

Chapter Three

Marketing Family Holidays

An article in *Advertiser's Weekly* in 1938 encouraged businesses to remember the influence of children on parental consumption; in short, that 'the hand that rocks the cradle pays the bills'.¹ This idea had influenced the advertising imagery of numerous products for around seventy years,² but the article encouraged all businesses to make use of new visual technologies, presumably including photographs, in 'remembering' the family market. Families offered tremendous potential to railway companies, although the unsophisticated nature of company statistics fails to reveal its exact importance. This chapter therefore uses photographic evidence to analyse what the family market meant to the GWR, how 'the family' as a concept was perceived by the company, and how it encouraged them to holiday by rail. The analysis considers how a 'family experience' was identified by the company, and how it was used to create a contrived image first of the Edwardian then the interwar family holiday. It finds that the imagery served different roles. Principally, a range of signs and symbols confirm the company's wish to segment the family market as different from, for example, the lover of the picturesque analysed in the previous chapter. Visual marketing to the family became more sophisticated between 1906 and 1939, but this chapter argues that this reflected not just the improvement of photographic techniques, but developing understandings of customer desires and emotions.

Historians portray family composition and life experiences as extremely varied, despite the existence of certain archetypes.³ A similar notion of the family holiday has

¹ *Advertiser's Weekly*, 7th March 1938, p. 382.

² Lori-Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women*, (New York, 1994), pp. 8-9.

³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (London, 2002); John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on*

caused its sparse treatment amongst historians. Improvements in the standard of living and the tendency towards smaller families meant that more were able to take holidays by 1900.⁴ But whilst Simmons includes a chapter ‘Tourism and Family Holidays’ in his examination of the railways up until 1914, this makes only passing reference to what the family holiday entailed or how it was encouraged.⁵ Walton goes further, describing the middle-class family as the ‘lifeblood of English resorts’ from 1900 until the dawn of overseas package holidays in the 1950s.⁶ Walton’s analysis identifies a class dimension. He argues that the middle classes enjoyed the bracing sea air, bathing, ornamental gardens, visiting museums and libraries, attending theatrical productions and concerts, promenading along the pier, playing golf, tennis or polo, and taking steamer trips off the mainland.⁷ They stayed on the respectable ‘big sands’ which included hot water for tea, bathing tents, clean sand for picnics, and rides on Shetland ponies.⁸ Although the working-classes enjoyed the beach as well, they were ultimately confined to the ‘low sands’ with their ‘dirty beach, ragged children, rowdy trippers in hot, dusty, best-suited clumps drinking jugs of ale, eating saveloys and cream cakes’.⁹

Beyond this distinction, the middle-class holiday lasting a week or more is neglected.¹⁰ The lack of an extensive historiography has meant that fewer still consider how this experience was marketed by railways, beyond the notion that visual or textual reference to children in promotional literature or posters was intended to encourage such a market.¹¹

Gender, Family, and Empire, (Harlow, 2005); Mary Abbott, *Family Affairs: A History of the Family in Twentieth Century Britain*, (London, 2002).

⁴ John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, (Manchester, 2000), p. 54.

⁵ Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, (London, 1991), pp. 290-308.

⁶ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 54.

⁷ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 54.

⁸ Walton, *The British Seaside*, pp. 98-99.

⁹ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 98.

¹⁰ Scholars have been drawn instead to the provision of holidays for children from deprived backgrounds. See for example Sandra Dawson, *Holiday Camps in Twentieth Century Britain: Packaging Pleasure*, (Manchester, 2011), pp. 10-21; Arthur Jordan and Elizabeth Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain 1830 to the Present Day*, (Kettering, 1991), pp. 64-65; Alan Delgado, *The Annual Outing and Other Excursions*, (London, 1977), pp. 77-89.

¹¹ Ralph Harrington, ‘Beyond The Bathing Belle: Images Of Women In Interwar Railway Publicity’, *Journal of Transport History*, 3rd ser. 25:1 (2004), p. 41.

