the genuine stuff?’

‘Beyant here, at Garrybaldi’s – no less’.<sup>290</sup>

Robinson’s authority in the situation is evident, both in the driver’s use of ‘yer honor’ and in the fact that the decision of whether or not to stop at Garrybaldi’s small thatched cabin was his alone to make, despite there being ‘ten or twelve’ passengers in total. Yet, the driver managed to divert the group to the rural inn, who were allowed to enter after ‘a short colloquy between the driver and the proprietor’.<sup>291</sup>

Tasting poitín – the illicit whiskey made in peripheral rural regions – was a well-established experience for travellers in Ireland, and the ‘wild west of Ireland’ was described as its ‘natural home’.<sup>292</sup> Much was made of the secrecy of the alcohol by the proprietor of Garrybaldi’s, and Robinson’s theatrical account described how ‘the “blessed lickker” was brought forth with much show of care and secrecy’.<sup>293</sup> Joynes, too, experienced the theatricality of the poitín presented by a local priest, who produced a key and opened ‘a cunningly devised hiding-place’, which revealed ‘to our wondering gaze a neat row of bottles upon which no exciseman had as yet set his eyes’.<sup>294</sup> Most of Robinson’s tourist group ‘spat the mountain dew out, declaring that it was nothing but bad Scotch whisky’. Robinson ‘rather liked the peaty flavour’, but was clearly suspicious of the provenance of the drink, and only felt that he had sampled ‘genuine poteen’ when he secured a ‘golligogue’ at the hotel in Leenaun.<sup>295</sup> It is unclear from Robinson’s account whether or not money was paid for the earlier dram of ‘poteen’, but it was customary to compensate the proprietor for his ‘naggin’ of liquor, and the driver would have been duly rewarded for bringing 10 or 12 tourists into his bar.

Robinson’s interactions with the driver were certainly subtler than the relentless hawking of the colleens, but both constituted attempts made by locals to make their interactions with guests economically beneficial.<sup>296</sup> The experience of being cheated, and the attempts to resist, became an expectation for travellers in Ireland, which was exaggerated comically by Liam O’Flaherty in his *Tourist’s Guide to Ireland* (1929). O’Flaherty warned that ‘the tourist is at the mercy of every kind of ruffian’, and the ‘welcoming

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<sup>287</sup> Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, p. 281.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>289</sup> Noel Ruthven, ‘A Dash through the Green Isle’, *Frank Leslie’s Sunday Magazine* 22.5 (1887), p. 381.

<sup>290</sup> Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, p. 282.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>292</sup> For an entertaining account of a ‘poteen-hunter’, who took the reader on a trip to ‘catch men making it’, see ‘Poteen-Hunting in the Wild West of Ireland’, *Chambers’s Journal* 2.100 (1899), pp. 761-3.

<sup>293</sup> Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, pp. 282-3.

<sup>294</sup> Joynes, *Adventures in Ireland*, p. 79.

<sup>295</sup> Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, pp. 282-3.

<sup>296</sup> For examples of begging, see Johnson, *The Isle of the Shamrock*, pp. 158, 162-3, 165; and Synge, *Wicklow, West Kerry and Connemara*, pp. 160-1. For an alternative account, which expressed surprise at the lack of begging in Connacht, see Stevenson, *Charm of Ireland*, p. 375.

hands' held out for the tourist are 'for the purpose of robbing him of all he possesses'.<sup>297</sup> The hosts used the expectations of the tourists to their own advantage, to give the tourist the experiences of authenticity they so craved, while attempting to make this situation financially lucrative for themselves, and shaping in subtler ways the directions, detours, and trajectories of the traveller's journey.

### *Old men and the desire for authenticity*

As the narration of host-guest interactions demonstrates, the 'colourful cast of characters'<sup>298</sup> was diverse, but the two most prominent stock characters in the travel narratives of the West were the old man and the young woman, which will be discussed in turn. While both male and female travellers romanticised the figure of the old man, there was a discernible male gaze directed at the voiceless young woman.

For the traveller, one of the principal strategic reasons for relating interactions with hosts in travel narratives was to convey a sense of authenticity.<sup>299</sup> Conversing with the locals showed not only a level of authenticity but also acceptance. As Stone wrote, 'the natives are shy with strangers, and can scarcely be got to answer a question until they get to know you, while it is a considerable time before they take you into their confidence'.<sup>300</sup> Synge integrated himself as far as possible with the people of the Aran Islands, whose speech informed the dialect and dialogue of his plays.<sup>301</sup> In particular, he recalled getting to know 'another Irish-speaking labourer', with whom he 'lay for hours talking and arguing on the grass'.<sup>302</sup> In Cornwall, Morton established contact with 'a poor old man' by the side of the road, after which 'we were soon talking like old friends'. Morton claimed that:

You cannot do this in England – I mean in other parts of England! – for the Saxon is slow to accept you into his confidence, while the Celt loves words for their own sake.<sup>303</sup>

The romanticised figure of the elderly man is a recurring character in travel texts. Dinah Craik described her 'elder' boatman, with his 'weather-beaten, sharp-lined, wrinkled' face that had 'a sweetness, an absolute beauty, which struck us at once'. His smile was 'placid and paternal', and his 'kindly eyes' were as blue 'as Tennyson describes King Arthur's'.<sup>304</sup> The figure of the old man was a symbol of authenticity due to his perceived connection with the history of the local area. During his conversation with a Cornish packman,<sup>305</sup> Morton asked how long this had been the old man's profession, but 'felt the question to be absurd', and would not have been surprised if he had replied:

Well, I began my round, working for Eli of Nablus, general merchant of Sidon, who came over to Britain once a year from 60BC onwards with a cargo of seed pearls, which he swopped for tin. Then when the Romans left I did a rare trade in strops for sword blades.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> O'Flaherty, *Tourist's Guide to Ireland*, pp. 5-8. O'Flaherty also humorously suggested the tourist was exploited to the extent that he might be charged by customs officers for 'taking away on his shoes some of the country's mud'.

<sup>298</sup> This term is borrowed from James, *Tourism in Ireland*, pp. 61-92.

<sup>299</sup> For the importance of authenticity, see Buzard, *Beaten Track*.

<sup>300</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 324.

<sup>301</sup> Greene, 'Synge and the Celtic Revival', pp. 292-3.

<sup>302</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), p. 80.

<sup>303</sup> H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (21st edn, London, 1934 [1927]), pp. 96-7.

<sup>304</sup> Craik, *Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>305</sup> A pedlar who carried his wares in his pack.

<sup>306</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1934), p. 97.



For Morton, the old man ‘was the world’s first trader and the world’s first gossip column’, and the ‘rich store of goods in his pack was only rivalled by the rich store of local scandal in his head’.<sup>307</sup>

The old man’s connection with the past was often demonstrated by his supernatural stories and superstitious beliefs, which the truly authentic traveller was able to tease out through conversation. A. G. Bradley emphasised his own authenticity as a traveller at Llyn Morwynion, ‘or the Lake of the Maidens’, which was named after ‘a famous Welsh legend’ in which maidens were raped and then drowned themselves. Bradley described how ‘long ago I used occasionally to fish it, rowed about by an old man from Ffestiniog who either owned or borrowed its only boat’. Bradley’s boatman ‘was a bard too, and was very fond of the old story, and saw great visions no doubt in the lake’s dark depths as we drifted over its rippling surface’.<sup>308</sup> Similarly, Mary Donaldson extracted ‘a most amusing story’ of the attempts to capture the ‘water-horse of Loch nan Dubrachan’. Her storyteller was ‘an old man’ who remembered the events from half a century ago.<sup>309</sup> The agency of the host in providing ‘pleasant answers’ or ‘putting the too-inquisitive Sassanach off the scent’ was also understood by many travellers – an awareness that drew on contemporary discourses of folklore collection, and which deemed the ‘imaginative Celtic nations’ as some of the more ingenious ‘obsequious subject-races’ in this regard.<sup>310</sup>

The authenticity of conversing with old men also extended from the historical to the contemporary. Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell spoke to an old man in Skye in order to gain first-hand information concerning the ongoing tensions between tenants and landlords. They asked the old man about the ‘crofter question’, who duly told them that he was a Land Leaguer, and that in the Glendale district ‘not a crofter has paid rent for five years’.<sup>311</sup> Touristic interest in the dispute over land control also enabled crofters to present an alternative image of being mobilised and well organised, which challenged gendered and racialised depictions of them as placid ornaments in the surrounding landscape scenery.<sup>312</sup>

For John M. Synge, his knowledge of Gaelic and the extended period he spent among the people of the Aran Islands gave him special insight into the folklore of the people.<sup>313</sup> While out one morning Synge ‘met an old man making his way down to the cottage’ – this was Pat Dirane, the ‘storyteller’. Old Pat ‘asked me if I liked stories, and offered to tell one in English’, before adding that ‘it would be much better if I could follow the Gaelic’.<sup>314</sup> Synge retold Pat’s stories at several points in his book, all of which ended with the same ending phrase: ‘That is my story’.<sup>315</sup> During more general discussions with Pat, Synge managed to ‘turn the conversation to his experiences of the fairies’, and Synge was made privy to ‘a secret he had never yet told to any person in the world’, regarding a defensive strategy to guard against them.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>308</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>309</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, p. 112.

<sup>310</sup> Of course, it was also recognised that the ignorance of the Celt ‘may be real, not pretended’; see Burne, *Handbook of Folklore*, p. 15.

<sup>311</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. 151-2. Michael Davitt wrote about attempts to extend Land League propaganda into the Highlands and the Isle of Skye, areas that were toured by the propagandist Edward McHugh; see Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland, or the Story of the Land League Revolution* (London, 1904), p. 228.

<sup>312</sup> Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland*, p. 176. Grenier, “Scottishness”, “Britishness”, and Scottish Tourism”, p. 1010. Also see Martin Padget, ‘An Iconography of Difference: Internal Colonialism, Photography, and the Crofters of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’, *College Literature* 20.2 (1993), pp. 177-95. For preconceptions of crofters as ‘placid’ parts of the surrounding scenery, see Andrew Newby, ‘Land and the “Crofter Question” in Nineteenth-Century Scotland’, *International Review of Scottish Studies* 35 (2010), p. 7.

<sup>313</sup> Encountering the Gaelic language was also a sign of authenticity in Scotland. This was something rare for the ‘ordinary tourist’, though ‘the enterprising pedestrian may occasionally stumble upon a Gael ignorant of all save his mother-tongue’; see J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers by K. Baedeker* (6th edn, Leipzig, 1906), p. 503.

<sup>314</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), pp. 17-18.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-24, 33-5, 51-7, 62-4, 75.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

While this was the predominant trope, there were also instances in which local women were also mined for their knowledge. Adopting the role of folklore collector, Catherine Scott explained that ‘the housewife, on persuasion, may be got to tell’ the traveller about having seen ‘the pisky stealing away over the dewy fields by the first grey glimmer of light’.<sup>317</sup>

In their veneration of old men and their perceived connection with the past, writers echoed the strategy employed by folklorists, who collected stories and superstitions from elderly members of rural communities. Jonathan Ceredig Davies walked ‘in the remote country districts’ and was ‘indebted for almost all my information’ on witches, wizards, and death omens ‘to old men and women whom I visited’, while Marie Trevelyan collected ‘lore and stories’ from ‘old inhabitants, some of whom have passed away, while others still survive’.<sup>318</sup>

### *Young women and the male gaze*

Both male and female narrators romanticised the physical features and dress of young women in the West, and compared her to archetypal examples of beauty. In addition, a distinctive ‘male gaze’, emerged in hints at sexual frisson, and in representations of silent working women who were also connected to consumerism.<sup>319</sup>

It was common for writers to describe the traditional dress of western women, and travellers in Ireland commented on the ‘red dresses’, which broke the monotony of ‘grey clouds and seas’ during Synge’s stay on the Aran Islands.<sup>320</sup> Stone described the ‘bodices, skirts, and shawls’ and the absence of hats and boots, as well as the ‘gorgeous’ colours, including ‘red of all shades’, purple ‘of the most deeply imperial to the slaty’, and ‘a vivid royal blue’.<sup>321</sup> Such an unembellished style was characteristic of travel narratives throughout the West, as Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell commented on the ‘white sacks’ and ‘handkerchiefs’ of the women in the Hebrides, who ‘looked not unlike French peasants’.<sup>322</sup> Mary Donaldson went in search of traditional Highland dress and described the ‘*brèid*’, which denoted a married woman in the Highlands, but searched in vain for ‘the picturesque *stim*, or snood, the fillet binding the hair round the forehead to indicate a maiden, seems to have fallen into disuse’.<sup>323</sup>

The women themselves were often described as ‘of a distinctly foreign type’, with ‘dark-brown hair and eyes’.<sup>324</sup> Madame de Bovet looked upon a ‘pretty girl of sixteen’ who knitted in her cottage, and leaned ‘idly against the door-post, with her fresh bare arms crossed under her black-and-red tartan, vaguely looking at the sea with her great dark eyes’.<sup>325</sup> Similarly, on Achill Island, Stone commented that ‘many of the young women one sees about Achill are undoubtedly handsome – one or two we saw would be

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<sup>317</sup> Scott, *Nooks and Corners of Cornwall*, p. 87.

<sup>318</sup> Davies, *Folklore of the West and Mid-Wales*, p. vii; Marie Trevelyan, *Folk-Lore and Folk-Stories of Wales* (London, 1909), p. vi; for examples of stories collected by Trevelyan from old men in Wales, see pp. 14, 67, 68, 122, 180, 106, 239.

<sup>319</sup> For the male gaze and tourism, see Annette Pritchard and Nigel J. Morgan, ‘Privileging the Male Gaze: Gendered Tourism Landscapes’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27.4 (2000), especially the conclusion, pp. 899-901. For the original coinage of the term, see Laura Mulvey, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ (1975), reprinted in Robyn Warhol-Down and Diane Price Herndl, *Feminisms Redux: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (New Brunswick NJ, 2009), see pp. 436-40.

<sup>320</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), p. 28.

<sup>321</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 329. Also see Bovet, *Three Months’ Tour in Ireland*, p. 208.

<sup>322</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 33.

<sup>323</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, p. 95.

<sup>324</sup> Mitton and Nicholls, *Cornwall*, pp. 18-19. This was also described as the ‘Spanish type of beauty’; see Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, p. 94.

<sup>325</sup> Katherine Lee Bates, *From Greta Green to Land’s End: A Literary Journey in England* (London, 1908), p. 370; Bovet, *Three Months’ Tour in Ireland*, p. 214.

called beauties in any country – and they have dark blue eyes, deep-red hair’. Stone described the ‘perfect complexions, features, figure, and carriage’, and drew on Tennyson’s ‘The Brook’, quoting the lines:

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the husk  
Divides three-fold to shew the fruit within.<sup>326</sup>

In western Ireland, Morton was struck by a girl who ‘was more primitive than Eve’, who ‘had no idea that she was cast in the same mould as Helen of Troy’.<sup>327</sup> Dinah Craik also likened her ‘young guide’ on St Michael’s Mount – who was ‘perhaps the prettiest bit of it all’ – to the beauty of famous literature, describing ‘her simple grace and sweet courtesy’ as ‘worthy of one of the fair ladies worshipped by King Arthur’.<sup>328</sup>

Rather than engaging them in conversation, travellers more often gazed upon young women while they worked. In Skye, the working woman was a romanticised character of the West, preserving ‘an erect carriage’ and a ‘certain freshness which is not unpleasing’ despite the ‘excessive toils’ of their labour.<sup>329</sup> During her travels in the Himalayas, Constance F. Gordon Cumming idealised the strength of Skye women, in a comparison with the Madras women who were in the Bengal region of India. She boasted that ‘some of our Highland lassies can carry a fair burden for many a long while’, and she observed ‘one delicate-looking little woman in Skye shoulder a heavy chest that had arrived by the steamer, and march across the steep hills up and down for fully twelve miles to her home’.<sup>330</sup> Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell shunned the romanticisation of women and instead emphasised their poverty and back-breaking work. They described ‘old witch-like women and young girls passed, bent double under loads of peat or seaweed’, which was depicted in a sketch of ‘A Real Highland Lassie’ (see Image 3.3).<sup>331</sup> They suggested that if the same sight were witnessed in Italy, ‘English people would long since have filled columns of the *Times* with their sympathy’. There were ‘no smiles, no signs of contentment’, and ‘on the faces of the strongest women there was a look of weariness and pain’.<sup>332</sup> Despite their sympathy, the young western woman remained silent, in contrast to the old man of the West.

The recurrent image of the working woman did not, however, prevent several male writers from also emphasising her connection to consumerism, in scenes which depict the ‘infantile, female spender, unregulated in her desires’.<sup>333</sup> In his explanation of the packman’s social function, Morton stressed that he represented ‘the one great thrill in the lives of the girls and women, whose eyes sparkled as he pulled out his trays and offered to their vanity cloths and trifles from the distant town’.<sup>334</sup> Synge made the same connection at the arrival of the *ceannuighe* (pedlar), who ‘opened his wares’ and ‘sold a quantity of cheap knives and jewellery to the girls and younger women’. Amused at the seemingly transformative powers of shopping, Synge noted that several women who had previously claimed to ‘know no English’ could in fact ‘make themselves understood without difficulty when it pleased them’, when bargaining with the English-speaking pedlar.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, pp. 328-9.

<sup>327</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 186.

<sup>328</sup> Craik, *Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall*, p. 102.

<sup>329</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 201-2.

<sup>330</sup> Constance F. Gordon Cumming, *From the Hebrides to the Himalayas* (London, 1876), vol. 2, p. 182.

<sup>331</sup> Pennell and Pennell, *Journey to the Hebrides*, pp. 146-7.

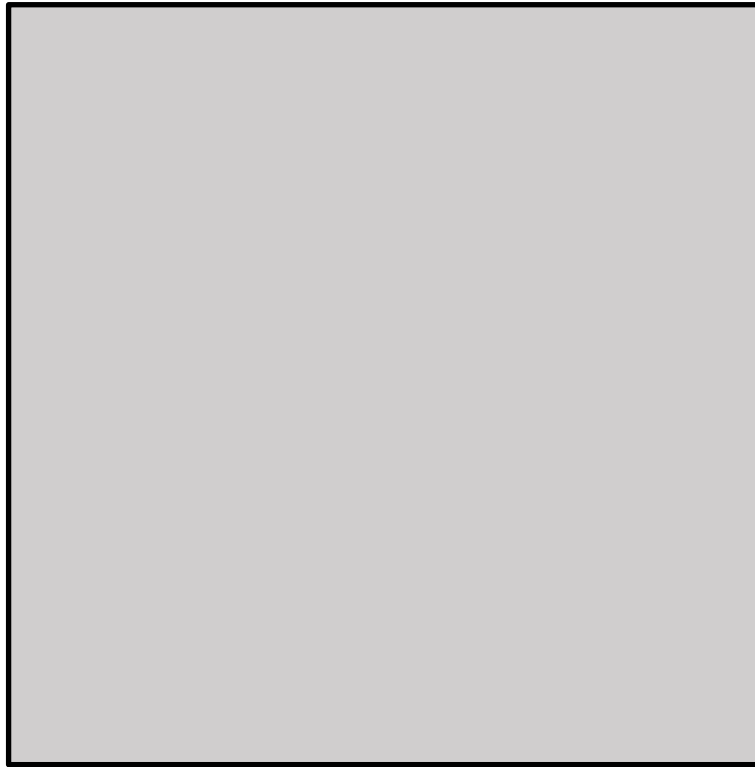
<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.

<sup>333</sup> Bowlby, *Shopping with Freud*, p. 62. Also see Hammerton, ‘Gender, satire and “moral manliness” in the lower middle class’, pp. 164-5.

<sup>334</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1934), p. 97.

<sup>335</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), p. 125.

Image 3.3



Source: Joseph Pennell and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *Our Journey to the Hebrides* (New York, 1889), p. 147. 'A Real Highland Lassie'.

Furthermore, a distinctive male gaze emerged in Synge's account of an 'unbearably sultry day' on the Aran Islands, when the 'sand and the sea near us were crowded with half-naked women'.<sup>336</sup> This was also evident in Robinson's extended descriptions of the colleens as 'bare-legged, bare-shouldered', wearing 'the scantiest of petticoats', and collecting turf 'which was to warm their dainty toes – ay, their limbs were moulded in the daintiest fashion – during the coming Winter'.<sup>337</sup> The playfulness convinced Synge that the women of the Aran Islands, especially 'when two or three of them are gathered together in their holiday petticoats and shawls... are as wild and capricious as the women who live in towns'.<sup>338</sup> The depiction of flirtatious women and playful sexual attraction was also extended to the representation of the landscape.<sup>339</sup> Stone portrayed Connemara's 'changeableness' as its 'greatest charm', and the variation between pouring rain and warm sunshine led him to remark that 'Connemara woos you as a coquettish maiden'.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. For further comment, see Mattar, *Primitivism, Science and the Irish Revival*, pp. 136-7.

<sup>337</sup> Robinson, 'A Dash through Connemara', pp. 282, 285.

<sup>338</sup> Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), p. 50.

<sup>339</sup> Wren Sidhe has commented on Morton's representation of the 'feminised English soil'; see Wren Sidhe, 'H. V. Morton's Pilgrimages to Englishness', *Literature and History* 12.1 (2003), pp. 57-71.

<sup>340</sup> Stone, *Connemara*, p. 2.

## VII – Conclusion

The forms of travel in the western peripheries were diverse and heavily stylised. The framework of social performance sheds light on the ways in which identities were inscribed in space, and the rugged and dramatic landscapes of the peripheral West provided a space in which these performances were intensified. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of these performances, they are also united by the pervasive desire to portray authenticity. Travellers performed, described, and displayed authenticity as part of a symbolic economy, in which both physical separation and cultural distinction from the tourist crowds was prized. Travellers and writers required the information contained in travel texts, while at the same time wished to avoid the sort of reliance on the 'guidebook' that would undermine the originality of their experiences off the so-called 'beaten track'. This tension played out in the historical imagination, which valued the West for its perceived links with the past, and was articulated through the recitation of historical knowledge regarding standing stones and local artefacts, as well as through the immersive narration of voyages in time as well as space. The 'performance' of travel was also manifest in the traveller's movement through the landscape, as contemporary moral geographies were evident in discussions of walking, rushing, and in the ambivalence of attitudes towards motor travel, which do not align easily within the dichotomy of the modern and the anti-modern. Alongside the claims to originality, travel texts drew on well-established tropes of danger and misadventure, in which the influence of Edmund Burke and various Romantic writers is evident in descriptions of high mountains, treacherous mists, and precipitous cliffs. Finally, descriptions of the interactions between hosts and guests in travel texts were invariably written from the perspective of the traveller, and yet they reveal a set of dialogues in which power was unequal but diffuse. This sheer diversity of travellers' accounts displays both patterns and dominant narratives that were heavily inflected by class and gender, as well as the opportunities which travel provided for those who wished to subvert those narratives. The next chapter continues to explore the theme of performance, and takes as its subject the distinctive set of associational values that accompanied the 'westward gaze'.



## I – Introduction

The previous chapter explored the many enactments which constituted the performances of travellers and tourists in the West. This approach is important for our understanding of the range of performances which, together, served to construct the West in a highly stylised manner. This chapter takes as its subject the single most distinctive performative act of travelling in the West throughout the period – the ‘westward gaze’ – and explores it in greater depth. Since the so-called ‘performative turn’, scholars have become increasingly aware of the ways in which human-nature relations may be understood not in terms of ‘static structures and rules’ but in terms of activity and performance.<sup>1</sup> Rather than viewing nature in terms of its materiality – as a passive background to tourist performance or as a blank canvas upon which narratives are inscribed – it is important to recognise nature as a process and as a product of performance.<sup>2</sup>

The westward gaze may be dissected into three stages. First, travellers physically or imaginatively gazed westwards in the direction of their destination from afar. Next, they described entering the West and the changes in landscape that marked the transition. Finally, once they had reached the edge of the land they continued to look across the sea towards the distant horizon. This was a performance that was heavily stylised, and the westward gaze carried with it specific associational values that were explored at length in travel texts. Accounts of travel described the act of standing on a cliff edge and gazing westwards into the hazy, indistinct horizon, which inspired the imagination of mythical sunken lands and distant islands of immortality. These scenes relied both on the traveller’s performance and also on atmospheric conditions such as the temperature and density of particles in the air. In this way, the landscape and its associational values were produced by performances that involved the agency of both the human and the non-human.<sup>3</sup>

The westward gaze was by its nature directed towards the extreme, the western extent of the land. The notion of the land’s end, or *finis terrae*, did not solely denote a geographical reality but it was also a powerful imaginary that was constructed in the narratives and images contained in travel texts.<sup>4</sup> Scholarship on postmodern cultural imaginaries has emphasised the ‘playful’ nature of such tourism, but the imaginary of the land’s end was often articulated as part of an earnest, personal, and spiritual search for the sublime and the authentic in the geography and the history of the periphery.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton, *Nature Performed*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1; James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Szerszynski, Heim, and Waterton, *Nature Performed*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon R. Roseman and Nieves Herrero, ‘Introduction’, in Nieves Herrero and Sharon R. Roseman (eds), *The Tourist Imaginary and Pilgrimages to the Edges of the World* (Bristol, 2015), p. 1. Roseman and Herrero also noted that, though the ideas of the end of the earth and border of the known world are most often applied to spaces where continents meet the sea at the most extended points, the same names can also be used metaphorically for inland locations. In addition, Roseman and Herrero recognised that Jean Mohr and John Berger used the phrase ‘the Edge of the World’ for the idea of ‘elsewhere’, which can refer to picturesque waterscapes that ‘one contemplates from a very distant vantage point, giving viewers the impression that they can never reach these locations’; see p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6. For a discussion of modernist ‘rational authenticity’ and postmodernist ‘aesthetic authenticity’, see Wayne Fife, ‘Penetrating Types: Conflating Modernist and Postmodernist Tourism on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland’, *Journal of American Folklore* 117.464 (2004), pp. 147-67.

## II – The westward gaze

### *Gazing from afar*

Firstly, the West was gazed upon and contemplated from afar by travellers such as Katherine Bates, who looked westwards towards Cornwall and described the region as ‘that rocky promontory which seems to belong more to the kingdom of the sea than to England’.<sup>6</sup> In travel accounts of North West Wales, writers often began their narratives in the east, in England.<sup>7</sup> Rarely did they begin their journey across the border. First, Wales was gazed upon and then travelled to before it was reached, and border regions such as Shropshire were important sites of the westward gaze.<sup>8</sup> S. P. B. Mais climbed the Stiperstones in Shropshire, and gazed westwards towards ‘the dim outlines of the cones and peaks and ridges of the Welsh mountains’, and he did the same on the Long Mynd, where ‘we got a superb view away to the west over the dim pastureland of Shropshire below to the high mountains of Central Wales in the blue mist behind the sinking sun’.<sup>9</sup> H. V. Morton’s search for Wales began in London, and he also decided to approach Wales through the Border Marches. Passing through the ‘gentle hills’ to Ludlow, Morton’s mind turned ‘again to Wales’. He ‘climbed to a sentry walk’ at Ludlow Castle, and, ‘gazing through an arrow-slit, saw far off to the westward the blue hills of Wales’.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, West Connacht was also approached from a distance, as travellers typically began their narratives from urban start points such as London or Dublin.<sup>11</sup> However, gazing westwards into West Connacht was an imaginative act that tended to occur once the traveller had arrived at Galway. As Michael Floyd wrote:

At Galway all Connemara lies before you, with its brown hills and blue waters, its gorge-like valleys and tracts of boggy moorland; a region as wild and sparse in habitation as any in Ireland, and as beautiful as any in the world.<sup>12</sup>

The act of gazing westwards at the destination also appeared in the travel texts of Scotland, despite many writers approaching Skye from the south, or south-east. As a result, gazing westwards towards Skye was enacted more selectively, from a shorter distance. Morton took the Stornoway steamer northwards, which passed through the Sound of Sleat and arrived at Kyle of Lochalsh, where he alighted to take the Skye steamer. From Kyle of Lochalsh Skye is due west, and Morton turned ‘towards the mountains of Skye’ to take in the ‘queer, grotesque mountains, dark and heroic’. The steamer subsequently approached the Isle of Scalpay, from where ‘to the west loom giant peaks with a hint of darker, higher, and even wilder peaks behind them’. At this point, Morton felt ‘that I had left the world behind me’.<sup>13</sup> Seton Gordon also gazed westwards towards Skye from Loch Duich on a winter’s night, during which the moon rose ‘full-orbed, large and golden’, illuminating ‘a long line, as of silver clouds... on the far western horizon’.<sup>14</sup>

Several writers described their attraction to the West as originating in childhood, which hints at the extent to which Celtic stories and music were consumed by young readers and radio listeners. Books such as Ella Young’s *Celtic Wonder-Tales* (1910) offered simplified narratives of Celtic tales, and in the inter-war

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<sup>6</sup> Bates, *From Gretna Green to Land’s End*, p. 350.

<sup>7</sup> Vale began his ‘Welsh Walk’ in Leominster; see Vale, ‘A Welsh Walk’, p. 249.

<sup>8</sup> Roddy, “‘Westward on the high-hilled plains’”, pp. 11-13.

<sup>9</sup> Mais, *This Unknown Island*, pp. 180, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> For London as a start point, see Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, p. 1. For Dublin, see Robinson, ‘A Dash through Connemara’, p. 280.

<sup>12</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> Morton, *In Search of Scotland*, pp. 202-5.

<sup>14</sup> Seton Gordon, *Highways and Byways in the West Highlands* (London, 1935), p. 66.



period *The Radio Times* listings indicate that younger audiences continued to be exposed to Irish, Scottish, and Welsh music, educational talks, and tales told ‘in the old Celtic manner’, alongside published reading material.<sup>15</sup> A. G. Bradley began his narrative of North Wales by transporting the author back to when, ‘at the mature age of seven’, he ‘stood on the top of a Shropshire hill’, and ‘dim shapes of, to me, strange and weird contour rose high upon the far western horizon. My hostess told me that they were the Welsh mountains’.<sup>16</sup> For Dinah Craik, her childhood fascination with the West was an imagined one, as she ‘beheld in fancy’ the Land’s End, which was ‘a favourite landscape-dream of my rather imaginative childhood’.<sup>17</sup>

The expectations raised by childhood memories and adult imaginings during these initial contemplative passages provided a convenient opening to travel texts, enabling the writer to describe the process of travelling while throwing into sharp relief the contrast between the ‘din and bustle and murky atmosphere of the metropolis’ with the remoteness and wildness of the West.<sup>18</sup>

### *Approaches and thresholds*

Secondly, writers described in detail the act of travelling westwards towards the destination.<sup>19</sup> Railway lines provided a framework for travel texts which portrayed the westward journey as a departure from Anglicised Britain and Ireland, as these journeys often began in London or local urban centres.<sup>20</sup> Entering the West involved crossing a threshold, which was described by writers either as a gradual process of change or as a sudden entrance after crossing a distinct boundary.

Morton was unsure the point at which he had entered Wales, remarking that ‘there is no sign-post on the Welsh boundary, as there is on the line between England and Scotland’. For him, the point at which England became Wales was not so easily defined, and the Marches represented a transitional zone of gradual change.<sup>21</sup> Stawell also felt the ‘Celtic atmosphere’ of the border, where the ‘quiet orderliness of England’ was left behind.<sup>22</sup> A. L. Rowse described the emergence of the West as it was gradually perceived by the traveller:

You notice as you go westward the landscape changes: it becomes more varied and yet more intimate, it becomes so much older, more storied, with longer memories of the past.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Many programmes were also aimed at adults, some of which are discussed in chapter 5. For examples of radio programmes aimed at children, see *The Radio Times* 57, 24 October 1924, p. 12; *The Radio Times* 296, 31 May 1929, p. 20; *The Radio Times* 417, 25 September 1931, p. 59; *The Radio Times* 603, 19 April 1935, p. 34; *The Radio Times* 688, 4 December 1936, p. 34; *The Radio Times* 703, 19 March 1937, p. 76; *The Radio Times* 716, 18 June 1937, p. 70; *The Radio Times* 754, 11 March 1938, p. 76; *The Radio Times* 858, 8 March 1940, p. 18; and *The Radio Times* 969, 24 April 1942, p. 16; quotation from *The Radio Times* 402, 12 June 1931, p. 25. A story from Ella Young, *Celtic Wonder-Tales* (Dublin, 1910) was told as part of the ‘For the Schools’ programme on 11 March 1938; see *The Radio Times* 753, 4 March 1938, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup> Bradley, *In Praise of North Wales*, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Craik, *Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Caledonian Railway, *Bonnie Scotland*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> There were some instances in which travellers moved from west to east. For instance, the American tourists Lucy Langdon Williams and Emma V. McLoughlin sailed from their homeland to Ireland, after which they travelled eastwards across the coast of North Wales, from Holyhead to Conwy and Chester; see Lucy Langdon Williams and Emma V. McLoughlin, *A Too Short Vacation* (Philadelphia, 1892), p. 52. For another example, see Higinbotham, *Three Weeks in the British Isles*, p. 312.

