Introduction

'In the GWR holiday provisions there is something to suit everyone...'[1]

Britain's railways attract substantial scholarly attention. This is unsurprising: since their initial availability as a form of passenger transport in the 1830s railways revolutionised how far and how fast people and goods could be moved, breaking down long-established notions of time and space in the process.[2] Railways stimulated and gave access to new forms of consumption as journeys which previously took days to complete now took hours. In some cases railways helped popularise aspects of consumer culture, holidays in particular.[3] The recent cultural turn in transport history has led scholars to enquire about these experiences and the people who consumed the railways as much as those who ran them.[4] Yet scholars remain fascinated by the railways' role in the economy.[5] Britain's railways became some of the country's largest businesses, and scholars have examined how they performed financially, managerially and technologically.[6] There is a peculiar omission however, one

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[1] Great Western Railway Magazine (hereafter GWRM), May 1936, p. 209.
[2] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization Of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century*, (Berkeley, 1986); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, (2nd edn., Cambridge Mass:, 2003), pp. 5-9.
[3] John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, (Manchester, 2000), pp. 58-59.
[4] Colin Divall and George Revill, 'Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technology', *The Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 26:1 (2005), pp. 99-112; David Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers: A Social History*, (Newton Abbott, 1988); Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, p. 74; Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination*, (London, 1999), pp. 237-39; Gayle Letherby and Gillian Reynolds, *Train Tracks: Work, Play, and Politics On The Railways*, (Oxford, 2005); Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity*, (Manchester, 2001); Malgorzata Nitka, *Railway De-Familiarisation*: *The Rise Of Passengerhood In The Nineteenth Century*, (Katowice, 2006); Ana Parejo Vadillo and John Plunkett, 'The Railway Passenger; Or The Training Of The Eye', in John Plunkett and Michael Freeman (eds.), *The Railway and Modernity: Time, Space and The Machine Ensemble*, (Oxford, 2006), pp. 45-68.
[5] Gijs Mom, Colin Divall and Peter Lyth, 'Towards a Paradigm Shift?', in Gijs Mom, Gordon Pirie and Laurent Tissot (eds.), *Mobility in History: The State of the Art in the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility*, (Neuchâtel, 2009), pp. 13-40.
[6] Geoffrey Channon, *Railways In Britain and The United States, 1830-1940: Studies In Economic and Business History*, (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 23-24; Nicholas Crafts, Timothy Leunig, and Abay Mulatu, 'Were British Railway Companies Well Managed in the Early Twentieth Century?', *Economic History Review*, 61:4 (2008), pp. 842–866; A.J. Arnold and S. McCartney, 'Rates of Return, Concentration Levels and Strategic Change in the British Railway Industry, 1830–1913', *Journal of Transport History,* 3rd ser. 26:1 (2005), pp. 41–60; John

which unites both the cultural and economic perspectives. How rail travel was 'commodified' for sale,[7] and how railway companies sought to persuade customers to travel, are rather neglected issues.

Yet it is clear that Britain's railways marketed themselves extensively. A discrepancy exists between the sheer volume of marketing communication, that which encompasses countless advertisements; posters; pamphlets; gazetteers; postcards; and publications, and what is known about its formulation and production. That some of this ephemera was generated by the first railways suggests, alongside ambitious public events, that railways companies were never ignorant of selling strategies.[8] Some have questioned the sophistication of this output however; whether ideas about marketing, customer satisfaction, public relations or segmentation strategies were significant elements of even the early-twentieth century railway company.[9] Yet within the last fifteen years attempts to market railway passenger transport have received renewed academic scrutiny.[10] Scholars have discovered important information about, for instance, the creation of railway advertising departments, the design of visual advertising, locomotive and carriage styling, and other specialist techniques used by railway companies during the first four decades of the twentieth

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Dodgson, 'New, Disaggregated, British Railway Total Factor Productivity Growth Estimates, 1875 to 1912', *Economic History Review*, 64:2 (2011), pp. 621–643; R.J. Irving, 'The Profitability and Performance of Britain's Railways, 1870–1914', *Economic History Review*, 31:1 (1978), pp. 46–66; Brian Mitchell et al., *How Good Was the Profitability of British Railway 1870-1912?*, (Working paper: Warwick, 2008); Peter Scott, 'British Railways and the Challenge from Road Haulage: 1919-1939', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13:2 (2002), pp. 101-20.

[7] Diane Drummond, '"For the Ladies?" Railway Company Advertising and the Woman Train Passenger in the UK and USA, 1890-1965', (Unpublished paper, T2M Conference York, 6-9th October 2005), p. 5.

[8] Harold Pollins, 'The Marketing of Railway Shares in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 7:2 (1954), pp. 230-39; William Fenton, *Railway Printed Ephemera: Being a Tragi-comic Picture of the Rise and Fall of the Railways in Great Britain Deduced from some of the Bits and Pieces of Paper They Left Behind*, (Woodbridge, 1992); Mark Casson, *The World's First Railway System: Enterprise, Competition and Regulation on the Railway Network in Victorian Britain*, (Oxford, 2009), p. 309.

[9] Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers*, p. 161; Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, (London, 1991), pp. 254-59; Rachael Holland, 'LNER Posters 1923-47: Aspects of Iconography, Railway and Social History', (Unpublished MA thesis, University of York, 1999), p. 3.

[10] Colin Divall, 'Transport, 1900–39', in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A Companion to Early Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Oxford, 2002), p. 286.

century.[11] The notion that railways were notable, even pioneering, marketers is gaining more credibility. However, there remains a substantial 'grey' area about how and when it was achieved, and to what extent railways were driven by the need to envision passenger's wants beyond practical considerations about the price and speed of services.

Scholars are limited by the availability of sources. Firstly, the statistics collected by railways on passenger numbers are unrevealing sources. Fare structure was divided by class initially and expanded as other types of ticket – for example excursion, season and discounted fares for groups such as hikers - were introduced. These show that journeys were divided by type but reveal little about corporate perceptions of passengers. Furthermore, statistics recording total journeys and revenue allow only impressionistic judgements about financial performance or corporate attitudes to particular services. The many changes in how information was gathered and quantified impedes analysis of long-term trends. Imprecise statistical accounting has been taken as evidence of haphazard attitudes to sales, and that the aggregate profitability of the entire organisation was what mattered most to senior managers.[12] This leads to the impression that passengers were viewed and treated as a large, uniform mass. More seriously, the lack of detailed records regarding marketing strategy outwardly confirms this conclusion. The National Archives, for example, holds little formal comment from railway advertising and publicity departments.[13]

Whilst little official information survives regarding marketing practice, absence of evidence should not be taken as evidence of absence. Generally speaking, marketing

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[11] Alan Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness', (Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of York, 2000), pp. 1-9; Ralph Harrington, 'Beyond The Bathing Belle: Images Of Women In Interwar Railway Publicity', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 25:1 (2004), pp. 22-41; D.C.H Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising: The London and North Eastern Railway Between The Wars', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 25:2 (2004), pp. 30-33; Colin Divall and Hiroki Shin, 'Cultures of Speed and Conservative Modernity: Representations of Speed in Britain's Railway Marketing', Benjamin Fraser and Steven Spalding (eds.), *Trains, Culture, and Mobility: Riding the Rails: Volume 2*, (Lanham, 2012), pp. 3-26.
[12] Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers*, p. 86.
[13] The National Archives (TNA), RAIL 267/30 Report on Advertising Department for Half-Year 31st January 1876; RAIL 250/354, Traffic Committee Minutes 1923-1926; RAIL 250/354, Traffic Committee Minutes 1926-1929.

departments in most instances rarely retained a complete record of their activities.[14] Furthermore, Britain's railways experienced periods of war and reorganisation between 1900 and nationalisation in 1948. This almost certainly led to information being lost. In the 1960s in particular, as lines closed and the move towards modernisation began, British Rail undertook significant, but ultimately uncompleted, microfilming projects resulting in large quantities of original sources being either discarded or destroyed.[15]

This thesis argues that one can transcend these deficiencies and argue that, contrary to popular perceptions, railway companies' attitudes to their customers were beginning to change in the early twentieth century. Companies arguably shifted their perception of customers from a largely homogeneous mass and captive market to individuals with different desires and expectations which required satisfaction. The attempts to understand customers, research their requirements, segment them into groups, and target them with effective advertising suggest the railways' own take on marketing long before it was defined by academics in the 1950s. This thesis argues that this developing attitude to marketing can be confirmed by introducing unconventional sources. In particular photographic marketing, a source almost completely neglected by historians of the railways, can be used to draw different conclusions about the abilities of railway marketers beyond more commonly analysed mediums such as the pictorial poster. Photographic marketing was used extensively by most railway companies,[16] but its role as part of wider railway promotional activities has

[14] Leonard McDonald, 'Legal, Public Relations, Marketing, Personnel and Production Records', in Alison Turton (ed.), *Managing Business Archives*, (Oxford, 1991), pp. 161-84.
[15] Vicky Stretch, 'Network Rail: Managing Railway Records in the Twenty First Century', *Business Archives*, 102 (2011), pp. 49-50; Cliff Edwards, *Railway Records: A Guide to Resources*, (Richmond, 2001), p. 11. In 1968 the historic records were divided between the Public Records Office in London and the National Railway Museum in York causing further disruption and breakup. Furthermore, the nationalised railway records have never been subject to the Public Records Acts meaning there has been no legal impediment to their disposal to private collectors.
[16] Ed Bartholomew and Michael Blakemore, *Railways In Focus: Photographs From The National Railway Museum Collections*, (Penryn, 1998), p. 12.

not been widely recognised.[17] For the Great Western Railway (hereafter GWR), the principal focus and case study of this thesis, photographs were essential for disseminating corporate messages. The National Railway Museum's A and B series photographic collections comprise nearly 20,000 negatives produced by the GWR and its British Railways successor, the Western Region, between 1898 and the early 1950s. Hundreds were taken for publicity reasons, only a fraction of which were selected for publication. The sheer volume of photographs, and the apparently rigorous process in narrowing this number down for publication, leads one to question whether the GWR's efforts were similar to other companies which used photographic marketing to partition large markets and appeal to consumers in a more 'emotive' manner.[18] This thesis suggests that they were. In particular, it argues that photographic marketing supports the conclusion that the GWR knew who its chief consumers were, and that it knew more about them in terms of tastes, wants and desires.

Historians now recognise the importance of photographs as historical sources, promotional photographs receiving particular attention. From initial experimentation with the medium in the 1830s and 1840s, rapid development between 1900 and 1950, and global dominance afterwards, photographs were never simple records but complex documents steeped in authorship and meaning.[19] Scholars agree that photographs do not represent 'innocent' windows onto the past. Instead they display it in 'very particular ways'.[20] Equally, photographs do not have any meaning in themselves, they are vehicles which 'carry

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[17] Photographs are occasionally admitted as part of wider studies into promotional activities, Simmons (*The Victorian Railway*, pp. 148-52) for example. Other than this, and Bartholomew and Blakemore's work, Jenkins' unreferenced work examines the appearance of photographs in publicity: David Jenkins, *Come To Wales: Publicity Photographs from the Great Western Railway, 1905-1940*, (Cardiff, 1998).

[18] Elspeth Brown, *The Corporate Eye: Photography and the Rationalization of American Commercial Culture, 1884–1929*, (Baltimore, 2005), pp. 162-208; John Hewitt and Helen Wilkinson, *Selling The Image: The Work of Photographic Advertising Limited*, (Bradford, 1996); Helen Wilkinson, '"The New Heraldry": Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain', *Journal of Design History*, 10:1 (1997), pp. 23-38.

[19] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction To The Interpretation Of Visual Materials*, (London, 2007), p. 39; Anandi Ramamurthy, 'Constructions of Illusion: Photography and Commodity Culture', in Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, (London, 1997), pp. 159-60; Stuart Ewan, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, (Cambridge, 1984), p. 90.