Harrington argues that child-centred holidays were marketed mainly to women; by serving their children they would become good mothers.¹² Yet this does not take into account the existence of a ‘family gaze’¹³ whereby mother and father would plan the holiday together. Whilst individual railway posters carrying a ‘family appeal’ have been identified,¹⁴ there has been no systematic analysis of the messages that this marketing conveyed, much less what it says about the railways producing it. Posters created by companies such as the pre-war North Eastern Railway (Figures 3.1) and post-war Southern Railway (Figure 3.2) suggest a culture which understood of the benefits of advertising using children, even if stylistically the outcomes varied. These examples suggest that the child was the most important symbolic element in the railways’ family marketing. As symbols of gentleness and defencelessness, the sight of children playing happily and safely symbolised the opportunities available to parents to provide a holiday which would encourage their children to flourish.¹⁵ This was but one ploy; *Holiday Haunts*’ content provides a test case for some important questions: which destinations were sold as ‘family’ holidays; how did family holiday marketing differ from that aimed at other segments; how was this difference achieved, and how was it presented as desirable to consumers?

¹² Harrington, ‘Beyond The Bathing Belle’, p. 41.

¹³ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, (3rd edn., London, 2011), p. 180.

¹⁴ Beverley Cole and Richard Durack, *Happy as a Sandboy: Early Railway Posters*, (London, 1990), pp. 14-15.

¹⁵ John Gold and Margaret Gold, “‘Home at Last!’: Building Societies, Home Ownership and the Imagery of English Suburban Promotion in the Interwar Years”, in John Gold and Stephen Ward (eds.), *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions* (Chichester, 1994), p. 88.

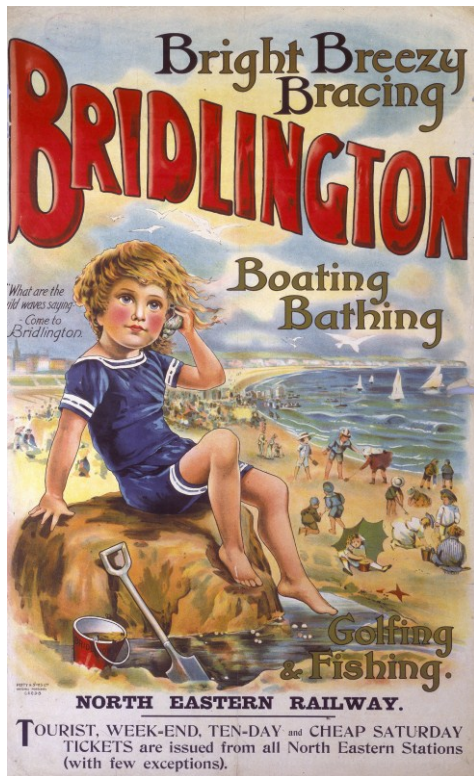


Figure 3.1: ‘Bridlington’ North Eastern Railway c. 1912¹⁶ Figure 3.2: ‘Hints For Holidays’, Southern Railway 1939¹⁷

In the absence of secondary literature concerning a railway-specific family appeal, this chapter draws upon analyses of the imagery and techniques used by other businesses to entice families. The historian John Gillis identifies the existence of two families; the one we live *with* and the other we live *by*, the former representing day-to-day life, and the latter, family life as we should like to imagine it.¹⁸ Advertisers focus on the latter. From the mid-nineteenth century an increasing variety of mass-produced products targeted the sentimental appeal of the family,¹⁹ and childhood especially.²⁰ By the 1880s, the emotions connected to

¹⁶ Image Courtesy of Science and Society Picture Library Collection.

¹⁷ Image Courtesy of Science and Society Picture Library Collection.

¹⁸ John Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: A History of Myth and Ritual in Family Life*, (Harvard, 1996), pp. xv-xvii.

¹⁹ Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*, (New York, 1985), p. 3.

²⁰ Daniel Cook, ‘The Rise Of “The Toddler” As Subject and As Merchandising Category In The 1930s’, in Mark Gottdiener (ed.), *New Forms Of Consumption: Consumers, Culture, and Commodification*, (Oxford, 2000), p. 116.

the family were appropriated to sell all manner of commodities,²¹ perhaps the best-known example being Sir John Millais' 1886 artwork *A Child's World* to advertise Pears' soap. The centrality of infant alongside product was intended to connote that commodities were, for example, kind on delicate skin as well as suggesting that it was a 'family friendly' product. This built on the more widespread popularity of 'family' imagery: the Princess of Wales carrying one of her children piggyback was amongst the most popular photographic cards of the 1880s selling over 500,000 copies.²²

In the twentieth century more and more advertisers depicted familial relations to tap into a pool of desires and aspirations, fulfilment of which was promised through consumption.²³ Daniel Cook has written variously on this.²⁴ The rise of inexpensive personal photography between 1900 and 1910 constituted an important development. Cameras such as the Box Brownie and user-friendly Kodak film allowed families to record cherished, carefully posed moments.²⁵ Advertisers began to appropriate the resultant pictorial conventions in their own work.²⁶ Consumers therefore participated in the construction and understanding of idealised family imagery used to sell. By the 1950s photographic imagery was used to sell a wide range of perishable goods, from toothpaste to new frozen goods,²⁷ in advertisements which showed what a happily consuming family

²¹ Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*, (London, 1991), pp. 241-44; Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, pp. 8-9.