<sup>20</sup> James, ‘Tourism and Western Terrain’, pp. 18-19.

<sup>21</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> Stawell, *Motor Tours in Wales*, p. 67.

<sup>23</sup> A. L. Rowse, ‘The West in English History’, in A. L. Rowse (ed.), *The West in English History* (London, 1949), pp. 178-9.

Similarly, Arthur Quiller-Couch described the traveller's gradual realisation that the Duchy 'is not a part of England', and the 'vague feeling that it differs somehow' developed without him being able to 'define it exactly'. Progressing westwards, 'down the narrowing peninsula', the feeling grew until the traveller 'suffers a curious apprehensive sense of drawing near to the end of all things. "The Land's End" – *finis terra, finisterre* – has taken on a real meaning for him'.<sup>24</sup> For Thomas D. Murphy, 'the declining sun, toward which we rapidly course, seems to flash across the Cornish hills the roselight of the old Arthurian romance, and the stately measures of the "Idylls of the King" come unbidden to our minds'.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast, Edmund Vale's experience of walking from England and into Wales was much more sudden, as the border was easily identified by a bridge which straddled the two nations. Vale 'stepped over into Wales' while his temporary companion 'remained in England, and we shook hands and parted'.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the change in atmosphere experienced by Morton in Ireland was perceptible 'suddenly as soon as you leave Galway due west by the coast road through Spiddal to Clifden'. This was a region 'in which Progress – whatever we mean by it – has broken in vain against grey walls; it has been arrested by high hills and deep lakes to the east and by the sea on the west'.<sup>27</sup>

The River Tamar was a particularly prominent threshold, the mouth of the river marked the point at which travellers left 'England' and entered 'Cornwall'. Katherine Bates claimed that 'the veritable Pixydom lies south of the Tamar',<sup>28</sup> while the writer Mary V. Hughes described the Royal Albert Bridge (which crossed the Tamar, linking Plymouth with Saltash) as the route by which 'we leave "England" ... and are in the country of the Celts'.<sup>29</sup> For Hughes, 'the difference between the rich Devon land and the ruder scenery of Cornwall, with its lonely little whitewashed cottages, can be immediately perceived'.<sup>30</sup>

Writers rooted their own experience of the Tamar in its history as a medieval border by recalling Athelstan's expulsion of the Cornish from Exeter in 939, which made the east bank of the Tamar the border between Cornwall and Wessex.<sup>31</sup> Havelock Ellis described the river Tamar as marking the divide between 'the rest of Great Britain and an ancient land',<sup>32</sup> while A. R. Hope Moncrieff wrote that 'many strangers crossing the Tamar... are fain to fancy themselves in another country'.<sup>33</sup> Typically, travel texts held that Cornwall was 'bounded on the north and south by the sea, cut off on the east by the Tamar'.<sup>34</sup> As Charles G. Harper explained in *The Cornish Coast (North)* (1910), 'still the Cornishman may be heard talking of "going into England", when he intends crossing the Tamar and entering Devon', and 'to this day all those who come westward across that stream are "foreigners"'.<sup>35</sup> Howarth expressed the same sentiment when he recognised that Cornwall has its own geographical features, 'both physical and human, in such measure as to give ground for the common assertion that another land is entered when the boundary of the river Tamar is crossed'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Quiller-Couch, 'Introduction to Cornish Section', p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> Murphy, *In Unfamiliar England*, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Vale, 'A Welsh Walk', p. 254.

<sup>27</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 173.

<sup>28</sup> Bates, *From Gretna Green to Land's End*, p. 350.

<sup>29</sup> Hughes, *About England*, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Alan M. Kent, *Celtic Cornwall: Nation, Tradition, Invention* (Wellington, 2012), p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Ellis, 'The Men of Cornwall' (April 1897), p. 328.

<sup>33</sup> Moncrieff, *Black's Cornwall* (1919), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Charles G. Harper, *The Cornish Coast (North)* (London, 1910), p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Howarth, *Scenic Heritage of England and Wales*, p. 130.

Thirdly, once the West had been reached, and its topographical extremities found, travellers gazed from the vantage points of mountains and cliff-edges across the sea towards the horizon. The western coastline was described as the final edge of the land, and western cliff-faces became geological defensive structures which stood against the eternal onslaught of the Atlantic. Sheridan reinforced this idea, describing the ‘terrific’ noise as ‘the great ocean spent its fury on this wonderful breastwork which had waged war with the Atlantic for ages’.<sup>37</sup>

In the travel texts of Cornwall, the order of the contents often reflected the westward movement of the traveller, arriving at the Land’s End and then the Scilly Isles at the end of the book, despite the suggested tourist routes often recommending that the traveller return eastwards by the northern coast.<sup>38</sup> Arthur Salmon’s *The Heart of the West* (1922) proceeded along two such routes, ‘from Bristol to St Ives on the north, from Exeter to Land’s End on the south’, which was done ‘for the sake of convenience’ (though what convenience he did not explain).<sup>39</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould’s *A Book of Cornwall* (1906) was also structured in a way that ensured the continuous westward geographical movement of the narrative, beginning with chapters on Launceston, Camelford, Bude, and Saltash, and ending with ‘The Land’s End’ and ‘The Scilly Isles’.<sup>40</sup> On the approach to the Land’s End, Harper wrote that ‘everything appears to resign itself to an ending’, as the railway ‘seems to come, tired out, to the shores of Mount’s Bay, and to expire, rather than come to a terminus’.<sup>41</sup>

In travel texts and also in more academic treatments, the coastline of West Connacht was described as the periphery, the extreme, the edge. Throughout these western case studies, urban centres and the east were places of Anglicisation and outside influence, whereas the West consisted of older cultures and peoples clinging to the final edges of the land. Michael Floyd described Ireland as ‘the outpost of Europe in the West’, with such a peripheral location bringing with it ‘an “Ultima Thule” quality that has hardly deserted them at the present day’.<sup>42</sup> If Ireland was the outpost of the West, then the western coast of Ireland ‘is indeed its final rampart’. Inseparable from the western coast was ‘the great stone forts still in existence on the Arans’, which represented ‘the last line of defence of the Bronze halberd-men, driven ever westward by the conquering sword-bearers of a new culture’.<sup>43</sup>

In West Connacht, one of the prime locations for gazing westwards into the distance was from Croaghnaun on Achill Island, a mountain over two thousand feet high that descends to the sea by the highest sea cliffs in the country. J. R. Sheridan, the proprietor of the Slievemore Hotel on the island, described Croaghnaun as ‘the most extraordinary marine cliff in the British islands’, reckoned by travellers ‘to be the highest sea cliff in the world’.<sup>44</sup> From the vantage point of Croaghnaun, Sheridan wrote that ‘we gazed far out on the broad Atlantic as far as the eye could reach’.<sup>45</sup> Wakeman expanded on Sheridan’s description, asking the reader to imagine ‘clouds floating in mid-air between his resting place and nether

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<sup>37</sup> Sheridan, quoted in Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, pp. 272-3.

<sup>38</sup> Harper, *The Cornish Coast (North)*, see contents pp. v-viii.

<sup>39</sup> Salmon, *Heart of the West*, p. v.

<sup>40</sup> Baring-Gould, *A Book of Cornwall*, see contents, p. v. For an example of a narrative structure which follows the recommended route down the south coast, returning by the northern coast, see Arthur L. Salmon, *The Cornwall Coast* (London, 1910), pp. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup> Charles G. Harper, *The Cornish Coast (South) and the Isles of Scilly* (London, 1910), pp. 247-8.

<sup>42</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 1. Achill Island was referred to as ‘that veritable “Ultima Thule” of the kingdom of Ireland’, in ‘Ireland for Health’, *The British Medical Journal* 1.2052 (1900), p. 1037.

<sup>43</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 6-7. This phrase is also quoted in chapter five, below.

<sup>44</sup> This record is in fact held by the Kalaupapa Cliffs in Hawaii, over a thousand feet taller than Croaghnaun.

<sup>45</sup> Sheridan, quoted in Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, pp. 272-3.

ocean', from a position 'even higher than the eyrie of the eagles, which build on the ledges or crevices of the cliff below'.<sup>46</sup>

In Cornwall, the headlands and cliffs around the Land's End were the chief points from which writers gazed towards the horizon in the West. Katherine Lee Bates described how the sun was setting, and from the Land's End 'we could distinguish the Scilly Isles like gold cloudlets resting on the sea'.<sup>47</sup> This was an outward-facing perspective that was shared by H. V. Morton, as he gazed from the cliffs towards 'jagged rocks of granite polished by the waters', which jut 'out into the steamy sea, the white spray breaking over them... the eternal wildness of granite and waves'.<sup>48</sup> From Tol-Pedn-Penwith, the headland above the fishing hamlet of Porthgwarra, Arthur Norway claimed that 'there is no grander sight in Western Cornwall than the sheer dropping of this mighty headland to the sea'.<sup>49</sup>

A proper vantage point was an important ingredient in the westward gaze, and Baring-Gould described Snowdon as a mountain 'looking over the western sea'.<sup>50</sup> Morton 'walked for two miles or so uphill to get a view of Bardsey Island' on his way to Aberdaron and 'the Land's End of Wales'. From his vantage point, Morton was rewarded by a view of 'steep headlands', which sloped 'down to the sea', as well as a well-earned prospect of the island.<sup>51</sup> From a vantage point in the Cuillin peaks, Kenneth MacRae found 'most exquisite' the 'range of miniature blue mountains' in the distance, 'which float far out in the ocean'. MacRae gazed westwards towards Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides and even further, as he noted that 'the eye can reach far beyond it over the Atlantic'.<sup>52</sup> On the Great North Road in Skye, MacCulloch felt that 'the charm of the Western Isles beckons you onward like the romantic magic of early Celtic poetry'. Looking westwards to the Isle of Harris and beyond, he described how 'every step carries you farther westward', and the 'soft haze on the distant hills beyond the sea invites you to explore their mysteries'.<sup>53</sup>

Gazing westwards from the cliff-edge emerged as an imaginatively powerful and widely enacted cultural practice, but there were a number of dissenting voices who claimed that 'gigantic cliffs can only be seen to advantage from the sea'. In reference to the cliffs of Achill Island, T. O. Russell (who was one of the founders of the Gaelic League) maintained that the view from the sea was the 'proper means of seeing them', and the way they 'ought to be seen'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Floyd claimed that he would 'cheerfully accept the testimony of the experienced on the boundless sea view to be had' from Achill Head, but 'personally I always prefer to look *up* at cliffs from some lower out-thrust instead of climbing to their summits'.<sup>55</sup>

There was also disagreement regarding the ideal conditions in which the westward view could be obtained. Systematic travel texts tended to recommend that readers avoid the heavy sultry air of August afternoons because such conditions would diminish the quality of the view and result in a lack of clear visibility out to sea. Instead, the fresher conditions of earlier or later in the season and earlier in the day would afford a crisper, clearer picture for the tourist. The *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924) recommended that the tourist stay 'at least one night' at the Land's End or nearby Sennen, which would provide the opportunity to see the Land's End 'early and late', which were deemed 'certainly the most beautiful times to visit this scene', as the light added 'to the beauty of the rock colouring', which stood out against 'the deep cool

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<sup>46</sup> Wakeman, *Picturesque Ireland*, p. 273.

<sup>47</sup> Bates, *From Gretna Green to Land's End*, p. 378.

<sup>48</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), p. 93.

<sup>49</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, p. 301.

<sup>50</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>51</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 111, 115.

<sup>52</sup> MacRae, 'Misty Isle' of Skye, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 56.

<sup>54</sup> Russell, *Beauties and Antiquities of Ireland*, pp. 311-13.

<sup>55</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 67.

shadows'. This was an image of contrasting light and dark, of clarity, with the ideal atmospheric conditions summed up as 'a bright sky and a good ground-sea'.<sup>56</sup> Equally, the publication went on to explain that 'the early afternoon of a bright and hot summer's day is without doubt the least advantageous time', because 'Scilly is almost sure then to be lost in haze'.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, the 'height' and 'isolation' of Croagh Patrick was valued for its ability to offer 'the most splendid panoramas' of western Ireland in popular guidebooks such as *Murray's Ireland* (1906).<sup>58</sup> In particular, the 'twenty-eight square miles' of Clew Bay, which is 'studded with over 100 islands', was a view not to be missed. This, according to Ivatts, was 'one of the rarest panoramic views in the world'.<sup>59</sup> Clear, precise views stretching into the distance were prized by systematic travel texts, as *Murray's Ireland* (1878) remarked matter-of-factly that 'the view seawards is of course boundless'.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, writers of personal travel narratives more often celebrated the lack of clarity caused by conditions of mist and haze. In Cornwall, Morton rejoiced that he:

... did not see Land's End in sunlight, for then, no doubt, it would have looked just like any other stretch of rocky coast; but, with the white mist that turned to thin rain over the land, drenching the body and drenching the mind in melancholy, Land's End seemed like the end of all things.<sup>61</sup>

Heath also recommended a stay at the nearby hostel 'for the purpose of viewing this westernmost piece of England under the magic spell of a stormy sunset or a misty dawn'. In order to 'fully enjoy these western cliffs', the traveller needed to 'see the mists of morning and the mellow tints of evening', when 'those who are fond of the legends and traditions of the past, will find much to interest them at the Land's End'.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, it was 'the end of a still afternoon of early summer' when Floyd described the view from the garden of the Southern Railway Hotel at Mallaranny. He declared it 'one of the greatest things in Ireland', and revelled in the 'softness in the light – not the heat-haze of a high summer – that lent an added delicacy to the outlines of the far-off hills'. The result was 'a rippling, almost fluid expanse of ridge and peak' in the distance, 'tinged a pearly grey and culminating in the cone of Croagh Patrick'. Floyd was struck by 'a pensive beauty in the scene'.<sup>63</sup> On a trip to Clare Island, Stephen Gwynn's travel companion described the 'pure enchantment' of the view to the West at sunset, when 'the sea edge of the islands to the west, their contour lines, their isolated ridges, grew transparent, and gave free passage to the rays of level light'.<sup>64</sup> These writers drew the reader's gaze towards the indistinct and hazy distance, where the sky and clouds met the sea at some indeterminate point. It was more often the imprecise horizon, rather than the flawless panorama, that captured the imagination of travellers in the West.

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<sup>56</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), pp. 284-5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>58</sup> Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), p. 269.

<sup>59</sup> Ivatts, *Western Highlands (Connemara)*, n.p., see section 'Main Route for Circular Tour through Highlands'.

<sup>60</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), p. 209.

<sup>61</sup> Morton, *In Search of England* (1931), pp. 93-4.

<sup>62</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, pp. 40-2.

<sup>63</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 66.

<sup>64</sup> Gwynn, *Holiday in Connemara*, pp. 192-5.

### III – The imaginative associations of the westward gaze

I have stood behind grey prehistoric stones on western headlands looking out at sunsets that suggested fairy isles luring the ancient traders who put up those stones in their long Odysseys, and then the sunlight has departed and left a richness of deep blue that Nature gives nowhere else in the world.<sup>65</sup>

Classic Greek and Latin texts used the term *finisterre* – the land’s end – as a ‘geographical referent to the extreme west of the Mediterranean region’. But this more broadly denoted the border between the known world (the *ecumene*) and the unknown.<sup>66</sup> For travel texts drawing on this strain of thought, the peripheral West provided geographical space in which the idea of the unknown was powerfully connected to local myths. The western coastlines were inseparable from the seascapes that they bordered, with the associational values of both sea and land relying on their proximity to each other. In combination with the westward gaze, the atmospheric conditions of mist, haze, and general indistinctness ignited the imagination of writers, and – as motifs – provided a route into discussions of the legends and mythologies of the West.<sup>67</sup>

The westward gaze is indicative of a set of associational values that may be productively contrasted to those noted by Paul Readman in his article on the Dover cliffs. Readman examined the white cliffs of Dover as a way of analysing the relationship between landscapes and English and British national identities. He argues that the cliffs became an important emblem of island-nationhood, a geographical symbol of a ‘defiant, self-asserted separateness from the rest of Europe’ – an association that was made more robust after the surrender of Calais to France in 1558, as the Dover cliffs coincided with the national border and were thereafter mobilised in propaganda calling for the defence of the nation from foreign invasion. The associational values of the Dover cliffs became more firmly embedded in the ‘emergent discourse of national heritage’ once the port of Dover was connected to the railway system in 1844, and also through technological developments in image production and engraving techniques (such as the mass production of lithographic prints from the 1830s) and, later, photography.<sup>68</sup> Crucially, the view of the cliffs was a common experience of returning home for travellers, which made the white cliffs ‘a distinctive marker of homecoming’, a common stage in the journeys of many people who lived in different parts of Britain. The guidebook *Dover: The Gateway to England* (1931) described the view of the cliffs as a ‘home-coming picture’, while the authors of travel narratives commented upon the cliffs as an important sight on the journey home.<sup>69</sup> This, in turn, provided an ‘externally orientated’ geographical symbol for the conceptualisation of insular identities, an inward-looking perspective that equated the cliffs with ‘the national home and homecoming’.<sup>70</sup>

In contrast, in both a physical and an imaginative sense the westward gaze was outward-looking, seeking the horizon in a cultural performance that drew on contemporary understandings of Celtic literature. This reflected an imagination that sought the mythical, the elusive, and the ethereal – lands that could not be conquered, mapped, and rationalised in a period of British imperial expansion. The connection between the westward gaze, vague atmospheric conditions, and Celtic myths and legends is evident in

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<sup>65</sup> H. J. Fleure, ‘Additional Note’, in O. J. R. Howarth, *The Scenic Heritage of England and Wales* (London, 1937), p. xxiv.

<sup>66</sup> Roseman and Herrero, ‘Introduction’, pp. 2-3.

<sup>67</sup> The term ‘fairyland’ was often used; for example, see Gwynn, *Holiday in Connemara*, p. 195. For a recent example of the imaginative power of the ‘impalpability on the western horizon’ and associations of ‘Celtic myth’ at Dún Aonghasa, see Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Readman, “‘The Cliffs are not Cliffs’”: The Cliffs of Dover and National Identities in Britain, c.1750-c.1950’, *History*, 99.335 (2014), pp. 247-9, 255-6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-8.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

contemporary treatises on so-called ‘Celtic literature’. Havelock Ellis recognised the importance of mist and vagueness for their ethereal qualities in his essay ‘The Celtic Spirit in Literature’ (1927). Ellis argued that ‘the very fundamental and significant’ element in Celtic literature was the depiction of the ‘remote’. He explained that the reader is customarily transported over mountains, down rivers, and across the seas, which creates the characteristic ‘sense of mystery’, ‘before we reach that far island which holds the enchanted castle of the tale’, and its ‘vanished splendour is brought before us with an unparalleled combination of remoteness and precision’. The depiction of these ‘remote’ worlds in ‘Celtic romance’ explains the love for what Fiona MacLeod called ‘a rainbow-land... the vague Land of Youth, the shadowy Land of Heart’s desire’.<sup>71</sup>

Ellis was ardent that the depiction of the ‘remote’ was only successful when done ‘clearly and firmly by the hand of a great artist’, and was ‘not attained by the use of any cheap devices of mistiness or vagueness’.<sup>72</sup> However, Ellis did not dismiss altogether the function of ‘mistiness’ and ‘vagueness’ in Celtic literature – only its use as a lazy substitute for the more complex depiction of the remote, which relies on the description of ‘long journeys’ as well as tropes such as mist, all of which successful writers combine ‘with elaborate skill’. On the contrary, Ellis argued that ‘the land of Celtic legend’ often ‘lies on the farther side of a terrifying mist’, and characters such as Geraint in ‘Geraint and Enid’ (from the collection of stories written in Middle Welsh known as *The Mabinogi*) were rewarded with wonderful visions for their fearless advancement into ‘mist from out of which no man had ever returned’.<sup>73</sup>

In the West, the outward-looking authorial perspective was shared by those who sketched, painted, and photographed the cliffs at the Land’s End. In Turner’s ‘Long Ship Lighthouse, Land’s End’ (see Image 4.1), the viewer’s eye is drawn to the lighthouse in the distance, and to the horizon beyond. This perspective is mirrored in the sketches and photographs of the headland in travel texts, which draw our gaze along the rocky precipices of the cliffs as they descend into the sea. Our eye is drawn onwards to the point at which rocks meet waves, and beyond to the horizon (see Images 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6). The cliffs of Dover represented the homeward, the inward-facing, and the familiar. In the West, the perspective was outward-facing, and represented the pursuit of the unknown, the mythical, and the imagined.

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<sup>71</sup> Havelock Ellis, ‘The Celtic Spirit in Literature’, in Havelock Ellis, *A Study of British Genius* (2nd edn, London, 1927), pp. 217-219. Fiona MacLeod was the pseudonym of the Scottish writer William Sharp.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

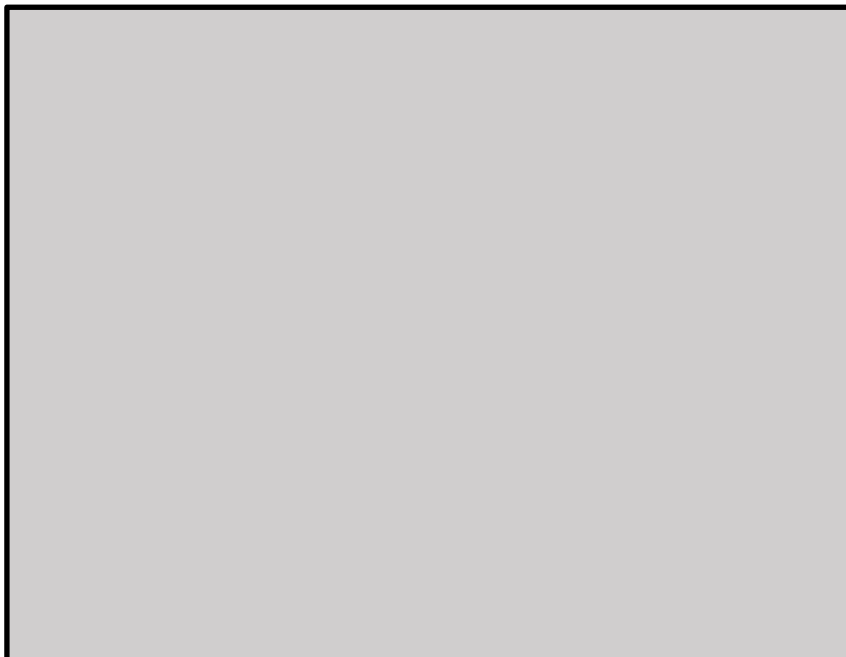
<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-19

Image 4.1



*Source:* J. M. W. Turner, 'Longships Lighthouse, Land's End' (c.1835).

Image 4.2



*Source:* Great Western Railway, *The Cornish Riviera* (2nd edn, London, 1905), p. 60.



Image 4.3



*Source:* Arthur L. Salmon, *Cornwall* (New York, 1925), facing p. 149. 'Land's End'.

Image 4.4



*Source:* Arthur H. Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall* (London, 1897), p. 307. 'Land's End'.

Image 4.5



*Source:* Katherine Lee Bates, *From Gretna Green to Land's End: A Literary Journey in England* (London, 1908), facing p. 376. 'Land's End'.

Image 4.6



*Source:* S. Baring-Gould, *Cambridge County Geographies: Cornwall* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 41. 'Land's End'.

The westward gaze was associated with specific myths and legends which may be divided into two thematic groups. The first group comprised realms which, according to tradition, were located just beyond the horizon such as Hy Brasil and Tír na nÓg, while the second group consisted of ‘lands’ situated off the contemporary coastlines, which had been sunk and lay under the sea, such as Lyonesse and Cantre’r Gwaelod. In discussions of these mythical realms, four principal themes emerge from the westward gaze. Writers engaged deeply with medieval accounts of myths and legends concerning Hy Brasil, Tír na nÓg, Lyonesse, and Cantre’r Gwaelod, as well as with the nineteenth-century literary works which they inspired. In addition, these texts also engaged with local folklore and beliefs, which grounded the myths in specific places. Environmental and atmospheric conditions were crucial to narratives which intertwined real with imaginary places. Finally, scientific explanation and rationalisation could either bolster the dismissal of such stories as fanciful, or they could reveal geographical and ‘scientific’ uncertainties that were not easy to explain away. These diverse enactments of the westward gaze were intertwined, and often constituted a sincere engagement with the imaginative associations of the West.

#### IV – Lands beyond the horizon

In *The Mythology of the British Islands* (1905), Charles Squire described the ‘land of perpetual pleasure and feasting’, which was ‘a paradise over-seas’, situated ‘in some unknown, and, except for favoured mortals, unknowable island of the west’. This land was ‘described variously as the “Land of Promise” (*Tír Tairngire*), the “Plain of Happiness” (*Mag Mell*), the “Land of the Living” (*Tír-nam-beo*), the “Land of the Young” (*Tír-nan-óg*), and “Breasal’s Island” (*Hy-Breasail*)’, and is the Gaelic equivalent of the ‘British’ island-valley of Avalon.<sup>74</sup> Of these various names of the paradise-land across the sea and beyond the horizon, which occupied both mythic space as well as mythic time, travel texts focussed in particular on Hy Brasil and Tír na nÓg.<sup>75</sup>

##### *The legendary island of Hy Brasil*

The first land which travellers looked for beyond the western horizon was Hy Brasil, a ‘phantom island’ that was believed to exist in the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>76</sup> The island of Hy Brasil first appeared in Genoese portolan charts in the fourteenth century, which encouraged adventurous merchants to undertake exploratory voyages in the fifteenth century. English writers such as Richard Head were inspired by the elusiveness of Hy Brasil during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The island transitioned from elusive reality to fictitious during the nineteenth century. As stated by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), the island appeared in J. Purdy’s *General Chart of the Atlantic* (1830) ‘with no indication of doubt’ at 51° 10’ N. and 15° 50’ W., and also in a chart of currents by A. G. Findlay (1853). However, in Purdy’s later *Memoir Descriptive and Explanatory of the N. Atlantic Ocean* (1865), ‘the existence of Brazil and some other legendary islands is briefly discussed and rejected’.<sup>77</sup> Debates and explanations of the phantom island and its appearance in old manuscripts and maps were carried on in journals such as *Notes and Queries*, in which W. Frazer suggested in 1883 that ‘an island must have existed at a very recent period where the Porcupine

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<sup>74</sup> Charles Squire, *The Mythology of the British Islands: An Introduction to Celtic Myth, Legend, Poetry, and Romance* (London, 1905), pp. 133-4.

<sup>75</sup> For the importance of western imaginary islands in Celtic mythology and in the Irish Renaissance, see John Wilson Foster, ‘Certain Set Apart: The Western Island in the Irish Renaissance’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 66.264 (1977), pp. 261-74; for the comment on mythic space and time, see p. 262.

<sup>76</sup> Barbara Freitag, *Hy Brasil: The Metamorphosis of an Island, From Cartographic Error to Celtic Elysium* (Amsterdam, 2013), p. xi.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Brazil, or Brasil’, in Chrisholm Hugh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edn, New York, 1910), vol. 4, p. 438.

Bank now is known to be placed'. For Frazer, this was demonstrated by the existence of '*Littorina*' or the 'common periwinkle' (sea snails) – 'a shellfish requiring occasional exposure on rocky surfaces to the atmosphere for its existence' – on this raised portion of the Atlantic seabed.<sup>78</sup>

In the nineteenth century, Hy Brasil was Gaelicised as a Celtic Otherworld, and became associated with the tales of St Brendan. Scholars, writers, and artists planted the island in the public imagination, and the appeal of Hy Brasil was such that the name became attached to several phantom isles of separate, local traditions in western Ireland.<sup>79</sup> The island was sometimes associated with the Aran Islands, and also with the reputed refuge of the Tuatha Dé Danann after their defeat by the Milesians.<sup>80</sup> In *The Celtic Twilight* (1894), W. B. Yeats reported that a fisherman from Drumcliff 'saw, on the far horizon, renowned Hy Brazel, where he who touches shall find no more labour or care, nor cynic laughter, but shall go walking about under shadiest boscage, and enjoy the conversation of Cuchullin and his heroes'.<sup>81</sup> The island was typically veiled in mist, and remained always beyond reach despite being sighted during one day in every seven years. In the travel texts of the period, the influence of the scholars, writers, and artists of the nineteenth century is evident alongside earlier cartographic sources. The scientific and cartographic descriptions of Hy Brasil as tangible yet frustratingly elusive merged with the Celticists' understanding of Hy Brasil as representing an otherworldly realm of Irish tradition.

Travel texts often grounded their references to Hy Brasil in specific locations, particularly the western extremities of the Aran Islands and Croaghaun on Achill Island. *Murray's Ireland* (1878) explained that many of the local peasantry believed that the Aran Islands were 'the nearest land to the far-famed island of O'Brazil or Hy Brisail, the blessed paradise of the pagan Irish'. Encouraging the tourist to perform a westward gaze of their own, the book explained that 'it is supposed even to be visible from the cliffs of Aran on particular and rare occasions'.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, in his *Ireland in Ten Days* (1935), Stephen Gwynn quoted George A. Birmingham's description of Hy Brasil from his *Pleasant Places* (1934), in which 'the islands of the Blest... surely lie out there somewhere, to be found if we dared to sail out far enough'.<sup>83</sup> On Achill Island, the western viewpoint of Croaghaun also prompted discussions of Hy Brasil in *Murray's* and *Black's* travel texts. If the tourist looked westwards, the 'nearest land' would be America 'unless we believe in the enchanted land of Hy Brisail' in which 'the dwellers on the W. coast have such a belief'.<sup>84</sup> Visions of Hy Brasil were not limited to the western coastlines of Ireland. As Charles Squire noted in his *The Mythology of the British Islands* (1905), 'it is still said, by lovers of old lore, that a patient watcher, after long gazing westward from the westernmost shores of Ireland or Scotland, may sometimes be lucky enough to catch a glimpse against the sunset' of Hy Brasil.<sup>85</sup>

Travel texts also drew on literary works to illustrate their descriptions of the enchanted island. *Murray's Ireland* (1878) quoted the lines of the poet Gerald Griffin from his 'The Isle of the Blest':

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<sup>78</sup> W. Frazer, 'O'brazile or hy Brazile', *Notes and Queries* 8.207 (1883), p. 475. For other contributions to the discussion of Hy Brasil in *Notes and Queries*, see N. 'O'brazile or hy Brazile', *Notes and Queries* 8.207 (1883), p. 474; and Thomas Kerslake, 'O'brazile or hy Brazile', *Notes and Queries* 8.207 (1883), p. 475.

<sup>79</sup> Freitag, *Hy Brasil*, pp. 261-2; 'Otherworld, otherworld', in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004). For an example of the connection between Hy Brasil and St Brendan in a travelogue, see Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days*, p. 211.

<sup>80</sup> 'Hy Brasil, Hy Brazil, Hy Breasil, Hy Breasail, Hy Breasal, Hy Brasil' in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>81</sup> W. B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (New York, 1894), p. 144.

<sup>82</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), pp. 187-8.

<sup>83</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days*, pp. 181-2; for Birmingham's quotation in its original form, see George A. Birmingham, *Pleasant Places* (London, 1934), p. 85.

<sup>84</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), p. 209. Also see *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 301.

<sup>85</sup> Squire, *Mythology of the British Islands*, pp. 133-4.

On the ocean that hollows the rocks where ye dwell  
A shadowy land has appeared, as they tell;  
Men thought it a region of sunshine and rest,  
And they call'd it O'Brazil, the isle of the blest.