[20] Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, p. 2.

meaning'.[21] The image constructed as part of a marketing campaign is loaded with evidence about what the producer wanted to communicate and how they hoped the image would be read. This is important for a study of corporate photography because it suggests that photographs can be used to analyse an organisation's intentions. Although photographs cannot reveal how people looked at or interpreted photographic messages, they nevertheless reveal certain ideas about the people and the cultural conditions that produced them.[22] To be clear from the start, the subject of analysis in this thesis is the corporate use of photographs, not their interpretation on the consumer's part. Using photographic marketing, this thesis analyses how the GWR pictured customers literally in its marketing, and how it imagined their wants and desires.

In particular, this thesis argues that the photographs are evidence of the GWR's own practical understanding of market segmentation principles.[23] Railway companies had segmented their services based on price and class since the 1830s, but this was a very rudimentary separation. They also knew that in dealing with different sets of customers, freight and commuters for example, different appeals needed to be made. But this thesis focuses on the decades after 1900 and the GWR's attempts to segment the holiday and discretionary travel market. As we shall see, the railways sought to grow this market because they believed that, as a growing number had access to time off, every person in the country was a potential passenger. There was therefore no theoretical limit on the number of journeys they could make. Indeed, as the quotation in the title of this introduction suggests, the GWR wanted its holiday services to appeal to 'everyone', which included consumer groups defined by their interests such as 'the family', 'lovers of the picturesque', 'lady travellers', 'sportsmen' and 'ramblers', as well as those sufficiently wealthy to potentially forgo train

[21] Stuart Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London, 1997), p. 5.
[22] James Chapman (ed.), *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches,* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 4.
[23] For a definition of market segmentation see Philip Kotler, *Marketing Management: Analysis*, *Planning*, *Implementation and Control*, (Englewood Cliffs NJ, 1991), p. 279.

travel in favour of the car. The idea behind the use of photographic marketing was therefore outwardly simple. As every individual in the country was a potential passenger, different images would persuade different people to consume. A relatively cheap and accessible medium by 1900, photographic marketing could be used to appeal to a variety of tastes, but also respond to changing market conditions quickly. This simple idea belies greater empirical understandings of passengers' interests, wants and desires. A high level of construction within the photographs elicits more detailed understandings of customers which were, in some cases, the product of new theories and new methods in understanding and researching the market. Ultimately, photographic marketing was an essential component in reorganising selling around the point of view of the customer more generally.

Although it argues that the GWR marketed using a customer orientated approach, this thesis does not suggest that practices were as developed or sophisticated as suggested by the theory of today or even thirty years ago. It does not 'compare' the GWR to current marketing theory to judge how 'modern' it was; this would be a misleading and ahistorical endeavor. Rather, this thesis argues that GWR's ideas and strategies were much more sophisticated than is commonly thought. It finds that the GWR was thoroughly conversant in ideas of customer satisfaction, devised effective advertising strategies and used perceptions of the passenger to shape services and publicity. This thesis will raise further questions about the extent to which the GWR was forward-thinking or innovative, not just in the travel sector but in comparison to other contemporary marketers. It will engage this question, but will not be able to provide a definitive answer because too little has been written on the wider development of marketing in Britain.[24] Similarly, the lack of systematic academic analysis into corporate use of

[24] Since the late-1980s there have been attempts to redress this. T.A.B. Corley ('Consumer Marketing in Britain 1914-60', *Business History*, 29:4 (1987), pp. 65-83), wrote of marketing's comparative neglect and since this time the subject has received greater attention. It is only recently that the subject has received its own journal and, more generally, has been considered by a wider range of scholars. See Section 1 below for a more in depth discussion of the field.

photographic marketing also prevents more detailed comparisons.[25] Nevertheless, this thesis draws upon a wide body of scholarship to provide the intellectual, methodological and contextual framework for its argument. First, this chapter gives a brief sense of the GWR as a company, where it stood in comparison to other railways and contemporary businesses. The following sections then link the GWR's use of photography to four areas; Consumption, Marketing and Advertising; Selling Transport; the History of Holidaymaking; and finally, Holiday Marketing in a Modern Perspective.

Section 1: The Great Western Railway

As one of the world's oldest and most successful railway companies much is known about the GWR's general and economic development, internal organisation, staff conditions, locomotives and carriage design.[26] The lack of an academic business history represents a significant omission, and this means that it is sometimes hard to grasp the context within which marketing was carried out.[27] Inaugurated in March 1835 as a scheme to link London with the port at Bristol, and thus London with New York, the GWR grew steadily throughout the nineteenth century. It absorbed smaller railways in a quest to monopolise travel over the south and west of England but faced competition from several other companies for this

[25] Several scholars research the photograph's role in marketing campaigns in the United States, although the level of detail varies substantially; T.J. Jackson-Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, (New York, 1994), p. 324; Pamela Walker-Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing*, (Baltimore, 1998), pp. 268-69; Brown, *The Corporate Eye*; Patricia Johnson, *Real Fantasies: Edward Steichen's Advertising Photography*, (London, 1998). For Britain there are fewer references, and only one detailed study: Hewitt and Wilkinson, *Selling The Image: The Work of Photographic Advertising Limited*; Wilkinson, '"The New Heraldry": Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain', pp. 23-38.

[26] Tim Bryan, *The Great Western Railway: A Celebration*, (Hersham, 2010); Andrew Roden, *Great Western Railway: A Histor*y, (London, 2010); Oswald Nock, *The Great Western Railway in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, 1962); Geoffrey Channon, 'The Great Western Railway Under the British Railways Act of 1921', *Business History Review*, 55:2 (1981), pp. 188-216; Rosa Matheson, *The Fair Sex: Women and the Great Western Railway*, (Chalford, 2007); Peter Timms, *Working At Swindon Works, 1930-1960*, (Stroud, 2007); Rosa Matheson, *Trip: The Annual Holiday of GWR's Swindon Works*, (Stroud, 2006); Michael Harris, *Great Western Coaches: 1890-1954*, (Newton Abbot, 1966).

[27] See for example Roger Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History of GWR Publicity*, (Newton Abbott, 1987).

territory.[28] Throughout its first forty years business was roughly divided between passengers and freight. However, the passenger business began to grow in importance from the 1870s onwards as holidays became more widely affordable.[29] Around this time, although scholars are unsure of the exact year, the company's first advertising department was created.[30] This was a small department within a behemoth; a handful of men were charged with making the company's services known to the general public at a time when businesses generally were sceptical of the value of promoting themselves and their products.[31] The department's importance grew, especially during the 1890s when discretionary travel, that is travel for leisure rather than business purposes, became ever more important to railway companies both in terms of revenue and prestige.

By the end of the nineteenth century the railway industry had reached a highly developed state. Demand for passenger services was well-established with 1427 million journeys taken in 1900.[32] The industry was dominated by large, well-organised companies which, in spite of individual idiosyncrasies, broadly agreed on what railways could and should offer customers. The GWR was Britain's third largest company ranked by market value, eclipsing tobacco and alcohol manufacturers (see Table 0.1). It continued to grow and in 1911 the company comprised roughly 70,000 employees, making it the third largest employer in Britain just behind the London and North Western Railway but far behind the General Post Office.[33] In 1914 the GWR was the second largest supplier of railway services

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[28] C.R. Clinker and E. MacDermot, *History of the GWR: Volume One 1833-1863*, (London, 1964), pp. 72-99 and 152-76.
[29] James Walvin, *Beside The Seaside: A Social History Of The Popular Seaside Holiday*, (London, 1978), pp. 40-60.
[30] Wilson (*Go Great Western*, p. 19) claims that the department was formed in 1886, but a report into the department's activities suggests that this was much earlier: TNA, RAIL 267/30, Report On Advertising Department For Half-Year 31st January 1876.
[31] GWRM, May 1904, pp. 71-72; Terence Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, (London, 1982), pp. 136-37; E. S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertising*, (London, 1952), pp. 84-85.
[32] P. Cain, 'Railways 1870-1914: The Maturity of the Private System', in Michael Freeman and Derek Aldcroft (eds.), *Transport in Victorian Britain*, (Manchester, 1988), p. 100.
[33] Peter Wardley, 'The Emergence of Big Business: The Largest Corporate Employers of Labour in the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States c. 1907', *Business History*, 41:4 (1999), p. 102.

in Britain, had assimilated 137 companies since its formation in 1835, and spanned a territory of some 3000 route miles between London and the South West, parts of the Midlands and Wales.[34] Its position was threatened when, after the First World War, Britain's railways were compulsorily reorganised from over one hundred individual companies into 'The Big Four' regional railways. The GWR gained more territory chiefly in Wales (Figure 0.1), and ultimately was fortunate enough to keep its corporate identity as others lost theirs, but the company faced the same pressures. Competition from road traffic and a changing holiday market meant that railways needed to be receptive to, and able to cope with, change. A sense of the success of this receptiveness can be gained from Table 0.1; by 1934 the GWR was still a giant in the corporate world. War once again disrupted the railways and in 1948, 117 years after its birth, the GWR ceased to exist when Britain's main line railway companies were nationalised.

Figure 0.1: The Great Western Railway and Subsidiaries as consolidated under the Act of 1921[35]

[34] Channon, 'The Great Western Railway Under the British Railways Act of 1921', pp. 188-216.
[35] Channon, 'The Great Western Railway Under the British Railways Act of 1921', p. 198.

Table 0.1: Large British Companies 1904/05 & 1934/35[36]

1904/5			1934/5		
Rank	Company	Market Value (£m)	Rank	Company	Market Value (£m)
1	Midland Railway Co.	136.7	1	L.M.S Railway	306.8
2	London & N. Western	126.7	2	Imperial Tobacco	259.3
3	Great Western Railway	92.3	3	L.N.E. Railway	240.6
4	North Eastern Railway	90.9	4	Great Western Railway	201.2
5	Lancashire & Yorkshire	63.7	5	British American Tobacco	160.8
6	Caledonian Railway	58.2	6	Southern Railway	145.5
7	North British Railway	58	7	Lever Brother	127.7
8	Great Northern Railway	54.9	8	Imperial Chemical Industries	123.4
9	London & S.W. Railway	54.5	9	Shell Transport & Trading	76.8
10	Great Eastern Railway	47.9	10	Courtaulds Ltd.	69.3
11	Bank Of England	44.5			
16	Gas Light & Coke Co.	25			
18	Imperial Tobacco Ltd	22.6			
21	Guinness	18.8			
23	London & India Docks	16.9			

The GWR represents an ideal case study for several reasons. Firstly, the company has attracted considerable scholarly attention which provides a basis for examination. Within this there are a small number of works concerning marketing and advertising: Wilson's narrative and unreferenced history of the company's publicity department provides a starting point,[37] but Bennett's research into the company's marketing literature offers a different perspective on the intricacies of corporate appeals to customers' interests and how this compared to other railways.[38] Persistent debates regarding the quality of the GWR's management suggest, however, that studying the GWR has more to offer. For instance, some claim that it was a conservative and backward-looking company, and this attitude was

[36] Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States*, pp. 23-24.
[37] Wilson, *Go Great Western*.
[38] Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness'.

reflected in its marketing.[39] This opposes Wilson's and Bennett's assessment, and the dispute highlights the need to reconsider how the GWR approached its customers using new sources. Secondly, unlike the other companies which became Britain's 'Big Four' railways, the London and North Eastern (LNER), London Midland and Scottish (LMS), and the Southern Railway (SR), the GWR retained its corporate identity. This allows a thorough exploration of photographic marketing across the first four decades of the twentieth century. Finally, the company held photographic marketing in high regard. It released photographic sales publications consistently from 1904. Only wartime restrictions prevented publication. York's National Railway Museum (hereafter NRM) preserves a wide-ranging collection of the company's published and unpublished photography, the sheer volume of which implies the company's firm belief in the medium. The amount of material makes the GWR an immediately practical choice and, as the joint-first academic research to consider the photographic marketing of a British railway company,[40] the GWR is therefore an ideal place to begin. This chapter's following sections consider in more depth the historiographical debates about how railways sold themselves and their services. First however it is important to consider the general framework of marketing and selling, how historians have understood the motives to consume, and the attempts, by businesses and marketers, to shape this.