²² Patricia Holland, *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*, (London, 2004), p. 10.

²³ Robert Goldman, *Reading Ads Socially*, (London, 1992), pp. 86-88.

²⁴ Cook, 'The Rise of "The Toddler" as Subject and As Merchandising Category in the 1930s', pp. 11-29; Daniel Cook, 'The Missing Child in Consumption Theory', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8:2 (2008), pp. 220-44.

²⁵ Malcolm Smith, 'The War and British Culture', in Stephen Constantine (ed.), *The First World War in British History*, (London, 1995), p. 169.

²⁶ Holland, *Picturing Childhood*, pp. 10-11; Sue Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', in Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A Companion To Early Twentieth-Century Britain*, (Oxford, 2003), pp. 358-60.

²⁷ Patricia Holland, "'Sweet it is to scan...'" Personal Photographs and Popular Photography', in Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, (London, 1997), p. 136; Leanne Klein, 'Eastern Promise', in Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*, (London, 1991), p. 144.

should be like. Companies recognised children as valuable manipulators of parental consumption, but also their potential as future consumers.²⁸

These examples and others will be compared to the GWR's own vision of harmonious family life. The contrast between the photographs in this and the previous chapter is immediately evident, but the challenge to historians is to determine why they appeared as they did, and what this reveals about corporate perceptions of the customer. Therefore, this chapter also examines the difference between the 'un-peopled' romantic gaze of the previous chapter, and the 'peopled' collective gaze which promoted the popular appeal of destinations.²⁹ It is this difference, the presence and absence of people within photographs, which first indicates that differential marketing operated within *Holiday Haunts*. As argued previously it was relatively simple for photographers to compose imagery which omitted people,³⁰ and therefore their retention must say something about the photographer or publicist's intentions. Commonly, the romantic/collective gaze distinction has been viewed as a middle versus working class paradigm, the working classes apparently desiring populous scenes indicative of mass enjoyment.³¹ Several scholars suggest that this distinction needs to be probed,³² and this chapter does so, arguing that for the GWR the collective gaze represented a durable ploy to middle-class families because it showed that there was ample opportunity to amuse children as well as providing something for all the family. The analysis is divided chronologically, with each section examining how appeals shifted between 1906 and 1939. Each examines the complexity of the GWR's strategies, and what they reveal about how the GWR envisaged and appealed to the family as an individual market segment.

²⁸ Shane Hamilton, 'The Economies and Conveniences of Modern Day Living: Frozen Foods and Mass Marketing, 1945-1965', *Business History Review*, 77:1 (2003), pp. 57-58.

²⁹ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, (2nd edn., London, 2002), p. 1 and 86.

³⁰ Robin Lenham, 'British Photographers and Tourism in the Nineteenth Century', in David Crouch and Nina Lübbren (eds.), *Visual Culture and Tourism*, (Oxford, 2003), pp. 95-6.

³¹ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 150.

³² John Walton (ed.), *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, (Clevedon, 2005), p. 6; John Hassam, *The Seaside, Health and The Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, (Aldershot, 2003), p. 57.

Section 1: The Collective Gaze –Photographic Realism and Fantasy 1906-1914

By 1900 more and more destinations were identified by the GWR, and indeed their own borough councils, as family resorts: Devon's Torquay, Somerset's Weston-Super-Mare and Dorset's Weymouth for instance. Immensely popular, these destinations respectively ranked 11, 18 and 19 of the 116 largest resorts by population in 1911.³³ Walton and Walvin identify some of the activities, genteel and child-centred, which characterised these places in the Edwardian years. In some cases these were well-established and commonly understood by all companies. The beach holiday was, for example, strongly associated with the family in comparison to, say, ancient castles or cathedrals, and in this case the beach already possessed an understood sign value. However the GWR resisted the temptation simply to place a picture of a child or beach in its advertising and thus assign it 'for the family'. Rather, the company sought to determine what sort of things attracted which consumers, and how these could be used to inspire further consumption. To identify the chief ingredients of the typical family holiday, the company once more utilised its 'holiday competitions' to ascertain customer comment about how publicity should be constructed.