*Griffin.*<sup>86</sup>

Griffin's poem was influential in propagating the idea that 'the island was the paradise of the pagan Irish', and influenced later poems such as Thomas D'Arcy McGee's 'The Voyage of Eman Oge' and William Larminie's 'The Finding of Hy Brasil'.<sup>87</sup> W. B. Yeats included Griffin's 'The Isle of the Blest' in his book *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888).<sup>88</sup> As Barbara Freitag noted, the message of the poem – that a fanciful dreamland should not be sought after – was generally ignored, and 'The Isle of the Blest' was more often cited for 'its powerfully evocative images of the ancient paradise'.<sup>89</sup> This is evident in the portion of the poem quoted by *Murray's Ireland* (1878), above, which played on the idea of an elusive 'shadowy land' of sunshine, rest, and 'the blest'. In the travel text, the reader unfamiliar with the poem would remain ignorant of its final warning, given to the 'Rash dreamer', the 'Rash fool', who bartered his 'calm life of labour and peace' for a futile 'vision of fanciful bliss':

The warning of reason was spoken in vain;  
He never revisited Aran again!  
Night fell on the deep, amidst tempest and spray,  
And he died on the waters, away, far away!<sup>90</sup>

In the same way, *Black's Ireland* (1877) chose to quote the first two-and-a-half of the three stanzas of Thomas Moore's poem 'Oh! Arranmore, Loved Arranmore', while M. D. Frazar's *Great Britain and Ireland* (1909) included the first stanza along with the same half of the final stanza, in their respective sections on the Aran Islands. The first half of the final stanza reads:

That Eden, where the immortal brave  
Dwell in a land serene, –  
Whose bowers beyond the shining wave,  
At sunset oft are seen.<sup>91</sup>

In the same way, these travel texts selectively quoted Moore's description of a serene Eden that was seen across the sea at sunset. Importantly, the second half of the final stanza, which builds on the important theme of regret in the poem, was omitted:

Ah! dream too full of sadd'ning truth!  
Those mansions o'er the main  
Are like the hopes I built in youth, –  
As sunny and as vain!<sup>92</sup>

In these texts, the reader was spared the final regret of the speaker, who could never recapture the 'bliss' of 'those sweet days' of youth. Moore added a note to the poem, which was a quotation from 'Beaufort's

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<sup>86</sup> *Murray's Ireland* (1878), pp. 187-8.

<sup>87</sup> Freitag, *Hy Brasil*, pp. 225-7.

<sup>88</sup> W. B. Yeats (ed.), *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (London, 1888), p. 212.

<sup>89</sup> Freitag, *Hy Brasil*, pp. 225-7.

<sup>90</sup> Yeats, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, p. 212.

<sup>91</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 271; Frazar, *Ireland and Scotland*, p. 65.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* (London, 1843), vol. 4, pp. 95-6.

*Ancient Topography of Ireland*, and the note was invariably repeated in travel texts. It explained that “‘The inhabitants of Arranmore are still persuaded that, in a clear day, they can see from this coast Hy Brysail, or the Enchanted Island, the Paradise of the Pagan Irish, and concerning which they relate a number of romantic stories’”.<sup>93</sup> This served to ground the Irish mythology in the beliefs and superstitions of the local people, as the two became intertwined in the construction of Hy Brasil in travel texts.

In addition, travel texts also attempted to explain local beliefs and literary representations of Hy Brasil by referencing atmospheric conditions and geography. To this end, *Black's Ireland* (1877) drew on Beaufort's topographical study of Ireland to describe Hy Brasil, the 'Enchanted Island'. In this description, it was claimed that 'this island of the blest has been seen is asserted by many, and in all probability with some truth', as 'some sunken land may, in the rays of the setting sun, appear as an island'.<sup>94</sup> This attempt to understand and rationalise the sightings of Hy Brasil anticipated Frazer's reference to the *Littorina* on the Porcupine Bank in *Notes and Queries* (1883).<sup>95</sup> The attempt to explain the belief in the island, as well as sightings of it, remained a feature of later travel texts, which generally described a 'superstitions belief among some of the old people in Aranmore', which was caused by the 'curious atmospheric conditions' created by the setting of the sun, which 'makes it seem as if an island of ideal beauty lay far off on the sea'.<sup>96</sup> In particular, similar references to Hy Brasil from the locations of Croaghnaun and the Aran Islands remained a consistent feature of *Murray's* travel texts, evident in several subsequent volumes.<sup>97</sup>

Scientific rationalisation was particularly prominent in works of scholars such as the archaeologist and antiquarian Thomas Johnson Westropp. In an article for the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* entitled 'Brasil and the Legendary Islands of the North Atlantic' (1912), Westropp described 'the early inhabitants of Ireland, keenly intelligent, poetical, and with an unusual appreciation for natural beauty', who 'stood on the western coasts face to face with phenomena of mystery and might'.<sup>98</sup> While the writers of travel texts were willing to suspend their disbelief and entertain the notion of Hy Brasil, Westropp suggested that islands such as Hy Brasil were 'purely mythical, or, at best, based on mirage and fog-bank'.<sup>99</sup>

### *Tír na nÓg, the Land of Youth*

The second land beyond the horizon was Tír na nÓg – the Land of Youth – which is the name of the Celtic 'paradise world beyond the realms peopled by mankind'.<sup>100</sup> Tír na nÓg is associated with the 'Happy Otherworld' of Irish mythological tradition, which appears in *The Voyage of Bran*. Tír na nÓg is 'The Land of the Forever Young', where 'pain, age, decay and ugliness are unknown'.<sup>101</sup> This otherworldly realm also appears in Scottish mythology, and may be reached by travelling across the sea, or alternatively by venturing under water or into ancient burial mounds or caves, and such voyages represent a persistent theme in medieval Irish literature.<sup>102</sup> Like Hy Brasil, Tír na nÓg is one of several lands that were supposedly settled by the 'semi-divine Tuatha Dé Danann' after they were defeated by

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<sup>93</sup> Moore, *Poetical Works*, vol. 4, pp. 95-6. For an example of the inclusion of this note in travel texts, see *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 271. For an example of a non-verbatim rendering of the note, see Frazer, *Ireland and Scotland*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>94</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 271.

<sup>95</sup> Frazer, 'O'brazile or hy Brazile', p. 475.

<sup>96</sup> Frazer, *Ireland and Scotland*, pp. 64-5. Aranmore was an alternative name for Inis Mór.

<sup>97</sup> For *Murray's*, see Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1902), pp. 235-6, 265; and Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), pp. 246, 275. For *Black's*, see *Black's Ireland* (1885), pp. 223-4.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Brasil and the Legendary Islands of the North Atlantic', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature* 30 (1912), p. 223.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-8.

<sup>100</sup> Bernhard Maier, *Dictionary of Celtic Religion and Culture*, trans. Cyril Edwards (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 266.

<sup>101</sup> Miranda J. Green, *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend* (London, 1997), p. 210.

<sup>102</sup> 'Tír na nÓg', in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, 2006), vol. 5, p. 1671.

the Milesians, and the land is often thought to be located off the west coast of Ireland.<sup>103</sup> Tír na nÓg is the most widely known of the otherworlds from Irish tradition, which was popularised by the Ossianic debates surrounding James Macpherson's infamous publication, and also by Micheál Coimín's Irish-language poem *Laoi Oisín i dTír na nÓg* (1750), which translates as 'The Lay of Oisín in the Land of Youth', and describes the tale of Oisín (the son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill), who spent 300 years with Niamh without knowing 'sickness, age, or decay'.<sup>104</sup> Tír na nÓg also appears in W. B. Yeats's epic poem *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889), which narrates a dialogue between Oisín and St Patrick, describing the former's visit to the Land of Youth, while T. Gwynn Jones's dramatic Welsh-language poem *Tir na n-Óg* (1916) also popularised the Irish Land of Youth, in early-twentieth century Wales.<sup>105</sup>

In travel texts, the stories of Tír na nÓg were retold for the reader, customarily in connection with the western coastlines of Ireland and Scotland. For instance, in the description of Achill Island, *Black's Ireland* (1877) used the local beliefs of 'some of the peasantry' as a route into describing the legend of Oisín. This book, as well as later publications such as Francis Miltoun's and Blanche McManus Mansfield's *Romantic Ireland* (1904), quoted directly from Dr Sylvester O'Halloran's *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland* (first published in 1772) in their retelling of Oisín's journey to Tír na nÓg.<sup>106</sup> After what seemed like a matter of a couple of days, Oisín in fact returned after 'two centuries' to find that his family and friends and the rest of their 'gallant race of mortals' had long since 'ceased to live', and in their place was 'a puny and degenerate people' who scarcely spoke the same language.<sup>107</sup>

Shorter travel texts relied on the reader's pre-existing knowledge of the mythical associations. For instance, in Scotland, MacBrayne's played on the associations between the Hebrides and Tír na nÓg by including 'The Isles of Youth' in the title of their steamer guidebook for 1938, describing the 'craving for some island far out on the rim' where 'dreams come true'. Drawing on the story of Oisín and Niamh, the suggestion of the eternal, timeless land of Tír na nÓg was repeated at the end of the opening description, where Donald R. MacLaren wrote that 'the measures of clocks and calendars will not trammel you', because 'these are the ISLES OF YOUTH'.<sup>108</sup> In the same way that the poems of Griffin and Moore were cited selectively for their romantic descriptions of happiness, MacBrayne's guidebooks offered to the traveller the images of timelessness, eternal youth, and bliss, without referencing Oisín's tragic return home to find his friends and family long gone.

On the Isle of Skye, there were specific sites that were linked to locations from the traditional stories in which Tír na nÓg appeared. In his *Handbook and Guide to the 'Misty Isle' of Skye* (1921), Kenneth MacRae emphasised the associations between Dunscaith Castle – 'one of the most ancient castles in the Hebrides' – and Tír na nÓg. Dunscaith was the home of Scáthach, or the Queen of Skye, who was 'learned in all the arts of war and the chase', and she alone 'knew the ocean route to Tír-nan-Oig, the paradise of the Celtic mythology'. MacRae explained that Cúchulainn travelled to Dunscaith, and from the castle battlements 'would often gaze towards the setting sun to get a glimpse of "Irt" or "Iort", the gateway to the Land of Eternal Youth'.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> 'Tír na nÓg', in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*; 'Tír na nÓg', in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, vol. 5, p. 1671.

<sup>105</sup> 'Tír na nÓg', in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, vol. 5, p. 1671. For modernist Arthurian literature in the Welsh language, with a focus on T. Gwynn Jones, see Geraint Evans, 'Modernist Arthur: The Welsh Revival', in Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 441-5.

<sup>106</sup> Sylvester O'Halloran, *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland* (Dublin, 1772), p. 363.

<sup>107</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), p. 301; M. F. and B. McM. Mansfield, *Romantic Ireland* (Boston MA, 1904), vol. 2, p. 166.

<sup>108</sup> MacBrayne, *Royal Route* (1938); see title page and pp. 2-3.

<sup>109</sup> MacRae, *'Misty Isle' of Skye*, p. 66.

Mary Donaldson retold a separate legend of Cúchulainn in her *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands* (1923), which drew on Macpherson's *Ossian*. In the story, Cúchulainn vacated Dunscaith for Ireland, and left behind his wife Bragela, who gazed westwards as she waited in vain for Cúchulainn, who 'will never return'.<sup>110</sup> Donaldson enacted the westward gaze herself. 'Standing by the shores of little Loch Dhughail' in the south-east of the island, Donaldson saw 'the rugged splendour of Skye' to the north-west, characterised by the 'heather-decked moorland' strewn with 'countless boulders' in the foreground and middle-distance. While the view of moorland pleased Donaldson, she maintained that, above all:

... it is the distance that grips you – where, above the narrow line of emerald sea, rise the mountains aloof and mysterious in their dim, shimmering outline. You may stand here for hours on such a day.<sup>111</sup>

In this instance, Donaldson looked roughly to the north-west, across from Dunscaith, Tokavaig, and Ord to the Cuillins, but her wanderings in Skye were characterised by her fondness of gazing across the sea whatever the direction. A path taken inland 'makes you sigh for eyes behind as well as in front of you', and on turning away from the coast at Ord she wrote that 'it is with more than the usual regret that you are *not* Argus-eyed that you force yourself to turn inland'.<sup>112</sup> As explored by Ellis in his 'The Spirit of Celtic Literature', the journey across the sea was an important theme in Celtic mythology, which informed the touristic practices and travel narratives of writers such as Donaldson, who delighted in the 'quite unearthly' Isle of Skye.<sup>113</sup>

Dunvegan Castle, in the north of Skye, was also associated with legends of Tír na nÓg through the 'Fairy Flag' – an article of curiosity that tourists could view during their visit to the castle. MacRae explained that the Fairy Flag was a gift presented by a fairy to her husband, the chief of the MacLeods, before she left for Tír na nÓg.<sup>114</sup> This provenance was, however, disputed by the existence of a separate tale, in which the flag was 'taken by one of the MacLeods from a Saracen during the Crusades'.<sup>115</sup> The *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927) briefly alluded to the 'mysterious origin' of the Fairy Flag, but made no mention of Tír na nÓg, and was relatively uninterested in describing mythological lands just beyond the horizon.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, in travel texts across the period, the performance of travel and of the westward gaze were intertwined with the stories of Oisín, Cúchulainn, and Tír na nÓg.

## V – Sunken lands

Sunken lands also occupied the minds of those who gazed westwards from the tops of mountains and the edges of cliffs. From this perspective, the tops of buildings might be seen in the depths of the sea on a clear day, or bells might be heard from underneath the waves at dusk. In discussions of sunken lands, the same four strands of rationalisation, medieval and nineteenth-century literature, local folklore, and atmospheric conditions were all intertwined in the pages of travel texts.

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<sup>110</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 109. Here, Donaldson referred to Argus Panoptes, the giant of Greek mythology with 100 eyes.

<sup>113</sup> Donaldson, *Western Highlands and Islands*, p. 105.

<sup>114</sup> MacRae, *Misty Isle' of Skye*, p. 59.

<sup>115</sup> *A Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to the Highlands of Scotland* (5th edn, London, 1922?), p. 183.

<sup>116</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 382.



The first of these sunken lands was Lyonesse, a legendary country which was ‘traditionally said to be a tract of land between Land’s End and the Scilly Isles’, and which disappeared beneath the sea.<sup>117</sup> Lyonesse is best known from its frequent appearance in the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, in particular the Arthurian romance of Tristram and Iseult.<sup>118</sup> As well as featuring in Arthurian legends, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) noted that contemporary notions of Lyonesse also drew on an ‘ancient local tradition’ in Cornwall, ‘apparently independent of the story of Lyonesse’, which states that ‘the Scilly Islands formed part of the Cornish mainland within historical times’.<sup>119</sup> An additional local legend concerned the lost city of Langarrow, which was believed to be near Perranporth, off the northern coast of Cornwall. Langarrow was covered by ‘shifting sand dunes’ due to the ‘greed and dissoluteness’ of the people, and ‘the story may have contributed to the Lyonesse story of Arthurian tradition’.<sup>120</sup> Lyonesse also appears in the *Chronicon e chronicis* of Florence of Worcester (d. 1118), who described ‘minutely and without a suggestion of disbelief the flourishing state of Lyonesse, and its sudden disappearance beneath the sea’, and suggested that the legend ‘may be a greatly exaggerated version of some actual subsidence of inhabited land’.<sup>121</sup> Lyonesse also appeared as a sunken land in topographical works such as William Camden’s *Britannia* (1586) as well as Richard Carew’s *Survey of Cornwall* (1602).<sup>122</sup>

The version of Lyonesse which appeared in the literature of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was thus a mixture of Arthurian myth and ‘purely Cornish tradition and folklore’.<sup>123</sup> In Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur* (1485), Lyonesse features briefly as the home of Tristram in ‘The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones’, but the literary links between Lyonesse and Arthurian legend were strengthened from the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> Matthew Arnold wrote of ‘Tristram of Lyonesse’ in his poem ‘Tristram and Iseult’ (1852), while Alfred, Lord Tennyson made Lyonesse the setting for the final battle between Arthur and Mordred, a remote and savage region of inevitable doom, in his ‘Idylls of the King’ (1859-1885).<sup>125</sup> Lyonesse was also the setting for A. C. Swinburne’s epic poem ‘Tristram of Lyonesse’ (1882), while in Walter Besant’s *Armored of Lyonesse* (1884) the sunken land represented a set of values ‘no longer present on the mainland of England’. Thomas Hardy made Lyonesse part of his fictional Wessex in several of his works, such as ‘When I set out for Lyonesse’ (1870), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), ‘A Mere Interlude’ (1885), and *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall in Tintagel* (1923). Hardy was part of a wider group of early-twentieth century writers – including Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and

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<sup>117</sup> ‘Lyonesse, Lyonesse, Leonnoys, or Leonais’, in Chrisholm Hugh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edn, New York, 1911), vol. 17, p. 174; ‘Lyonesse’, in I. C. B. Dear and Peter Kemp (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (2nd edn, Oxford, 2006); ‘Lyonesse’, in Elizabeth Knowles (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (2nd edn, Oxford, 2006).

<sup>118</sup> ‘Lyonesse’, in Dear and Kemp, *Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*; ‘Lyonesse, Lyonesse, Leonnoys, or Leonais’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), vol. 17, p. 174. For the Arthurian tradition in other areas of the British-Irish Isles, see Juliette Wood, ‘The Arthurian Legend in Scotland and Cornwall’, in Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 102-6; Joseph Falaky Nagy, ‘Arthur and the Irish’, in Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 117-27; and Evans, ‘Modernist Arthur’, pp. 434-48.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Lyonesse, Lyonesse, Leonnoys, or Leonais’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), vol. 17, p. 174.

<sup>120</sup> ‘Langarrow, Langona’, in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>121</sup> ‘Lyonesse, Lyonesse, Leonnoys, or Leonais’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), vol. 17, p. 174. Also see ‘Lyonesse’, in Dear and Kemp, *Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*.

<sup>122</sup> Marea Mitchell, ‘The Lost Lands of Lyonesse: telling Stories of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly’, *Shima* 10.2 (2016), pp. 94-5.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Lyonesse, Lyonesse, Leonnoys, or Leonais’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), vol. 17, p. 174.

<sup>124</sup> Mitchell, ‘The Lost Lands of Lyonesse’, p. 94; ‘Lyonesse’, in Knowles, *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. For a summary of Arthurian scholarship in the nineteenth century, see David Matthews, ‘Scholarship and Popular Culture in the Nineteenth Century’, in Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 355-67. For nineteenth-century Arthurian literature, see Inga Bryden, ‘Arthur in Victorian Poetry’, in Helen Fulton (ed.), *A Companion to Arthurian Literature* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 368-80.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Lyonesse’, in Knowles, *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*; Mitchell, ‘The Lost Lands of Lyonesse’, p. 97.

Rebecca West – who found in Cornwall’s marginality a powerful setting. Lyonesse is also the setting for Walter de la Mare’s poem ‘Sunk Lyonesse’ (1922) and Mary Ellen Chase’s *Dawn in Lyonesse* (1938).<sup>126</sup>

In travel texts, the local Cornish legends, Arthurian romances, and nineteenth-century literary iterations of the story of Lyonesse were interlinked, so that the traveller gazing westward would ‘think instinctively of the lost land of Lyonesse’.<sup>127</sup> J. C. Tonkin and Prescott Row’s *Lyonesse: A Handbook for the Isles of Scilly* (1900) told the ‘hazy romantic legend’ of Lyonesse by abbreviating the account of ‘Mr Whitfield (who visited Scilly by the sailing packet in 1840)’.<sup>128</sup> These publications capitalised on the popularity of Arthurian myth in their descriptions of the Land’s End and the Scilly Isles ‘upon the western horizon’, and *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879) drew on Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s poem ‘Morte d’Arthur’, in which the ‘sweet land of Lyonesse’ is where King Arthur fell, when:

All day long the noise of battle roll’d  
Among the mountains by the winter sea.<sup>129</sup>

In particular, the Great Western Railway sought to exploit the legend of Lyonesse as a way of marketing the local tourism infrastructure. In *The Cornish Riviera* (1905), it was explained that the Scilly Isles have been regarded ‘from time immemorial’ as ‘the peaks of the submerged realm... one of the mysterious scenes of the great Arthurian legend’.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, in their pamphlet *Legend Land* (1922), written by George Basil Barnham, a chapter titled ‘The Lost Land of Lyonesse’ claimed that ‘there is a lot of truth mingled with the old legends that tell of the lost land of Lyonesse’, where several villages and 140 churches became submerged under ‘the angry sea’, which ‘broke in and drowned fertile Lyonesse’.<sup>131</sup> *The Cornish Riviera* reminded readers that those wishing to travel from Cornwall to the Scilly Isles could board the ‘SS Lyonesse’, which plied from Penzance, while *Legend Land* advertised the ‘regular service of steamers from Penzance’, which afforded ‘magnificent views of the rugged coast’, and transported the traveller to ‘a perfect place for a lazy holiday’.<sup>132</sup> For companies such as the Great Western Railway, it was important to strike an appropriate balance between the remote and detached land of Lyonesse in the literary works of Tennyson, Hardy and others – ‘far away from the great world’ – and the convenience offered by the train journey to Penzance, which is ‘only six and a-half hours from Paddington’.<sup>133</sup>

Some writers were more detailed in their descriptions, explanations, and conjectural musings about Lyonesse. In *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall* (1897), Arthur Norway described ‘the grand range of headlands which lie between the Logan and the Land’s End’, as his narrative takes the reader to the edge of the land, over the ‘exquisitely springy turf’ which ‘runs to the very margin of the cliff’, past ‘tufts of sea-pink blossom beside the scattered boulders’. Once he reached the cliff, the western extremity, Norway’s thoughts turned to the lost land of Lyonesse. He informed the reader that, ‘if there be any truth in tradition’, this cliff ‘did not always border the seashore’, and – directing the reader’s gaze westwards – ‘that wide space of ocean was once solid land, a rich and fertile country’ which contained ‘no less than one hundred and forty parish churches’. This was ‘the Lost Land of Lyonesse’. The Scilly Isles, ‘which we should see now were the fog to clear away’, were once the ‘peaks and high grounds of that vanished

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<sup>126</sup> Mitchell, ‘The Lost Lands of Lyonesse’, pp. 94-106.

<sup>127</sup> Heath, *Cornish Riviera*, p. 38. The mixture of travel, history, and legend was also evident at Tintagel. For example, see Eden Phillpotts, *A West Country Pilgrimage* (London, 1920), pp. 105-9.

<sup>128</sup> Tonkin and Row, *Handbook for Scilly*, pp. 11-13, 28.

<sup>129</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), pp. 106-7.

<sup>130</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 69.

<sup>131</sup> G. Basil Barnham, *Legend Land* (London, 1922), vol. 2, pp. 28-31.

<sup>132</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 69; Barnham, *Legend Land*, vol. 2, pp. 28-31.

<sup>133</sup> Barnham, *Legend Land*, vol. 2, pp. 28-31.

country, which stood up above the inrush of sea waves that drowned the lower lands fathoms deep beneath the ocean'.<sup>134</sup>

Katherine Bates also described the approach to the end of the land in the final stage of her literary journey *From Greta Green to Land's End* (1908). The 'fields of gorse and heather' were suddenly replaced by 'foaming reefs', 'great waves', and the sails of Atlantic vessels which 'glinted on the horizon'. Her gaze was drawn towards the setting sun, 'and we could distinguish the Scilly Isles like gold cloudlets resting on the sea'. Bates explained that 'between these islands and Land's End once bloomed the lost Arthurian realm of Lyonesse', and she extended her gaze 'further and further west, far out across the Atlantic to the land of hope and promise'.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, C. Lewis Hind looked from Chapel Carn Brea across to the Lizard, Cape Cornwall, St Michael's Mount to the south, and the Brisson Rocks to the north. Upon turning westwards, he 'saw the gap in the coast where the flower gardens of Lamorna descend to the sea, the ultimate houses at Land's End, the Longships Lighthouse beyond, and far away, across the region of fabled Lyonesse, a blur in the drear expanse of ocean marking the isles of Scilly. Finis!'<sup>136</sup>

Norway examined the veracity of the legend of Lyonesse, noting that submerged forests had indeed been found around the coast of Cornwall, and alluding to the record in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* of two 'great inundations of the sea' which occurred elsewhere in the eleventh century. He claimed that only 'stupid people criticise all fragments of tradition', and even the most implausible of stories may contain 'a kernel of truth, however twisted or concealed by careless repetition'.<sup>137</sup> Likewise, Arthur Salmon wrote that 'such legends are rarely baseless', and 'the fact that the shallow seas extend far westward cannot be ignored; when we speak of a lost Lyonesse we are not dealing with absurdities'.<sup>138</sup> The geography of the landscape and the sea provided a setting in which stories of Lyonesse were fathomable, and Barnham reminded the reader that 'stories are told of how on calm days ruined buildings may be discerned beneath the waters', and that 'in times past fishing-nets have brought up old weathered domestic utensils from the sea bottom'.<sup>139</sup>

In his conversation with two coastguards on the Cornish coast, C. Lewis Hind initially met with scepticism when he suggested that between the Land's End and the Scilly Isles – 'fairy isles floating in a fairy sea' – lay the lost land of Lyonesse. But after some conversation, one of the coastguards admitted that 'a chap told me that when the sea is quiet you can hear church bells ringing down below'.<sup>140</sup> As Koch recognised, local geography and 'acoustical phenomena' can 'help to localise these traditions and keep them alive'. For instance, bays and lakes can reflect sound 'so that a distant church bell will sound as if it is tolling under the waves, a common motif in folk tradition both in the Celtic countries and internationally'.<sup>141</sup>

Despite enthusiasm for the legend as a marketing tool, the Great Western Railway's *The Cornish Riviera* (1905), was less open-minded in its approach to Lyonesse, stating that Sabine Baring-Gould had declared the legend 'to be as groundless as the reports of certain uncanny sounds said to proceed from the cities supposed to lie buried between the Land's End and St Mary's Island'.<sup>142</sup> Desiring a measure of certainty,

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<sup>134</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, pp. 302-3.

<sup>135</sup> Bates, *From Greta Green to Land's End*, pp. 377-8.

<sup>136</sup> Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1907), p. 350; Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1925), p. 350.

<sup>137</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, pp. 303-5.

<sup>138</sup> Salmon, *Cornwall Coast*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>139</sup> Barnham, *Legend Land*, vol. 2, pp. 28-31.

<sup>140</sup> Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1907), pp. 163-4; Hind, *Days in Cornwall* (1925), pp. 163-4.

<sup>141</sup> 'Flood legends', in John T. Koch (ed.), *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara, 2006), vol. 2, pp. 754-5.

<sup>142</sup> Great Western Railway, *Cornish Riviera* (1905), p. 69.

Catherine A. Dawson Scott sought after ‘a Passmore Edwards imbued with curiosity rather than philanthropy, who should by dredging operations settle the vexed question for good and all!’<sup>143</sup>

While several writers assessed the reliability of a given tradition, more important was the imaginative experience at the periphery – allowing oneself to be taken in by the local legends and traditions in the landscapes and atmospheric conditions of the West. Norway came to this very realisation, and wrote that ‘whatever the truth may be’, there exists ‘a certain fascination, such as the wisest of us feel when we hear a tale of lost cities, or of buried treasure’, and the feeling of this fascination was certainly real. Such tales ‘will always cling around the wide sea view which lies below the most westerly cliffs in England’, and among the local population:

Many a burly giant will drop his voice to an awed whisper as he tells you how he has seen towers and houses far down in the depths of the transparent water, and long oarweed waving round the steeples which once summoned the folk of some wide parish to prayer.<sup>144</sup>

### *The drowned kingdom of Cantre’r Gwaelod*

The second sunken land which appeared in the travel texts of the West was Cantre’r Gwaelod, most commonly translated to ‘the Lowland Hundred’. Whereas Hy Brasil, Tír na nÓg, and Lyonesse provided the settings for a variety of myths, legends, and stories, Cantre’r Gwaelod was associated exclusively with the specific tale of the inundation of the land between Bardsey Island in the north and either Cardigan or Ramsey Island in the south, in what is now Cardigan Bay. The story of Cantre’r Gwaelod originates in a poem from the Black Book of Carmarthen, titled Boddí Maes Gwyddno – the drowning of Gwyddno’s plain (also known as Cantre’r Gwaelod).<sup>145</sup> Seithenyn is ‘the chief figure, and probably the ruler’ of Cantre’r Gwaelod, which was inundated in the sixth century after ‘a well-maiden named Mererid’, or Margaret, ‘neglects her duties’ and let in the waters.<sup>146</sup> In the poem, Seithenyn is ‘one of three kings whose lands were inundated’.<sup>147</sup> There is also a parallel inundation narrative of Helig ap Glannawg’s kingdom, Llys Helig, in Conwy Bay. The two stories have influenced one another over time, and may represent the same original narrative that has been localised around two traditional sixth-century individuals.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, the ‘renowned’ inundation of Keri-Is, off the coast of Brittany, is also dated to the late-fifth or sixth century.<sup>149</sup> Rachel Bromwich noted similar inundation narratives along the coasts of France and Germany, as well as that recorded by the second-century Greek geographer Pausanias at Peloponnesus. The likely inspiration for such western European inundation narratives is the Biblical Deluge, and the annihilation of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah by the wrath of God.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Scott, *Nooks and Corners of Cornwall*, p. 101. John Passmore Edwards (1823-1911) was a well-known journalist and philanthropist from Cornwall.

<sup>144</sup> Norway, *Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall*, pp. 303-5.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Flood legends’, in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, vol. 2, pp. 754-5.

<sup>146</sup> Rachel Bromwich, ‘Cantre’r Gwaelod and Ker-Is’, in Sir Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickins (eds), *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 221-2; ‘Cantre’r Gwaelod, Cantref-y-Gwaelod’, in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004).

<sup>147</sup> ‘Flood legends’, in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, vol. 2, pp. 754-5.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 754-5; Bromwich, ‘Cantre’r Gwaelod and Ker-Is’, pp. 229-31.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Submerged cities’, in James MacKillop, *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford, 2004); ‘Flood legends’, in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, vol. 2, pp. 754-5; Bromwich, ‘Cantre’r Gwaelod and Ker-Is’, pp. 240-1.

<sup>150</sup> Bromwich, ‘Cantre’r Gwaelod and Ker-Is’, p. 221.

The details of the Cantre'r Gwaelod story have mutated over time, so that the version most commonly found in travel texts 'departs rather widely' from that of the Black Book poem.<sup>151</sup> The more commonly known story is, according to Mackillop, of sixteenth-century origin, and tells of 'the legendary king Gwyddno Garanhir' who ruled over 'sixteen cities ringed by an embankment with sluices'. In this version, Seithenyn is relegated to the role of the 'drunken dike-keeper', who 'neglects his duties and allows the waters to flood the land, drowning all except the king'.<sup>152</sup> This version of the story was popularised in the nineteenth century by works such as T. J. Ll. Pritchard's poem 'The Land Beneath the Sea' (1823) and T. L. Peacock's novel *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829).<sup>153</sup> Contemporary academics such as John Rhys commented upon the different versions of the tale, but it was the second, popularised, narrative which shaped the perception of the wider public.<sup>154</sup> This influence is evident in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), which described the foolishness of Seithenyn, 'the drunken keeper of the sluices', who 'carelessly let in the waters of the bay', which in turn forced Prince Gwyddno, his son Elphin, and the other survivors 'to migrate to the wild region of Snowdon'.<sup>155</sup>

Travel texts also adopted the more recent narrative, as *Ward and Lock's North Wales Southern* (1912) told the story of Seithenyn, who neglected his duty 'in a fit of intoxication', so the country was inundated by the sea. The king, Gwyddno, 'left his malediction on the head of his offending sea-ward in a Welsh poem, noted for its vigour'.<sup>156</sup> Elsewhere, the *Blue Guides: Wales* (1926) noted that the song and legend of 'The Bells of Aberdovey' were 'said to originate from the tradition of the drowned Lowland Hundred or Cantref-y-Gwaelod, a Welsh Lyonesse, overwhelmed in c.520 through the carelessness of Seithenyn, its drunken governor, who neglected to repair the sea-wall'.<sup>157</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould included part of the poem attributed to Gwyddno, which included the lines:

Accursed be the sea-warden, who, after his carousal, let loose  
the destroying fountain of the ranging deep.  
Accursed be the watched, who, after drunken revelry, let loose  
the fountain of the desolating sea.<sup>158</sup>

For travellers and readers alike, much of the interest in Cantre'r Gwaelod centred on contemporary debates about the story's veracity. This was markedly different from the draw of Lyonesse, which was so heavily associated with popular Arthurian myths that it encouraged an imaginative performance that was primarily literary in its focus, and was thus relatively liberated from the debates about whether or not the stories were indeed historically accurate. For Cantre'r Gwaelod, the imaginative power of the story rested on those very debates, which tantalised the traveller with the possibility that the authenticity of the story was visible in the physical geography of the West.

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-3.

<sup>152</sup> 'Cantre'r Gwaelod, Cantref-y-Gwaelod', in MacKillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. The two identities of Seithenyn seem to merge in some accounts. For Seithenyn as the 'Drunkard, son of the King of South Wales', see Jonathan Ceredig Davies, *Folk-Lore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911), p. 321.