[39] Michael Bonavia, *The Four Great Railways*, (Newton Abbott, 1980), pp. 39-45; Beverley Cole and Richard Durack*, Railway Posters, 1923-1947: From the Collection of the National Railway Museum, York, England*, (New York, 1992), p. 8.

[40] The other being Matthew Thompson, '"A Master Whose Heart is in the Land": Picturing the Tourist Utopia of the Great Western Railway 1897-1947', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2011).

Section 2: Literature Review

2.1: Consumption, Advertising and Marketing

The GWR sold travel at a time when the nature of consumption was changing. Although a 'consumer society' is said to have occurred earlier,[41] some scholars consider the years between 1900 and 1939 as the first of 'mass consumption' in Britain.[42] Population expansion accompanied by economic growth meant that incomes and leisure time increased.[43] This varied by region and class: improvements were felt less by the working classes working in traditional industries, but for those in middle-class occupations consumption opportunities generally improved.[44] Thus the middle classes were the chief target audience for many new commodities.[45] Historians argue that in these decades the character of consumption increasingly shifted from traditional staples to new fashionable items.[46] People tended to define themselves by what they consumed rather than what they produced.[47] The apparently rational calculus of the market was therefore embedded in a range of cultural processes such as publicly displaying one's aspiration for a better life.[48] The

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[41] John Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain, 1880-1980*, (London, 1994), p. 1; Neil McKendrick et al, *The Birth Of A Consumer Society: The Commercialization Of Eighteenth-Century England*, (London, 1982), pp. 1-3; Maxine Berg, 'Consumption In Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, *The Cambridge Economic History Of Modern Britain; Volume 1*, (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 357-80; Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture Of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*, (London, 1991), p. 5.

[42] David Bell and Joanne Hollows (eds.), *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity From The 1900s to 1970s*, (Aldershot, 2006), p. 2.

[43] Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain, 1880-1980*, pp. 11-13; Sue Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A Companion To Early Twentieth-Century Britain,* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 353-59.

[44] Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', p. 358; Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain, 1880-1980*, pp. 24-25; David Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, (London, 2000), pp. 128-29.

[45] Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth-century Britain: The Search For a Historical Movement*, (Cambridge, 2003), p.8.

[46] Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain*, pp. 12-21; Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', pp. 354-61.

[47] Hilton, *Consumerism in Twentieth-Century Britain*, p. 4; Lori-Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women*, (Oxford, 1994), p. 4.

[48] Peter Jackson, 'Introduction: Transcending Dualisms', in Peter Jackson et al., *Commercial Cultures: Economies, Practices, Spaces*, (Oxford, 2000), p. 1.

middle-class holiday epitomised this change. It satisfied a range of social desires; it could be restorative and educative but it also allowed people to consume conspicuously, showing that they had the money and, crucially, the right sensibilities to select an enviable destination. By contrast, before the late-1930s the working classes had limited access to breaks of more than a day or two.[49] One can therefore conclude that when the GWR marketed holidays of a week or more, it targeted a solidly middle-class clientele which other marketers tried hard to influence.

Some scholars use the development of advertising to partly explain increased consumption in the early twentieth century.[50] Although careful not to suggest that consumers acted as passive ciphers buying anything favourably advertised,[51] there is agreement that advertising assisted the pervasiveness of the desire for consumption. Making the availability of products or services known to a consuming public existed long before 1900.[52] Yet it was not until the final decades of the nineteenth century that some advertisers broke with tradition and became shapers of demand. They recognised that advertising might not simply announce the arrival of new products but assist in the creation of new desires.[53] Reassured by attempts during the 1890s to professionalise and regulate the advertising industry,[54] many companies no longer viewed advertising with scepticism but as essential to business success. Furthermore, aided by new technologies such as the lithographic poster,[55] images steadily became more preferable to text-based ploys. As cost effectiveness and quality improved

[49] Walton, *The British Seaside*, pp. 58-59.
[50] Robert Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and The Marketing Revolution, 1862-1969*, (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 10-16.
[51] Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain*, p. 28; Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History Of American Advertising and Its Creators*, (New York, 1984).
[52] Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, pp. 4-5; Elizabeth McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*, (London, 2004), p. 155-56; Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, pp. 5-7; Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'Respectable Persuaders: The Advertising Industry and British Society, 1900-1939', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2008), pp. 3-6; Richards, *The Commodity Culture Of Victorian England*, p. 5.
[53] Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, p. 7.
[54] Nevett, *Advertising In Britain*, pp. 136-37.
[55] Paul Rennie, *Modern British Posters: Art Design and Communication*, (London, 2010).

image-based advertising was commonly understood as way to appeal to customer desires in a succinct and emotive manner.[56]

Scholars have questioned what advertisers knew about consumer aspirations and how they sought to respond to and manipulate them. This has prompted consideration of how firms marketed. Richard Tedlow proclaims marketing as difficult to discuss because it is difficult to define.[57] Indeed, marketing is often confused with advertising, but whilst advertising forms one vital part of marketing activities – communication - marketing also incorporates branding, pricing, market research and product development for example. As a basic definition, scholars and practitioners understand marketing as a range of processes and techniques which help 'identify, anticipate and satisfy customer requirements' in an effort to increase business.[58] This is a modern definition, but scholars believe that although the term 'marketing' was not in general use until the 1950s, a range of similar practices operated long before this. In short, the principles of marketing were in use long before it was theorised and studied scientifically as an academic discipline.[59] To historians, how businesses understood their consumers and used this knowledge to manufacture and advertise products, represents a significant development towards understanding consumers as agents in the construction of their own desires. Such a conceptualisation is crucial to this thesis which intends to explore how the GWR imagined customers with a view to using this understanding to shape promotion.

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[56] Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, pp. 7-10.
[57] Richard Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America*, (2nd edn., Princeton, 1996), p. 5.
[58] David Mercer, *Marketing*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 11. Mercer quotes the definition used by the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Also see Larry Percy and Richard Elliot, *Strategic Advertising Management*, (3rd edn., Oxford, 2009), pp. 15-18; Sally Dibb, *Marketing Concepts and Strategies*, (4th edn., Boston, 2001), p. 1-13; Fitzgerald also employs this definition in his examination of Rowntree's (Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and The Marketing Revolution, 1862-1969*, pp. 6-10). See also, Robert Fitzgerald, 'Marketing and Distribution', in Geoffrey Jones and Jonathan Zeitlin (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Business History*, (Oxford, 2008), pp. 396-419.
[59] Ronald Fullerton, 'The Historical Development of Segmentation: The Example of the German Book Trade 1800-1928', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 4:1 (2012), pp. 57-59; Ronald Fullerton, 'How Modern is Modern Marketing? Marketing's Evolution and the Myth of the "Production Era"', *The Journal of Marketing*, 52:1 (1988), p. 108-21; Richard Germain, 'Were Banks Marketing Themselves Well from a Segmentation Perspective Before the Emergence of Scientific Inquiry on Services Marketing?', *Journal of Services Marketing*, 14:1 (2000), pp. 44–60.

The development of marketing has, however, been portrayed chiefly as an American phenomenon. Tedlow is a key figure here. His analysis, and that of others such as Susan Strasser,[60] has been fundamental in sustaining the perception that modern marketing, and many of the theories of consumer behaviour, originated in the United States in the early twentieth century.[61] Tedlow argues, for example, that after 1880 American businesses developed new techniques to reach a mass market.[62] He characterises this development using three distinct stages (Table 0.2). In the first phase marketing was unnecessary as businesses operated on a regional basis and sold at high prices in low volume. In phase two, the development of national markets meant that firms needed to sell creatively and aggressively. This phase was dominated by products which sought to satisfy large swathes of the population, such as Coca-Cola or the Ford Model T. The third phase saw marketers engage with customer demographics and interests to segment markets for competitive advantage. Although his strict model of sequential maturity has been criticised – not least because the final stage is said to occur variously between 1920 and 1960[63] - others use it as a standard for assessing whether businesses outside of the United States were marketing themselves well.[64]

Table 0.2: Summary of Tedlow's Historical Periodisation of Marketing[65]

Phase	Characteristics
1) Fragmentation (pre-1880s)	High margin, low volume, restricted market size due to transportation costs
2) Unification (1880s-1920/1960s)	High volume, low margin, incorporation of whole nation as a mass market
3) Segmentation (1920s/1960s)	High volume, value pricing, demographic or pyschographic segmentation

[60] Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*, (New York, 1989).
[61] Marieke de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, (London, 1997), p. 6; Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through Twentieth-Century Europe*, (London, 2005).
[62] Tedlow, *New and Improved*, p. xxvi.
[63] Fullerton, 'How Modern is Modern Marketing?', pp. 108-21.
[64] Germain, 'Were Banks Marketing Themselves Well from a Segmentation Perspective Before the Emergence of Scientific Inquiry on Services Marketing?', p. 44.
[65] Tedlow, *New and Improved*, p. xxii.

More recently, scholars have identified the British experience as different and autonomous from American influences. Analysing a range of businesses and industries, they have challenged the assumption that mass marketing originated in the United States.[66] Much of what constitutes Tedlow's third, modern stage of marketing - namely market research, public relations exercises, market segmentation and customer-orientated advertising campaigns – was trialled and tested by a variety of British companies in the first half of the twentieth century. Corley demonstrates that although a great deal of consumer marketing in 1914 was amateurish and unimaginative, several companies had able entrepreneurs who were receptive to consumers' wishes.[67] By the interwar period, Fitzgerald's research identifies the beginnings of a 'marketing revolution'.[68] The marketing revolution describes a complete change in the commercial world, from occupation with production and products, to a business outlook with customers at the centre. Heller argues that in the 1930s the British division of the Shell-Mex Corporation grew as a characteristically modern firm by embracing public relations exercises, film, celebrity endorsement and prolific literature distribution, to reach out to consumers.[69] In some cases there was a negotiation between British and American techniques: Schwarzkopf examines the influence of the American J. Walter Thompson advertising agency on a British soap manufacturer's use of market research to inform product design and shape advertising from the 1920s.[70] The work of these business historians joins

[66] Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Who Said 'Americanisation'? The Case of Twentieth-Century Advertising and Mass Marketing from a British Perspective,' in Jessica Gienow-Hecht (ed.), *Decentering America: Explorations in Culture and International History* (New York, 2008), p. 56: Roy Church and Andrew Godley, *The Emergence of Modern Marketing*, (London, 2003).
[67] Corley, 'Consumer Marketing in Britain 1914-60', pp. 65-70.
[68] Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and the Marketing Revolution*, p. 10; Robert Fitzgerald, 'Markets, Management, and Merger: John Mackintosh and Sons, 1890-1969', *The Business History Review*, 74:4 (2000), pp. 555-609.
[69] Michael Heller, 'Corporate Brand Building: Shell-Mex Ltd. In The Interwar Period', in Teresa Da Silva Lopes and Paul Duguid (eds.), *Trademark, Branding and Competitiveness*, (New York, 2010), pp. 194-214.
[70] Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'Discovering The Consumer: Market Research, Product Innovation, and the Creation Of Brand Loyalty In Britain and The United States In The Interwar Years', *Journal Of Macromarketing*, 29:1 (2009), pp. 8-9. Companies that resisted marketing are shown to have declined or been absorbed see, for instance, Corley's examples from the brewing industry, Corley, 'Consumer Marketing in Britain 1914-60', p. 71. In another example, Telephone services developed slower in Britain compared to the United States thanks, in part, to their slow adoption of marketing; Peter Scott, 'Still a Niche Communications Medium: The diffusion and Uses of the Telephone System in Interwar Britain', *Business History*, 53:6 (2011), pp. 801-20; Claude

that on a host of firms in other industries which concludes that marketing and advertising was certainly part of a British commercial discourse well before the 1950s.[71] What is clear is that for all of these businesses a customer-focussed outlook characterised the selling process. However, this thesis treats with some caution the notion of a 'marketing revolution' beginning in the interwar period. Although this may apply to some businesses, it is too abrupt to describe the processes which shaped the GWR's practice between 1906 and 1939. Indeed, marketing evolution is perhaps a better way of characterising the GWR which arguably began its customer focus earlier.