As seen in the case of the photographic competitions analysed in Chapter One, the GWR's own employees were an important source of inspiration. For the family market however, the GWR ran competitions for the children of its employees which required them to write an essay on their 'best holiday'. Later, in the 1930s, this kind of competition extended to parents,³⁴ but it is significant that the GWR targeted children in this way at first. It suggests the company perceived some level of influence over their parents as in 'the hand that rocks the cradle pays the bills'. Although essays presented idealised visions of the

³³ 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. 26-27.

³⁴ 'The Voice of Experience', GWRM, May 1938, pp. 197-98; May 1936, pp. 209-10.

holiday, intended to win a prize, this was no less useful as the GWR was actively engaged in selling the ideal. In 1912, the winning entry by a ten year old girl rejoiced in;

nice sands and blue sea, where you can paddle and bathe without danger when the tide is out as well as when it is in...a lot of us went building sandcastles and made them look pretty with shells...we went on the pier and got into a steamer which took us out...we fed the swans and ducks in the gardens...the boys played cricket...we sat on the seats and listened to the band playing...at night we could see the light of the Berry Head lighthouse and the Torquay lights across the sea.³⁵

Such a list reflected both the importance of health, sport and outdoor pursuits to middle-class families, as well as activities different to the gaudier seaside attractions of lower class resorts.³⁶ The adoption of more corporate language such as ‘bathe without danger’ would also have pleased GWR publicists; their messages were being digested. Although this particular competition was aimed at the children of GWR employees, we have seen – in Chapter One - that the same structure was applied to competitions aimed at a wider audience and advertised in national newspapers. As a means of ‘puffery’, such competitions were invaluable, but they also placed before the GWR a tangible means of reconstructing holidaymaking practice. Comments from consumers on accommodation, train conditions, and resort amenities therefore enlarged the basic picture of what a family desired whilst on holiday. The competitions and anecdotal feedback were by no means market research as we know it today because it generated for the GWR only the most superficial idea of what an ideal family holiday might look like. Yet the GWR sought as much to find these things out via the competition as to generate an excitement surrounding the holiday. They helped

³⁵ GWRM, June 1912, p. 171.

³⁶ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 54.

inform the perceived knowledge about the family market which in turn helped direct the company communications to this market.

Although it was never commented on explicitly from within the company, these competitions apparently played a similar role to photographic ones, providing a rudimentary understanding of customer wants and desires which allowed the company to more effectively frame its photographic marketing. What consumers could do at a resort and why it was, perhaps, superior to a rival destination, was increasingly communicated through a visual rhetoric of the family holiday, exemplified in readily recognisable photographic tropes. For example, the kinds of activities described in the essay were appropriated and used in contemporary GWR photography. Figures 3.3 to 3.5 represent a fraction of the total Edwardian imagery, but exemplify a number of consistent themes. Chief amongst these were the spacious sands and calm seas, the diversity of beach games which included paddling, rock-pooling and building sandcastles, (especially evident in Figure 3.5), as well as the excitement associated with more popular activities such as piers and boat trips. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 convey the impression of the beach holiday as a very 'public' form of consumption, and it is evident that the company wished to display the availability and popularity of these activities through the high number of people 'consuming' the beach – a 'collective' gaze. Varying between shots taken on the beach and some way further back, the people and activities range from being discernable and interpretable, to suggesting an air of mass enjoyment and conviviality. As indicators of a lively environment, from the distant towering hotels and array of bathing huts to the masses on the beach, they could all easily have been omitted by taking photographs early or later in the day as was the case at beaches intended to portray a more 'secluded' character.³⁷ Children were pictured preoccupied with great excavations in the sand, burying their siblings in the sand (Figure 3.4), which suggests some

³⁷ Lenham, 'British Photographers and Tourism in the Nineteenth Century', pp. 95-6.

artistry on the photographer's part, but also the difficulties in making the initial photographs appear 'live', adequately capturing the hedonism of a day at the beach.