<sup>153</sup> 'Cantre'r Gwaelod, Cantref-y-Gwaelod', in MacKillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. Pritchard's poem, and the wider movement of popularising legends attached to Welsh landscapes (and seascapes), is discussed in Morgan, 'Welsh Past in the Romantic Period', p. 86.

<sup>154</sup> John Rhys commented on the different versions of the tale, in John Rhys, 'Chwedloniaeth Gymraeg', *Y Traethodydd* 35.4 (1880), pp. 476-84, specifically pp. 479-81.

<sup>155</sup> 'Cardiganshire', in Chrisholm Hugh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th edn, Cambridge, 1911), vol. 5, p. 320.

<sup>156</sup> *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), pp. 100-1.

<sup>157</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. 140; Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: Wales* (2nd edn, London, 1926), p. 140. The song title uses the Anglicised name of the Welsh town Aberdyfi.

<sup>158</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, p. 240.

Debates about the veracity of the Cantre'r Gwaelod story focussed on the evidence of three sarns, or causeways, which run from the western coast of Wales out into Cardigan Bay. In the north, Sarn Badrig (St Patrick's Causeway) runs 20 miles out to sea from the coast at Pensarn, between Harlech and Barmouth. The central Sarn y Bwch runs between four and five miles seaward from Tywyn, while the southern Sarn Cynfelyn projects eight miles out to sea from Y Borth, just north of Aberystwyth, culminating in a group of rocks called Caer Wyddno.<sup>159</sup> The sarns were important features in the travel texts which retold the story of Cantre'r Gwaelod. As *Ward and Lock's North Wales Southern* (1912) explained, the legendary kingdom was 'protected from the waves by a system of dams, causeways, and embankments, with flood-gates at the mouths of the rivers'.<sup>160</sup> In the north, Mochras (or Shell Island) is 'a tongue of land on the coast seaward of Pensarn station', and nearby is Sarn Badrig, 'a ridge of rocks that stretches into the sea', nine miles of which were visible at low tide. This represented 'one of the fabled embankments' of Cantre'r Gwaelod.<sup>161</sup> In the south, the *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920) noted that Sarn y Bwch 'is a long natural ridge, near the river's mouth at Towyn, and extending out to sea' for around five miles. Like Sarn Badrig, 'it is traditionally associated with the Cantref-y-gwaelod, or the Lowland Hundred, along which these causeways were supposed to run'.<sup>162</sup>

By 1950, Rachel Bromwich asserted that 'geologists are satisfied' as to the natural formation of the sarns, despite their remarkable straightness, but between 1880 and 1940 the matter was up for debate by academics, which translated into a tantalising sense of mystery in the pages of travel texts.<sup>163</sup> As the geologist William Ashton wrote in 1920, the sarns 'have provided a subject of controversy as to whether they are of natural or artificial origin'.<sup>164</sup> In his *A History of Wales* (1911), J. E. Lloyd wrote that 'there may well have been a time within the memory of Neolithic man when Anglesey was not an island and Cardigan Bay, which hardly anywhere exceeds twenty fathoms in depth, was dry land'. In this case, the story of Cantre'r Gwaelod may represent 'reminiscences handed down through many generations of the effects – at times, perhaps, startling – of this gradual subsistence attested by geology'.<sup>165</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) stated with certainty that the inundation of Cantre'r Gwaelod was a tradition 'evidently based on fact', and the kingdom was 'suddenly submerged at an uncertain date about the year 500'.<sup>166</sup>

The *Blue Guides: Wales* offered readers a geological explanation of the inundated land. In H. J. Fleure's introductory article, he explained that 'the glaciers which spread down from Scotland over the Irish sea' pressed into Cheshire and the coast of North Wales, 'and also came over Anglesey into Cardigan Bay'. In the coastal areas 'they dropped their load of stones and mud, and especially in Cardigan Bay seem to have given rise to the lowland known to legend as Cantref-y-Gwaelod'.<sup>167</sup> As for the sarns, Fleure suggested that they were 'for the most part' made up of 'great boulders' that 'may be remnants of the old lowland against which the tides have subsequently accumulated pebbles and other detritus'. However, he added that 'he would be a bold man who would definitely rule out the possibility of human work having contributed something to the form of these "sarns" in the days when the lowland was still inhabited'.<sup>168</sup>

The geologist William Ashton devoted a chapter of his *Evolution of a Coast-Line* (1920) to Cantre'r Gwaelod. The book was written with the aim of contributing to 'the science of geology' but it is also part-travel

<sup>159</sup> Bromwich, 'Cantre'r Gwaelod and Ker-Is', pp. 225-7.

<sup>160</sup> *North Wales (Southern Section)* (1912), pp. 100-1.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>162</sup> Alfred T. Story, *The Little Guides: North Wales* (London, 1907), p. 251; Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920), p. 251.

<sup>163</sup> For a full discussion, see Bromwich, 'Cantre'r Gwaelod and Ker-Is', pp. 225-7, 231, 240-1.

<sup>164</sup> William Ashton, *The Evolution of a Coast-Line* (London, 1920), p. 268.

<sup>165</sup> John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (London, 1911), vol. 1, pp. 4-5.

<sup>166</sup> 'Cardiganshire', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911), vol. 5, p. 320.

<sup>167</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. xix.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

text, as Ashton described his own visits to the sites under question, which included Llys Helig as well as Cantre'r Gwaelod. Ashton took advantage of 'highly favourable' conditions on 13 September 1908 to search for Llys Helig, 'accompanied at early dawn by a Penmaenmawr boatman'. Upon inspecting the '350 or more yards of strictly rectangular remains', Ashton declared it 'quite impossible' for anyone who had also seen them 'to entertain the slightest doubt as to their having been human handiwork'.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, Ashton felt 'a strong flavour of romance about the past of Cardigan Bay', and as an 'explorer of this past', he attempted to 'disentangle romance from fact'.<sup>170</sup> He made 'a special hundred-mile journey in September, 1910' to examine Sarn Badrig 'on the occasion of the lowest tide of the year', and reached the balanced conclusion that:

The irregular breadth of Sarn Badrig and the extensive area of the Cynfelin patches do not support the belief that the whole of these sarns are of human handiwork. On the other hand, the extraordinary straightness and narrowness of all the three sarns is against the whole natural origin theory.<sup>171</sup>

In the accounts of writers such as Ashton, it was the process of disentangling 'romance from fact' that provided the tantalising twin prospects for the traveller – mystery and discovery.

Certain publications were less enthusiastic about the sunken lands of North West Wales. For instance, *Black's North Wales* (1897) described Sarn Badrig as 'a curious formation' which, as with Sarn Cynfelin, 'we would ascribe to nature rather than to man'.<sup>172</sup> Elsewhere, the book retold the story of Llys Helig, which was 'buried beneath the waves', and described with a measure of detachment the men who 'still fancy they can trace the ruins of Helig's pride'.<sup>173</sup>

Nevertheless, there were several geographical locations at which the authors of travel texts paused to consider the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod. For many writers, any coastal road or high ground which afforded a view of Cardigan Bay was suitable for the recollection of the legend. *Black's North Wales* (1897) described the tourist's view from Tywyn beach, which boasted 'a splendid view of the bold curve of Cardigan Bay from Bardsey Island to St David's Head', and brought to mind 'the submerged Cantref y Gwaelod', the causeways of which may be 'traced far out to sea'.<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Bradley travelled along the coast road 'looking down upon Cardigan Bay', and wrote that:

... when the tide is low, you will be little in tune with the folk-lore of the region if your thoughts do not turn towards the submerged cantref of Ardudwy, the drowned country of Gwaelod, that has lain now, this thirteen hundred years and more, beneath the sea.<sup>175</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Bradley reasserted the association between views of Cardigan Bay and the legend of Cantre'r Gwaelod when he spotted Sarn Badrig – 'a ledge of sand and stones' which can be seen 'stretching for miles into the bay' – as well as Sarn y Bwch, 'another mysterious wall of a similar kind'.<sup>176</sup> Thus, the geography of Cardigan Bay and also of Conwy Bay played an important role in the popular perception of the story of Cantre'r Gwaelod, and shaped the way travellers interacted with a combination of mythological tradition and the physical geography of the West. In contrast to the purely literary

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<sup>169</sup> Ashton, *Evolution of a Coast-Line*, pp. 197-9.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 274.

<sup>172</sup> *Black's North Wales* (1897), pp. 188-9.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>175</sup> Bradley, *Highways and Byways in North Wales*, p. 388.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

engagement with Lyonesse, the tantalising draw of Cantre'r Gwaelod and other stories of lost cities and sunken lands was that, as Fleure wrote, 'some at least' had their foundation in fact.<sup>177</sup>

## VI – Conclusion

The associations between physical geography, mythology, and travel texts discussed above are by no means restricted to the West. Sunken kingdoms and cities are not unique to Celtic culture, and they abound in non-western areas, such as the legends of Atlantis in Greece and Vineta in northern Germany. Similar mythological associations also accompany many inland lakes, such as Lough Corrib, north of Galway. Legends of the otherworld are also attached to landscape features such as raths and tumuli, which are associated with fairy palaces.<sup>178</sup> The idea of reaching the edge has also been applied to peripheral geographical sites across the world. From the perspective of the tourism industry, the notion of the end of the land is valuable as it enables differentiation in a competitive market. The 'intangible' allure of being at the extreme marks out land's ends from many places which are otherwise remote, peripheral, and coastal.<sup>179</sup> This is evident in the promotion of 'land's ends' at Nordkapp and Tierra del Fuego. The promontory of Nordkapp (North Cape) on the Norwegian island of Magerøya in the Arctic Ocean is considered the edge of the European world, and is associated with the Greek explorer Pytheas's description of *Ultima Thule*, a land 'where the sea became solid and the sun never set in summer'. The appeal of Nordkapp – particularly in French and Italian guidebooks – rested on its ability to inspire the feeling of being at the edge of the world.<sup>180</sup> Similarly, the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America has been associated with the end of the world since the colonial voyages of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such associations are rooted in exploratory voyages beginning with Ferdinand Magellan (1520), and are expressed in an imaginary of uncertainty, sea monsters, and the 'uncontrollable forces of nature'.<sup>181</sup> Peripheral geographies, especially 'land's ends', are important for their imaginative pull, and the tourism industry has worked to harness the imaginative associations of physical geography.

The literature of the West, however, enables us to take this further – both analytically and also geographically – as we can more clearly demonstrate that it is not simply the edge but the mystery of what lies beyond it, tantalisingly out of physical reach but within the grasp of the imagination, that provided the cultural power of 'the West'. As Eiluned and Peter Lewis wrote in *The Land of Wales* (1937), memories of the past do not 'cease where the land gives way to the sea'. In the West, beyond the end of the land there were 'traces of submerged forests, stories of sunken cities and lost kingdoms', all of which 'haunt the coast from end to end'.<sup>182</sup>

Not simply a marketing tool for the tourism industry, the associational values described above derived from ancient folk tales and medieval manuscripts, which were retold by nineteenth-century poets and novelists, discussed by geologists and historians, all of which was fundamental in shaping the wider comprehension of the West through the performance of travel. This was an array of voices, from the

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<sup>177</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1926), p. xviii.

<sup>178</sup> Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, 'The Mythical Island in Irish Folklore', in Patricia Lysaght, Séamas Ó Catháin, and Dáithí Ó hÓgáin (eds), *Islanders and Water-Dwellers* (Blackrock, 1999), pp. 247, 255.

<sup>179</sup> Roseman and Herrero, 'Introduction', pp. 12-13.

<sup>180</sup> Jens Kr. Steen Jacobsen, 'North Cape: In the Land of the Midnight Sun', in Nieves Herrero and Sharon R. Roseman (eds), *The Tourist Imaginary and Pilgrimages to the Edges of the World* (Bristol, 2015), pp. 120-40.

<sup>181</sup> Laura M. Horlent and Mónica C. Salemme, 'Finis Terrae: The End-of-the-world Imaginary in Tierra del Fuego (Argentina)', in Nieves Herrero and Sharon R. Roseman (eds), *The Tourist Imaginary and Pilgrimages to the Edges of the World* (Bristol, 2015), pp. 179-86.

<sup>182</sup> Lewis and Lewis, *Land of Wales*, p. 2.



academic to the popular, encompassing the literary, geological, geographical, and the touristic. We see the combinations of these voices in various travel texts, and we can trace how foundational mythological texts and the secondary writings of academics can percolate through genres, furnishing entertaining travel texts, or being condensed into a brief set of phrases commissioned by the Great Western Railway. This is at once an identification with the foundations of British-Irish literary culture and a way of enjoying (or selling) a holiday, in a way which places western peripheries and alternative national literary traditions at the centre of a 'British' literary culture that is often treated in an Anglo-centric manner.<sup>183</sup>

The associational values of the West were also heavily inflected by the dichotomy of the Celt and the Saxon, which was concisely captured in *The Land of Wales*. The 'sensible Saxon' might 'stop his ears and refuse to hear the echo of ghostly bells on stormy nights', but 'even he cannot rule out the possibility of some drowned human effort when the spring tides uncover great "Sarns", or causeways, far out in Cardigan Bay'.<sup>184</sup> The division of the British-Irish Isles into Celt and Saxon, and the consequences for the multiple and sometimes competing national identities of these islands, will be discussed in the final chapter.

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<sup>183</sup> For the Anglocentric tendencies of British literary studies, see Andrew Webb, *Edward Thomas and World Literary Studies: Wales, Anglocentrism and English Literature* (Cardiff, 2013), especially pp. 1, 38, 40, 61, 66, 108, 138.

<sup>184</sup> Lewis and Lewis, *Land of Wales*, p. 2.



## I – Introduction

### *The importance of historical narratives*

Previous chapters of this thesis have explored travel as a form of self-fashioning for the individual. This chapter explores the role of travel narratives in cultural, or national, projects of self-fashioning, and the contested nature of this process.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, history was a subject of public interest, as sources of historical knowledge were transferred from private collections, monasteries, aristocratic estates, and royal palaces and into the public sphere, through museums, libraries, archives, and universities. Historical texts, novels, paintings, and monuments disseminated historical knowledge, as the ‘nation’ was envisioned as a community of members but also as a community with cultural and historical continuity, with contemporary citizens part of a lineage linking them to generations of ancestors.<sup>2</sup>

Peter Mandler suggested that the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries saw a marked decline of popular interest in history, as a result of commercialisation, mass leisure, and new technologies of communication, which produced a ‘democratic kind of cosmopolitanism’. This cultural shift was matched by a retreat from history, as academic history writing could no longer claim status as popular literature, which became characterised by information about foreign places that was circulated in journals and newspapers at the expense of domestic travel narratives, in a culture that increasingly valued individuality and commercial modernity. Historically-minded travel texts were secondary to ‘cheaper and flashier regional guides’ which focussed on hotels, transport, and attractions at the expense of historical, archaeological, topographical, and architectural information. In short, as a result of these trends history became gradually less significant.<sup>3</sup>

In response, scholars have pointed towards the various forms of popular interest in history which remained an important part of the cultural discourse, as a way of rooting society in the stability of the national past amid the rapid transformations of the period.<sup>4</sup> Interest in history was not a reaction against the emergence of modernity, but part of it. Rather than disappearing, narratives of history and domestic travel carved their own space within an interconnected literary culture, and constituted a far more diverse and extensive body of texts than Mandler’s argument suggests.<sup>5</sup> Systematic travel texts incorporated historical narratives in a briefer but no less important style, and chapter one demonstrated how train and steamer names subtly furnished popular tourism with a historical atmosphere in banal ways. As the introduction demonstrated, personal travel narratives were widely read in this period, as historical narratives found new forms in anecdotal scenes which resembled fictional novels. Instead of a decline in historical interest, this interest changed in its forms and was written, read, and performed in different ways by a new mass reading and travelling public.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the link between tourism and nation-state building, see James, *Tourism in Ireland*, p. 3. The significance of ‘home tourism’ in the construction of ‘British peripheries’ is emphasised in Benjamin Colbert, ‘Introduction’, in Benjamin Colbert (ed.), *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Joep Leerssen, ‘Introduction’, in Lotte Jensen, Joep Leerssen, and Marita Mathijsen (eds), *Free Access to the Past: Romanticism, Cultural Heritage and the Nation* (Leiden, 2010), pp. xv-xii.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (London, 1997), pp. 109-17.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Readman, ‘The Place of the Past in English Culture, c.1890-1914’, *Past and Present* 186.1 (2005), pp. 147-99; see p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> For Mandler’s comments on travel texts, see Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*, pp. 116-17.

<sup>6</sup> For alternative expressions of popular interest in history, see the recent literature on historical pageants: for historical pageants in Ireland, see Joan FitzPatrick Dean, *All Dressed Up: Modern Irish Historical Pageantry* (Syracuse NY, 2014). For England, see Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alexander Hutton, and Paul Readman, ‘Performing the Past: Identity, Civic Culture and Historical Pageants in Twentieth-Century English Small Towns’, in Lud’a

This chapter argues that narratives of geology, history, national development, and political union occupied the minds of travellers and tourists in the West. Travel texts and travel itself served as a form of identity formation, and historical narratives of the West played an important role in the contested construction of Britishness. The material cultures of tourism (brochures, travel texts, signposts) act as the important link between the historical narrative and the reader or traveller. They suggest appropriate actions and states of mind, what should be valued, and what should be discarded. In short, these texts shape the perception of the reader and the traveller.<sup>7</sup> The representation of regional and national histories in travel texts established motifs and narratives which were durable, remained largely consistent in their expression through different media, and as a consequence they shaped broader understandings of the past. Having created a specific set of expectations, travellers and tourists often reproduced these images for themselves when visiting the regions and specific sites that appeared in the text.<sup>8</sup> This was evident in descriptions of travelling to Wales as ‘invading’, which reflected a set of expectations based on narratives of Edward I’s conquest of Wales that were triggered by local landscape features such as castles. This enabled the traveller to ‘vividly recall to the mind’ the ‘stormy, insecure times described in old Welsh history’.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, experiencing different landscapes and cultures provoked travellers to consider not just the national identity of others, but also to turn the critical gaze onto their own. As a review of Mrs Stanley Gardiner’s *We Two and Shamus* (1913) recognised, when the author and her husband ‘are in Cambridge they never describe themselves as Saxons. But in Ireland they were at once terribly conscious of race’.<sup>10</sup>

Rudy Koshar stated that, in the pages of travel texts, tourism and the nation ‘met on hallowed cultural ground’.<sup>11</sup> Just as the traveller wished to undertake an authentic journey beyond the ordinary, so the nationalist identified with the nation beyond ‘specific social and economic interests’. In travel texts and through travel itself, tourists learned about the origins of various sites and their place in the national narrative.<sup>12</sup> Travel texts were thus an important cultural force in this period, and served to construct the nation in the minds of both readers and travellers.<sup>13</sup>

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Klusáková (ed.), *Small Towns in Europe in the 20th and 21st Centuries: Heritage and Development Strategies* (Prague, 2017), pp. 24-51; and Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alexander Hutton, and Paul Readman, ‘Historical Pageants and the Medieval Past in Twentieth-Century England’, *English Historical Review* 133.563 (2018), pp. 866-902. Also see Tom Hulme, ‘“A nation of town criers”: civil publicity and historical pageantry in inter-war Britain’, *Urban History* 44.2 (2017), pp. 270-92; and Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alexander Hutton, and Paul Readman, ‘“History taught in the pageant way”: education and historical performance in twentieth-century Britain’, *History of Education* 48.2 (2019), pp. 156-79. Historical pageants held within the case study regions in this period include ‘The Pageant of Harlech Castle’ (1920), ‘The Conway Pageant’ (1927), ‘The Rock of Penmaenmawr’ (1928), and ‘The Pageant of Launceston’ (1931). Information on these pageants was collected from the following database: Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, and Paul Readman, *The Redress of the Past: Historical Pageants in Britain*, <http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/> [27 May 2019].

<sup>7</sup> Robert Witcher, Divya P. Tolia-Kelly, and Richard Hingley, ‘Archaeologies of Landscape: Excavating the Materialities of Hadrian’s Wall’, *Journal of Material Culture* 15.1 (2010), pp. 121-2.

<sup>8</sup> Witcher, Tolia-Kelly, Richard Hingley, ‘Archaeologies of Landscape’, pp. 119-20.

<sup>9</sup> For travelling to Wales as ‘invading’, see *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), p. 2. For the ‘stormy, insecure times’, see Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1883), p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> [Review], ‘Gardiner, *We Two and Shamus*’, p. 691.

<sup>11</sup> Koshar, ‘Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities’, p. 339.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Foster, ‘Storylines: Narratives and Nationality in Nineteenth-Century Ireland’, in Geoffrey Cubitt (ed.), *Imagining Nations* (Manchester, 1998), p. 38.

In this chapter, 'Britishness' refers to the ways in which multi-national diversity and interconnections between the constituent nations were accommodated within the political framework of what was described by many writers as 'Britain' – as composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland up until partition in 1921 – unified by the institutions of the Crown and Parliament.<sup>14</sup>

There are important differences between the western peripheries and their function in political and cultural nationalisms. Cornwall was regarded as having an independence of spirit and a habit of resisting centralising powers. Rather than representing an important side to the national character (as the West did in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland), Cornwall represented a 'disturbing otherness' which called into question the coherence of the English national territory, and served as a setting in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century literature for the exploration of anxieties about the internal fragmentation of England.<sup>15</sup>

There were also important differences in the extent to which political and cultural nationalisms merged in this period. In the case of Ireland, political and cultural nationalisms were closely intertwined throughout the nineteenth century. This made the cultural construction of the West a process that was more politically charged, which emerged in the War of Independence.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the sense of more recent conquest and dispossession meant that social and economic issues such as the Land Question became fused with political demands for self-government, symbolised in the creation of the Land League in 1879.<sup>17</sup> In Wales and Scotland, the 'Celticism' of the periphery was less tightly bound to political nationalism, and the expression of national difference and individual identity was compatible with the British state.<sup>18</sup> In the 1890s, the movement in favour of Welsh Home Rule was expressed in Lloyd George's call for 'National Self-Government for Wales' (1895), as the North Wales Liberal Federation joined the Cymru Fydd league under his leadership. However, the refusal of the South Wales Liberals to join the alliance ended the hopes of political unity behind a nationalist agenda in Wales, and the movement for Welsh independence went underground.<sup>19</sup> Calls for Welsh self-government re-emerged as Plaid Cymru was established in the 1920s, but the movement failed to gain significant support during the inter-war years.<sup>20</sup> In Scotland, the West was part of the Highland portion of the dual Scottish identity. The de-politicised Highland culture existed alongside a Scottish 'Anglo-Britishness' which was developed in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This duality was personified by the two brothers of Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *The Master of Ballantrae* (1899), one of whom was 'Jacobite, imaginative and evil' while the other was 'Hanoverian, conscientious and dull'.<sup>21</sup> The Scottish National Party was formed out of two earlier groups

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<sup>14</sup> For the United Kingdom as a 'multi-national state' unified by the Crown and Parliament from 1800, see Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood, 'Introduction: A Union of Multiple Identities', in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds), *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> Trower, 'On the Cliff Edge of England', pp. 199-214; quotation at p. 211. Arthur Conan Doyle depicted Cornwall's remoteness from official legal procedures and conventional notions of justice in 'The Adventure of the Devil's Foot', in Arthur Conan Doyle, *His Last Bow: A Reminiscence of Sherlock Holmes* (New York, 1917), pp. 278-80.

<sup>16</sup> Leerssen, 'Celticism', p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Bull, 'Irish Land and British Politics', in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 126-45; see p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> Morrison, *Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting*, pp. 185-92.

<sup>19</sup> Webb, *Edward Thomas*, p. 93. For the growing sense of national identity in the late-nineteenth century, see Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 90. For the growth of nationalism, see Kenneth O. Morgan, 'Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6.1 (1971), pp. 153-72.

<sup>20</sup> Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, pp. 290-1. In 1937, Davies suggested that undergraduate students in Wales's four University colleges 'largely support the Party', but that 'the industrial area of South Wales has not been captured'; see Davies, *My Wales*, p. 278.

<sup>21</sup> Harvie, 'Anglo-Saxons into Celts', p. 249. For the construction of the Highland image, see Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 15-41.

in 1934, but made little impact on the 1935 general election, with their best result amounting to 28 percent of the vote in the Western Isles.<sup>22</sup> In 1937, the writer and journalist A. G. MacDonell supported the idea of ‘intellectual freedom through political self-government’ for Scotland, but admitted that ‘there is certainly not a sufficient number’ of ‘Scotsmen who want to see a self-governing Scotland’.<sup>23</sup>

While recognising these differences, there are important reasons for analysing the construction of Britishness at the scale of the West. This transnational approach provides an important perspective on Britishness and the strategies employed by its adherents in order to hold together the political union. In the travel texts of the West, this is marked in discussions about an emergent Britishness in history, and also in themes which range from geology, race and ethnicity, geography, and the monarchy. These narratives allowed for and even celebrated national cultural diversity, as long as this remained apolitical and did not provide the foundation for separatist political nationalism. Travel texts played an important role in constructing a Britishness of geological, racial, and linguistic layers as well as historical interconnections, which aimed to simultaneously promote a diverse sense of Britishness and defuse the arguments for separatist nationalism in the Celtic periphery. This was a project which ultimately failed in the case of Ireland, but North West Wales, Cornwall, and the Isle of Skye were celebrated in many of these texts as part of ‘Greater British local colour’.<sup>24</sup>

As historical sources, travel texts provide insight into the Janus-faced strategies with which peripheral regions were constructed as part of a multi-layered Britishness. This involved a ‘sentimental condescension’ and ‘repressive tolerance’ of the West.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the contents of travel texts represent a relatively benign portion of a diverse set of strategies that aimed to forge a coherent sense of Britishness. The construction of the West in historical narratives was matched by the repressive policies of the Highland Clearances and programmes of systematic Anglicisation that were implemented through schools, in which the ‘sons of Normans and Celts and Saxons learn to be Englishmen’.<sup>26</sup> References to such repressive measures were rarely made, and it is important to recognise the partial insight provided by the source material in this respect.

This chapter argues that it was the ‘cynical tolerance’ or ‘romantic attraction’ to internal difference – in the form of the West – which characterised the emergence of a flexible sense of Britishness, in contrast to the British identity of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, which Linda Colley (who excludes Ireland from her analysis) argues was characterised by the ‘overwhelming influence of Protestantism’.<sup>27</sup> Western landscapes and histories were constructed as part of a diverse, multi-national, pluralistic sense of Britishness which could – as Paul Ward remarked – be celebrated in hedgerow and cottage but also in

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<sup>22</sup> Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, pp. 291-2. In 1938, Edward Shanks wrote of the ‘Scottish Nationalist Movement’ that ‘its fire seems always to languish for want of the fuel of a substantial grievance and of the bellows of opposition from the foreign tyrant’; see Shanks, *My England*, p. 175. A. G. MacDonell also admitted that ‘the great mass of the middle-classes, commercial folk, solid gentry, and, in general, the agriculturalist and worker, does not feel very strongly about the rebirth of the nation. The figures of the Nationalist vote at elections show that clearly’; see A. G. MacDonell, *My Scotland* (London, 1937), p. 266.

<sup>23</sup> MacDonell, *My Scotland*, pp. 252-66.

<sup>24</sup> Leerssen, ‘Celticism’, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Repressive tolerance’ and ‘sentimental condescension’ are discussed in Leerssen, ‘Celticism’, pp. 11-12. These contradictions have also been recognised in the sixteenth-century creation of a Protestant Welsh Bible to aid the survival of the language alongside ‘official discrimination against and social scorn for that language’; see Gwyn A. Williams, ‘When Was Wales?’, in Gwyn A. Williams, *The Welsh In Their History* (London, 1982), p. 193. Early editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* famously contained the entry ‘For Wales – see England’.

<sup>26</sup> Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. 284.

<sup>27</sup> Bernard Crick, ‘The English and the British’, *The Political Quarterly* 83.1 (2012), p. 234; Bernard Crick [review], ‘Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1701-1837* (London, 1992); Roy Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English* (Cambridge, 1992)’, *The Political Quarterly* 83.1 (2012), pp. 407-8; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 2003), pp. 7-8.

moor and mountain.<sup>28</sup> Ward has suggested that the strength of Britishness lies in its vagueness,<sup>29</sup> but this chapter suggests that the period 1880 to 1940 witnessed the construction of a distinctively layered Britishness, after which narratives of the nation became heavily focussed on Second World War, which became, as Paul Gilroy put it, the ‘mythic moment of national becoming’.<sup>30</sup>

## II – The geological imagination and the layers of the past

In the nineteenth century, there was a circular relationship between academic geology and travel texts. Popular books about geology by writers such as Charles Lyell proliferated, educating the reading public about the scale of deep time.<sup>31</sup> Travel texts extended the reach of this geological information, and it was customary for Victorian texts to consider the subject at length in the introduction.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, *Murray’s Ireland* (1878) recognised that the subject of geology was ‘too extensive’ to be treated fully, and pointed the reader back towards academic texts such as ‘Mr Hull’s treatise on the geology of Ireland’, as well as Lyell’s *Elements of Geology* and *Principles of Geology*, which were not ‘too much overloaded with details for the general reader’, while Tyndall’s *Forms of Water* was recommended as ‘an admirable popular treatise’ regarding glaciers.<sup>33</sup>

Writers and travellers drew on the language of academic geology in their engagement with landscapes, as they described geological processes based on scientific information. This was described by *Murray’s Scotland* (1883) as ‘a growing tendency amongst tourists to combine the picturesque with the scientific’.<sup>34</sup> *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878) stated that ‘daily this science is becoming more popular’, because:

... the lover of the picturesque finds that his admiration of the beauties of nature is enhanced... by a knowledge of the wonderful history appertaining to the formation of the mountains and glens amongst which he likes to ramble.<sup>35</sup>

Tourists were encouraged to discover examples for themselves, and those journeying to Skye could expect to find samples of Permian, Oolitic, and Lower Silurian rocks, or the ‘peculiar’ Hypersthene in the Cuillin mountains, noted for ‘its excessive hardness’, while at Maam in West Connacht the geologically-minded traveller might find ‘upper Silurian’ fossils.<sup>36</sup>

Many travel texts wished to present a mode of observation that suggested accuracy, knowledge, and objectivity as opposed to the connotations of subjectivity and creativity which accompanied the term ‘imagination’. This was typified in the following lines of Dr Johnson, which were quoted in travel texts such as Frazar’s *Great Britain and Ireland* (1909):

The use of travel is to regulate imagination  
by reality, and instead of thinking how things

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<sup>28</sup> Ward, *Britishness since 1870*, pp. 56, 141-3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>30</sup> Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, pp. 87-95.

<sup>31</sup> Lyell and his ideas were also popularised by other writers who wrote for ‘Amateurs’, such as W. S. Symonds, *Record of the Rocks* (London, 1872); see p. vii for dedication to Lyell, and p. ix for ‘Amateurs’.

<sup>32</sup> For an example, see *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), introduction, pp. 20-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), introduction, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Murray’s Scotland* (1883), introduction, p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), p. lxi.

<sup>36</sup> For Skye, see *Murray’s Scotland* (1883), introduction, pp. 30-1. For Maam, see *Black’s Ireland* (1877), pp. 277-8.

may be, to see them as they are.

Dr Johnson.<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, the popularisation of academic geology in fact encouraged a dramatic style of narration, as travellers, tourists, and writers were armed with knowledge of the formation of scooped corries and U-shaped valleys, of how gigantic boulders had reached their present-day locations, as well as of the glacial processes which had sharpened the blade-like ridges of the mountains. In travel texts, dramatic imaginative passages described the dynamic geological processes that formed mountains and valleys, which might seem solid and static to the untrained eye. In his consideration of the Welsh mountains and their emergence from the sea, Alfred T. Story explained that:

Only by following, as it were, with the mind's eye through successive operations of this kind – the gradual submergence of the land and then its re-emergence again and again repeated – can we comprehend, and then but dimly, the age-long process of building up the earth's crust as we now see it in this section of Wales, stratum after stratum, formation after formation, through a period of time in which a thousand years are truly but as a day.<sup>38</sup>

The writers who 'read' the landscape in this way imagined 'the forces that have been at work through the ages scooping out the valleys and hollows on either hand, and perching gigantic fragments on dizzy slopes, which one thinks a breath might topple down and bring crashing to the bottom'.<sup>39</sup> Through such dramatic description, the 'holiday-maker' may find that the 'dry bones' of 'dry and fragmentary... scientific details... begin to stir and the whole subject glow and kindle with life'.<sup>40</sup> It is important to recognise that, while many geologists strove to establish their discipline as a modern scientific profession, 'objective' and 'uncorrupted by imagination', there was no clear-cut distinction between geological and imaginative literature. Geologists were, fundamentally, interested in landscapes, and the writing of the scientist Robert Hunt combined geology and imaginative literature, as he described the ritual sacrifice of ancient people in his poetry, whose blood dyed the granite crags of Cornwall.<sup>41</sup> This combination of science and imagination was fully developed in travel texts.