To help explain the GWR's changing attitudes to consumers, this thesis focuses on how they were perceived less as a homogenous market and towards market segments. As a concept, market segmentation recognises that a single product or service can rarely satisfy all consumers. Businesses usefully divide mass markets into groups of customers unified by similar wants or ability to consume.[72] Although market segmentation was only recognised in official parlance in the 1950s,[73] historians nevertheless agree that the concept shaped earlier selling practices, even if they differ over when.[74] For example, market segmentation based on price has existed as long as the market in consumer goods and services. Sole proprietors, partnerships and firms commonly offered good, better and best services, and this was no less

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Fischer, "'Touch Someone": The Telephone Industry Discovers Sociability', *Technology and Culture*, 29:1 (1988), pp. 32-61.

[71] Teresa Da Silva Lopes and Paul Duguid (eds.), *Trademark, Branding and Competitiveness*, (New York, 2010), pp. 1-3; Peter Scott and James Walker, 'Advertising, promotion, and the competitive advantage of interwar British department stores', *Economic History Review*, 63:4 (2010), pp. 1105–28; Peter Scott, 'Mr Drage, Mr Everyman, and the creation of a mass market for domestic furniture in interwar Britain', *Economic History Review*, 62:4 (2009), pp. 802–27; Paul Duguid, 'Developing the Brand: The Case of Alcohol, 1800-1880', *Enterprise and Society*, 4:3 (2003), pp. 405-32; Schwarzkopf, 'Who Said "Americanisation"?, pp. 33-37.

[72] Kotler, *Marketing Management: Analysis*, *Planning*, *Implementation and Control*, p. 279.

[73] Theories and development surrounding market segmentation were developed in the 1950s, one of the originators being Wendall Smith in his paper, 'Product Differentiation and Market Segmentation as Alternative Marketing Strategies', *The Journal Of Marketing*, 21 (1956), pp. 3-8.

[74] Stanley Hollander and Richard Germain, *Was There A Pepsi Generation Before Pepsi Discovered It? Youth Based Segmentation In Marketing*, (Chicago, 1992); Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, pp. 139-42; Matthew Hilton, 'Advertising the Modernist Aesthetic of the Marketplace? The Cultural Relationship Between the Tobacco Manufacturer and the 'Mass' of Consumers 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), p. 47; Germain, 'Were Banks Marketing Themselves Well from a Segmentation Perspective Before the Emergence of Scientific Inquiry on Services Marketing?', pp. 44–62.

true of the railways that issued tickets for a range of services divided by class.[75] Factors such as age, income and education (demographics) were subsequently used to portion the market. These remained useful, however, marketing based on a corporation's systematic awareness of consumers' interests, attitudes and lifestyles represented a significant development. From around the 1900s, some marketers employed lifestyle analysis, identifying consumers' activities, interests, and opinions.[76] Put simply, advertisers of a variety of goods and services found ways to empathise with the social anxieties of consumers, and chiefly the concern that they might not be consuming in ways appropriate to a particular station in life.[77] In some cases advertising imagery connected with this was inspirational; it showed consumers what they could do by possessing a product. It was also often 'aspirational' as marketers presented the idea that, by buying a product, individuals could better themselves.[78] To do this companies appropriated commonly understood symbols associated with anxieties concerning romance, success, health and wealth and used them in such as way to connect these values with the products and services being sold.

For many businesses, including the GWR, visual marketing became crucial in communicating with and segmenting markets. During the first decades of the twentieth century, manufacturers, advertisers and retailers agreed on the central place of the image in stimulating consumer desire.[79] It worked to increase sales of goods and services that went beyond the strictly utilitarian. By the 1880s lithographic and printing techniques had reached a stage where production costs were low enough to facilitate large-scale commercial use.

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[75] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 74-75.
[76] Bell and Hollows, *Historicizing Lifestyle*, p. 2; Tedlow, *New and Improved*, p. xxiii; Ronald Michman, Edward Mazze, and Alan Greco, *Lifestyle Marketing: Reaching the New American Consumer*, (Westport, 2004), pp. 2-3; John King, 'Destination Marketing Organisations: Connecting the Experience Rather than Promoting the Place', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8:2 (2002), pp. 105-08.
[77] Roland Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream: Making Way For Modernity, 1920-1940*, (Berkeley, 1986), p. 22.
[78] Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, pp. 235-84; Colin Divall, 'Civilising Velocity: Masculinity and the Marketing of Britain's Passenger trains, 1921-39', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 32:2 (2011), p. 2.
[79] Brown, *The Corporate Eye*, p. 185, Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, pp. 149-53; Jackson-Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, pp. 323-29.

This signalled the beginnings of the full-colour poster as an advertising medium.[80] Elsewhere, for a number of reasons image advertising was restricted before 1900,[81] but improved reproduction and declining cost meant that afterwards British advertisers were able to use images to make a more direct claim on consumers' attention and feelings.[82] However, scholars believe that it was not until the interwar years that British society became truly 'visual'. Especially in the 1930s, advertisers confronted a public increasingly accustomed to sophisticated forms of visual communication, although this visual literacy remains almost impossible to measure objectively and difficult to evaluate historically.[83] Whilst historians have undertaken detailed analysis of posters and press advertisements,[84] few consider photographic marketing as an individual medium.

This is perplexing: by the interwar years in the United States photography was seen to hold a unique power, ably creating a fantasy world portrayed in an apparently realistic way.[85] Before this the development of the photographic half-tone process by 1895 enabled quality photographic reproduction. However, advertisers were reluctant to abandon pen-and-brush-artists for commercial photography. The problem was that most photography failed to meet the complex requirements of effective advertising illustration. Photography could offer realism, but for many years it failed to offer art which was deemed essential to appeal to consumers emotionally rather than rationally.[86] Johnson, Marchand and Brown pinpoint change in the mid-1920s when photographers' abilities converged with the needs of

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[80] Rennie, *Modern British Posters*, pp. 6-13; McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*, pp. 166-72.
[81] McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*, pp. 153-77.
[82] Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century*, (London, 1996), p. 180.
[83] D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 256-57.
[84] Nevett, *Advertising in Britain*, pp. 150-52; Margaret Timmers (ed.), *The Power of the Poster*, (London, 1998); Catherine Haill, *Fun Without Vulgarity: Victorian and Edwardian Popular Entertainment Posters*, (London, 1996); McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*, pp. 158-72.
[85] Jackson-Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, p. 324.
[86] Brown, *The Corporate Eye*, pp. 162-68.

advertisers.[87] Facial expressions, gestures, costume and placement were all carefully staged in order to illustrate a story and create an aura around the product to spark an emotional response in the viewer. Authenticity was downplayed in favour of securing specific visual effects. By the 1930s photography was a key element of marketing which was emotional, manipulative and projected fantasies which made idealised situations appear accessible.[88]

British commercial photography has received much less attention compared to its American counterpart.[89] In one sense this is understandable. Press and poster advertising, most commonly analysed, rarely used photographs before the mid-1930s.[90] It was expensive, technically complicated, and results, for the daily press and its low quality paper, were commonly unsatisfactory. However, two recent studies develop the picture. Beegan examines photographic reproduction up until 1914 showing that photographs were deemed essential in marketing the daily press.[91] The public's insatiable appetite for news imagery led to the establishment of several large photographic agencies which stocked a regular supply of material.[92] Development quickened during the First World War. The Ministry of Information developed a Photographic Section that controlled the taking, reproduction and distribution of war photographs.[93] Propaganda photographs provided an illusion of reality at a time when it was commonly thought that the camera could not lie. The intention was to convince the civilian population that their efforts were worthwhile and had visible effects on the war

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[87] Johnson, *Real Fantasies*, pp. 3-4; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, pp. 149-53; Brown, *The Corporate Eye*, p. 185.
[88] Johnson, *Real Fantasies*, p. 1. See also Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*, (Oxford, 1998), p. 523; Martin Francis, 'Leisure and Popular Culture', in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Harlow, 2001), p. 238.
[89] Turner and Nevett, for example, do not include any significant mention of advertising photographs before 1950.
[90] Rennie, *Modern British Posters*, p. 116.
[91] In the 1890s the halftone process had made reproduction of the press more economically viable and efficient; Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London*, (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 160.
[92] Beegan, *The Mass Image*, pp. 160-85.
[93] Mark Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media and Propaganda: British Narrative from 1900 to 1945*, (Oxford, 2006), p. 19.

effort.[94] In the 1920s advertisers recognised the photograph's persuasiveness, but in the interwar years they also acknowledged the importance of telling a story which would appeal to the movie-minded. Films further whetted the public's appetite for photographic advertising illustration.[95] This led agencies, and as we will see, companies like the GWR, to appropriate the visual rhetoric of the cinema to sell in a convincing, yet emotive manner. Hewitt and Wilkinson analyse the activities of a British photographic agency in the late 1920s and 1930s.[96] The company supplied stock photography to a range of businesses. To remain competitive, this meant concentrating on visions of the consumer, and the agency used models and studio sets to produce imagery which sold intangible pleasures as much as the product shown.[97] Photographic marketing was ubiquitous by the late 1930s but lack of analysis means we must study companies such as the GWR to better understand why marketers came to value the promotional photograph so highly.

This section has established some important considerations for this thesis. It suggested that it is both correct and practical to search for evidence of more 'developed' marketing in British companies, that marketing practice preceded academic theory on the subject, and that visual, and most specifically photographic, marketing is an underused but potentially revealing source in discussing corporate attitudes to customers. The examples provide a useful starting point to consider the GWR, but a direct comparison is complicated in that most concern the marketing of tangible goods. More information is required on how transport providers attempted to grow their markets and sell such a multivalent commodity as 'travel'.

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[94] M.L. Sanders and Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914-18*, (London, 1982), p. 155.
[95] Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', p. 368; Francis, 'Leisure and Popular Culture', p. 238; Cheryl Buckley and Hilary Fawcett, *Fashioning the Feminine: Representation and Women's Fashion from the Fin de Siècle to the Present*, (London, 2002), pp. 110-12.
[96] Hewitt and Wilkinson, *Selling The Image: The Work of Photographic Advertising Limited*; Wilkinson, '"The New Heraldry": Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain', pp. 23-38.
[97] Wilkinson, 'The New Heraldry', p. 24.

2.2: Selling Transport

Comparing railways to the marketing of tangible consumer goods has led some to conclude that railway marketing before 1914 was ineffective.[98] This viewpoint has been sustained by a large body of analysis which is imprecise and often bridges the gap between academic histories and enthusiast literature.[99] However, more scholars have now taken up the challenge to consider how railway marketing developed, both in the UK and USA. The field remains divided however, on why railway marketing appeared as it did; when and why companies became 'consumer oriented'; and, indeed, if railway companies were ever successful marketers. Historians have attempted to tie selling cultures to what is known about the railways' economic position. Some state that the railways' attitude to marketing was shaped by rail's monopoly on travel over all but the shortest distances. Until the 1920s the railways were the dominant form of transportation, with cars the preserve of the wealthy. Scholars argue that although railways experimented with marketing principles before the interwar years, this was rarely developed because marketing services, beyond announcing their availability and price, was unnecessary.[100] The railways' numerous discursive, text-based, 'unattractive' handbills and timetables are used to support this argument.[101] Competition with road transport after 1918 forced railways to market,[102] but the timing of the change between 'bad' earlier practice and 'good' later efforts has not been explored in any great length by railway historians.

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[98] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 258-64.
[99] For example, Wilson, *Go Great Western*; Allen Middleton, *Its Quicker By Rail!: The History Of LNER Advertising*, (Stroud, 2002).
[100] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 264.
[101] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 253-59; Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers*, pp. 155-61.
[102] Peter Lyth and Philip Bagwell, *Transport in Britain: From Canal Lock To Gridlock*, (London, 2002), pp. 58-59; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 253; Scott, 'British Railways and the Challenge from Road Haulage', pp. 101-20.

There is nevertheless broad agreement that at some point after 1900 British railways were amongst the pioneers of creative and eye-catching advertising.[103] The most recent scholarship, from Harrington, Watts, Holland, Bennett and Divall, considers how railway companies understood their potential customers, and how they conceived services and publicity with consumers in mind. These scholars have engaged with questions over targeted marketing, market segmentation and aspirational advertising. They differ on many of these points. Whilst some suggest that railways formed part of a developing discourse of marketing,[104] others claim that this was 'rudimentary' and not as nearly as developed as companies in the United States which employed advertising agents.[105]

Analyses of the pictorial poster dominate this literature.[106] Railway companies were amongst the first to use lithographic posters to communicate with passengers,[107] but varying quality up until the 1920s has further shaped conclusions about when Britain's railways developed 'modern' marketing. Harrington and Watts use posters to suggest that companies had a decent grasp of their target markets and their interests and worries. They argue that well-thought-out poster campaigns, composed with the attention to symbolic content, are indispensible sources through which to analyse railways' attitudes to marketing and to their customers.[108] These scholars do recognise the methodological limitations of their studies; a small selection of posters, lack of evidence of their popularity or success, and the difficulty of placing them within an overall marketing strategy are just some shortcomings. This analysis has also come at the expense of the almost complete neglect of visual imagery other than the

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[103] Smith, *The Railway and Its Passengers,* pp. 155-61 and 167-68.
[104] Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising', p. 24.
[105] Harrington, 'Beyond the Bathing Belle', p. 23.
[106] Cole and Durack*, Railway Posters, 1923-1947*; J.T. Shackleton*, The Golden Age of the Railway Poster*, (London, 1976); David Bownes and Oliver Green, (eds.), *London Transport Posters: A Century of Art and Design*, (Aldershot, 2008).
[107] Beverley Cole and Richard Durack, *Happy as a Sandboy: Early Railway Posters*, (London, 1990), pp. 1-17.
[108] Harrington, 'Beyond The Bathing Belle', pp. 22-41; Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising', pp. 23-48; Cole and Durack*, Railway Posters, 1923-1947*; Shackleton*, The Golden Age of the Railway Poster*; Bownes and Green, *London Transport Posters: A Century of Art and Design*.

poster. Despite exploratory discussions by Bartholomew and Blakemore,[109] popular works exploring images from a nostalgic perspective,[110] and passing references in general railway histories,[111] there is no comparative analysis of photography for example. This is puzzling, for as Bartholomew and Blakemore suggest, photography was used increasingly by publicity conscious railways at the turn of the last century.[112] Scholarly focus on the poster and the interwar years sustains the common beliefs about railways as marketers which this thesis seeks to address.

There are a small number of scholars who suggest that railways marketed in sophisticated ways other than posters. Developing earlier articles,[113] Divall's most recent work argues that in response to interwar road competition, Britain's railways re-engineered their marketing to appeal to existing consumers in new ways.[114] The companies employed 'official' corporate marketing, as well as 'semi-official' media such as company magazines, to spread their messages. Divall suggests that the railways possessed a greater understanding of concepts such as 'customer service' than is generally appreciated, and his work with Shin into the commercial cultures of the railways is the most significant attempt in recent years to examine how, between 1830 and 1950, railways approached selling through imagery, station design, merchandising and streamlining.[115] Alongside this, Barbara Schmucki examines cross-channel services provided by railways. Schmucki's conclusions support the notion of railways as developed marketers: they improved the intermodality of their travel systems and invested in luxury to create a superior passenger experience. Furthermore, there is also

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[109] Bartholomew and Blakemore, *Railways in Focus*, pp. 9-15.
[110] Jenkins, *Come To Wales: Publicity Photographs from the Great Western Railway*; David Patrick, *The Railway Photographs of P.W. Pilcher*, (Chester, 2007).
[111] Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 148-52.
[112] Bartholomew and Blakemore, *Railways in Focus*, pp. 13-17.
[113] Colin Divall, 'The Modern Passenger: Constructing The Consumer on Britain's Railways, 1919-1939', in Magda Pinheiro (ed.), *Railway Modernization: An Historical Perspective, 19th and 20th Centuries*, (Lisbon, 2009), pp. 110-25; Divall and Revill, 'Cultures of Transport: Representation, Practice and Technologies', pp. 99-111.
[114] Divall, 'Civilising Velocity', pp. 164-91.
[115] Divall and Shin, 'Cultures of Speed and Conservative Modernity', pp. 3-24.

evidence that companies developed crossing routes which were specialised to suit the needs of different types of passenger.[116]

Although it is examined less often, Britain's twentieth century railways prolifically produced travel literature. Bennett's research into the GWR's literature deepens our understanding of how this material was wielded at a corporate level.[117] Although focussing primarily on the GWR's construction of 'Englishness', Bennett's work reveals a number of perspectives, such as the portrayal of destinations as 'democracies by the sea' and picturesque tourist stops, which shows that the GWR understood the different needs of consumers. Bennett's work is the first major step towards a revision of our understanding of the significance of railway text-based marketing. However, Bennett emphasises the need for a complementary visual analysis to more fully understand how companies such as the GWR persuaded consumers to 'Go Great Western'.

Elsewhere, London Transport's innovative passenger inducement policy has been acknowledged. The man most closely associated with this, Frank Pick, took over an uninspired publicity department in 1908 and transformed it using well-known poster artists to create a universal, easy to comprehend identity which branded all elements of the system.[118] Pick went further. His strategy encouraged the public to see the Underground as more than just a means of getting about; it was easy, convenient, fast, reliable and safe. This was part of his ultimate objective - persuading people to make journeys it had not occurred to them to make.[119] His influence on the railways should not be underestimated; although the artists and poster styles used to market the Underground clearly influenced Britain's main line

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[116] Barbara Schmucki, 'By Railway Ferry from England to the Continent: Intermodal Travel in the Interwar Period', in Heli Maki and Jenni Korjus (eds.), *Railways as an Innovative Regional Factor*, (Helsinki, 2009), pp. 54-62.
[117] Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and the Celebration of Englishness', pp. 1-9.
[118] Christian Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport: A Biography of Frank Pick*, (Newton Abbot, 1979), pp. 1-9; Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society Since 1750*, (New York, 1992), pp. 230-37.
[119] Barman, *The Man Who Built London Transport*, pp. 29-30.

railways,[120] his thoughts regarding travel for pleasure mirrored what commentators thought the railways should be doing, and eventually what they strove for.[121]

American railroads present a useful comparison to British railway marketing. As in Britain, it is commonly believed that railroads only marketed seriously following the loss of monopoly after 1918.[122] There is a similar focus on pictorial posters used to dispel the negativity that previous generations associated rail travel.[123] Others have gone further, suggesting that railroad promotion began in earnest in the 1890s when managers recognised that selling 'adventure' was more important than selling speed.[124] Like the GWR, railroads employed 'experience advertising' to convince tourists, potential settlers, sportsmen, and health-seekers to book journeys.[125] When a direct comparison has been made, scholars argue that the United States railroads better grasped how to appeal to individual consumer groups.[126] A fully comparative approach is out of the question in this thesis, but overall it intends to show that some of the conclusions about British's railways, and more specifically the GWR's efforts, are perhaps premature.

In some respects the scholarship on railway marketing lags behind that on modes such as cars, aviation and, to an extent, shipping. Cars attract most interest, especially their use of product design to encourage market segmentation.[127] For cars as well as aircraft,[128] and to an

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[120] Cole and Durack*, Railway Posters, 1923-1947*, p. 8.
[121] See for example Douglas Knoop, *Outlines of Railway Economics*, (London, 1913), p. 235.
[122] Tad Burness, *Classic Railroad Advertising: Riding the Rails Again*, (Iola, 2001), pp. 6-8; Michael Zega and John Gruber, *Travel by Train: The American Railroad Poster, 1870-1950*, (Bloomington, 2003), pp. 1-21.
[123] Burness, *Classic Railroad Advertising*, pp. 6-8.
[124] Alfred Runte, 'Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad', *California History*, 70 (1991), pp. 63-70; Victoria Dye, *All Aboard for the Santa Fe: Railway Promotion of the Southwest, 1890s to 1930s*, (Albuquerque, 2006); Richard Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West 1850-1930*, (Berkeley, 2007).
[125] Runte, 'Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad', p. 63.
[126] Drummond, '"For the Ladies?", pp. 1-37.
[127] Sean O'Connell, *The Car In British Society*, (Manchester, 1998), pp. 52-57; Pamela Walker-Laird, "'The Car Without A Single Weakness: Early Automobile Advertising', *Technology and Culture*, 37:4 (1996); Wolfgang Sachs, *For Love Of The Automobile*, *Looking Back Into The History Of Our Desire*, (Berkeley, 1992); Tim O'Sullivan, 'Transports Of Difference and Delight: Advertising and The Motor Car In Twentieth Century Britain', in David Thoms, Len Holden and Tim Claydon, *The Motor Car and Popular Culture In The Twentieth Century*, (Aldershot, 1998); Stephen Bayley, *Sex, Drink and Fast Cars: The Creation and Consumption Of*

extent bicycles,[129] it is understood that after initially employing a 'reason-to-buy' approach based on price, range and good-running, companies began to market through images. What travel could say about one's personality became as important a consideration as price, speed and destination.[130] This was seen clearly in transatlantic shipping, with liners presented as opulent palaces where social fantasies of glamorised and aspirational lifestyles were enacted.[131] Of travel facilitators, Shell Oil turned to posters, film and celebrity endorsements in the 1920s because economic agreements between oil companies meant that prices and quality ceased to be the crucial determinants in the choice of petrol.[132] Companies now competed in terms of corporate image and brand recognition: one purchased Shell's products not simply for enabling automobility but because of what the company stood for, increasingly preservation of art and nature.[133] Shell's skill is still revered today, obscuring the railways' marketing. This is most visible in the concept of the 'motoring pastoral' – a new form of movement, undertaken by car, which was a journey for beauty rather than speed.[134] However, as historians revisit railway marketing it is clear that a railway pastoral predated and probably exceeded the motoring one.[135] The suggestion once again is that these companies shared similar visual rhetoric, and that railway marketing was much more sophisticated than is commonly given credit. There is still much work needed to substantiate this however, not least by analysing neglected materials such as photographs.

Images, (London, 1986); Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age*, (New York, 1991).

[128] Peter Lyth, 'Think of Her as Your Mother': Airline Advertising and the Stewardess in America, 1930–1980', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 30:1 (2009), pp. 1–21; Lucy Budd, 'Selling the Early Air Age: Aviation Advertisements and the Promotion of Civil Flying in Britain, 1911-1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 32:2 (2011), pp. 125–44.

[129] Stephen Harp, *Marketing Michelin: Advertising and Cultural Identity In Twentieth Century France*, (London, 2001), pp. 40-70.

[130] Harp, *Marketing Michelin*, p. 3; Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945*, (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 162-69.

[131] Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany*, pp. 158-93.

[132] John Hewitt, *The Commercial Art of Tom Purvis*, (Manchester, 1996), p. 18.

[133] Hewitt, *The Commercial Art of Tom Purvis*, p. 19; Heller, 'Corporate Brand Building: Shell-Mex Ltd.', pp. 202-09; John Hewitt (ed.), *The Shell Poster Book*, (London, 1998).

[134] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, (London, 1998), pp. 63-67.