The 'geology craze' was at its height in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, but an interest in geology remained characteristic of travel texts throughout the period, even if the topic was covered in less depth in the early-twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> For example, the University of Edinburgh's T. M. Finlay wrote an introductory article in *Ward and Lock's Complete Scotland* (1933) titled 'Geology and Scenery', and in 1939 Hugh Quigley continued the convention of dramatic, imaginative description in his passage on the mountains of Skye:

It requires little imagination to see the Cuillins in the ice-age, ice slipping down slowly from the peaks, leaving the crests vulnerable to the ravages of frost and whittling them

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<sup>37</sup> Frazer, *Ireland and Scotland*, preceding p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907), pp. 9-10.

<sup>39</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920), pp. 31-3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22.

<sup>41</sup> Hunt was a mine surveyor who wrote works of geology, poetry, and folklore. Between 1845 and 1883 he was the Keeper of Mining Records at the Museum of Practical Geology in London; see Shelley Trower, 'Geological Folklore', in Marion Gibson, Shelley Trower, and Garry Tregigda (eds), *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* (London, 2013), pp. 117, 123.

<sup>42</sup> For examples of shorter treatments of geology from the early-twentieth century, see R. Lloyd Praeger, 'Natural History of the South and West of Ireland', in O'Mahony, *Sunny Side of Ireland*, pp. 260-77; and Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1902), introduction, pp. 14-17, and p. v for the desire to update the information contained in the book. Also see Cooke, *Murray's Ireland* (1906), introduction, pp. 17-20.



down to skeleton form, while the corries were being hewn out by glaciers. These, with their cupped lochans and precipitous drop, are typical of ice-weathered formation.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout the period 1880-1940, scientific knowledge, travel, and dramatic narration were intertwined in the pages of the travel text, as the evidence of the landscape ‘collapsed the deep past into the familiar present’, and assisted the geological imagination.<sup>44</sup>

In a more fundamental manner, geology influenced travel texts by providing a language of ‘layers’. The landscape spatialised geological time in this way, enabling the geologist and also the informed traveller to ‘read’ the chronological sequence of the landscape. This was possible at sites such as the mountain Lissoughter near Recess, which offered ‘a kind of geological synopsis of the rocks of Connemara, with the characteristic bands of crystalline limestone and serpentine’.<sup>45</sup> The layered geological landscape also shaped the ways in which writers thought about race, history, culture, and the chronological development of the West.<sup>46</sup>

Firstly, the language of layers reinforced pre-existing ideas about the difference of the West. In Skye and West Connacht, the layered landscape consisted of both the oldest and newest rocks in the British-Irish Isles, situated at ‘the two extremes of the geological time-scale’.<sup>47</sup> This served the dual purpose of reinforcing the West as the ancient periphery of Europe, while the recent strata were embodied in dangerous mountains where adventure could be had. In particular, the prevalence of older geological layers reinforced notions of the West as a wild, prehistoric periphery. Robert Hunt conceived the geological disparity in England as one between east and west, describing in *British Mining* (1884) the ‘marked distinction’ between the rocks of the eastern counties and those of ‘the midland and western districts of England and the whole of Wales’.<sup>48</sup> Later in the period, Howarth wrote that, as one travelled westwards, ‘there is an almost orderly succession of rocks of increasing age’.<sup>49</sup> In North West Wales, the Cambrian rocks of the mountains were considered ‘the oldest rocks in the British Isles’, with the exception of some Lewisian gneisses in northern Scotland.<sup>50</sup> West Connacht was ‘a wild region of ancient metamorphic rocks – schists, quartzites, gneisses, and granites – which form wild moorlands’.<sup>51</sup> West of Galway was the ‘old pre-Cambrian continent’,<sup>52</sup> a land steeped in the past, comprising some of ‘the earliest rock on earth, Archaean Gneiss’.<sup>53</sup>

The geological narratives of the West supported the corresponding historical narratives, as geological antiquity and human history were interwoven. The links between geology and human cultures reflected the influence of neo-Lamarckism in post-Darwinian geography, as academics described the ‘modification of organisms due to changes in the natural environment’.<sup>54</sup> The geographers E. G. Bowen and H. J.

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<sup>43</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), pp. 37-46. Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>44</sup> Macfarlane, *Mountains of the Mind*, p. 125.

<sup>45</sup> Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, *Connemara*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> For a recent example of the contemporary influence of the language of layers in the comprehension of history, see the *Layers of London* project, [www.layersoflondon.org](http://www.layersoflondon.org) [27 May 2019].

<sup>47</sup> The quotation refers to the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, in Alfred Harker, *The West Highlands and the Hebrides: A Geologist's Guide for Amateurs* (Cambridge, 1941), pp. 1, 75. For Ireland, see Lang, *Black's Ireland* (1906), p. xxii.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Hunt, *British Mining* (London, 1884), p. 193. Also see Trower, ‘Geological Folklore’, p. 118. Hunt was also recommended reading in guidebooks such as Salmon, *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927), p. 41; and Arthur L. Salmon, *The Little Guides: Cornwall* (London, 1905 [1903]), p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> Howarth, *Scenic Heritage of England and Wales*, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson's North Wales* (1878), pp. lxxviii-lxx.

<sup>51</sup> Praeger, ‘Natural History of the South and West of Ireland’, pp. 260-77.

<sup>52</sup> Grenville A. J. Cole, ‘Geology’, in George Fletcher (ed.), *Connaught* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> Pyrs Gruffudd, ‘Back to the Land: Historiography, Rurality and the Nation in Interwar Wales’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19.1 (1994), p. 62. Fleure was influenced by Cyril Fox, whose division of Britain into ‘Highland’ and ‘Lowland’ Fleure hoped would be expanded ‘into a general philosophical interpretation of British life’; see H. J. Fleure

Fleure illustrated this when they explained that Wales had ‘some of the oldest’ rocks in Europe, a ‘rocky, storm-bound coast’, and ‘cold water-logged soils’ that sheltered ‘the descendants of Neolithic shepherds’ on the upland landscapes.<sup>55</sup> The links between geology and human history were also noticeable in regional architectural styles, which made use of local brick or stone.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, geological layers – and the prevalence of earlier layers in the West – provided a language and a framework in which the West was placed into a broader British scheme of historical development.<sup>57</sup> In the coherent, chronological sequence of the geological landscape, each layer provided a foundation for the next, making an enduring contribution to the whole, no matter how far from the visible surface it might be. Using this language, writers assembled neat sequenced narratives of history, which helped to construct assertive and resounding images of both region and nation.<sup>58</sup> Descriptions of ethnic groups in the British-Irish Isles described the ‘Iberian’ strain – understood to be predominant in the West – as ‘the bed-rock race’, while in historical narratives of Goidelic and Brythonic waves of invasion it was recognised that ‘a large substratum’ remained ‘to amalgamate with the new people’.<sup>59</sup> Travellers revelled in the historical layers of Skye, which spanned from the recent ‘romantic days of Prince Charlie back through the voiceless generations to those dim ages when the island was built up, stratum by stratum, out of the unknown deep’.<sup>60</sup> In Skye, the folk customs of the local people were understood by MacCulloch in the same terms – as a ‘deep stratum of a belief in magic’.<sup>61</sup>

The language of layers enabled the ancient, prehistoric West to contribute to a narrative of history that encompassed the British-Irish Isles, and thus undermined calls for political independence based on claims of geographical, racial, cultural, and historical differences. The imaginative and dramatic writing contained in these travel texts bears witness to the profound influence of academic geology on the ways in which readers and travellers engaged with landscapes, and on the language used to reinforce the idea of an ancient western periphery. The remainder of this chapter explores the narratives of the West that used the language of layers as a strategy through which racial and linguistic difference could be contained and celebrated within a diverse and pluralistic Britishness.

### III – Theories of national development

Chapter two discussed the use of racial language in the description of the problems associated with industrialisation, urbanisation, and the health of the nation. This chapter explores how academic theories of race filtered into more popular forms of writing and contributed to the construction of ideas about the nation. Systematic travel texts devoted the vast majority of their pages to practical information for the tourist, and generally provided much briefer, simplified summaries of the racial makeup of the West. On the other hand, personal travel narratives were often written by self-appointed social investigators who portrayed the local people in detail using literary conventions of description, and had the space to

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[review], ‘Cyril Fox, *The Personality of Britain: Its Influence on Inhabitant and Invader in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times* (4th edn, Cardiff, 1943 [1932])’, *Geographical Review* 36.2 (1946), pp. 340-2.

<sup>55</sup> E. G. Bowen and H. J. Fleure, ‘Denmark and Wales’, *Geography* 15.6 (1930), p. 469.

<sup>56</sup> Mais, ‘The Varied Scene’, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> The language of layers has been recognised in the work of influential Victorian intellectuals such as E. B. Tylor and John Lubbock; see Laavanyan Ratnapalan, ‘E. B. Tylor and the Problem of Primitive Culture’, *History and Anthropology* 19.2 (2008), pp. 131-42.

<sup>58</sup> While the writers of travel texts often constructed neat chronologies, academic geologists recognised that models of chronological layering could be disrupted as a result of ‘great terrestrial displacements’, as noted in J. Horne, ‘Introductory’, in Archibald Geikie (ed.), *The Geological Structure of the North-West Highlands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1907), pp. 1-10.

<sup>59</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920), pp. 61-3.

<sup>60</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 19.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

outline contemporary academic theories of race. Travel texts served as spaces in which several different strands of academic research intersected. As Alexander MacBain wrote in his 'Excursus and Notes' to the second edition of W. F. Skene's *The Highlanders of Scotland* (1902), the question of 'the ethnology of the British Isles' was 'in an unsettled state' because 'the subject draws its materials from various subordinate or kindred sciences', including archaeology, anatomy, anthropology, history, and philology.<sup>62</sup>

The treatment of race in these texts had consequences for conflicting ideas about the nation and the state, in a period when Britishness, Englishness, Irishness, Scottishness, and Welshness competed for primacy. Discussions of national character were widespread in the period, and provocative books on the topic elicited lively and divergent responses.<sup>63</sup> From the beginnings of the Home Rule crisis of the 1870s to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 and the formation of nationalist political parties in Wales (1925) and Scotland (1934), travel texts comprised an important genre of literature which helped to shape popular understandings of the historical, racial, cultural, and linguistic composition of the nations in the British-Irish Isles.

### *Theories of race and their influence on travel texts*

In discussions of the historical development of the West, a combination of 'racial' and 'civilisational' perspectives is discernible. One of the chief racial models of historical development was provided by 'Teutonism', which, put simply, proposed a narrative of historical progress that saw 'superior' peoples conquer 'inferior' ones, and that the finest features of the modern national character drew on the virtues brought to these shores during the Anglo-Saxon migrations. This idea was incorporated into the work of historians such as J. A. Froude, John Mitchell Kemble, J. R. Green, and E. A. Freeman.<sup>64</sup> In this view, the English nation derived its language, customs, institutions, and blood from the Germanic migrants from the fifth century onwards, an invading race of superior physicality and mentality, evident in the contemporary populations of areas in eastern England and southern Scotland, which 'neatly' coincided with contemporary regions of economic dynamism.<sup>65</sup> In 1930, looking back on the nineteenth century, H. J. Fleure explained that the development of 'modern industrialism' in England, followed by 'the miraculous development of German scientific industry', led to ideas of 'Teutonic or German superiority', all of which was underscored by 'the feats of the German armies in 1870-71'. This foundation supported the 'idealising of the Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic peoples' which formed 'part of the ancestry of both English and Germans'.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Alexander MacBain, 'Excursus and Notes, by the Editor', in William F. Skene, *The Highlanders of Scotland* (Stirling, 1902), p. 381.

<sup>63</sup> Hughes wrote that 'England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales are united in every sense, but the characteristics of each are sharply defined enough to be a constant puzzle and source of amusement to others'; see Hughes, *About England*, p. 356. Satirical publications included *Mr Punch in the Highlands*. For an example of a particularly provocative work of satire, see 'Draig Glas', *The Perfidious Welshman* (London, 1910). For a selection of responses to the book, see 'Opinions Differ: The Perfidious Welshman', *The Observer*, 10 April 1910, p. 7; and 'The Welshman's Reputation', *The Academy and Literature*, 1910-1914, 14 October 1911, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Chris Manias, 'Uncovering the Deepest Layers of the British Past, 1850-1914', in Marion Gibson, Shelley Trower, and Garry Tregigda (eds), *Mysticism, Myth and Celtic Identity* (London, 2013), p. 49. For a brief summary of race and Anglo-Saxonism in nineteenth-century intellectual thought, see Hugh MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal, 1982), pp. 89-103. Freeman was more overtly conscious of race than Green. For a comparison of the two, see Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth Century Visions of a Greater Britain* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 240-53.

<sup>65</sup> Manias, 'Deepest Layers of the British Past', pp. 55-6.

<sup>66</sup> H. J. Fleure, 'The Nordic Myth: A Critique of Current Racial Theories', *Eugenics Review* 22 (1930), p. 118.

The poet and literary critic Theodore Watts-Dunton applied this theory to language when he wrote that ‘it is not the excellence of a tongue which makes it survive and causes it to spread over the earth, but the energy, military or commercial, of the people who speak it’. This explained ‘the vast expansion of the English language all over the world’. Combining cultural appreciation of Wales with an implied sense of the nation’s inferiority, he suggested that ‘if Welsh does not survive it will not be because it is not a fine language’.<sup>67</sup> Michael Shoemaker took a similar approach to the Irish language, claiming that the spread of English was ‘a case of survival of the fittest’, and that attempts to revive ‘the ancient Celtic’ served no discernible good beyond being of interest to ‘students and savants’.<sup>68</sup> These ideas drew on the philological work of Otto Jespersen, who in *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (1905) argued that Celtic languages played no role in the development of English, as ‘there was nothing to induce the ruling classes to learn the language of the inferior natives’. Celtic languages amounted to ‘unintelligible gibberish’ with which the Celt ‘could not think of addressing his superiors’.<sup>69</sup> Such attitudes were also extended to the English-speaking accents of the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, discussions of which were ‘heavily laden with prejudice and exotic benignity, condescension and disdain’.<sup>70</sup> This attests to the importance of ‘linguicism’ in long-standing discourses of the West, from Edmund Spenser’s *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596).<sup>71</sup>

Some travel texts provided simple geographical summaries of the racial makeup of the West, which in their brevity resembled the racial model of historical development. *Black’s Scotland* (1887) divided the country into three prevailing national groups: ‘the Saxon in the south; the Celtic in the Highlands; and the Scandinavian principally in the north-east, including Orkney and Shetland’.<sup>72</sup> In the inter-war period, the publication continued to provide a brief, general summary, claiming in 1920 that ‘the Highlanders in the north and west are mainly of Celtic blood; the Lowlanders Saxon and Scandinavian’.<sup>73</sup> Such a rudimentary depiction of clear ethnic difference is, however, indicative of the limitations of space in publications that were devoted to providing practical information concerning ‘the present facilities for travel’, and does not reflect the prevailing racial scheme put forward by the literature of the period.<sup>74</sup> Certainly, Anglo-Saxon racism was ‘a powerful strain’ in late-Victorian and Edwardian social thought, and anthropologists such as A. H. Keane supported the idea that national character had a racial basis. In Keane’s *Man Past and Present* (1899), the ‘Kelt’ was mercurial, impulsive, and quick-witted, while the Saxon was stolid, solid, and haughty.<sup>75</sup> However, the idea of a clear ethnic divide between the Celt and the Saxon that could be defined geographically was no longer proposed by anthropologists and cultural geographers, who instead identified several racial layers which existed in the population, across Britain and Ireland.

In contrast to racial models of historical development, the ‘civilisational perspective’ narrated the universal developmental stages of savagery, barbarism, and settled life or civilisation.<sup>76</sup> This process had

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<sup>67</sup> Watts-Dunton, ‘Talk about “Wild Wales”’, pp. x-xi. Hostility to European languages was a stereotype of the English tourist; see Walter J. Farquharson, ‘The Coming of the British Tourist’, *The New Ireland Review* 5.6 (1896), p. 340.

<sup>68</sup> Shoemaker, *Wanderings in Ireland*, p. 86.

<sup>69</sup> Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 39. There were also scholars, such as A. G. van Hamel, Wolfgang Keller, and Walther Preusler, who looked at syntax rather than lexicon, which revealed similarities between English and Welsh that are not shared with other Germanic languages, suggesting ‘Celtic contact effects’ which contradicted Jespersen’s orthodox view. These writers, and Jespersen, are discussed in Markku Filppula, Juhani Klemola, and Heli Paulasto, *English and Celtic in Contact* (London, 2008), pp. 224-6.

<sup>70</sup> Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 63-5.

<sup>71</sup> Laura O’Connor, *Haunted English: The Celtic Fringe, the British Empire, and De-Anglicisation* (Baltimore, 2006), pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>72</sup> *Black’s Scotland* (1887), p. xiii.

<sup>73</sup> *Black’s Scotland* (1920), p. vii.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, n.p., see preface.

<sup>75</sup> Mandler, *The English National Character*, p. 118; Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, pp. 236-7.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Mandler, ‘“Race” and “nation” in mid-Victorian thought’, in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore, and Brian Young (eds), *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 229-39.

– according to many of its proponents – reached its full potential in ‘the institutions and society of modern Britain’.<sup>77</sup> According to the civilisational perspective, ‘constitutional and linguistic marks of identity’ were deemed important, ‘rather than exclusive and hereditarian racial ones’.<sup>78</sup> In Ireland, it has also been suggested that ‘political and cultural criteria of difference tended to be more prominent than biological ones’.<sup>79</sup> John Rhys and the historian David Brynmor-Jones described the civilisational progress of the Welsh ‘by the side of their conquerors’ in *The Welsh People* (1900), while the historian Robert S. Rait argued in his *The Making of the Nations: Scotland* (1911) that Scottish Highlanders were different ‘in speech and in civilisation, not in race’, in direct disagreement with the views of J. R. Green.<sup>80</sup>

The racial and the civilisational narratives of historical development came together in theories of historical progress, which often emphasised amalgamation and mixture. For instance, narratives of the successive invasions of Ireland by the Fírbolgs, Fomorians, Tuatha Dé Danann, and Milesians asserted ‘a layered (although quite distinctive) history preceding the arrival of Norman, English, and Scottish settlers’.<sup>81</sup> In his *Modern Ireland* (1868), George Sigerson rejected the notion of a clear racial distinction on either side of the Irish Channel, and argued that ‘the races of Ireland have always shown a strong tendency to amalgamate, and have in fact fused together’.<sup>82</sup> The educationist Sophie Bryant also emphasised the mixture of racial strains which constituted Irishness in her *Celtic Ireland* (1889).<sup>83</sup> In Britain, John Rhys, John Beddoe, William Boyd Dawkins and many others put forward the view that the British ‘Celtic’ population was made up of several strata by the time of the Roman conquest.<sup>84</sup> This was a theory of racial diversity, which was retold, summarised, and reformulated in the travel texts of the West. What was clear to these writers was that the contemporary populations of the West were made up of a variety of different races, which were to be found across the British-Irish Isles.<sup>85</sup> The narrative of ‘the extermination of one race by another’ was replaced by one that emphasised ‘continuity’.<sup>86</sup>

The scheme of continuity put forward by academics was paraphrased in travel texts, so that the *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907) argued that successive conquests never resulted in a ‘clean sweep made of the conquered people’. Instead, ‘a large substratum’ remained, ‘to amalgamate with the new people’.<sup>87</sup> In Cornwall, Ellis pointed out that ‘the modern ethnologist is inclined to demur when the race is called Keltic’, and ‘he points out that there were people in Cornwall before the so-called Kelts came, and that there is no reason to suppose they were annihilated by the Kelts, while it is very certain there have been immigrations of other races since’.<sup>88</sup> Salmon speculated that stories of Cornish pixies may represent the folk memory of ‘a rather short race conquered and absorbed by the Celts’.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, in Skye,

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<sup>77</sup> Manias, ‘Deepest Layers of the British Past’, p. 49.

<sup>78</sup> Chris Manias, “‘Our Iberian Forefathers’”: The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation, 1850-1914’, *Journal of British Studies* 51.4 (2012), p. 911. Also see Mandler, “‘Race’ and “nation” in mid-Victorian thought”, pp. 224-44. For an in-depth study of nineteenth-century historiography, see Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*.

<sup>79</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, pp. 911-12; Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*.

<sup>80</sup> John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People* (London, 1900), p. xxiv; Robert S. Rait, *The Making of the Nations: Scotland* (London, 1911), p. vii.

<sup>81</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, p. 912.

<sup>82</sup> George Sigerson, *Modern Ireland* (London, 1868), pp. 11-12, 16, 387. This is also mentioned in Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>83</sup> Sophie Bryant, *Celtic Ireland* (London, 1889), p. xiv.

<sup>84</sup> Manias, ‘Deepest Layers of the British Past’, p. 55. For John Rhys, see Rhys and Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People*, pp. 34-5. Also see Robert Williams [review], ‘John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones, *The Welsh People: Chapters on their Origin, History, Laws, Language, Literature, and Characteristics* (London, 1900), *The English Historical Review* 16.62 (1901), pp. 358-60.

<sup>85</sup> Mandler, *The English National Character*, p. 113.

<sup>86</sup> Johnson, *Folk-Memory*, p. 56.

<sup>87</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907), pp. 62-3.

<sup>88</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), p. 330.

<sup>89</sup> Salmon seemed particularly interested in the ‘knockers’, which were ‘found in most mining districts’ and were known to commit acts of mischief; see Salmon, *Cornwall* (1925), pp. 42-3. Elsewhere, Salmon speculated that the ‘giants’ of Cornish

MacCulloch explained that the island bears the influence of ‘an alien race of Norsemen’, who provided an element in the makeup of the population alongside ‘the Celtic element’.<sup>90</sup> In a summary of the racial layers that made up contemporary Wales, T. Gwynn Jones noted layers of ‘Iberians, Goidels, and Brythons’, after which ‘the Romans added another element’, and the Anglo-Saxons ‘still further complicated the racial mixture’.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Mackie wrote that the populations of Scotland and England contained the same racial layers of ‘Anglo-Saxon stock’, as well as ‘a Norse strain, a Celtic strain’, and the so-called Iberian strain which was ‘well-marked’, meaning that the two countries were considered ‘far more akin in race’ than was recognised by the simple dichotomy of the ‘Celtic’ and the ‘Teutonic’.<sup>92</sup> In these narratives of development, racial purity as a result of isolation was not desirable, because it prevented civilisational progress. For instance, the isolation of the Scottish Highlanders meant that, according to Batsford and Fry, the people were, ‘as late as the eighteenth century’, as ‘backward in comparative evolution as Albania in modern Europe’, with life ‘in remoter districts... hardly in advance of the Iron Age’, or, in Froude’s words, ‘loitering in the rear of civilisation’.<sup>93</sup>

In the study of archaeology, the layers of landscape and race came together in a way which reinforced the idea of civilisational development as a result of racial mixture and amalgamation. Much of this early archaeological scholarship equated archaeological cultures with ‘historically attested “peoples”’, which were believed to be ‘biologically distinct “races”’.<sup>94</sup> In the late-1860s, the archaeologist John Thurnam outlined a three-age model of the long-barrows and round-barrows, which concluded that the former were the older structures as they contained no metal, whereas the latter contained ‘bronze implements and more artistic pottery’. In connection with this civilisational development, the skulls recovered from long-barrows were ‘remarkably long and narrow’, whereas those from the round-barrows were brachycephalic. The long-barrows were deemed the burial mounds of ‘the dolichocephalic race of late Stone Age Britain’, while the round-barrows were Bronze Age migrants and probably Celtic.<sup>95</sup> Travel texts made the same distinction between the ‘more ancient’ long-barrows and the ‘less remote’ round-barrows with their ‘bronze implements’.<sup>96</sup> Crucially, ‘the existence of a range of intermediate skull forms in the round-barrows seemed to indicate that racial intermixture had taken place after the conquest’.<sup>97</sup> The *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907) echoed Thurnam’s views, commenting that ‘the two types have been found in the same cromlech’. The ‘neolithic peoples’ and the ‘Celts who largely displaced them’ lived together ‘and so became mixed in their tombs’.<sup>98</sup> As Thurnam himself wrote, ‘it is far more likely that they reduced them to slavery, or drove them, in part, into the interior and western parts of the island’.<sup>99</sup>

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tradition might represent ‘a distorted and exaggerated recollection of an extinct race’ of ‘Palaeolithic men’, who preceded the Iberian group; see Salmon, *Cornwall* (1925), p. 42. For Baring-Gould’s similar rationalisation, see Sabine Baring-Gould, *A Book of Folk-Lore* (1913); see chapter nine, ‘Pixies and Brownies’.

<sup>90</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 195.

<sup>91</sup> T. Gwynn Jones, ‘The History and Social System of Wales’, in Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), p. xxvii.

<sup>92</sup> J. D. Mackie, ‘The History of Scotland’, in *The Complete Scotland: A Comprehensive Survey, Based on the Principal Motor, Walking, Railway and Steamer Routes* (London, 1933), p. 23.

<sup>93</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> For a summary of the development of archaeology as a discipline, from ‘culture history’ to ‘post-processual’ archaeology, see Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 25-7. For the ideological features of nineteenth-century archaeology, see Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britain and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven, 1994). For the Celt in archaeology, see Timothy Champion, ‘The Celt in Archaeology’, in Terence Brown (ed.), *Celticism* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 61-78.

<sup>95</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, p. 921.

<sup>96</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920), p. 77.

<sup>97</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, p. 921.

<sup>98</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1920), p. 77.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, p. 920-1.

Chris Manias has suggested that the ‘simplicity of this model’, and its endorsement by ‘one of Britain’s foremost craniologists’, accounts for its strong cultural influence in the period.<sup>100</sup>

### *Iberians and Celts*

In the West, the conventional account of race was fundamentally similar across the four case studies, and focussed on the two layers of the amalgamation that were particularly expressive – the ‘Iberian’ and the ‘Celtic’, which will be discussed in turn.

Firstly, the mid-nineteenth century study of ‘prehistory’ by academics such as William Boyd Dawkins and John Lubbock described an ‘Iberian’ Neolithic race, which had exterminated the prior ‘savage’ Ice Age race, but was not itself exterminated by subsequent peoples. Having introduced farming, settlements, and organised social life, the Iberian race was afforded a foundational role in the civilisation of the British-Irish Isles, and became part of the amalgam that made up the modern British nation. They were the ‘dark’ type, which was more visibly expressed in the populations of western regions of the British-Irish Isles.<sup>101</sup> It was widely accepted that the Neolithic ‘Iberian’, ‘Mediterranean’, or ‘Ivernian’ people occupied the land ‘from a time before history began’, and constituted ‘the underlying race everywhere in Western Europe from the western isles of Scotland to Gibraltar’.<sup>102</sup> Academic descriptions of ‘a short, dark-haired, dark-eyed race’ with dolichocephalic skulls were echoed in travel texts.<sup>103</sup> Quoting the philologist Edwin Norris, *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879) described this ‘pre-Celtic’ race as ‘the men of narrow skulls’, while Sabine Baring-Gould explained that this ‘dusky, short-statured race, with long heads’ were present in both Ireland and Wales.<sup>104</sup> In Ireland, one of the foundational peoples were the Firbolgs, who were described as ‘a swarthy, dark-haired race’.<sup>105</sup>

The second key racial group was described as ‘Celtic’ by most writers of travel texts, primarily for the sake of convenience, but this shorthand disguises the ambiguous, varied, and sometimes contradictory usages of the term as a racial category in this period. Many authors wrote of multiple so-called Celtic ‘strata’,<sup>106</sup> while this was often overlain with the two linguistic categories ‘Goidelic’ and ‘Brythonic’, representing the languages of the Celtic ‘layers’. The division of Celtic languages into P-Celtic, Brythonic, or Kymric on the one hand, and Q-Celtic, Goidelic, or Gaelic on the other hand, was a partition that was racialised by academics such as John Rhys, who suggested that the linguistic differences denoted two distinct groups of migrants who had their own religion, cultural practices, and physical forms.<sup>107</sup> The racialisation of linguistic difference was also prominent in travel texts, as linguistic and racial groupings were conflated. For instance, the ‘Old Cornish Language’ belonged to ‘the Cymric division of Celtic, to which Welsh and Armorican (Bas Breton) also belong’.<sup>108</sup> In the second of ‘the two great divisions of the Celtic language’,<sup>109</sup> modern Scottish Gaelic ‘may be defined as a member of the Goidelic branch of the Celtic stock of the Aryan family of languages’, of which the Gaelic of the Isle of Man and that of Ireland

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 921.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 910-35. John Lubbock identified the ‘Neolithic’ as ‘a distinctive stage between the old stone age (Palaeolithic) and the bronze age; see Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, p. 215.

<sup>102</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, p. 1; Baring-Gould, *Cambridge County Geographies: Cornwall*, p. 67.

<sup>103</sup> Johnson, *Folk-Memory*, p. 53. Also see Bowen and Fleure, ‘Denmark and Wales’, p. 468.

<sup>104</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), introduction, p. 43; Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>105</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, pp. 50-1.

<sup>106</sup> Beddoe used this term to describe multiple Celtic races in John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe* (Bristol, 1885), p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Manias, ‘Deepest Layers of the British Past’, p. 55.

<sup>108</sup> *Murray’s Cornwall* (1879), introduction, pp. 42-3. Also see Salmon, *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927), p. 46.

<sup>109</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 54.

‘are but different dialects of the one and the same language’.<sup>110</sup> The movement of languages into the West reinforced racial narratives of British and Irish history. As the *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927) explained, the Britons retreated from the Saxons into Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany, bringing with them their Brythonic tongue ‘to parts that had previously been Goidelic’, which was ‘commonly spoken in Cornwall till the sixteenth century’.<sup>111</sup> The degree of racial difference from so-called ‘Saxon’ England varied between regions of the West, so that while Cornwall ‘stands and always has stood apart from the rest of England’, Baring-Gould believed that it did so ‘much, but in a less degree, as has Wales’.<sup>112</sup>

As travel texts drew on academic sources for their information on the Celts, a process of simplification occurred. John Beddoe characterised the academic texts, which asserted that in race and physical type the Kymric Celts were tall and blonde, whereas the Goidelic Celts were described as a ‘thick-set, broad-headed, dark stock’.<sup>113</sup> In travel texts, however, the vague term ‘Celtic’ was frequently used without further specification, which led to descriptions that at first glance seemed contradictory. For instance, in the *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907) the Celtic type is ‘fair-haired’, whereas MacCulloch contrasted the ‘swarthy’ Celt with the ‘fair-haired, blue-eyed Scandinavian’ type in Skye.<sup>114</sup> In his introductory article in the *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922), the geographer H. J. Fleure attempted to combat the simplification which took place in popular literature, and made it clear that the idea of ‘a single Celtic race’ should be dismissed, adding that ‘journalists who speak of a Celtic “race” are very far out’.<sup>115</sup>

There were several other ‘races’ that were discussed to a lesser extent in the source material, from the earlier ‘Palaeolithic type’ to later waves of Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman stocks. There were also singular examples of racial admixture that transpired as a result of specific historical events. The ‘extensive trade’ between Galway and Spanish merchants (especially marked ‘about the fourteenth century’) meant that the inhabitants became ‘in blood allied to their foreign visitors’, which, alongside the Firbolgian pedigree, accounted for the predominance of the dark type in the West.<sup>116</sup> On St Mary’s – the largest of the Scilly Isles – the ‘early race’ of ‘Ivernians’ had left few visible traces by the late-nineteenth century. The population by this time was deemed ‘less pure than on the mainland’ due to Irish colonists and also to a Bedfordshire regiment that was stationed on the island during the Civil Wars.<sup>117</sup> The racial purity of the Aran Islands was similarly disrupted, and *Black’s Ireland* (1906) explained that it would be incorrect to accept the contemporary population ‘as representatives of the Firbolgs’ because Oliver Cromwell – ‘that upsetter of all things Hibernian’ – left on Inis Mór ‘a small English garrison’ who ‘intermarried with the natives, and so vitiated the Firbolgian pedigree’.<sup>118</sup>

### *Expression in individuals*

As well as considering the historical races of the West, writers commented on the physical traits of the contemporary local population and speculated as to their racial makeup. More academically-minded texts were careful to point out that, in abstract discussions of ‘the blood of the average Englishman’, it was

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<sup>110</sup> Penney, *Murray’s Scotland* (1903), p. xlii. Also see *Black’s Ireland* (1877), pp. 7-8.