[135] Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising', pp. 33-34; Thompson, 'Picturing the Tourist Utopia of the Great Western Railway 1897-1947', pp. 1-10.

2.3: Selling Holidays and Leisure – The Historical Perspective

Holidaymaking has interested historians for decades but, as is the case of transport history, scholars have only recently questioned more deeply how this experience was sold or why it was purchased.[136] Until the mid-nineteenth century holidaymaking, at least that beyond the day trip, represented socially exclusive consumption. Afterwards it gradually became democratised, but it was not until the late-1930s that it became a component of 'mass' consumer culture.[137] Nevertheless, by the early-twentieth century holidays away from home were becoming big business. The 1881 and 1911 censuses exhibit brisk growth in the permanent seaside population from just under one million to just over 1.6 million.[138] Although imperfect surrogates for numbers visiting the resorts, this increase indicates rising popularity. The trend continued as more gained the right to paid vacations; 17 per cent in 1925, 42 per cent in 1937 and 60 per cent in 1938.[139] An understanding of this development is important: promotional activities did not develop until the late-nineteenth century because it was only after this time, when the middle classes in particular began to visit seaside resorts more frequently, that these places and the railways serving them were forced to compete for trade on a regional, and increasingly national, basis.[140]

This is borne out by the historical evidence. Scholars demonstrate that during the 1890s resorts' marketing policies became more imaginative and professional. Many resorts

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[136] John Pimlott, *The Englishman's Holiday: A Social History*, (Hassocks, 1976); Walton, *The British Seaside*; Walvin, *Beside The Seaside*; Susan Barton, *Working-class Organisations and Popular Tourism, 1840-1970*, (Manchester, 2005).
[137] Benson, *The Rise Of Consumer Society In Britain,* pp. 82-119.
[138] John Walton 'The Seaside Resorts of England and Wales, 1900-1950: Growth, Diffusion and the Emergence of New Forms of Coastal Tourism', in Allan Williams and Gareth Shaw (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of British Coastal Resorts*, (London, 1997), pp. 21-22.
[139] Walton, *The British Seaside*, pp. 58-59.
[140] Nigel Morgan, 'Perceptions, Patterns and Policies of Tourism: The Development of the Devon Seaside Resorts in the Twentieth Century with Special Reference to Torquay and Ilfracombe', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1995), p. 207; John Walton, 'Railways and Resort Development in Victorian England: The Case of Silloth', *Northern History*, 15 (1979), pp. 191-209.

abandoned aloof exclusiveness and gave more attention to encouraging mass tourism.[141] This is evident in a number of broad appeals, such as the promotion of 'healthy air', an intangible appeal which resonated with the common aversion to urban pollution,[142] and more clichéd appeals: golden sands, invigorating climates, and beaches washed by sparkling waters.[143] A parallel discussion of the efforts of the hospitality industry is difficult because many hotels were in private hands. Nevertheless, Pope gives some indication that marketing featured amongst the largest chains, especially to overseas markets.[144] Later, in the 1930s, holiday camps launched well-coordinated marketing which focussed on unbridled pleasure.[145] For example, Billy Butlin's preference for celebrity endorsement marked a significant shift in the nature of holiday promotion.[146] Although scholars suggest its importance, there is no in-depth historical analysis of the holiday brochure or its visual messages.[147] 'Guidebooks' fare better,[148] although these were commonly instructional rather than promotional, and even here Shell's 'Guides', authored by John Betjeman, are a substantial omission.[149] The visual ploys within these have not been analysed sufficiently to allow comparison to the GWR.

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[141] John Hassam, *The Seaside, Health and The Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, (Aldershot, 2003), p. 56.
[142] John Beckerson and John Walton, 'Selling Air: Marketing the Intangible at British Resorts', in John Walton (ed.), *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, (Clevedon, 2005), pp. 55-70.
[143] Stephen Ward, 'Time and Place: Key Themes in Place Promotion in the USA, Canada and Britain Since 1870', in John Gold and Stephen Ward (eds.), *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions* (Chichester, 1994), pp. 53-72.
[144] Rex Pope, 'A Consumer Service in Interwar Britain: The Hotel Trade, 1924-1938', *The Business History Review*, 74:4 (2000), pp. 657-82.
[145] Alan Tomlinson and Helen Walker, 'Holidays for All: Popular Movements, Collective Leisure, and the Pleasure Industry', in Alan Tomlinson (ed.), *Consumption, Identity, and Style: Marketing, Meanings, and the Packaging of Pleasure*, (London, 1990), pp. 222-25.
[146] Sandra Dawson, *Holiday Camps in Twentieth Century Britain: Packaging Pleasure*, (Manchester, 2011), pp. 86-88.
[147] Ward, 'Time and Place: Key Themes in Place Promotion in the USA, Canada and Britain Since 1870', p. 53; Jill Steward, 'How and Where to Go': The Role of Travel Journalism in Britain and the Evolution of Foreign Tourism, 1840-1914', in John Walton (ed.), *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, (Clevedon, 2005), p. 47.
[148] Nicholas Parsons, *Worth The Detour: A History of The Guidebook*, (Stroud, 2007); John Vaughan, *The English Guidebook 1780-1870*, (London, 1974); John Taylor, *A Dream Of England: Landscape, Photography, and the Tourist's Imagination*, (Manchester, 1994).
[149] One non-academic text constitutes the limit of this subject: David Heathcote, *A Shell Eye on England: The Shell County Guides, 1934-1984*, (Faringdon, 2011).

What is lacking from all these historical accounts is detailed consideration of the physical means of accessing resorts. Many scholars acknowledge the railways' role in facilitating resorts' growth but less in shaping demand for travel to them.[150] Two exceptions acknowledge the railways' responsibilities in this respect. Bennett demonstrates the GWR's impact on resort promotion, in most cases encouraging slow-moving destinations to at least match the railway's input.[151] Morgan's conclusions are similar; the GWR's financial and technical input was crucial to resort promotion and joint advertising constituted the mainstay of publicity efforts.[152] But the general lack of scholarship under-represents the railways' significance in developing the varied social appeal of particular resorts. As this thesis demonstrates, the GWR sold the idea of destinations as much as travel to them, and ultimately this was more sophisticated than simply picturing places in a realistic manner to announce availability.

2.4: Selling Holidays and Leisure – The Modern Perspective

Marketing practitioners and sociologists have been more interested than historians in exploring how individuals are transformed into tourists through place marketing.[153] Place marketing is defined as a process whereby a destination and its local activities are related as closely as possible to the demands of targeted customers.[154] Theorists specify that although the basic principles of marketing, identification of demand and position of satisfaction, are

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[150] Walton, 'Railways and Resort Development in Victorian England', pp. 191-209; Ward, 'Key Themes in Place Promotion in the USA, Canada and Britain Since 1870', pp. 53-72; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, (3rd edn., London, 2011), pp. 37-38; Beckerson and Walton, 'Selling Air: Marketing the Intangible at British Resorts', pp. 55-70.
[151] Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness', p. 163.
[152] Morgan, 'Perceptions, Patterns and Policies of Tourism', pp. 213-16.
[153] Graham Dann, 'The People Of Tourist Brochures', in Tom Selwyn (ed.), *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making In Tourism*, (Chichester, 1996), p. 61.
[154] Gregory Ashworth and Henk Voogd, 'Marketing and Place Promotion', in John Gold and Stephen Ward (eds.), *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions* (Chichester, 1994), p. 41.

the same, the intangibility of the product offered by place marketing necessitates greater attention to visual promotion. The 'place image' is therefore the foremost tool for communicating with potential customers,[155] and the ultimate objective of destination marketing is to 'sustain, alter or develop images in order to influence prospective buyers' expectations'.[156] Long before the advent of the internet the holiday brochure was the major mechanism used to convince consumers of the value and personal benefits from purchasing a holiday.[157] Images, whether online or in brochures are crucial to the success of campaigns and images involve considerable cultural work on the part of marketers.[158] Strategic image management represents the key element in the ongoing process of researching a place's image among its audiences, segmenting and targeting specific images to demographics, and communicating the place's benefits to those target audiences.[159]

Sociologists assign similar importance to photographic images. They widely agree that tourism is a social and cultural phenomenon essentially centred on dreams of alternatives to everyday life. Scholars such as MacCannell and Shields argue that the chief task of place imagery is to construct 'myths' which are 'chased' by tourists.[160] These myths are based on intricate webs of images, stereotypes and clichés associated with particular destinations, made durable through constant repetition and underpinned by widely shared cultural beliefs.[161] The prevalence and power of the camera in destination promotion has led many to enquire how photographs are used to achieve these aims. Whilst the marketer carefully

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[155] Olivia Jenkins, 'Photography and Travel Brochures: The Circle of Representation', *Tourism Geographies*, 5:3 (2003), p. 5; Stephen Page and Joanne Connell, *Tourism: A Modern Synthesis*, (3rd edn., London, 2009), p. 363.
[156] Victor Middleton and Jackie Clarke, *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, (Oxford, 2001), p. 127.
[157] Page and Connell, *Tourism: A Modern Synthesis*, pp. 371-72.
[158] Philip Kotler, Donald Haider and Irving Rein, *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States and Nations*, (New York, 1993), pp. 146-48.
[159] Kotler, Haider and Rein, *Marketing Places*, pp. 142-43.
[160] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of The Leisure Class*, (London, 1976); Robert Shields, *Places On The Margin: Alternative Geographies Of Modernity*, (London, 1991), p. 60.
[161] David Crouch and Nina Lübbren (eds.), *Visual Culture and Tourism*, (Oxford, 2003), p. 5; Hartmut Berghoff and Barbara Korte, 'Britain and the Making of Modern Tourism an Interdisciplinary Approach', in Hartmut Berghoff (ed), *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000*, (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 1-20.

constructs photographic messages, the fact that tourists can seek out and capture images using their own cameras suggests a mutually reinforcing social process of constructing, altering and understanding place imagery.[162]

A significant contribution to the sociological literature on tourism imagery is John Urry's *Tourist Gaze*, three editions of which span more than two decades.[163] Urry also sees touristic consumption of places as primarily visual. He regards the chief motivation of taking a holiday as the need to experience a total antithesis to home life or work, with visual messages playing a key role in advertising this difference. Developing Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of social capital, Urry's work sees the cultural practices of tourism as represented in sets of preferred social activities which are highly structured by distinctions of taste.[164] Tourist views are commonly segmented between two 'gazes': the predominantly working-class 'Collective Gaze' which embraces conviviality, popularity and noise, and the middle-class 'Romantic Gaze' which embraces exclusivity, solitude and peace. These gazes are socially constructed, the result both of the activities of tourists and marketers, and are partly the products of history. The romantic gaze, for example, references the eighteenth-century practice of seeking picturesque scenery updated to suggest rural solitude against busy urban areas. The collective gaze, by contrast, draws upon beliefs that working class leisure has always been rooted in gregarious exploits and mass spectacle. Urry's work has influenced historical analysis of resort promotion,[165] but some scholars have begun to question whether this analysis is adequate. In particular, they argue that this distinction between two main types of resort marketing, one which served popular demand and the other catering to a bourgeois predilection for more natural pleasures, is too simplistic and would benefit from

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[162] Crouch and Lübbren, *Visual Culture and Tourism*, p. 1; Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, 'Tourism and the Photographic Eye', in Chris Rojek and John Urry (eds.), *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, (London, 2004), p. 176.
[163] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel In Contemporary Societies*, (1st edn., London, 1990); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, (2nd edn., London, 2002); Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*.
[164] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn., p. 66.
[165] Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising', pp. 28-32.

much more systematic and nuanced analysis across time.[166] This thesis builds on this suggestion by showing that the GWR's photography engaged a number of market segments which crossed the boundaries of 'mass' and 'class' appeals.