<sup>111</sup> Salmon, *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927), p. 46.

<sup>112</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *Cornish Characters and Strange Events* (London, 1909), p. vii.

<sup>113</sup> For a concise summary, see Beddoe, *Races of Britain*, p. 29.

<sup>114</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907), pp. 62-3; MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 196.

<sup>115</sup> H. J. Fleure, ‘The Land of Wales’, in Findlay Muirhead (ed.), *The Blue Guides: Wales* (London, 1922), p. xxvi; the simplification of the term ‘Celtic’ was also discussed in Johnson, *Folk-Memory*, p. 53.

<sup>116</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1877), pp. 263-4.

<sup>117</sup> S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 2. *Cornwall* (London, 1899), pp. 334-5.

<sup>118</sup> Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), pp. 209-10.



doubtful that ‘an individual specimen anywhere exists’.<sup>119</sup> Having opened with this caveat, John E. Southall attempted to quantify the racial layers of the English, assigning percentage scores to the composite layers of ‘Saxon and Anglian’ (45), ‘Celtic’ (30), ‘Danish’ (15), ‘Dano-Norman’ (5), and ‘French, Jewish, Roman etc.’ (5). He did the same to the Welsh, which resulted in average scores for layers of ‘Celtic’ (70), ‘Saxon and Anglian’ (15), ‘Danish’ (5), ‘Norman and Roman’ (5), and ‘Flemish et al’ (5).<sup>120</sup> However, in many travel texts, the already simplified terminology of Iberian, Celtic, and Saxon was discussed not in its original abstract form but applied to the contemporary people of the West.

In these descriptive passages of travel texts we see the influence of the ethnologist John Beddoe, who was a founding member of the Ethnological Society, and served as president of the Anthropological Institute between 1889 and 1891. His influential book, *The Races of Britain* (1885), popularised the method of connecting facial features and anthropometric measurements to racial origin. It was in *The Races of Britain* that Beddoe developed his ‘Index of Nigrescence’, which placed an individual on the scale by quantifying the amount of residual melanin in the skin, eyes, and hair follicles. Additionally, attention was also paid to the jaw, brow, and shape of the skull, which built on the earlier ideas of the anatomist Petrus Camper and the physiologist Johann Kaspar Lavater. The darkest and most prognathous individuals on the scale were described by Beddoe as ‘Africanoid’, which determined not just racial origin but also the location of the individual on the scale, in between the extremes of primitivism and civilisation.<sup>121</sup> Discussions of facial features, head shape, stature, and hair colour remained germane throughout the period in the work of academics such as H. J. Fleure, who described ‘dark deep-set eyes’, ‘large cheek-bones’ as well as an Iberian ‘substratum’ in his article on ‘The Welsh People’ (1939).<sup>122</sup>

The writers of travel texts set out to find contemporary examples of the categories identified by Beddoe, and Havelock Ellis applied this language in his summary of the Cornish types, one of which he described as displaying ‘a rugged prognathous character’ with a ‘massive’ jaw and ‘arches over the eyes’ that were ‘well marked’, all of which combined to give the impression ‘of a lower race’. Similarly, Arthur Salmon noted the physiognomy of ‘the Cornish race of to-day’, which he termed ‘partly Ivernian, partly Celtic; very little Teutonic’.<sup>123</sup> Baring-Gould saw in ‘the dark men and women’ of western Cornwall, Scotland, and Ireland the ‘last relics’ of the ‘infusion’ of Iberian and Celtic ‘blood’, and in Wales he noted the ‘round heads, bullet-shaped skulls, with beetling brows, and jaws the speak of brute force’.<sup>124</sup>

If an individual had in their racial makeup such a range of strains, then the use of simplistic descriptive labels such as ‘Iberian’ or ‘Celtic’ required some level of qualification. Writers such as Havelock Ellis were understandably reluctant to ‘insist too strongly’ that Cornwall was made up of people who represented either the Iberian or Celtic races, since the two were often found to ‘blend into one another, and may even be found in the same family’, while the Cornish as a whole were described by Ellis as ‘a race well compacted of various elements’.<sup>125</sup> Ellis’s statement reveals the flexibility of the term ‘race’ in this period, which in this case was applied to a group (the ‘Cornish’) made up of ‘various elements’ – elements that were usually labelled as ‘races’ themselves.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> John E. Southall, *Wales and her Language* (London, 1892), p. 329.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>121</sup> For the introduction to Beddoe’s method, and the Index of Nigrescence, see Beddoe, *Races of Britain*, pp. 2-8. For other, concise, summaries of Beddoe’s work, see Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels*, pp. 19-20; and Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp. 192-3.

<sup>122</sup> H. J. Fleure, ‘The Welsh People’, *Wales* 10 (1939), pp. 265-9, quotations at p. 267.

<sup>123</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), p. 330; Salmon, *Cornwall* (1925), pp. 24-5.

<sup>124</sup> Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon*, pp. 2-3; Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, pp. 214-15.

<sup>125</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), pp. 330-2.

<sup>126</sup> For a discussion of the various historical uses of the term ‘race’, see ‘Racial’ in Williams, *Keywords*, pp. 248-50.

In addition, the silent influence of these ideas about race in the West is evident in the anecdotal accounts of local characters, described by writers who used similar language to contemporary ethnologists. At a church service in Skye, sitting in front of Malcolm Ferguson was a ‘dark-visaged, elderly dame’, while John M. Synge came across an ‘old dark man’ on the Aran Islands.<sup>127</sup> Ross and Somerville encountered ‘the Spanish type of beauty that is said to abound in Connemara’ when they met ‘Widow Joyce’, who was a ‘specimen’ with ‘large brown eyes, and dark hair’, and S. G. Bayne was struck by the people of Kilronan village on Inis Mór, who ‘are a simple and peculiar people, descended from the Firbolgs’.<sup>128</sup> Howarth summarised this approach, claiming that ‘it is not always necessary to measure skulls or make elaborate studies of the colour of hair or eyes to find strong traces of a Celtic population’, because ‘as we travel westwards’ through England ‘the change in speech is reflected in a change of face’.<sup>129</sup> Through the experience of travel, writers applied and confirmed the abstract racial theories of academics.

#### IV – Race, language, and Britishness in the West

Competing ideas about race and civilisational development played an important role in the Home Rule debates of the 1870s and 1880s, during which Parnell’s Irish Parliamentary Party made the case for Home Rule for Ireland. The debates saw the Liberal Party split over the issue in 1886, as Joseph Chamberlain and the Liberal Unionist bloc defected to the Conservatives and defeated Gladstone’s First Home Rule Bill. More broadly, Liberal thinking was sharply divided on the issue. In a letter to *The Times* in 1887, the Liberal politician and amateur ethnologist Sir John Lubbock undermined the idea that there were four nationalities in Britain, and instead adopted John Beddoe’s racial division of the British-Irish Isles in *The Races of Britain* (1885). Instead of neat racial differences along national lines, Lubbock emphasised that the ‘Saxon division’ comprised most of eastern England as well as the eastern portions of Ireland and Scotland. The Celtic division comprised ‘most of west Ireland and west Scotland together with Wales and Cornwall’. For Lubbock, Gladstone’s Home Rule would antagonise racial tensions, not resolve them.<sup>130</sup>

James Bryce, the Victorian liberal scholar, diplomat, traveller, and politician, disagreed with Lubbock in his reply, and made the argument that ‘a nationality may be made up of any number of races’, and that ‘race is only one of several elements which go to create a nationality’. Gladstone’s policy of Home Rule was therefore acceptable as long as it took into account ‘the “opinions” of each of the four surviving nationalities in Britain’. For Bryce, multiple national identities did not preclude United Kingdom-wide patriotism, and he wrote that while an Englishman has one patriotism (because ‘England and the United Kingdom are to him practically the same thing’), ‘a Scotchman has two’, and the latter ‘believes the day may come when the same may be true of an Irishman’.<sup>131</sup> As Paul Rich noted, Bryce sought ‘tolerant recognition’ for Wales, Scotland, and Ireland within the framework of the status quo, in which the populations had ‘dual allegiances to their own sub-nations as well as to the wider Great Britain’.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ferguson, *Rambles in Skye*, p. 73; Synge, *Aran Islands* (1907), p. 3.

<sup>128</sup> Somerville and Ross, *Through Connemara in a Governess Cart*, p. 94; Bayne, *Through Donegal and Connemara*, p. 108.

<sup>129</sup> Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. 245.

<sup>130</sup> Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 20; see *Mr Gladstone and the Nationalities of the United Kingdom: A Series of Letters to the “Times” by Sir John Lubbock with Rejoinders by Mr J. Bryce, MP* (London, 1887), pp. 7-13, letter of 18 March 1887. For an introduction to Lubbock’s views on race, see Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, pp. 215-18.

<sup>131</sup> Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p. 20; see *Mr Gladstone and the Nationalities of the United Kingdom*, pp. 13-15, letter of 21 March 1887.

<sup>132</sup> Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, p. 21.

Arguments about civilisational development and nationality do not map neatly onto the Home Rule debates of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>133</sup> As Peter Mandler pointed out, the civilisational perspective was mobilised to justify the Union for the development of the Irish, and it also reinforced arguments for Home Rule as a ‘political recognition that the Irish were in an earlier phase of civilisation’. Similarly, the Liberals’ ‘strong sense of nationality’ supported the assimilation of the Irish into the English nation through union, and also the argument that the ‘backward, oppressed Irish needed stronger national institutions than the English’.<sup>134</sup> This impasse hindered intellectual attempts to ‘reconcile nationality and the civilisational perspective’, which aided the argument for the Union in England, while simultaneously strengthening intellectual nationalism in Ireland ‘at the expense of the civilisational outlook’.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the events of the 1880s and 1890s also spooked intellectuals such as William Lecky, who recoiled from the idea of Home Rule in this period.<sup>136</sup>

In travel texts, what emerged was an amalgam of opinions, which generally recognised the racial, cultural, linguistic, and historical variances of the West while tolerating or sentimentalising these differences within the enduring political framework of the United Kingdom. The descriptions of race, language, and nation in travel texts were rarely taken to their explicit political consequences. There were, however, a range of subtle and also blatant implications made by writers who asserted the overlapping claims of fundamental national difference and diverse overarching Britishness.

#### *Undermining the racial and linguistic difference of the West*

Laura O’Connor has examined the ways in which the construction of the Welsh and Gaelic languages in spatial terms (as situated in northern and western peripheries) combined physical with historical remoteness, as Gaelic and Welsh cultures were relegated ‘into a Celtic Fringe that recedes into the distant mists of a faraway place and a once-upon-a-time mythic space’, expelled from the modern nation where ‘English is here and now’.<sup>137</sup> While remaining sensitive to the overt cultural imperialism often at play in discussions of the West, this section explores the model of racial layers which provided the space for notions of Britishness within which Teutonic Anglo-Saxon identity was compatible with the other national identities of the British-Irish Isles, even if it was the ‘leading unifying progressive force’.<sup>138</sup> This mode of thought was part of the wider idea of Comtian progress, which moved unavoidably towards ‘integration and mutual elevation rather than division and separation’.<sup>139</sup> As Edwards put it, ‘the more mixed a nation is, the more rich its life and the greater its future’.<sup>140</sup>

Forms of Irish nationalism which were built on the foundation of racial difference provoked an increase in the assertion of the ‘common mixed ethnicity’ of the British-Irish Isles in the statements of unionists, who sought to diminish notions of ethnic distinctions between the constituent countries.<sup>141</sup> The Iberian layer was particularly important in this respect, as it undermined ‘Celtic’ nationalism by highlighting the ‘much deeper basis of the common country’. Intellectuals such as the archaeologist and geologist William Boyd Dawkins made this argument in his public lectures, linking theories of race to the Home Rule

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<sup>133</sup> For discussions of Home Rule in Edwardian politics, see Alan O’Day, ‘Irish Home Rule and Liberalism’, in Alan O’Day (ed.), *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability 1900-1914* (London, 1979), pp. 113-32.

<sup>134</sup> Mandler, ‘“Race” and “nation” in mid-Victorian thought’, p. 243.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243; Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp. 8-14.

<sup>136</sup> Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, pp. 188-9.

<sup>137</sup> O’Connor, *Haunted English*, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>138</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, pp. 928-9.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 930.

<sup>140</sup> Owen Edwards, *A Short History of Wales* (5th edn, London, 1922 [1906]), pp. 8-9.

<sup>141</sup> Mandler, *The English National Character*, pp. 133-4.

debates of the nineteenth century through the language of layers.<sup>142</sup> This approach allowed for a nation that was the product of ‘a merger of stocks’, in which ‘the disciplined and stalwart Teuton’ regulated ‘the unruly Celtic elements’ while ‘gaining a degree of creativity and dynamism’, which created an ethnological basis for the argument that Ireland should remain part of the British political framework.<sup>143</sup> This strain of thought adapted the ideas of Matthew Arnold, who called for a ‘plural British national make-up’ and aimed to find a place for the Celtic in the English national character.<sup>144</sup> The exception was, perhaps, the Claddagh, who ‘may undoubtedly be regarded as representing the original Celtic inhabitants of the town, as they have never intermarried’ with the ‘Saxon and Norman colonists introduced at different periods’.<sup>145</sup>

The same logic was applied to Cornwall, as well as to Scottish nationalism. In the case of Cornwall, Ellis explained the ‘vigour and versatility’ of the ‘Cornish race’ by its nature as ‘a race well compacted of various elements’.<sup>146</sup> In his *Literary Rambles in the West of England* (1906), Arthur Salmon summarised this development as ‘the gradual moulding of many divergent elements into one nation – a compound of Ivernian, Roman and Celt, Saxon, Dane, and Norman’.<sup>147</sup> The narrative of Scotland as ‘a homogeneous country, peopled by an alien race, struggling to be free’ was rejected outright by A. G. Bradley with the dismissive suggestion that ‘Bruce was an Anglo-Norman baron with the average motives of his breed’, and William Wallace ‘may have been Welsh’.<sup>148</sup> Collett argued that ‘the separation between Scotland and England was political, and came late’, so that in racial terms ‘most of the lowlands’ and ‘the flatter lands right up into Aberdeenshire’ were inhabited by ‘Angles of as pure blood as those who settled Northumberland or Norfolk’.<sup>149</sup>

In the case of Welsh nationalism, racial layering also undermined claims for political independence based on notions of racial difference. In his *A Short History of Wales* (1906), the historian O. M. Edwards (whose nationalism was strictly cultural) argued that the self-conscious unity of Wales cannot be explained by race alone, ‘for the population of the west midlands and the north of England, possibly of the whole of it, have been made up of the same elements’.<sup>150</sup> Edwards also suggested that Wales’s unity ‘cannot be explained by language’, given that ‘nearly one half of the Welsh people speak no Welsh’.<sup>151</sup> Dawkins made the same argument in his political pamphlet *The Place of the Welsh in the History of Britain* (1889), written at a time ‘when it is attempted to raise an antagonism between the races inhabiting the British Islands’. Dawkins rejected the notion that ‘there is some essential difference between them which renders it necessary for them to live further apart from each other than they have done for centuries’. On the matter of those ‘called Celtic’ and those ‘termed English’, he succinctly stated that ‘they are both mixed races’ that were ‘composed of the same ethnological elements, with some predominating in one place and some in another’.<sup>152</sup> Dawkins cited the marked ‘Welsh element’ in the contemporary population of Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Dorset, Devon, ‘and elsewhere’, and concluded that ‘the Welsh have contributed an important element to the ethnology of England’.<sup>153</sup> In short, the attempt to ‘stop or hinder’ the political ‘fusion of the English and Welsh’ which has been ‘to the mutual advantage of both’ was ‘futile’ and ‘mischievous’.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Manias, ‘The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation’, pp. 929-30.

<sup>143</sup> Manias, ‘Deepest Layers of the British Past’, p. 56.

<sup>144</sup> Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, pp. 14, 20.

<sup>145</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1885), pp. 222-3.

<sup>146</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), p. 330.

<sup>147</sup> Salmon, *Literary Rambles*, pp. 188-9.

<sup>148</sup> Bradley, *Highways and Byways in North Wales*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>149</sup> Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. 236.

<sup>150</sup> Owen Edwards, *A Short History of Wales* (London, 1906), p. 123.

<sup>151</sup> Edwards, *Short History of Wales* (1922), pp. 123-6.

<sup>152</sup> Dawkins, *The Welsh in the History of Britain*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

Evidence of the survival of the Welsh language ‘in the dales of Cumbria in the tongue of shepherds counting their sheep’ also served to undercut the idea of fundamental difference based on language.<sup>155</sup> The diversity of languages could be celebrated, as long as the movements supporting language revivals remained cultural and did not stray into the political. For instance, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906) celebrated the ‘Gaelic movement’ for having ‘revived the study of the Irish language and literature’, for having ‘encouraged music and singing at its festivals’, for contributing to dramatic art, and for patronising ‘old Irish sports and pastimes’. However, the book warned that such a movement may only succeed in ‘brightening the homes and enriching the lives of the peasantry’ if it ‘keeps itself free from the intrusion of that plague of things Irish, politics’.<sup>156</sup> Similarly, the *Blue Guides: Wales* (1922) explained that ‘the Welsh hills and remote valleys naturally preserve old treasures of thought and fancy, cherish an old language, and tell old folk-tales’, while at the same time Wales was ‘weak in political organisation’, lacked ‘an effective capital city’, and ‘their law has disappeared for lack of an administrative centre, and their independence for their lack of power of coherence’. For these reasons, Welsh nationalism ‘turned towards spiritual rather than purely political ends’, and with this lack of political motivation it ‘claims the special respect and sympathy of the other inhabitants of Britain’.<sup>157</sup> When it came to ‘patriotism’, John E. Southall was clear that ‘love of country exists apart from any ideas as to form of government’.<sup>158</sup>

However, despite these efforts, cultural nationalism and political nationalism were not so easily separated. By the 1930s, writers such as Rhys Davies were concerned that the ‘entirely cultural’ motivations of the Welsh Nationalist Party had become ‘loudly political’, and ‘a section of the nation fears that Wales is going to become a second Ireland’. Davies warned that ‘isolation in the haughtiness of a tribal consciousness is the danger of such a Party as this which is endeavouring to entice the confused Welsh people into its ranks’.<sup>159</sup> In Scotland, by the 1930s writers such as A. G. MacDonell were convinced that ‘Scotland must decide in the near future whether they wish to be citizens of a free country or citizens of a rather stale music-hall joke’.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, MacDonell saw cultural nationalism not as a productive and acceptable outlet within a British political framework, but as a precursor to political nationalism and political self-rule. He explained that ‘the Scottish Nationalist movement has begun at the right end’ as ‘the spontaneous outburst of the young creators of art and beauty’. This, hoped MacDonell, would prove more powerful a beginning than ‘a political dodge or a commercial ramp’. For MacDonell, the call for Scottish independence had begun with ‘practically every single man and woman who is contributing to the literary and artistic revival of the land’.<sup>161</sup>

### *Musical Celts and the British national character*

Racial types, or peoples, were deemed to possess different qualities. The precise nature of these qualities was the subject of much disagreement among intellectuals, and in the late-nineteenth century William Lecky claimed that the differences between Celts and Teutons ‘have been enormously exaggerated’. He argued that the nature of any such differences was a matter ‘far from settled’, as ‘the qualities that are

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. For the increasing recognition of linguistic influence between English and Welsh, see T. H. Parry, *The English Element in Welsh: A Study of English Loan-Words in Welsh* (London, 1923), p. 2.

<sup>156</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 55.

<sup>157</sup> Fleure, ‘The Land of Wales’, p. xxvi.

<sup>158</sup> Southall, *Wales and her Language*, p. 317.

<sup>159</sup> Davies, *My Wales*, pp. 275-6, 281, 283. Edward Shanks also implied that ‘the Welsh’ had not accepted ‘the principle of amicable partnership’ in the same way as ‘the Scotch’; see Shanks, *My England*, p. 281.

<sup>160</sup> MacDonell, *My Scotland*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

supposed to belong to each have very seldom the consistency that might be expected'.<sup>162</sup> Scholars also had different preferences when it came to terminology, with some choosing 'Silurian' over 'Iberian', for instance.<sup>163</sup> However, they agreed in their narrative of the nation, which described a 'fused and progressive entity' that had emerged over a long period of time, and which united diverse historical groups in the modern nation. These historical processes had 'interrelated' the different racial layers 'into a single national community' that would progress with continued political unification.<sup>164</sup> It was agreed that the nations of Britain could not claim 'purity' in the sense of a 'single line of descent', and groups from the pre-Celtic Neolithic 'substratum' were seen 'as having been an important part of past national formation'.<sup>165</sup> As O. M. Edwards wrote in *A Short History of Wales* (1922):

Some races have more imagination than others, or a finer feeling for beauty; others have more energy and practical wisdom. The best nations have both; and they have both, probably, because many races have been blended in their making.<sup>166</sup>

In travel texts, this idea found its expression in the notion that the modern British nation was based on two broad and complementary sets of characteristics. On one side, the romantic, imaginative, artistic passion of the Celt and the Iberian. On the other, the pragmatism, power, and tenacity of the Saxon.<sup>167</sup> Dawkins suggested that the Welsh had 'contributed to the national character the romantic element, an appreciation of natural beauty, and a tenderness which, united with the severe and stern qualities of the English, have found their noblest fruits in the immortal works of William Shakespeare'.<sup>168</sup> The National War Memorial in Edinburgh, built to commemorate those Scottish soldiers and those serving in Scottish regiments who died in the Great War, was for H. V. Morton a testament to the Celtic 'genius for the glorification of sorrow', which had produced 'the greatest war memorial in the world'.<sup>169</sup>

This contribution to the diverse British national character was often manifest in the languages of the West, which were deemed expressive and musical in a way that reinforced popular understandings of the Celtic West as romantic, imaginative, and passionate. As R. A. S. Macalister explained:

The Irish language as spoken in Connaught is characterised by a much more emphatic observance of the delicate distinctions between the pronunciation of the consonants with different vowel combinations than the Irish of other provinces; thus making the pronunciation of Irish more expressive and more musical in this province than elsewhere.<sup>170</sup>

By characterising the western accents in this way, Macalister reinforced the perception of the West as a repository of creativity and of native culture that was expressed even in the musicality of everyday speech. Similarly, at a Highland Presbyterian service in Skye, MacCulloch emphasised the 'Gaelic tune', which:

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<sup>162</sup> William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1892), vol. 1, p. 397.

<sup>163</sup> Manias, 'The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation', p. 931.

<sup>164</sup> Manias, 'Deepest Layers of the British Past', p. 58.

<sup>165</sup> Manias, 'The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation', pp. 912, 931.

<sup>166</sup> Edwards, *Short History of Wales* (1922), pp. 8-9.

<sup>167</sup> These ideas were largely drawn from Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1867). Robert Knox also claimed this characteristic for Lowland Scotland, in *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia, 1850); see Colin Kidd, 'Sentiment, race and revival: Scottish identities in the aftermath of Enlightenment', in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds), *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester, 1997), p. 117.

<sup>168</sup> Dawkins, *The Welsh in the History of Britain*, p. 42.

<sup>169</sup> H. V. Morton, *The Soul of Scotland* (London, 1930), p. 7.

<sup>170</sup> R. A. S. MacAlister, 'Ancient Geography', in George Fletcher (ed.), *Connaught* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 4.

... progresses leisurely, swaying up and down, now slowly, now in sudden turns or grace-notes, as some supple tree might sway in an uncertain wind, and giving the effect of some exaggerated plain-song melody.<sup>171</sup>

This provided the service with ‘a certain romantic quaintness’, while it also recalled ‘the grim austerities of the most narrow of Puritanic sects and the barbaric chant of some forgotten but indigenous paganism’.<sup>172</sup> In 1934, Batsford and Fry suggested that the Gaelic ‘still widely spoken about the Highlands’ was ‘vigorous in address, rich in assertion, and, perhaps as the result of the ingrained enthusiasm of the Celt for story-telling and poetry, graceful, picturesque and witty in its phrasing’.<sup>173</sup> Even in English-speaking Cornwall, ‘the language the people speak also scarcely sounds English to the stranger’. The marker of difference in Cornwall was not the language itself but rather the ‘inflection of the Cornish voice’, which ‘rises in a musical wave to a climax reached about the antepenultimate syllable’ – a ‘soft inflection’ that ‘breaks as gratefully as the ripple of the Cornish summer sea on the rocks’, in contrast to the ‘harshness of English voices’.<sup>174</sup>

The contribution of Welsh creativity was experienced first-hand by Morton, who heard schoolgirls singing in Caernarfon – for ‘every one knows that the Welsh genius is the gift of song’.<sup>175</sup> The girls sang ‘various songs in Welsh’, before a ‘savage’ rendition of ‘Cymru’n Un’ (‘Wales United’), which sounded like ‘centuries of pride interpreted in sound’, the voice of ‘old Wales defying Saxon, Norman and English’, and it made Morton ‘feel like the enemy’. Next, Morton heard the sound of ‘Merrie England in a faint mist’, as the schoolgirls sang some ‘lovely Elizabethan madrigals’ – ‘beautifully, but a trifle sadly’. While he was initially struck by the national voice of Wales, Morton subsequently enjoyed how their passion injected a different, historical, romantic feel to English madrigal music. This was the ‘old romantic and darkly passionate voice of Britain’.<sup>176</sup> The poet Edward Thomas, however, criticised the romanticised ‘English’ use of the term ‘Celt’ in his *Beautiful Wales* (1905). Thomas labelled English romantics as ‘decadents’, and preferred to depict not the mountains of Snowdonia and romantic Wales, but the difference of the Welsh and the Irish in realistic and unsentimental terms.<sup>177</sup>

This sort of contact between Celtic and Saxon peoples was responsible for what Baring-Gould called ‘the higher qualities of our race’. The Saxons possessed ‘perseverance, tenacity, and power of organisation’, and yet it was ‘due to the spark of living fire’ which entered ‘the somewhat heavy lump of the Germanic nature through contact with the Celt’, which resulted in qualities such as ‘searching intellect, the bright imagination, and idealism’. Baring-Gould concluded that ‘the English of to-day are a mixed race, and there is certainly a great deal more of British and Iberian blood in our veins than some have supposed’.<sup>178</sup> The two contributions were different and, perhaps, unequally weighted, but both were essential to the emergence of the modern British nation. Thus, in discussions of language and race in the West, regions of difference made important contributions to the modern national character, which assisted the construction of a flexible and diverse sense of Britishness while simultaneously undermining calls for political separation based on ideas of ethnic and linguistic difference. Fleure joked that ‘descendants of Norseman may speak Welsh in Wales, descendants of Celtic and pre-Celtic peoples in Norfolk may speak English with a Norse or Danish accent!’ But his more serious point was that ‘we were mixed in the

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<sup>171</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 206.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>173</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 11.

<sup>174</sup> Ellis, ‘The Men of Cornwall’ (April 1897), p. 328.

<sup>175</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 68.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>177</sup> Edward Thomas, *Beautiful Wales* (London, 1905), pp. 10-15. Webb, *Edward Thomas*, pp. 113, 143.

<sup>178</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, p. 10.

making, with the ingredients diversely proportioned east and west, but with no fundamental divergence'.<sup>179</sup> As Dawkins snapped, the Welsh 'do not want home rule', and 'if they ask for it, they will have to bring forward a better reason than that of race'.<sup>180</sup>

In addition to the celebration of the 'Celtic genius' outlined above (perhaps better described as sentimental condescension) there was also a veneer of dismissiveness and superiority when it came to discussions of the racial and linguistic difference of the West. Apart from casual references to the 'little northern land' of Scotland and to 'gallant little Wales', this was more commonly expressed in the form of derisive humour, which overlooked more long term systematic efforts to Anglicise the West.<sup>181</sup> *Ward and Lock's North Wales* (1883) promised to 'not inflict the Welsh on our readers' when describing the songs of Maelgwyn's bards.<sup>182</sup> Similarly, the *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889) noted the 'amusement which visitors may derive' from the 'phonetic perplexities' of Welsh place-names.<sup>183</sup> In 1935, Edmund Vale summarised the long-running joke that an Englishman's attempt to pronounce Welsh would 'incur the grave physical risk of a broken jaw'.<sup>184</sup> Unlike Wales's landscape features, the place-names 'fail to enlist the admiration of the stranger', and seem 'uncouth both to eye and ear'. However, *Jenkinson's North Wales* (1878) admitted that 'their apparent uncouthness disappears when their signification is rightly understood', and the Welsh language sounded to Welsh ears 'more pleasing, as well as much more expressive than the English language, or the names of Saxon origin'.<sup>185</sup>

A sterner line of criticism focussed on the perceived impracticality of languages such as Welsh, Irish, Scots Gaelic, and Cornish. In an introductory section on the Irish language, *Black's Ireland* (1900) quoted the classicist Professor John Pentland Mahaffy, who 'lately delivered himself upon the subject of the revival of the Celtic speech in Ireland'. Mahaffy 'denounces this movement as a "fuss" which is "amusing", and at the same time "melancholy"', and *Black's* found the legitimacy of this criticism enhanced as it came from 'an Irishman, and a man of letters'. According to the travel text, Mahaffy argued it impractical to insist 'upon our youth re-learning their nearly extinct language', and that 'the use of a distinct national language would not necessarily sustain a direct national spirit'.<sup>186</sup> The lack of practical use was also the reason that *Penguin's Cornwall* (1939) dismissed the revival of Cornish, 'which is quite adequate for announcing that the pig is in the river, but useless for buying a packet of cigarettes'.<sup>187</sup> There were strict limits on the extent to which the linguistic differences of the West were tolerated, which emerged after the Ordnance Survey map adopted 'Gaelicism' in the spelling of place-names. The *Thorough Guide: Highlands and Islands* (1884) despaired at the 'strict' and 'remorseless' Gaelicism, which produced a map that represented an 'abiding illustration of the Gaelic tongue', but was 'most bewildering' to those who wished to use the map for 'ordinary purposes, especially those of the tourist'. The publication did not wish to quarrel with the Gael 'for maintaining the integrity of his own language', but maintained that 'Saxon' spelling should have been included, given that 'these maps are paid for by the nation at large and not by any particular section of it'.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Fleure, 'The Celtic West', p. 882.

<sup>180</sup> Dawkins, *The Welsh in the History of Britain*, p. 48.

<sup>181</sup> Elizabeth Grierson, *Peeps at Many Lands: Scotland* (London, 1907), p. 2; Marks, *Gallant Little Wales*. For the Anglicisation of the Scottish Highlands, see Charles W. J. Withers, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region* (Edinburgh, 1984), especially chapter 3.

<sup>182</sup> *Ward and Lock's North Wales* (1883), pp. 69-70.

<sup>183</sup> Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), p. xv.

<sup>184</sup> Edmund Vale, 'Wales: The Spirit and the Face', in J. B. Priestley (ed.), *The Beauty of Britain* (London, 1935), p. 161.

<sup>185</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson's North Wales* (1878), p. xxvi.

<sup>186</sup> Jordan, *Black's Ireland* (1900), p. xxx.

<sup>187</sup> J. W. Lambert, *The Penguin Guides: Cornwall* (London, 1939), p. 22.

<sup>188</sup> M. J. B. Baddeley (ed.), *Thorough Guide Series. The Northern Highlands and Islands* (2nd edn, London, 1884), pp. v-vi.



By reducing the distinctiveness of the West to the more concentrated expression of particular (but ubiquitous) racial layers, and by emphasising the creative, musical contributions to the national character, it was possible to construct the West as part of a diverse and flexible British nation. But this did not mean that the West lost any of its imaginative power as a periphery of difference. As the traveller, the archaeologist, and the ethnologist moved westwards, evidence of the earlier waves of Iberian and Celtic races increased, while evidence of Saxon, Norman, and other subsequent waves decreased and even disappeared. Consequently, the idea of a western periphery of racial difference, which existed *within* the diverse British nation, emerged. Beddoe, Davis, Thurnam and others suggested that 'as the Saxons moved further inland' the largely male Germanic conquerors intermarried with the existing local population, allowing for the possibility that they also retained the natives as slaves and serfs, and that local Celtic elites adopted Saxon language and customs. This allowed for the extermination model in the east where settlement was thoroughly completed, while also incorporating ideas of 'subordination and interbreeding as one moved west across the country'.<sup>189</sup> In other words, theories of racial replacement were compatible with theories of racial amalgamation within the geographical context of the British-Irish Isles.