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More detailed discussion concerning each of these sections is introduced at relevant points throughout this thesis. There are, however, a number of salient points to consider now. We have summarised how notions of the consumer became important to marketers of consumer goods, but also that when and how this occurred for services such as travel is far from clear. The British holiday taken at a resort was an increasingly important form of consumption from 1900 onwards, and even before the 1950s the place image was the chief way of marketing this experience to a variety of demographic segments. Scholars now recognise that their tendency to describe place marketing as a relatively recent phenomenon obscures and seriously undermines appreciation of the sophistication of early advertising strategies.[167] Those who have analysed railway posters have begun to redress this, but the neglect of railway photography unduly narrows our understanding. More research is required into how the railway companies sold travel if scholars are to ground the roots of modern practice more firmly in the past. This thesis studies the GWR to develop these themes, broadening the understanding by using photographic marketing to analyse how passengers were 'pictured' both in a material and conceptual sense.

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[166] Walton, *Histories of Tourism*, p. 6; Hassam, *The Seaside, Health and The Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, p. 57.
[167] Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard, *Power and Politics at the Seaside: The Development of Devon's Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, (Exeter, 1999), p. 1.

Section 3: Sources

Archival sources relating specifically to the GWR's marketing are rare. However, the converse is true as far as photographs are concerned. Of the GWR's unpublished photographic records, held at the NRM, a significant proportion comprises holiday resorts; several images of one single place were taken in a season. The remaining number features locomotives, company buildings and staff, and general-interest items which invariably occupied photographers outside of the holiday season.[168] Occasionally the GWR contracted commercial photographic agencies for supplementary material, but generally photographs were taken by the company's own photographers who formed a dedicated photographic section. Initially, their tools were cumbersome cameras mounted on tripods fed by large glass plate negatives.[169] Their travelling apparatus consisted of five cases containing a 12 by 10 inch camera, slides, camera legs and lenses. The total weight was over 80 lbs.[170] Working at a time when the process had become industrialised,[171] the weight and quality of the machinery improved and by the end of the 1920s GWR photographers used simpler, lightweight cameras and nitrate film.[172]

Although the sheer amount of unpublished material testifies to the important role of photography in the company's publicity, to analyse it all would be a Herculean task. As Brown argues, the researcher using photographic sources should select a manageable group of images to analyse.[173] Therefore, this thesis focuses on the smaller number of published photographs which appeared in the company's publications, pamphlets and gazetteers.

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[168] Michael Esbester, "'Dead On The Point Of Safety": Occupational Safety Education on the Great Western Railway, 1913-39', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2006); Bartholomew and Blakemore, *Railways in Focus*, pp. 8-13.
[169] Bartholomew and Blakemore, *Railways In Focus*, pp. 13-14.
[170] TNA, ZPER 38/6, Great Western Railway (London): Lecture and Debating Society Proceedings 1908-1909, meeting of 5th November 1908, 'Experiences of a Railway Photographer' pp. 1-10.
[171] John Taylor, 'The Alphabetic Universe: Photography and the Picturesque Landscape', in Simon Pugh (ed.) *Reading Landscape: Country-City-Capital*, (Manchester, 1990), pp. 178-82.
[172] Bartholomew and Blakemore, *Railways in Focus*, p. 48.
[173] Brown, *The Corporate Eye*, p, 298.

These variants are principally considered because the very fact of their inclusion reveals something of what the GWR wanted customers to see. Photographs played a key role in the sales publications, illustrating and constructing corporate visions of destinations created in response to ideas about the customer. This terminology, 'sales publications' is important; although commonly called 'guidebooks' the GWR's sales publications had only a little in common with the practical aids which were intended to inform curious travellers.[174] Although the GWR's volumes did follow in this tradition, they operated more like modern holiday brochures which seek to create and shape expectations rather than offer practical advice. The company was a prolific publisher. It released material on diverse subjects, from *Historic Sites and Scenes of England*, published for an American audience, to *Camping and Hiking Holidays*, and *Haunts and Hints for Anglers*. The largest contained hundreds of photographs which were selected to attain maximum appeal amongst prospective travellers. The GWR's sales publications are also by far the best means available for considering the company's marketing strategy in relation to leisure travellers. Unlike posters, the impact of which it was almost impossible for the company to gauge,[175] the efficacy of literature could be judged through sales, responses to adverts, and customers who quoted the volume when booking accommodation. They were considered the primary form of marketing communication, the 'backbone' of publicity.[176] A small number of unpublished negatives are, however, considered to help understand the processes of selection, construction and alteration, and appreciate the published variants as the outcome of a considered, rigorous process.

Whilst I have drawn on examples from across the range of the company's guides, for practical reasons the analysis primarily concerns the company's largest and most successful

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[174] Vaughan, *The English Guidebook 1780-1870*, p. 13; G. H. Martin, 'Sir George Samuel Measom (1818-1901), and His Railway Guides', in A.K.B. Evans and John Gough (eds.), *The Impact of The Railway On Society In Britain*, (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 225-40.
[175] Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness', p. 12.
[176] This phrase appears in RAIL 250/772: GWR Minutes and Reports 1936.

publication, *Holiday Haunts*. Covering almost every destination accessible via a GWR service, it spanned, with the exception of the First World War, the years 1906 to 1939,[177] providing an almost unbroken vision of the GWR's perceptions of consumer tastes. Other company publications, by contrast, appeared sporadically. Photographs were a fundamental part of *Holiday Haunts*; hundreds of images appeared in each volume, and were updated annually. *Holiday Haunts* was divided into geographical regions, but the fact that the photographs appeared *before* any textual description of these areas suggests that the GWR believed photographic messages to hold particular persuasive power. A definite figure for circulation is impossible, especially given the practice of sharing and passing on second-hand copies, but *Holiday Haunts* certainly had a wide readership. It sold around 50,000 copies annually in the Edwardian years, 100,000 in 1921 and 200,000 copies by 1928.[178] In the 1930s, economic depression brought numbers down to around 172,000 copies until production ceased in 1942. *Holiday Haunts* was the most popular sales publication offered by any of the interwar railways. The LNER, commonly viewed as the best at marketing during this period,[179] sold only 100,000 of its publication, *The Holiday Handbook*, in 1930.[180] Independent operators fared worse. Thomas Cook's guides sold only 10,000 copies in 1930, although at five shillings this was significantly more expensive than *Holiday Haunts'* sixpence.[181] *Holiday Haunts* thus possessed considerable reach and dominated the travel literature market, certainly between the wars and probably before 1914.

The primarily middle-class nature of *Holiday Haunts'* appeal is easily established. It offered longer, more expensive holidays which could only be afforded by the middle class for much of the period under review. Nevertheless, the appeal did extend to the lower-middle

[177] Some editions were also released during the Second World War and afterwards but these are not included in this thesis which uses the start of war as the analytical cut-off point.
[178] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, p. 115.
[179] John Hewitt, 'East Coast Joys: Tom Purvis and The LNER', *Journal Of Design History*, 8:4 (1995), pp. 291-311.
[180] It was left with 50,000 unsold copies; Middleton, *Its Quicker By Rail!*, pp. 40-46.
[181] Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism*, (London, 1991), p. 272.

classes, and it is not out of the question that aspirational working class families used the guide, especially after 1938 when holidays with pay covered more working class households.[182] Therefore *Holiday Haunts* affords a detailed insight into how the GWR appealed to and segmented a range of tastes within a potentially large, and continuously changing, market.

A variety of sources on the production of sales publications, public relations events and traffic committee minutes are also used to give a sense of how photographs were understood as a way of imagining the passenger as customer. The GWR's internal magazine is most valuable. Company magazines are central to the study of large organisations.[183] They represent a key site for the construction of corporate cultures.[184] Although before 1918 company magazines tended to be employee-originated and amateurish, afterwards they appeared corporate, professional and were in some cases well-known beyond the organisation.[185] The GWR's own magazine predated this shift. It was founded in 1888 as the organ of the GWR Temperance Union, but when the Union ran into financial difficulties in 1903 the GWR purchased the magazine.[186] It soon became a valuable corporate asset with a wide readership, sold to staff at a nominal fee.[187] The magazine solved the problem, common to many modern large-scale businesses, of linking management and employees separated by vast physical distances.[188] However, the fact that the magazine was subsequently advertised alongside promotional literature suggests its part-role as a public-relations mouthpiece. For this thesis, the company magazine helps to demonstrate the GWR's wider re-conceptualisation of selling practices and attitudes to customers. Regular articles on

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[182] Walton, *British Seaside*, pp. 58-59.
[183] Michael Heller, 'Company Magazines 1880-1940: An Overview', *Management and Organisational History*, 3:3-4 (2008), pp. 179-80; Fullerton, 'How Modern is Modern Marketing?', p. 110; Divall, 'Civilising Velocity', pp. 167-70; Heller, 'Corporate Brand Building: Shell-Mex Ltd. In The Interwar Period', pp. 202-09.
[184] Divall, 'Civilising Velocity', pp. 9-10.
[185] Heller, 'Company Magazine 1880-1940: An Overview', pp. 186-87.
[186] Mike Esbester, 'Organizing Work: Company Magazines and the Discipline of Safety', *Management and Organisational History*, 3:3-4 (2008), p. 220; Wilson, *Go Great Western*, p. 164.
[187] Wilson, *Go Great Western*, pp. 165-66.
[188] Esbester, 'Organizing Work', p. 219.

operation, management, marketing, 'the passenger', and staff performance are some of the only places to see the various actors speak about their craft, albeit sometimes informally. To be clear, this thesis uses the company magazine foremost in reconstructing attitudes to marketing, not as an official element of GWR marketing communication.

Records from the company's debating society are similarly useful. Although not 'official' output, publicity clerks and managers were regularly invited to speak to the society.[189] Their thoughts, strategies and goals are recorded amongst the published papers. In addition to these sources, the more traditional archival locations such as Traffic Committee Minutes and General Manager's Meetings will be analysed. Material previously unconsidered in a railway context is also used, for instance the Maxwell Fraser archive. Dorothy Fraser ('Maxwell' was her pseudonym) was a central figure in the GWR's interwar marketing, editing *Holiday Haunts* between 1929 and 1939. Amongst her personal papers resides generous information highlighting the internal workings of the GWR's publicity department, and the construction process behind *Holiday Haunts* during the 1930s.[190] This thesis also uses railway industry journals and a sample of advertising industry journals to contextualise the GWR's efforts in relation to other railways and businesses more generally. Contextualising the photographic marketing messages using these sources helps prevent a superficial reading, but it is also necessary to utilise an appropriate methodology in order to unpack the intended meanings of GWR photography.

[189] A complete run is held at TNA, ZPER 38, British Transport Historical Records: Great Western Railway (London): Lecture and Debating Society Proceedings 1904-1972.
[190] National Library of Wales, GB 0210 MAXSER: F /1-593, Correspondence and papers, 1929-1968, relating to Maxwell Fraser's publicity work for the GWR.

Section 4: Methodology

This thesis sees 'picturing' the passenger as a process, the examination of which assists understanding each photograph to be the result of sophisticated levels of imagination and construction on the part of the historical actors. It argues that the picturing process, on the corporate side, consisted first imagining consumers, their standards, desires and preconceptions which could be converted into a propensity to travel. The GWR needed to find these out, and this thesis demonstrates that it did so by paying attention to wider social fashions and trends, to how others marketed, and in some cases by conducting its own rudimentary market research. Recognition of this process attributes the photographs layers with intended meaning. This higher level of meaning is captured in the difference between 'vision', what the human eye is physiologically capable of seeing, and 'visuality', how vision is constructed or framed in various ways so that we are made to see in particular ways.[191] As part of how the GWR meant customers to see, the company produced photographic marketing loaded with signs which guided viewers to a particular interpretation. Therefore, as a qualitative assessment of the GWR's photographic marketing, this thesis explores the construction of these signs as evidence of the GWR's (re)-conceptualisation of passengers.

As Barthes proclaimed, the advertising photograph is a message which operates within systems of meaning.[192] This thesis uses semiotic theory to analyse the GWR's creation of meaning by distinguishing between the outward appearance and inner mechanisms in the photographs. Semiotics, a term derived from the Greek word for 'signs',[193] occupies a widely-acknowledged place at the forefront of visual analysis.[194] By treating images,

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[191] Hal Foster (ed.), *Vision and Visuality*, (Seattle, 1988), p. ix; Joan Schwartz and James Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, (London, 2003), p. 7.
[192] Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, (Translation by Stephen Heath, London, 1977), p. 15.
[193] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, p. 36.
[194] Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction To The Interpretation Of Visual Materials*, pp. 12-80; Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses Of Images As Historical Evidence*, (London, 2001); Benson, *The Rise Of*

including marketing ones, as texts, semiotic analyses concentrate on how images relate to the larger cultural codes shared by viewers.[195] The most important element in semiotic analysis is the 'sign'.[196] The sign comprises two elements; the signifier, the actual image, and the signified, and the idea or concept with which the image is associated.[197] Put another way, meaning works on what is both 'denoted' and 'connoted'. Denotation is a basic descriptive level where most people would agree on the meaning; for example the identifiable objects in a photograph irrespective of the larger societal code. Connotation, however, is not descriptive but interpretative, drawing on more abstract cultural norms derived from the larger sign system of society; for example ideas about romance, wealth and family happiness.[198] Connotative meaning has a normative force; something a culture (dis)approves of. Both denotation and connotation come together in a sign. In our case, corporate images depend on signs which symbolise particular qualities to their audience.

Whilst dependent on an individual's cultural context, certain visual conventions connote symbolic similarities. Hall argues that meanings are shared through our common access to language,[199] and some images are shared across cultures and provide signs with a common meaning. People in certain cultures learn that, for example, a thatched cottage with roses round the door represents 'ye olde England', or that waves crashing on to rocks

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Consumer Society In Britain, p. 1; Michael Emmison, *Researching The Visual: Images, Objects, Contexts and Interactions In Social and Cultural Enquiry*, (London, 2000). Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, (London, 1997); James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and The Visualisation of The British Empire*, (London, 1997); Taylor, *A Dream Of England*; Andrew Wernick, *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*, (London, 1991). It has also been used to analyse transport marketing, for example Watts, 'Evaluating British Railway Poster Advertising', pp. 22-25; Harrington, 'Beyond the Bathing Belle', pp. 22-24 and Lyth, 'Airline Advertising and the Stewardess in America', pp. 7-8.

[195] William Leiss, Sut Jhally, Stephen Kline, *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products and Images of Well-Being*, (1st edn., Scarborough Ontario, 1988), p. 130. Beasley and Danesi argue that one should use semiotics to approach advertisements as we would a painting or a novel and ask questions about the intended meanings and intended responses they were constructed to convey, Ron Beasley and Marcel Danesi, *Persuasive Signs: The Semiotics of Advertising*, (Berlin, 2002), p. 30.

[196] Rose, *Visual Methodologies*, p. 75.

[197] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, p. 31.

[198] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, pp. 38-9.

[199] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, pp. 1-4.

signifies 'wild, untamed nature'.[200] Further, when tourists see two people kissing in front of the Eiffel Tower, they think of 'timeless romantic Paris'.[201] In a more general example, the smile is understood principally to represent happiness. Shown in connection with an advertised product or service, it connotes that the product or service does its job in a pleasing manner.[202] In these cases signifieds are shifted in the minds of the viewer from images in advertisements and onto the product or service advertised.[203] Marketers aim to produce imagery which will be readily understood and will create favourable responses amongst viewers. Research at the end of the twentieth century indicated that, in general, consumers' interpretations matched the intentions of the producers.[204] Even if an advert does not make literal sense, consumers generally process advertisements according to learned cultural conventions.[205] Although this kind of study did not take place formally during the first half of the twentieth century, it is plausible that marketers at this time endeavoured to produce imagery which was both easily decipherable as well as attractive. Analysing the appearance of, and reasoning behind the inclusion of signs in the GWR's photographic marketing assists the deconstruction of the company's marketing aims.

There is a danger that scholars will take semiotics as a 'key' to 'decode' any image, ignoring an image's historical context and its social meanings to contemporaries.[206] The second strand to this methodology therefore requires the photographs to be placed, as far as possible, into their cultural context and a context of production. The GWR's photographic marketing was not conceived in a cultural vacuum and the images cannot easily be separated

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[200] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn., p. 128.
[201] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 1st edn., p. 3.
[202] Anthony Cortese, *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 28.
[203] Gillian Dyer *Advertising and Communication*, (London, 1982), p. 80; Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, (London, 1978), pp. 12-17.
[204] Barbara Phillips, 'Thinking into It: Consumer Interpretation of Complex Advertising Images', *Journal of Advertising*, 26:2 (1997), p. 77.
[205] Phillips, 'Thinking into It: Consumer Interpretation of Complex Advertising Images', pp. 77-87.
[206] Ramamurthy, 'Constructions of Illusion', p. 180; Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'The Subsiding Sizzle of Advertising History', Methodological and Theoretical Challenges in the Post-Advertising Age', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 3:4 (2011), pp. 535-38.

from the social context in which they were conceived. This thesis argues that the context in which they were intended to be read was British middle-brow culture between 1906 and 1939. Contemporary British society changed rapidly during these years. World war, increasing freedoms for women, economic turmoil, unprecedented levels of travel and consumption, and a preoccupation with notions of (pre)-modernity, all helped shape how British society viewed itself and others.[207] At the same time visual mediums became more pervasive means of chronicling this change. Cinema,[208] the press,[209] magazines,[210] modern art,[211] design[212] and personal photography all assisted the creation of new visual languages. By the 1930s, immersion in this culture made individuals supremely capable of decoding and analysing imagery, at anywhere between a superficial or more intense level, which had implications for marketing messages.[213] Although not all would have grasped exactly the same meanings, many would have understood images of, for example, attractive, famous and fashionable women as evidence of the new rights for women, whilst the carthorse and haystack stood increasingly for an older Britain being eroded by mechanised agriculture and urban encroachment. By 'reading' the GWR's images with reference to the 'signs' developed by, in and through middle-brow culture, one can begin to unpack more effectively what the GWR wished the potential consumer to think and feel about railway services, and how this allowed the GWR to develop marketing targeted at customers with different outlooks on life.

The production context is a second fundamental consideration. This thesis stresses that GWR photographs were produced by individuals with an increasingly sophisticated

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[207] See, for example, the collected chapters in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A Companion To Early Twentieth-Century Britain,* (Oxford, 2003).
[208] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 523; Martin Francis, 'Leisure and Popular Culture', p. 238.
[209] LeMahieu, *A Culture For Democracy*, pp. 59-79; Beegan, *The Mass Image*.
[210] Penny Tinkler and Cheryl Warsh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, Cars and Cigarettes,' *Journal of Women's History*, 20:3 (2008), pp. 113–43.
[211] Charlotte Benton (ed.), *Art Deco 1910-1939*, (London, 2003).
[212] Forty, *Objects of Desire*.
[213] LeMahieu, *A Culture For Democracy*, pp. 232-53.

attitude to marketing and customer satisfaction. A sense of this culture can be obtained by studying sources such as the company magazine and other archival documents. Therefore this thesis does not rely on visual signs alone. The company was far from silent on the groups it wanted to attract or on the means of doing so. Debates on how to attract foreign tourists or to persuade people to forgo motor transport in favour of rail may not directly explain photographic procurement, but they are nonetheless indicative of the kind of marketing culture from which photographic publicity emerged. Analysis of this culture, in the following chapter, grounds the subsequent qualitative visual analysis of the photographs and demonstrates that they were a key part of a considered marketing strategy. By placing them in the context of their corporate production, one can begin to understand the business processes and intentions the photographs were constructed to convey. In a similar way, what the GWR wanted customers to 'see' is assisted by the textual descriptions accompanying sales publication imagery. At first the text simply cited the location, but gradually these descriptions began to reinforce visual messages and emulate company marketing slogans. Eventually text took the form of a testimonial, common in American advertisements by the 1930s,[214] as if individuals in the photographs were speaking directly to the viewer. The influence these small snippets of text probably had in directing the viewer's attention therefore cannot be underestimated, and neither can the wider corporate culture the photographs were conceived in.

Finally, whilst there are almost always multiple ways in which an image can be understood, equally there is usually a 'preferred' or dominant reading that most people will take. The dominant reading, broad acceptance of an advertisement's message, is joined by the negotiated reading, whereby the viewer acknowledges the main messages of the image but is unsure of others, and an oppositional reading in which a viewer totally rejects the

[214] Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, pp. 59-60.

dominant construction.[215] This thesis is based on the reasonable assumption that as a corporation, the GWR constructed photographs with a dominant or most probable reading in mind. In order to make its advertising as effective as possible, the GWR wished people to interpret the images in 'roughly similar ways'.[216] Of course, this does not mean that all viewers accepted or comprehended the corporate meaning; negotiated and oppositional readings were always possible.[217] As this thesis concerns the GWR's business strategy however, it is reasonable to focus analysis on the dominant meaning intended by the corporate producer of the image. The many other possible readings of the GWR's photographs does not negate the value of considering them as artefacts authored by a corporate body.

There are practical limits to this thesis. There is a geographical focus; although *Holiday Haunts* periodically included sections on Ireland and Brittany these are omitted here in favour of a British perspective.[218] Finally, this thesis focuses on marketing train-based mobility. It acknowledges that smaller bus and steamer services were marketed, and probably in similar ways, but in this initial analysis the focus is on the dominant railway side of the business.

Section 5: Chapter Content

To underscore the GWR's developing attitude to customers, Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five each examine a different market segment in detail using the photographs to

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[215] Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', in Simon Durring (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, (London, 1993), pp. 90-103.
[216] Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, p. 4.
[217] Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', pp. 101-03.
[218] How such places were presented provides further examples of creating imagery for distinct markets and information on this can be found in Bennett's and Thompson's respective theses; Bennett, 'The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness'; Thompson, 'Picturing the Imaginary Geographies of the Great Western Railway, 1895-1946'.

question what the GWR knew about these groups in terms of demographic structure, interests, attitudes to society and to holidaymaking. Chapter Two, for example, analyses the appeals to a group the company broadly defined as 'lovers of the picturesque'. The GWR saw the desires of this group as predominantly rural, pre-modern and peaceful, opposed to more gregarious holidaymakers and shaped its appeals accordingly. By contrast the appeal to families, analysed in Chapter Three, shows that the company grasped the differential appeal resorts held. The GWR employed various visual devices to attend to these markets but most important was the symbolic content which shows that customers' emotions and desires were being considered. Chapter Four shows that the GWR's strategies were not infallible; it neglected women as a significant group of customers up until the 1930s, but after this time photographs proved crucial in appealing to women, and show an understanding of this segment which is neglected in the focus on posters. Chapter Five argues that analysis of the outdoors market highlights a different set of capabilities; the company repositioned the market appealing to new sets of customers using promotional photography. This allows one to appreciate the nuances of the GWR's visual style as well as its reception of change.

Chapter Six analyses how the middle class customer, who by the 1920s might have a choice in how to travel to destinations, was marked out and persuaded to travel by rail using a rudimentary form of market research. The fruits of these labours shaped photographic marketing. In turn the photographs provide additional information on who the GWR saw as the 'ideal' railway passenger. Chapters Two to Six therefore demonstrate that throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century the GWR perceived success in the travel business as dependent on closer inspection of the types of consumers who could be persuaded to holiday, and by attending to them differently. This mindset, however, is made clear in the chapter immediately following this one, Chapter One. It examines the development, during the first four decades of the twentieth century, of the GWR's 'customer oriented' approach to

marketing. It provides background information on marketing thought, photographic and publication production, in an attempt to ground the photographs as artefacts of a considered marketing culture.