Westward-moving narratives of historical development described the increased concentration of the Iberian and Celtic layers in the western peripheries, which was also where the non-English languages of the British-Irish Isles had survived. This provided a motif with which the writers piqued the historical interest of the reader and the traveller in their descriptions of the difference of the West. In Ireland, the 'great stone forts' of Inis Mór were understood to represent 'the last line of defence of the Bronze halberd-men', who were 'driven ever westward by the conquering sword-bearers of a new culture'.<sup>190</sup> Similarly, the preponderance of 'dark men and women' found near the Land's End, and also 'found in the Western Isles of Scotland and in West Ireland', may be explained by 'a gentle, intelligent, artistic, unwarlike people' who were 'pressed into corners by more energetic, military, and aggressive races'.<sup>191</sup> Like the waves of the retreating tide, the first Iberian and Celtic invaders from continental Europe reached the very edges of the western British-Irish Isles, covering the extent of the land and leaving a concentrated racial residue that was strongly expressed in contemporary populations, while the subsequent waves of Saxons, Normans, and other groups of settlers were increasingly shallow, leaving traces that were insignificant to the point of being untraceable in the modern population. Daniell enticed his readers with the possibility that, even in the Midlands, 'some specimens of the pure Celtic family may yet be found'.<sup>192</sup>

Even if pure specimens could not be found (which was not necessarily desirable in any case), it was often put forward that the dark Iberian type and the prognathous Celtic type were more conspicuous in the West than anywhere else. For instance, despite the 'successive waves of conquest and migration' that passed through Wales, it was the Iberian characteristics of small physical build and 'dark hair and eyes' that were observable in 'predominant and indestructible vitality'.<sup>193</sup> Thus, in Wales there existed 'a more concentrated amalgam, as it were, of the racial influences that went into the making of England as a whole', of which the most expressive element was the 'small, swarthy people, to whom the name Iberian has been given'.<sup>194</sup> In Cornwall, the Celts 'form a considerable element in the race', and leave 'more

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<sup>189</sup> Manias, 'Deepest Layers of the British Past', pp. 55-6. For example, see Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. 236.

<sup>190</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>191</sup> Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>192</sup> Rev. J. J. Daniell, *A Compendium of the History of Cornwall* (2nd edn, Truro, 1880), 117.

<sup>193</sup> Baring-Gould, *Book of North Wales*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>194</sup> Story, *Little Guides: North Wales* (1907), pp. 61-2.

distinct traces here than in any other part of England'.<sup>195</sup> The darker western types were in contrast to the 'prepondering element of Saxon', which was more expressive in 'the east of Devon'.<sup>196</sup> As Morton put it, 'it is a general rule that in any country which has known invasion you will find the older races in the mountains and the younger and more vigorous races on the good, flat farmlands which they have stolen from the original owners'.<sup>197</sup> After acknowledging the caveats of racial layers and historical admixture, most writers felt justified in using the convenient terms 'Iberian' and 'Celtic' to denote what they saw as the most expressive racial strains in the West. In doing so, they continued to construct the West as a periphery of racial difference.

This was reinforced by linguistic differences, which were particularly noticeable in the West. While strange and exotic languages were an important part of the appeal of the West to English-speaking travellers and readers, the growth of the tourism industry (alongside other forces such as national education legislation) brought about their decline. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the languages of the West were deemed to be dying or – in the case of Cornish – dead. The number of Welsh speakers declined from 1911,<sup>198</sup> and *Black's Ireland* (1877) claimed that 'the mass of the Irish people speak the English tongue alone', and 'only a tenth' speak both Gaelic and English, while 'very few' speak Gaelic only.<sup>199</sup> In *Black's Ireland* (1885), it was claimed that 'only a sixth part of the whole population' was bilingual.<sup>200</sup> Official figures showed that the proportion of Irish speakers in Connacht fell from 50.8 percent in 1851 to 39 percent in 1871.<sup>201</sup> In Skye, MacKinnon explained that 'Gaelic is still the language of the home, but there are few (if any) of the people who are not bilingual'.<sup>202</sup> The *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927) remarked that 'the Cornish tongue is a dead language', and 'if there are degrees of deadness, then Cornish is very dead', since it 'does not enjoy a literary existence' like Latin or Welsh.<sup>203</sup>

Contemporaries were acutely aware of the contradictory relationship between the tourism industry and the vernacular languages of the West. A review of Stephen Gwynn's *Highways and Byways in Donegal and Antrim* (1899) explained that:

In some parts it may be noted there are still natives who can speak no language but Irish, and many who speak English with difficulty. But, with the advent of golfers and anglers (for whose benefit Mr. Gwynn supplies a special chapter) and other visitors, this must gradually change.<sup>204</sup>

Likewise, in Skye, the sense of 'some primitive foreign land' was strengthened by the 'flow of Gaelic' among the local inhabitants, but 'such foreign and primitive aspects' were 'far more common before the advent of MacBrayne's steamers, opening up the markets of the south', and bringing things that the people, 'not knowing the need of them, did without' in previous years.<sup>205</sup> In Wales, Williams noted that one of the 'most complete' areas of Anglicisation was along the north coastal plain between Llandudno

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<sup>195</sup> Ellis, 'The Men of Cornwall' (April 1897), pp. 330-2.

<sup>196</sup> Baring-Gould, *A Book of the West*, vol. 1, *Devon*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>197</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 8.

<sup>198</sup> Gruffudd, 'Remaking Wales', p. 221.

<sup>199</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), pp. 7-8.

<sup>200</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1885), p. 9.

<sup>201</sup> Though this was still well above the national averages of 23.3 percent (1851) and 15.1 percent; see K. Theodore Hoppen, 'Nationalist mobilisation and governmental attitudes: Geography, politics and nineteenth-century Ireland', in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood (eds), *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 164-5.

<sup>202</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>203</sup> Salmon, *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927), p. 46.

<sup>204</sup> [Review] 'Gwynn, *Highways and Byways in Donegal and Antrim*', p. 495.

<sup>205</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), p. 208.

and Prestatyn – a result of railway construction in the 1850s and the popularity of the area as a destination for Victorian tourists – which intensified in the inter-war period.<sup>206</sup> As Rhys Davies put it, the ‘unusual loveliness of North Wales’ which attracted so many tourists ‘has been a curse’ from the perspective of ‘a nationalist preservation of the Cymric spirit’.<sup>207</sup> Dawkins echoed these views, and wrote that the ‘Celtic element’ is ‘more concentrated in... the hilly districts whither the Welsh tongue has retreated before the advance of the railways’.<sup>208</sup> The *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889) explained that, to the west of Pwllheli, in many places ‘there is scarcely a word of English spoken’ because ‘the tourist-tide has not set towards it with sufficient strength to induce the inhabitants to grapple with the English language’.<sup>209</sup>

Within the overarching narrative of decline, vernacular languages in fact became more closely associated with the upland landscapes of the West, as languages often remained in use in the more isolated areas of the western peripheries. Floyd noted that ‘much of the West, and nearly all its islands, are Irish-speaking’,<sup>210</sup> while *Murray’s Ireland* (1877) recognised that Gaelic is spoken more ‘in the south and west’ while it was ‘fast disappearing’ in the ‘north and east’.<sup>211</sup> In western Scotland, Mackinnon overheard a group of middle-aged men who spoke in Gaelic and ‘could speak no English’ on the steamer to St Kilda,<sup>212</sup> and even in Cornwall the Cornish tongue had ‘lingered’ longest ‘around Land’s End’.<sup>213</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1883) described Caernarfonshire as ‘thoroughly Welsh’, with ‘the native language being everywhere spoken, and primitive customs to a great extent preserved’.<sup>214</sup> This made the inhabitants ‘a distinct and very remarkable people’.<sup>215</sup> As Pys Gruffudd put it, ‘mountain and moorland’ were deemed ‘important for their part in defending Welsh culture from the currents of the east’.<sup>216</sup> Williams reinforced ideas that had been expressed in travel texts for decades when he wrote that the Welsh language had retreated ‘to the western heartland behind the Cambrian Mountains’.<sup>217</sup> The mountains of North West Wales acted as ‘barriers to intrusion’, and ‘served to isolate the inhabitants, and to preserve to a great extent the old customs and language’.<sup>218</sup>

In this way, the landscapes of the West were fundamental to Irish and Welsh national identities, and Vale claimed that the Welshman’s ‘mysterious and intriguing’ qualities ‘fit in with the qualities of his scenery in perfect dovetail’.<sup>219</sup> The link between upland landscapes and the survival of the Welsh language was important to nationalists, who completed ‘something of a psychological retreat to the heartland’,<sup>220</sup> as the Triban (which represented the mountains) became the symbol of the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru in 1933.<sup>221</sup> Similar sentiments were evident in Ireland, where Douglas Hyde stressed the importance of

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<sup>206</sup> D. Trevor Williams, ‘A Linguistic Map of Wales According to the 1931 Census, with Some Observations on Its Historical and Geographical Setting’, *The Geographical Journal* 89.2 (1937), pp. 149-50. For the inter-war period, see Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 245. Seaside towns on the North Wales coast were also, however, ‘common venues for national eisteddfodau’; see Borsay, ‘Welsh Seaside Resorts’, pp. 116-17.

<sup>207</sup> Davies, *My Wales*, p. 246.

<sup>208</sup> Dawkins, *The Welsh in the History of Britain*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>209</sup> Baddeley and Ward, *Thorough Guide: North Wales I* (1889), p. 150.

<sup>210</sup> Floyd, *The Face of Ireland*, p. 14.

<sup>211</sup> *Black’s Ireland* (1877), pp. 7-8.

<sup>212</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 21.

<sup>213</sup> Salmon, *Little Guides: Cornwall* (1927), p. 49.

<sup>214</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1883), p. 83.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>216</sup> Rolant Pys Gruffudd, ‘Landscape and Nationhood: Tradition and Modernity in Rural Wales, 1900-1950’, PhD thesis (University of Loughborough, 1989), pp. 175-6.

<sup>217</sup> Williams, ‘Linguistic Map of Wales’, p. 147.

<sup>218</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), p. xxvi.

<sup>219</sup> Vale, ‘Wales: The Spirit and the Face’, p. 163.

<sup>220</sup> Gruffudd, ‘Landscape and Nationhood’, pp. 162-3.

<sup>221</sup> Gruffudd, ‘Remaking Wales’, p. 221-4.

‘our once great national tongue’ in his lecture ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’ (1892).<sup>222</sup> This continued into the inter-war period, when successive Irish governments projected the image of the ‘bleak but beautiful countryside, peopled exclusive by a sturdy Gaelic-speaking’ population in the decades following political independence.<sup>223</sup> Despite overall decline in vernacular languages, the West remained a place where the traveller could still experience the full range of local British colour, and where the nationalist could find the heart of the nation.

## V – Narratives of history, politics, and the British nation

As this chapter has demonstrated, narratives of Britishness operated on several temporal scales, from deep-time geological processes to the millennia of racial and linguistic developments. While some writers attached great importance to race in the construction of nationality, others declared that nationhood was based more on the ‘acceptance of the same ideals and traditions – a common culture and civilisation’.<sup>224</sup> To illustrate his point, Anthony Collett pointed to the physical differences between the ‘fair-headed Frenchmen of the Boulonnais or of Normandy’ and the ‘sunburnt Provençal or Gascon’, and yet ‘France is one of the most coherent of nations’.<sup>225</sup> This section considers the event-history which comprised the narration of centuries of historical and political developments, and constructed a history of the British nation in the British-Irish Isles.

From the 1870s, the professionalisation of history as a discipline left a void that was occupied by a range of popular historical narratives that shaped the national consciousness.<sup>226</sup> In travel texts, writers codified the history of the West, constructing historical narratives and a sense of place that were both local and national in scope. Local narratives illustrated the region as a unique and coherent entity, while connections between the local and the national served to construct the region as a site of the national historical narrative.<sup>227</sup> The narratives constructed in travel texts were generally stories of inevitable and beneficial union which followed heroic and brave resistance. The potentially problematic historical episodes of the Welsh rebellions, the Civil Wars, and the Jacobite rebellions were defused by the incorporation of bravery and loyalty into the British nation, as evidenced by the subsequent contributions of the Welsh and Scottish. This was supported by a framework of historical development which saw progress emerge through conflict. In contrast, narratives of Irish history employed similar techniques but slipped into the events of more recent history. Instead of satisfactory and glorious unification, travel texts reflected British politicians of the period in framing Ireland as a special case, a problematic ‘question’, which made it more difficult to construct a Britishness of which Ireland could remain a part.<sup>228</sup> In the travel texts of the

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<sup>222</sup> Douglas Hyde, ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’, in Brendan Ó Conaire (ed.), *Language, Lore and Lyrics: Essays and Lectures* (Dublin, 1986), pp. 153-70; quotation at p. 160. The important differences between Irish and Welsh nationalism, and the connection with the landscape, are discussed in relation to the Land Question, in Matthew Cragoe, ‘“A Contemptible Mimic of the Irish”: The Land Question in Victorian Wales’, in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds), *The Land Question in Britain, 1750-1950* (Basingstoke, 2010), 92-108.

<sup>223</sup> Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, ‘Landscape, space and gender: their role in the construction of female identity in newly-independent Ireland’, in Steven Adams and Anna Gruetzner Robins (eds), *Gendering Landscape Art* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 76-86, quotation at p. 76.

<sup>224</sup> Collett, *Changing Face of England*, p. 283.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>226</sup> Mandler, *History and National Life*, pp. 51-2. Raphael Samuel recognised the connection between the growth of history as a popular literary form and the rise of nationalism; see Raphael Samuel, ‘Continuous National History’, in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1, *History and Politics* (London, 1989), pp. 10-11.

<sup>227</sup> Raymond Williams discusses the duality of the region as ‘a distinct area’ in its own right and a ‘definite part’ of a larger entity, in Williams, *Keywords*, pp. 264-6.

<sup>228</sup> The treatment of Ireland as a special case marked a departure from the politics of the period 1830-1860; see Hoppen, ‘Geography, politics and nineteenth-century Ireland’, pp. 170-5.

British-Irish Isles, historical and political narratives of the West played an important role in establishing the common culture and traditions which both reinforced and undermined the story of the British Unions.

### *Narratives of Britishness in the West*

In the narration of the political Unions, the preceding centuries of resistance and struggle provided the necessary prelude to unification. In the cases of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, this was depicted as brave resistance, after which membership of the Union was deemed satisfactory to the population. By describing the subsequent contributions made to the British nation by the people of the West, a flexible sense of British history was constructed, which contained within it historical episodes of conflict. In this way, ‘blood-soaked’ landscapes, ‘powerfully evocative’ of historical conflict, were also important to the construction of ‘unionist-nationalism’, within which the articulation of national narratives of conflict and defiance also provided space for narratives of the ‘union of equals’. The landscapes of the West thus accommodated regional, national, and transnational narratives of nationhood, displaying the ‘plural and complexly imbricated’ nature of British identities.<sup>229</sup> In particular, the Welsh and the Scottish were described as ‘fighting people’, whose bravery and loyalty was appropriated by the British nation. Sites of local significance in the West signified historical events which played out in narratives that were simultaneously local, regional, national, and part of the story of the British nation.

The importance of the ‘Union’ narrative was evident in travel texts such as *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883). ‘There is no need’, claimed the guide, ‘for us to enter into a history of Wales anterior to, or during, the Roman invasion and occupation of Britain’. Instead, more space was dedicated to periods such as ‘Edward’s Conquest of Wales’, which commanded four of the 17 pages of the introductory historical sketch, while this section was bookended by images of Edward I and Edward II, ‘The First English Prince of Wales’ (see Images 5.1 and 5.2).<sup>230</sup> Travel texts revelled in the description of the fighting which preceded the Union, and the architecture of North Wales provided monuments to this struggle. The most famous castles in the region were those at Conwy, Caernarfon, and Harlech, built by Edward I during his conquest of Wales. Morton noted that Caernarfon Castle resisted two sieges by Owain Glyndŵr, with its ‘thick walls and massive towers, its heavy doors and four portcullises’.<sup>231</sup>

Travel texts also recognised the ‘Welsh’ castles at Dolbadarn and Deganwy. Dolbadarn Castle, near Llanberis, was built by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, and in ‘after centuries’ Owain Glyndŵr imprisoned Lady Grey of Ruthin there, the wife of his enemy.<sup>232</sup> ‘Old Deganwy Castle’ was a fortress of Gwynedd, rebuilt in stone for Henry III. It was ‘besieged by the Welsh with Henry III inside’, and though the king escaped, ‘the castle was taken by Llewelyn, and destroyed’. So the ‘prophecy of the Welsh bards seemed to be holding true: - “Their Lord they will praise, their speech they shall keep, their land they shall lose – except wild Wales”’.<sup>233</sup> In North West Wales, the narration of centuries of ‘heroic struggles for freedom’ – especially the uprisings of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth in 1211, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282, and Owain Glyndŵr between 1400 and 1415 – invariably ended with the suggestion of the inevitable unification of England and Wales, a narrative which remains prevalent today.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Readman, ‘Living in a British Borderland’, pp. 169-91, especially pp. 182-4, 186-7. Also see Paul Readman, *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 52-89. ‘Blood-soaked’ landscapes quotation from p. 59.

<sup>230</sup> *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), pp. 5, 18-21.

<sup>231</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 63.

<sup>232</sup> Piggott, *Burrow’s North Wales*, p. 47.

<sup>233</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), pp. 81-2.

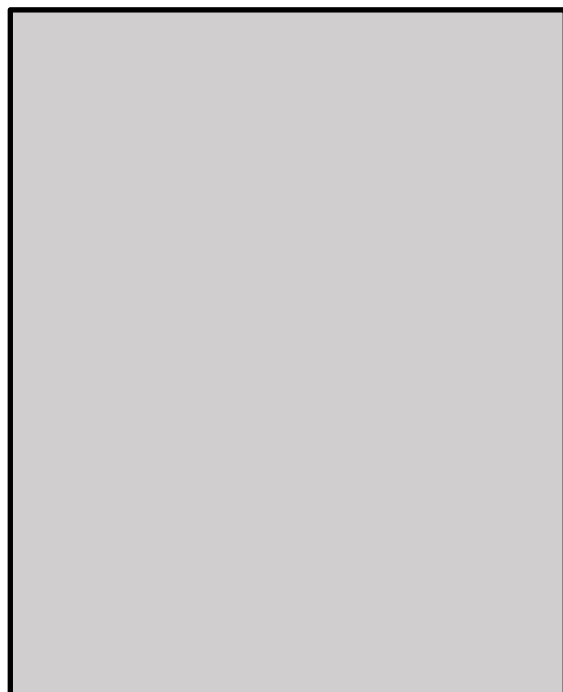
<sup>234</sup> See Susan Pitchford, ‘Ethnic Tourism and Nationalism in Wales’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 22.1 (1995), pp. 44-5.

Image 5.1



*Source: Ward and Lock's (Late Shaw's) Illustrated Guide to, and Popular History of North Wales* (London, 1883), p. 5.

Image 5.2



*Source: Ward and Lock's (Late Shaw's) Illustrated Guide to, and Popular History of North Wales* (London, 1883), p. 22.

The landscape of the West, and the castles within it, acted as symbols of and tributes to ‘the fighting qualities of the Welsh’, which reminded readers and travellers of the long and violent wars between English kings and Welsh princes.<sup>235</sup> Such narratives also permeated the language of travel, as Jeanette Marks likened her ‘plundering’ tour through Wales to the Romans, who ‘spent a summer holiday or so both in North and South Wales’.<sup>236</sup> Upon consideration of the routes into North Wales, which included ‘from Shrewsbury or Aberystwith; or from Liverpool by water to Llandudno; or from Chester, or from Crewe, *via* Oswestry, to Llangollen’, *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883) concluded that there were many ways ‘by which North Wales may be invaded’.<sup>237</sup>

The historical narrative of the Union between England and Wales focussed on two episodes in particular. In the first, Edward I summoned the Welsh chiefs to meet him at Caernarfon, and:

... when they called out that they would acknowledge no prince but one born in Wales, who would speak to them in the Welsh tongue, he produced to them his infant son, born a few days previously in Carnarvon itself. ‘Here’, he cried, ‘is your prince, born in Wales, and I undertake that he shall speak to you in the Welsh tongue’.<sup>238</sup>

In this narrative, subjugation was replaced by a negotiated authority – the Welsh ‘were not subdued’, and retained their loyalty to a Welsh prince.<sup>239</sup>

The second principal episode of the Union was the accession of Henry Richmond to the English throne, as Henry VII, after the Battle of Bosworth Field, ‘when a prince of Cumric blood won the crown of fair Britain’.<sup>240</sup> Henry was the grandson of Owain Tudor, ‘the Welsh gentleman of princely descent’ – a fact that ‘gave exceeding satisfaction to the Welsh’.<sup>241</sup> The satisfaction of the Welsh at the lineage of the Tudor monarchy was a recurrent theme in travel texts and in popular history books. In O. M. Edwards’s *A Short History of Wales* (1906), during the Wars of the Roses ‘the people of Wales welcomed Henry as a Welshman who would rule them kindly and justly’.<sup>242</sup>

Between 1536 and 1543, during the reign of Henry VIII, the Union was formalised and the ‘brave people’ were made ‘fellow-citizens with their conquerors’.<sup>243</sup> Having been granted ‘all English privileges’, the Welsh ‘joined formally with England’, and were ‘incorporated into the United Kingdom’.<sup>244</sup> The question of the Union was deemed a settled historical matter, as *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878) remarked that since the time of Owain Glyndŵr, ‘no national rising has since taken place to attempt to sever the union’.<sup>245</sup> *Baedeker’s Great Britain* (1910) declared that Wales ‘has been an integral and undisputed part of the British monarchy since 1535’.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, pp. 63-5.

<sup>236</sup> Marks, *Gallant Little Wales*, p. viii.

<sup>237</sup> *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), p. 2. Elsewhere, heading into the Highlands from Perth to the Pass of Killicrankie, Clarke travelled ‘almost in fear, as a regiment of English mercenaries is said to have been a-feared in the Forty Five’; see Keith Clarke, *The Spell of Scotland* (Boston MA, 1916), p. 194. Also see Keith Clarke, *The Spell of Scotland* (Boston MA, 1921), p. 194.

<sup>238</sup> Eyre-Todd, *Through England and Scotland* (1903), pp. 86-7. Also see *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), p. 20. Stawell places this event in Rhuddlan Castle, and describes it as a ‘historical joke’ played by Edward I ‘upon the Welsh nation’; see Stawell, *Motor Tours in Wales*, pp. 84-5.

<sup>239</sup> *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), p. 20.

<sup>240</sup> George Borrow, *Wild Wales* (London, 1888), p. ix.

<sup>241</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), pp. lix-lx.

<sup>242</sup> Edwards, *Short History of Wales* (1906), p. 80.

<sup>243</sup> *Black’s North Wales* (1883), p. 3.

<sup>244</sup> *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), p. 21.

<sup>245</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), pp. lix-lx.

<sup>246</sup> J. F. Muirhead (ed.), *Great Britain. Handbook for Travellers* by K. Baedeker (7th edn, Leipzig, 1910), p. xxxiii.

The consequences of political unification were invariably described as beneficial to the constituent nations. O. M. Edwards explained that the ‘state of bondage’ became a union in which the Welsh enjoyed ‘all English privileges’.<sup>247</sup> This consisted of the ending of laws which denied the Welsh ‘residence in the garrison towns in Wales, or the holding of land in England’. In addition, the country was divided ‘into one system of shires and given representation in Parliament’. Stressing the point, Edwards concluded that ‘it was called an Act of Union because, by it, Wales and England were united on equal terms’.<sup>248</sup> Or, as *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878) tellingly put it, after the Act of Union ‘every Welshman is *de facto* an Englishman’.<sup>249</sup>

Moreover, as part of the narrative of unification, the bravery and loyalty of the Welsh resistance was also appropriated by the British nation. As Morton explained, the Welsh fought battles against ‘the might of England’, but this was subsequently manifested in military contributions to shared efforts.<sup>250</sup> He explained that the ‘ancient Britons who inhabit these mountains’ fought against ‘Roman, Saxon, Norman, English’, and ‘when they were not fighting against the English they were fighting with them’.<sup>251</sup> In spite of the narratives of conquest and resistance described above, Morton declared that ‘the Welsh are our oldest allies’, and ‘five thousand Welsh archers and spearmen fought with us at Crecy’, while they also ‘drew their bows at Agincourt’. The Welsh longbow ‘became the national weapon of England’, and ‘gave us victories in France and Scotland’.<sup>252</sup>

The narratives of Skye focussed on the feuds between the clans of MacLeod and MacDonald, and were also overlain with melancholy associations with ‘the weary odyssey’ of the defeated Bonnie Prince Charlie, who fled to the Isle of Skye in 1746 after his defeat at the Battle of Culloden.<sup>253</sup> The focus on this episode reinforced the broader idea of brave yet doomed resistance in the historical narratives of the western peripheries.<sup>254</sup> Once the political threat of the Highland warriors had been neutralised, the glamour of Charles’s invasion of England flourished among the public.<sup>255</sup> Like the castles of North Wales, there were reminders of previous struggles for the traveller on the Isle of Skye. In Portree, a room at the Royal Hotel was the place where ‘Prince Charlie bade farewell to Flora MacDonald’ in 1746. Additionally, around four miles from Portree there was a cave on the eastern shore of Loch Fada associated with Prince Charlie, although Muirhead’s *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927) pointed out that the Prince actually spent the night of 2 July 1746 in a byre two miles to the south.<sup>256</sup> When placed alongside Montrose’s campaigns during the Civil Wars, the ‘weary odyssey’ of Bonnie Prince Charlie formed important connections between the Highlands and the story of Britain, in which two nations ‘coalesced into one State’.<sup>257</sup>

The defeat of the Jacobite cause in the Highlands of Scotland was romanticised as an expression of the sentimental part of the Scottish national character, which contributed an honourable sense of loyalty to the dynamic of the Union. For instance, *Black’s Scotland North* (1920) drew on the work of Walter Scott and claimed that ‘there are two main strains of Scottish blood’, which are reflected in ‘a double

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<sup>247</sup> *Ward and Lock’s North Wales* (1883), pp. 20-1.

<sup>248</sup> Edwards, *Short History of Wales* (1906), p. 81.

<sup>249</sup> Jenkinson, *Jenkinson’s North Wales* (1878), pp. lix-lx.

<sup>250</sup> Morton, *In Search of Wales*, p. 4.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>253</sup> For the powerful, romanticised associations of Culloden, see John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, “‘The Graves of Gallant Highlanders’: Memory, Interpretation and Narratives of Culloden”, *History and Memory* 19.1 (2007), pp. 5-38.

<sup>254</sup> Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 37; Penney, *Murray’s Scotland* (1903), pp. 436-7; Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: Scotland I* (1903), p. 273; *Highlands of Scotland* ([1931?]), p. 180.

<sup>255</sup> Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland*, p. 52.

<sup>256</sup> Muirhead, *Blue Guides: Scotland* (1927), p. 383.

<sup>257</sup> For Bonnie Prince Charlie’s ‘weary odyssey’ quotation, see Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 37. For Montrose’s campaigns and the ‘coalesced into one State’ quotation, see Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 107-15.



temperament shot through the national character'. This split was between the Highland Celt who could not be tempted 'to betray his luckless prince' with the promise of English gold, and the Lowlander who 'is mainly an Englishman moulded by harder circumstances'.<sup>258</sup> Similarly, Mackinnon narrated the historical contributions of the 'Soldier Sons' of Skye, who fought in 'the wars of Bruce for Scottish independence', and also on the side of Charles II at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. During the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, the 'clansmen stood bravely and loyally by the Stuarts'.<sup>259</sup>

However, the fierce loyalty and fighting qualities of the Highlanders that had once resisted England were subsequently appropriated by the British nation. As in the case of Wales, brave resistance turned into loyal contribution, as travel texts continued the narrative tradition of Walter Scott, whose historical novels depicted past conflict and the 'natural progression of a history of ongoing national integration'.<sup>260</sup> The fighting qualities of Highland clans were 'deplorable' when perceived as a domestic threat, but 'became an asset' when deployed in the 'wars of imperialist expansion'.<sup>261</sup> During the Napoleonic Wars, Skye counted among its British Army recruits '21 Lieutenant-Generals and Major-Generals, 45 Lieutenant-Colonels, 600 Majors, Captains, and other commissioned officers, 120 pipers, 10,000 foot soldiers, and one Adjutant-General'.<sup>262</sup> Alvin Jackson noted that Highland soldiers were also praised for their courage in Crimea (1853-6), the Indian Mutiny (1857-8), the Ashantee War (1873), Dargai on the North West Frontier (1895), and the African War (1899-1902).<sup>263</sup> By the inter-war period, the Great War became part of the same narrative. As Mackinnon wrote, 'during the last war' more than 2,000 Skymen 'fought in France and Flanders, in Egypt, the Dardenelles, and in Mesopotamia',<sup>264</sup> and the National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle 'is not only a monument to the brave dead; it is the expression of a living spirit'.<sup>265</sup> Quoting Alexander Smith's *A Summer in Skye*, Mackinnon extolled the achievements of the Highlanders, who waved the tartans 'through the smoke of every British battle', and 'in her time of need Britain never called in vain to the men of Skye'.<sup>266</sup> Highland regiments wore the tartan kilt and they were often led by family members of clan chiefs, but their famed loyalty had been appropriated by the British state.<sup>267</sup>

Nevertheless, just as the Welsh had retained their nationality as fellow citizens, it was made clear that Scotland's nationality also remained undiluted. The military contributions were Scottish and Welsh in their nationality, so that national diversity could flourish within an overarching sense of Britishness.<sup>268</sup> In an article on the 'History of Scotland', which appeared in *Ward and Lock's Complete Scotland* (1933), the Scottish historian J. D. Mackie asserted that, 'often defeated, the Scots managed to hold their own until accident of dynasty produced the Union of the Crowns in 1603', and 'in spite of two centuries of union from 1707, the nation 'maintains her nationality intact at the present day'. Through the narrative of brave yet doomed resistance, and a unification of the Crowns, Scotland was narrated as 'now a part of the United Kingdom', and 'still keenly conscious of her own individuality, hopeful of her future and proud

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<sup>258</sup> Mitton, *Black's Scotland, North* (1920), pp. xi-xii. The distinction between 'Highland' and 'Lowland' was largely constructed in the nineteenth century, and has since diminished; see Murray Pittock, "'To See Ourselves as Others See Us': The Scot in English Eyes since 1707", *European Journal of English Studies* 13.3 (2009), pp. 293-304.

<sup>259</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>260</sup> Quotation from Leerssen, 'Introduction', in Jensen, Leerssen, and Mathijsen, *Free Access to the Past*, p. xx. Also see Morrison, *Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>261</sup> Womack, *Improvement and Romance*, p. 29.

<sup>262</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 12.

<sup>263</sup> Alvin Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 165-6.

<sup>264</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 12.

<sup>265</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 36.

<sup>266</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 12.

<sup>267</sup> Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland*, p. 52.

<sup>268</sup> For the Scottish military casualties as a Scottish contribution to Empire, see Pittock, 'The Scot in English Eyes since 1707', p. 299.

of her past'.<sup>269</sup> This was a constructive Union, evident in the 'Empire-builders' and colonial governors who went forth 'from the glens and straths' of the Highlands.<sup>270</sup> These narratives encouraged what Colin Kidd called 'a liberal and dignified Unionism', which 'involved a national component'.<sup>271</sup> This took the form of narratives in which the divided political history was one that need not threaten the political integrity of the British state, and which was able to contain and also to celebrate Welsh and Scottish national difference.

In Cornwall, narratives focussed on the historical contributions of Cornwall to the English, and then to the British, nation. For instance, at Fowey Harbour in Cornwall, Rowse was moved to remember Elizabeth's defence of the Low Countries by hiding Philip of Spain's treasure and therefore forcing his troops to go unpaid. He also fancied he could 'see the Parliamentary troops camping out there along the Gribbin where they were surrounded in the Civil War', and he remembered Charles I's 'majestic letter of thanks for the loyalty of his county of Cornwall, written after the victorious campaign of 1644'.<sup>272</sup> Similarly, at Tresilian Bridge, Harper was reminded of 'the surrender of the Royalist Cornish army under Lord Hopton, to Fairfax' in 1646.<sup>273</sup> For writers such as Rowse, it was 'not surprising that we should presume to interpret England's story in a West Country setting'.<sup>274</sup> There were entire books dedicated to Cornwall's contributions, such as Walter H. Tregellas's 'readable, fireside book' of *Cornish Worthies* (1884),<sup>275</sup> while travel texts also detailed the 'contributions to the nation' made by the people and resources of the West. For example, the *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924) explained how the granite quarries of Cheesewring and Penryn contributed to the nation. From these quarries 'came the stone for many of the London Docks, Westminster and Waterloo bridges, Chatham docks, Plymouth breakwater, the Duke of Wellington's sarcophagus in St Paul's Cathedral, etc.'.<sup>276</sup> Cornwall had also contributed 'worthies' such as the inventors Sir Humphry Davy, Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, Henry Trengrouse, and 'the prince among them' Richard Trevithick, whose 'invention of the high-pressure steam engine made Stephenson's *Rocket* possible'.<sup>277</sup>

### *The Irish narratives*

While Ireland's history had its own national context that was separate to Britain, it was also written as part of a larger British narrative. For instance, *Black's Ireland* (1877) recalled that, in 1588, one of the ships of the Spanish Armada was wrecked in Galway Bay, and the survivors were massacred.<sup>278</sup> This was a local event which connected western Ireland with a historical narrative that was familiar to readers. In the same way that British civilisational development was viewed as a microcosm of world development, so the history of the region was written as a localised version of the national historical narrative. The narration of such events produced the West as a microcosm of the British nation.

Just as the historical narratives of Wales focussed on Edward I's conquest, so the history of Galway was narrated through the extension of the monarchy's influence. This was a historical narrative of conquest, which emphasised defeat rather than brave resistance. Travel texts such as *Murray's Ireland* (1906) narrated

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<sup>269</sup> *Complete Scotland* (1933), p. 36

<sup>270</sup> MacKinnon, *How to See Skye*, p. 12.

<sup>271</sup> Kidd, 'Sentiment, race and revival', p. 120.

<sup>272</sup> A. L. Rowse, 'Introductory', in A. L. Rowse (ed.), *The West in English History* (London, 1949), pp. 12-13.

<sup>273</sup> Harper, *Cornish Coast (South)*, p. 113.

<sup>274</sup> Gerald Beadle, 'Foreword', in A. L. Rowse (ed.), *The West in English History* (London, 1949), pp. 5-6.

<sup>275</sup> Walter H. Tregellas, *Cornish Worthies: Sketches of some Eminent Cornish Men and Families* (London, 1884), vol. 1, p. xv.

<sup>276</sup> Ward and Baddeley, *Thorough Guide: South Cornwall* (1924), p. 13.

<sup>277</sup> Walling, *West Country*, p. 28.

<sup>278</sup> *Black's Ireland* (1877), pp. 269-70, quoting Hely Dutton, *A Statistical and Agricultural Survey of Galway* (Dublin, 1824), p. 258.

the history of Galway from the ‘first charter of incorporation’ granted by Richard II to the surrender of Galway to Ludlow in 1652, after the town had remained loyal to Charles II during the Civil Wars.<sup>279</sup> Frazar’s *Great Britain and Ireland* (1909) narrated the pattern of rebellion and land confiscation from the reign of Henry VIII – ‘the first English King to take under his dominion the entire country’ – and the rebellions under Elizabeth I, which resulted in the forfeiture of estates to the Crown. The pattern of rebellions and forfeitures continued under James I, under whose reign land in the north was ‘given to English and Scotch settlers’.<sup>280</sup>

This was the narrative of conquests and defeats, which had at its centre the ‘curse’ of Oliver Cromwell, which ‘lies heavier on Galway than on any other Irish town’.<sup>281</sup> During the Civil Wars, Galway supported Charles I,<sup>282</sup> and Morton described Galway as ‘a town of dead factories and great houses brought to decay’, having been ‘the Bristol of Ireland’ in the Middle Ages. During the Civil Wars, ‘Galway remained loyal to Charles, but Cromwell had his way with it in the end, and Galway has never recovered’. This was reflected in the population, which numbered 40,000 a century before Morton wrote, but ‘this once mighty seaport is reduced to that of a small English country town’, with ‘only 14,000’ people living ‘among the ruins of past endeavour’.<sup>283</sup> Broader narratives of the Irish nation similarly emphasised the country as ‘always the “home of lost causes”’, which included the Jacobite cause and the defeats at Aughrim, Derry, the Boyne, and Limerick, which ‘sealed the fate of the Stuarts’,<sup>284</sup> as the Jacobite guns were surrendered to Ginckell and the English at Galway.<sup>285</sup>

In Ireland, too, the language of warfare in historical narratives spilled over into descriptions of travel. Walter J. Farquharson joked that ‘the Irish are supposed to have an objection to British invasions’, but on ‘the desirability of an invasion by the British tourist all parties in Ireland seem to be in agreement’.<sup>286</sup> The London and North Western Railway also made it clear that their use of the term ‘invasion’ to describe the anglers and golfers who travelled to Ireland was meant ‘in a friendly and not a hostile sense’.<sup>287</sup>

Crucially, in narratives of militarism Ireland’s soldiers did not make the same transition as their Welsh and Scottish counterparts, from brave resistance to celebrated contributions to the British armed forces. This was despite the fact that by 1830 the Irish constituted less than one third of the United Kingdom’s population and over 42 percent of the British Army. In 1830, there were more Irish soldiers than English in the British Army, and Ireland’s share of the armed forces remained larger than the share of the total population at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>288</sup> The existence of an alternative military tradition in Ireland, evident in republican insurgency from the 1790s and which came to the fore from 1916, meant that the British state ‘could not claim exclusive rights over the loyalties of Irish fighters’.<sup>289</sup> This, perhaps, explains the absence of Ireland in narratives of military contributions to the Union. The sacrifice of Scottish soldiers in the Great War was commemorated in a National War Memorial which used the

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<sup>279</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), p. 239.

<sup>280</sup> Frazar, *Ireland and Scotland*, p. 3.

<sup>281</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 163.

<sup>282</sup> *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), p. 182; Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), p. 230; Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), p. 239; Ivatts, *Western Highlands (Connemara)*, n.p., see section ‘Galway’; O’Mahony, *Sunny Side of Ireland*, see section pp. 235-45.

<sup>283</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 163.

<sup>284</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 53.

<sup>285</sup> Jordan, *Black’s Ireland* (1900), p. 205; Lang, *Black’s Ireland* (1906), p. 205; Mitton, *Black’s Galway Connemara and West Ireland*, p. 206; *Murray’s Ireland* (1878), p. 182; Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1902), p. 230; Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), p. 239; Ivatts, *Western Highlands (Connemara)*, n.p., see section ‘Galway’; O’Mahony, *Sunny Side of Ireland*, see section pp. 235-45.

<sup>286</sup> Farquharson, ‘The Coming of the British Tourist’, p. 339.

<sup>287</sup> London and North Western Railway, *Ireland for the Holidays* (London, 1911), p. 3. Also see London and North Western Railway, *Ireland for the Holidays* (London, 1914), p. 3.

<sup>288</sup> Jackson, *The Two Unions*, p. 197.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170, 351.

‘iconography of union and monarchy’, whereas the sacrifice of Irish soldiers was discussed in the context of debates on self-government, as the ‘Irishness reinforced in the trenches’ had the potential to feed into republican activism in a way that simply did not occur in Scotland and Wales.<sup>290</sup>

### *Narratives of history and contemporary politics*

In this sense, Ireland was treated as a special case, where historical narratives of political unification inevitably strayed into the contemporary and the political. *Murray’s Ireland* (1906) described the rejection of Poyning’s Law and the suppression of the Rebellion in 1798, after which the Act of Union resulted in ‘the loss to Ireland of her legislature’. However, this was not a settled historical narrative, and the text recognised that ‘much sentiment has been expended’ about the Union.<sup>291</sup> The text slipped into a discussion in which it was hoped that ‘the vexed “Irish question” will find its full and true solution’.<sup>292</sup> In this narrative, the benefits of the Union, such as the ‘Emancipation and many other remedial measures for the relief of Roman Catholics’, were part of contentious contemporary political debates about the nature of Ireland’s position in the United Kingdom.<sup>293</sup> For the writers of travel texts, the Irish Union was a question that had not yet been resolved, and the difference in narratives of Irish politics and history perhaps reflects the approach of British politicians from the 1860s, which, in treating Ireland as a special case, encouraged more general perceptions of Irish difference ‘and eventually perhaps even of separation’.<sup>294</sup>

The conflation of historical narratives and political discussions was evident in several travel texts. For example, in 1910 Alexander Corkey described the refusal of some landlords to sell their estates to the government, while remarking that ‘absentee landlordism has been Ireland’s historic curse for centuries’.<sup>295</sup> Similarly, James Hack Tuke and Stephen Gwynn reported ongoing events with an immediacy of style, while recognising that historical systems of land ownership were in the process of being overturned – a situation which Gwynn described as ‘a singular state of evolution’ in Connemara.<sup>296</sup> While maintaining a sense of historical perspective, many travel texts described scenes of eviction, and explained to the reader the details of the latest Land Act, the events surrounding Captain Boycott, and the purpose of bodies such as the Congested Districts Board.<sup>297</sup>

The ongoing changes in land ownership and tenants’ rights could return to influence the contested narratives of the Union. On one side, texts such as *Murray’s Ireland* (1906) reassured the reader that, as a result of the Union, recent legislation of the British Parliament ‘has entirely transferred the management of local affairs from the hands of the classes to the hands of the masses’, and that the Land Acts would enable ‘the fuller development’ of Ireland’s resources.<sup>298</sup> On the other side, writers such as Stephen Gwynn connected western Ireland’s contemporary under-development to the ‘legislative Union’ with Britain, and the subsequent direction of commercial movement ‘towards the more powerful island’.<sup>299</sup> In

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>291</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 53.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>294</sup> Hoppen, ‘Geography, politics and nineteenth-century Ireland’, pp. 170-5, quotation at p. 174.

<sup>295</sup> Corkey, *Through the Emerald Isle with an Aeroplane*, p. 40.

<sup>296</sup> Gwynn, *Holiday in Connemara*, pp. 4-5; Tuke, *Irish Distress*, p. 56.

<sup>297</sup> For the description of evictions, see John M. Synge, *The Aran Islands* (Dublin, 1912), pp. 77-9; and Stone, *Connemara*, p. 89. For Captain Boycott, see Joynes, *Adventures in Ireland*, pp. 73-6. For explanations of government legislation and the Congested Districts Board in Ireland, see Stevenson, *Charm of Ireland*, p. 331; Joynes, *Adventures in Ireland*, 73-4; and Corkey, *Through the Emerald Isle with an Aeroplane*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>298</sup> Cooke, *Murray’s Ireland* (1906), introduction, p. 53.

<sup>299</sup> The example explored in this instance was the decline of Galway as a port; see Gwynn, *Ireland*, pp. 54-5, 57-8.

Ireland, historical narratives of the nation were inseparable from contentious discussions of contemporary politics.

In Scotland, narratives of history and the Union also strayed into more recent political events. The narratives of the crofter agitation in Skye were too recent for MacCulloch to feel detached, and he described the difficulty of arriving at ‘a conclusion which will do justice all round’.<sup>300</sup> But, generally, discussions of politics emphasised the benefits of unification. For instance, the expansion of the British state and the distribution of tax revenues fed into narratives of beneficial union. According to W. M. Acworth, the postal subsidy of the Highlands was ‘no less than £55,000’, and the Postmaster General was ‘a far more efficient representative of the central government than any Secretary of State for Scotland’, doing ‘more to cement the Union than any Scottish Home Rule League can do to break it’.<sup>301</sup> Similarly, Dawkins explained that Wales has benefited from ‘large grants of money in aid of her colleges’ made by Gladstone. For Dawkins, Wales ‘has had her share, and – looking at her size – more than her share, in the government not only of Wales but of England’.<sup>302</sup>

By the inter-war period, events which had previously been described with immediacy became part of historical narratives. Writers in the 1930s placed the events of the crofter agitation within the longer story of ‘broad changes in the human or economic aspect of the Highlands’ in post-Culloden Scotland.<sup>303</sup> In Ireland, this process was particularly important for prospective travellers who wished to know about ‘recent events, as well as of what has passed into settled history’.<sup>304</sup> In the early-twentieth century, Curtis reassured the reader that the contemporary land agitations were ‘gentle and mild’ disturbances when compared to ‘the land wars of the past’, and Burton E. Stevenson stated that the problems of the ‘Land League days’ were now ‘solved’, so that the peasantry of Ireland, as well as the tourist, ‘can afford to forget the past’.<sup>305</sup> By the 1930s, the narrative of Ireland included ‘the Rebellion and the Civil War’. Morton cited the treaty of 1922 and the establishment of ‘the Irish Free State, or Saorstát Eireann’ as the end of centuries of ‘racial war’, and looked forward to achieving ‘a sense of historical perspective’.<sup>306</sup> The immediate style of reporting remained a common feature of travel texts, but instead described the trade wars between Britain and Ireland, and the difficulties of policing the border between Northern Ireland and the Free State.<sup>307</sup>

Historical narratives of military defeat in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland played an important role in maintaining the myth of ‘English’ superiority, and provided a link between the West and the story of Britain.<sup>308</sup> Some writers, such as Edward Thomas, described the recurrent narratives of defeat as the ‘unobservant’ superstitions of those ‘self-satisfied’ ‘lovers of the Celt’, but dissenting voices were few among the prevailing narratives contained in travel texts.<sup>309</sup> While the military histories of North West Wales and the Isle of Skye were appropriated by narratives of Britishness, those narratives were not

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<sup>300</sup> MacCulloch, *Misty Isle of Skye* (1927), pp. 216-22.

<sup>301</sup> W. M. Acworth, *The Railways of Scotland: Their Present Position, with a Glance at their Past and a Forecast of their Future* (London, 1890), pp. 136-7.

<sup>302</sup> Dawkins, *The Welsh in the History of Britain*, p. 45.

<sup>303</sup> Quotation from Quigley, *Highlands of Scotland*, pp. 6-7. Also see Batsford and Fry, *The Face of Scotland*, p. 9.

<sup>304</sup> Gwynn, *Ireland in Ten Days*, p. 7.

<sup>305</sup> Curtis, *One Irish Summer*, p. 432; Stevenson, *Charm of Ireland*, pp. 346, 353. For later discussions of Captain Boycott, see Curtis, *One Irish Summer*, p. 433; Scott-James, *Englishman in Ireland*, p. 221; Gwynn, *Connaught*, p. 24; and Lynd, *Rambles in Ireland*, pp. 71-3.

<sup>306</sup> Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, pp. vi-vii, 18.

<sup>307</sup> For the trade wars, see Dunsany, *My Ireland*, pp. 270-1; and Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 230. For the Northern Ireland border, see Morton, *In Search of Ireland*, p. 229; and Dunsany, *My Ireland*, pp. 162-3.

<sup>308</sup> Webb, *Edward Thomas*, pp. 143-4. For a brief summary of the process of uniting the local and national in Germany, see Zuelow [review], ‘Bhandari, *Tourism and national identity*’, p. 100.

<sup>309</sup> Thomas, *Beautiful Wales*, p. 11-13.

flexible enough to do the same for Ireland, which fed into the broader depiction of Ireland as existing outside an otherwise diverse Britishness in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

## VI – Conclusion

Narratives of the West operated on different scales of time, including the geological processes calculated in millions of years, the millennia of racial and linguistic development, and centuries of history which slipped into the narration of contemporary political events. The common thread running through these narratives was a model of Britishness which allowed for the contribution – in fact required the contribution – of diverse landscapes, nations, and peoples.<sup>310</sup> This model of Britishness provided space for the articulation of several cultural nationalisms, which suggests that nationalism does not necessarily seek political expression in the form of state power, as has been previously suggested.<sup>311</sup> The result was often expressed in sentimental condescension, repressive tolerance, or what Luke Gibbons called ‘benevolent colonialism’, which saw Matthew Arnold suppress the Welsh language in his role as a school inspector for Wales, while simultaneously calling for the adoption of certain Celtic characteristics into the British mixture.<sup>312</sup>

By reciting, adapting, and popularising subjects as diverse as ethnology, philology, archaeology, geology, and history, travel texts offer an important insight into the construction of Britishness in the period. While there was an overarching political framework, and while certain races or peoples might lead, there were also valuable contributions made to the national culture and the national character by historically defeated peoples. The historical narratives of the Union provided the coherence of the British-Irish Isles in a political sense (the rigid framework of the state), while the races and nationalities from the deep past emphasised the diversity that made up the layers of the British nation. Through narratives of conflict, unification, and resolution, seemingly peripheral regions could in fact be central to national histories.<sup>313</sup>

Britishness was and remains culturally and historically contingent, ‘always in the making, never made’, and after the Second World War the nature of discussions about Britishness changed.<sup>314</sup> Traditional theories of physical anthropology adapted to the ‘rise of Darwinism and Mendelian genetics’ in the early decades of the twentieth century, and racial typologies remained influential in discussions of ‘race’ until at least the 1930s.<sup>315</sup> But by this time, the rise of National Socialism in Germany, with its use of eugenics as part of a ‘race fitness’ programme, made clear the dangerous politicisation of racial theories.<sup>316</sup> Many academics, such as H. J. Fleure, were alarmed at the ways in which theories of race – often abstract, and containing tentative arguments with many caveats – were used for ideological purposes, to support arguments for eugenics, which was ‘enthusiastically propagated in the media and in public discussion’.<sup>317</sup> Fleure made this point explicit in an article called ‘The Celtic West’ (1940), in which he questioned the

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<sup>310</sup> This differs somewhat from the argument that, for instance, Wales was ‘little more than a perpetual footnote in accounts of the history of the English state and, later, of the British state’; see Keith Robbins, ‘More than a Footnote? Wales in British History’, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 1.1 (2001), p. 21.

<sup>311</sup> For previous suggestions that nationalism and state power are inextricable, see John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (2nd edn, Manchester, 1993 [1982]), p. 2; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (2nd edn, Ithaca, NY, 2006 [1983]), p. 1; and E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 2013 [1990]), p. 9.

<sup>312</sup> Mandler, ‘“Race” and “nation” in mid-Victorian thought’, p. 241. For ‘benevolent colonialism’, see Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, p. 156.

<sup>313</sup> Readman, ‘Living in a British Borderland’, pp. 184-5.

<sup>314</sup> Quotation from Samuel, *Island Stories*, p. 22.

<sup>315</sup> Paul Rich, ‘The Long Victorian Sunset: Anthropology, Eugenics and Race in Britain, c. 1900-48’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 18.3 (1984), p. 3.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12. For an example, see Sir Basil Blackett, ‘What I would do with the world’, *The Listener* 6.150 (1931), p. 903.

usefulness of the term 'race', and accused British political leaders of 'helping Nazi racialist propaganda' with their misuse of the term.<sup>318</sup> Fleure raised more specific concerns about what he called the 'Nordic Myth' in an article which appeared in the *Eugenics Review* in 1930. Fleure emphasised that 'race-type is an abstraction, to be used with much reserve', and he was alarmed at the way in which 'the apostles of the Nordic Race' used race-theory to 'glorify some group or other' and support their 'political ambition' and 'mania for power', whether it be the descendants of 'the men of the Mayflower', the English landed aristocracy, or 'the masters of Germany'.<sup>319</sup>

Travel texts repackaged the academic theories of race, and applied in a simplified manner what were often abstract theories and tenuous links between physiology and psychical characteristics to living examples of the local people in the West. Academics such as Fleure emphasised the lack of knowledge regarding 'the capacities and social values' of racial types, and admitted that 'we are only at the beginning of studies of correlation between the physical and the psychical'. In any case, to make such links would be incredibly difficult because any given individual was not racially of one stock. Even the 'Nordic type' remained 'quite unproven' as an 'indigenous stock' which had existed 'in purity' in certain areas of north-western Europe.<sup>320</sup> Fleure called for 'more work' and 'quiet examination', rather than 'rhapsodies' which used the language of science 'to veil, however thinly, political propaganda'.<sup>321</sup> In this context, the language of race was increasingly questioned, and Julian Huxley and A. C. Haddon opted instead for the term 'ethnic group' in their book *We Europeans* (1935), which anticipated broader changes in the terminology of the social sciences after 1945.<sup>322</sup> Discussions of 'national character' also seemed too rooted in the Victorian period to be relevant after the Second World War, as the BBC abandoned a series of radio broadcasts on the topic in 1950.<sup>323</sup> In the post-1945 period, Britishness was constructed in new ways, which was expressed in projects of nationalisation and the welfare state, and had as its national mythic moment the glories of the Second World War.

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<sup>318</sup> Fleure, 'The Celtic West', p. 882.

<sup>319</sup> Fleure, 'The Nordic Myth', pp. 117-18.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>322</sup> Rich, 'Anthropology, Eugenics and Race in Britain', p. 13.

<sup>323</sup> Mandler, 'Liberalism and the English National Character', p. 137.





## Conclusion

By looking across travel texts that were nominally organised into national categories, the West emerges as a complex, diverse, yet coherent collection of landscapes, historical associations, and spaces of performance. As a set of places and as a concept both real and imagined, the multifarious nature of the West materialises once the distinct thematic discussions of the chapters in this thesis are recombined.

From the final decades of the nineteenth century, the proliferation of the literary culture discussed in the introduction was closely connected to infrastructural developments and the growth of the modern tourism industry, discussed in chapter one. Railway lines were extended to Clifden, Achill, Kyle of Lochalsh, and Mallaig, while the pre-existing networks were thickened in North West Wales and Cornwall, linked together by coaches and, later in the period, motorbuses and motorcars. Travel times tumbled, as coaches, trains, and steamers ran in connection with one another, and tourist tickets made the discovery of the West more convenient. Circular routes, itineraries, daily excursions, inns, hotels, hostels, and estimated expenses were standard sections of systematic travel texts, which fused infrastructure with tourism for a new reading and travelling public. In addition to practical information, travel texts collected and repackaged the contents of a wide range of publications, including the historical, geological, topographical, literary, linguistic, and folkloric, as part of the tightly packed literary bogland.

The growth of roads and railway lines, alongside the emergent tourism industry, were part of broader debates about industrial development in the late-nineteenth century. As chapter two argued, the legacy of colonial discourse was evident in the language of improvement and of racial stereotypes that characterised discussions of the western peripheries and their inhabitants, particularly on the Isle of Skye and in West Connacht. There was an industrial imagination, too, which envisaged economic growth in the West, and praised the efforts of enterprising landowners and the initiatives of government-led organisations such as the Congested Districts Boards of Ireland and Scotland. In North West Wales, the proximity of industry and upland rural landscapes came together in the promotion of Welsh water to tourists and to the inhabitants of large cities. This reveals the ambivalence of attitudes towards industry and suggests that the West was not simply a place of the rural, preindustrial, and mythical, but was also as a site of the current and future economic development of the nation.

As a result of these interrelated developments, the West became a set of spaces for physical and imaginative travel, which had its own unique set of associational values that were articulated in travel texts, as outlined in chapters three and four. Folk tales, medieval manuscripts, nineteenth-century literary works, and contemporary geological investigations all combined to produce the tantalising symbolic power of the West. Travellers and readers envisioned the West from afar, and after thresholds were crossed and the edges of the land were reached, the westward gaze continued towards the hazy, indistinct horizon. From this perspective, legends of sunken lands, such as Lyonesse and Cante'r Gwaelod, and mythical tales of lands of immortality just beyond the horizon, such as Hy Brasil and Tír na nÓg, marked the West as a liminal space between the known and the unknown. Moreover, the historical West was experienced through an immersive perception of travelling in time as well as in space, which was articulated in the historical imagination, as clock-time was replaced by the rhythms of the sun and the tides.

For many writers and readers, travelling outwards to the western peripheries was also a voyage of introspection, which was explored in chapters two and three. The contested performance of travel was embedded in contemporary moral geographies, and in broader processes of social and cultural change, which sheds light on the anxieties of the *fin-de-siècle* and the emergence of mass culture in this period.

Travel texts provided the cultural capital with which informed travellers could, and did, differentiate themselves from the variety of tourists who prioritised deck-chairs, the seaside, and the promenade. This was achieved by leaving the so-called 'beaten track' and exploring less-frequented areas such as the Vaternish peninsula and the northern coast of Cornwall, and by drawing on Burkean and Romantic tropes of adventure and misadventure in the misty mountains and along the precipitous cliffs of the West. In addition, as Morton indicated at Conwy Castle, even at the same popular tourist attraction two visitors could have very different experiences as a result of contrasting levels of historical knowledge. By exploring travel, and the depiction of travel, as a form of performance, this thesis highlights the moral geographies of travel but also the uncertain role of the travel text itself, which at once equipped the traveller with the cultural capital to delineate, and yet symbolised the reader's reliance on the 'guide' and thus inhibited truly authentic experiences. These personal accounts of differentiation were connected to broader concerns about urbanisation and physical degeneration in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, which were joined by anxieties which focussed on the emergence of a mass, commercial society in the twentieth century, as sprawling suburbia threatened to contaminate the West. This was introspection on a broad scale, as accounts of travel in the West drew attention to perceived problems at home. Experiences of travel in the West are inseparable from developments in the metropolitan centres that travellers left behind.

In the West, many travellers were faced with landscapes, languages, and people very different to that which they were accustomed. This led to contemplation on a national scale, as the periphery emerged as central to discussions of Britishness in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As explored in chapter five, the West was a powerful imaginary for national identities within the British-Irish Isles, but it was also mobilised as an important part of a diverse sense of Britishness, evident in layers of geology, archaeology, race, language, and centuries of historical development. In travel texts, this layered Britishness was articulated in a way that celebrated cultural difference on the condition that it did not stray into the realm of the political. The layers of the British past were flexible, and accommodated centuries of military struggle between the constituent nations of the British-Irish Isles, and survived political reconfiguration after the partition of Ireland, until ideas about Britishness changed profoundly after the Second World War.

### *The West and 'four nations' history*

As historical sources, travel texts are especially valuable as they enable the historian to explore the significance of the West as part of broader historical processes in the period 1880-1940, and their intertextual nature highlights the ways in which these processes intersected, collided, and overlapped. The ancient and modern were interwoven, as travellers boarded twin-screw steamers, sped along railway lines, and bowled along in motorcars in order to move through the landscapes of the ancient West. In these landscapes the oldest layers of these islands remained exposed at the surface, and their exploration drew heavily on well-established Romantic performances of adventure and misadventure. The urban and the rural were connected to each other in travel texts, as descriptions of travel narrated the journey into the remote West from metropolitan centres, while those with industrial ambitions looked upon the West as an undeveloped periphery of untapped potential. At the same time, discussions of urban conditions, racial degeneration, and the consequences of suburban sprawls reversed the flow of influence, as the West was valued for its remoteness, untainted by the stain of industrialisation and commercialisation, which was evident in the commentary on the cottages, huts, megaliths, and castles of the periphery. The proximity of these developments reveals the relational nature of the rural and urban, and contextualises

the growing perception of ‘national’ landscapes that would later find legislative expression in the establishment of National Parks after the Second World War.

The West has retained its importance as a cultural imaginary, and its allure as a set of remote, authentic, dramatic landscapes that abound with historical associations. In his search for *The Wild Places* (2008), Robert Macfarlane found that ‘almost all’ of them were in ‘the far north or far west’.<sup>1</sup> David Gange’s forthcoming history and travel text of *The Frayed Atlantic Edge*, Madeleine Bunting’s *Love of Country: A Hebridean Journey* (2016), and the popularity of Tim Robinson’s books on the Aran Islands and Connemara, attest to the continued power of the landscapes of the West.<sup>2</sup> Official tourist associations continue to mobilise these images in their brochures and on their websites. The Cornish peninsula is ‘tumbling into the vast Atlantic ocean’, while in the ‘far west’, the land ‘is adorned with a legacy of Bronze age standing stones, huge granite burial chambers, Celtic crosses and holy wells’, as Cornwall celebrates both its ‘Celtic roots’ and its ‘triumphant mining past’.<sup>3</sup> North Wales is home to ‘one of Europe’s oldest living languages’, and is characterised by ‘enormous castles’ and the ‘ruggedly action-packed’ Snowdonia National Park.<sup>4</sup> The Isle of Skye boasts ‘majestic geological features’, ‘prehistoric sites’, ‘brooding castles’, and associations of ‘feuds of rivalling clans, Jacobite battles’, and the Highland Clearances.<sup>5</sup> In western Ireland, ‘towering sea-cliffs’ and ‘islands at the edge of the world’ characterise the essence of the ‘undisturbed’ and ‘magical’ Wild Atlantic Way.<sup>6</sup>

However, the West is no longer at the intersection of the broad historical processes that form the subject of this thesis. From the inter-war period and especially after 1945, the politics of class eclipsed the politics of nation. The post-1945 period also witnessed the rise of what David Edgerton recently called the ‘British nation’, characterised by post-imperial and often ‘implicit’ nationalism which was manifest in ‘the internal rebuilding of the nation’ and the language of ‘political economy’, as the story of the British nation was told by historians who downplayed the fact that it was ‘a nation of nations’, and instead concentrated on the rise of the welfare state.<sup>7</sup> Despite the rise of Scottish and Welsh nationalism and the process of devolution, the SNP and Plaid Cymru have increasingly adopted civic as opposed to ethnic formulations of nationalism. Civic understandings of Irishness have also grown in the Republic of Ireland and more recently in Northern Ireland, where since the Good Friday Agreement Sinn Féin has increasingly rejected ethnic and sectarian definitions of the nation. Current debates on the role of the nation in the broader context of European politics have brought these issues to the fore.<sup>8</sup>

This, in turn, reveals the particular importance of the West in the cultural history of the period 1880-1940. The fascination with the West intensified in a society that was increasingly characterised by transience and change in industrialisation, urbanisation, commercialisation, and suburbanisation at the end of the nineteenth century. The cultural significance of the West, in all its symbolic value and layers of meaning, emerged as a product of modernity, and sheds light on the experience of modernity as characterised by the appropriation of certain aspects of the modern, and the rejection of others. Amid

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Macfarlane, *The Wild Places* (London, 2008), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> David Gange, *The Frayed Atlantic Edge: A Historian’s Journey from Shetland to the Channel* (forthcoming, 2019). Madeleine Bunting, *Love of Country: A Hebridean Journey* (London, 2016). Among Robinson’s books are: Tim Robinson, *Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage* (Dublin, 1986); *idem*, *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth* (Dublin, 1995); *idem*, *Connemara: Listening to the Wind* (Dublin, 2006); *idem*, *Connemara: The Last Pool of Darkness* (Dublin, 2008); and *idem*, *Connemara: A Little Gaelic Kingdom* (Dublin, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.visitcornwall.com/about-cornwall> [9 June 2019].

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.visitwales.com/destinations/north-wales> [9 June 2019].

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/isle-skye/> [9 June 2019].

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/destinations/republic-of-ireland/mayo/articles/bay-coast/> [9 June 2019].

<sup>7</sup> Edgerton, *Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, pp. xix-xxx.

<sup>8</sup> These broad trends are summarised in Richard Marsden, ‘Brexit and the mythologies of nationalism: a warning for Wales’, *History and Policy* (2018), <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/opinion-articles/articles/brexit-and-the-mythologies-of-nationalism-a-warning-for-wales> [8 June 2019].

these transformative changes, the West was especially important for its ability to anchor the transient present in the stability and continuity of the past. The West was a periphery where the past still lived, where it was believed that the historical influence of Anglicisation was at its thinnest, where vernacular languages and racial types survived in greater concentration. The West was steeped in the deep history of the British-Irish Isles, which was especially significant in a period in which the political Union was questioned and fractured, as ideas of Britishness were contested and reconstructed. The past was recovered in travel texts and in travel itself, both of which offered authenticity and revealed continuity and coherence in a period of rapid social, cultural, economic, and political transformations. Travel removed the writer from the everyday, and provided a different perspective on the problems of society. From industrialisation, physical degeneration, to commercial society and suburbanisation – travelling to the West became an important trope through which writers attempted to deal with the most pressing issues of the day.

Finally, examining the West offers a new way of approaching a ‘four nations’ history, and highlights the complex interweaving of identities in the British-Irish Isles, as well as the overlapping imagined geographies which operated on a variety of spatial scales, including the ‘south country’, the north, and the borderlands of Northumberland and the Welsh Marches. This allows us to explore the interconnections between British and Irish histories, and examine the different extents to which cultural nationalism found political expression in this period. This work complements the studies of regions and borderlands, which have also altered the scales of historical analysis in insightful ways, exploring that which exists within or across conventional categorical definitions. Travel texts brought together the local, regional, national, and transnational, in a way that emphasises multiple allegiances and identities, which intersected and overlapped between the pages of these texts. The history of the West is not simply a story of increasing English dominance, but one which places the periphery at the very centre of British and Irish cultural history.

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