Figure 3.3: 'Weston-Super-Mare', 1914



Figure 3.4: 'Falmouth – The Beach', 1911



Figure 3.5: ‘Aberystwyth – South Beach’, 1911

Yet how does one account for these ‘collective’ images in what was ostensibly a publication intended for the middle classes? Some scholars have claimed that images such as these indicate companies attending to a mass, meaning working-class, gaze which would have discouraged a wealthier clientele.³⁸ Some historians have extended this reasoning to railway advertisements of the early twentieth century,³⁹ arguing that the romantic gaze, seen previously, was seen as more appropriate for middle-class consumers. Yet this reasoning is predicated on an unjustified assumption that working-class consumers were united in their attraction to amusement and activity while middle-class consumers were united in their aversion to it. Although it included masses of people, the GWR’s photographs were designed to reflect middle-class pleasures and codes. Apparent in the company’s photographic

³⁸ Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn., p. 150.

³⁹ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 20; Alan Bennett, ‘The Great Western Railway and The Celebration of Englishness’, (Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of York, 2000), p. 146.

marketing, relaxing in the sun, bathing (one needed to pay for the use of bathing huts)⁴⁰ or taking in the view were appropriate activities indicative of a wealthier clientele. Whilst presenting a dramatic demarcation from the romantic gaze, Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 suggest a difference in *market segments*, not necessarily *class* interest. Some scholars now argue that the contemporary middle-classes generally were not put off going to the beach even if, in its heavily populated state, it was seen as proletarian. Although some middle-class parents might have recognised it as ‘common’ and undignified, the happiness of children, alongside health benefits for all the family, was central to making the beach a place desired by all sections of society.⁴¹ Indeed, Dr Saleeby, chair of both the National Birth-Rate Commission and the Sunlight League, championed the seaside as a preventative measure against tuberculosis and rickets; ‘the beach is incomparable, it gives the child everything’.⁴² Furthermore, there was a difference, as suggested above, between the ‘high’ and ‘low’ sands,⁴³ which the GWR’s imagery, in its exclusion of more proletarian pleasures, confirms. There were many occasions when the middle classes might have consumed in an unexpected manner, and many justifications for doing so. In this context, photography which captured the collective gaze was used to demonstrate the popularity of destinations to a wealthier market; people who could afford a longer vacation from work, the provision of activities to keep children entertained, and possibly even the movement of one or two servants. A ‘populated’ look therefore reveals more about who the GWR saw as its intended audience and how it hoped potential consumers would be enticed by these evidently popular watering holes.

Ultimately, it is very difficult to tell how such imagery would have been viewed by customers. But given the popularity of stereoscope images which depicted days at the beach,

⁴⁰ Catherine Horwood, 'Girls Who Arouse Dangerous Passions': Women and Bathing, 1900-39', *Women's History Review*, 9:4 (2000), p. 663.

⁴¹ Susan Barton, *Working-class Organisations and Popular Tourism, 1840-1970*, (Manchester, 2005), p. 73.

⁴² Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 100.

⁴³ Walton, *The British Seaside*, pp. 98-99.

the holiday studios and beach photographers who supplied imagery to the family,⁴⁴ it appears that the GWR was well aware of the deeper sign value surrounding a day at the beach. Part of the appeal of these images was that they probably brought back memories of holiday time many months after the event. Herein lay part of the purpose of replicating commonly understood imagery in *Holiday Haunts*, a guide which was initially on sale in March. As will be seen throughout this thesis, anticipation of the holiday was an important element of its 'consumption', a fact that the GWR recognised in structuring its appeals to each market segment. What we should now understand as the collective gaze was then of primary importance in advertising many destinations which sought a family clientele, of whatever social class. The images above confirmed the presence at destinations of sufficiently attractive activities to sustain a joyful holiday. But this imagery formed only one part of what the GWR wanted to 'tell' families.

As well as a 'collective' gaze, the GWR also sought to induce more individual, emotional ones. Throughout the Edwardian years the company included small children in pairs or groups in its publications. These images, for example Figures 3.6 and 3.7, showed children at play on the beach in various arrangements, sometimes looking directly at the camera and sometimes absorbed in beach games. The company's extensive photographic pool enabled different activities to be brought to the fore as fashions changed or resorts updated their amenities. Above all however, photographs which captured days at the beach, riding donkeys, and paddling, suggested that as well as popular and pleasing, a seaside holiday could fulfil a deeper family aspiration for togetherness and happiness. An extension of the mass imagery nonetheless, this suggests an additional capability on the part of the GWR's photographers and Advertising Department.

⁴⁴ Jo Spence and Patricia Holland, *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*, (London, 1991), p. 7.



Figure 3.6: 'On Weston Sands', 1908



Figure 3.7: 'On the sands at Teignmouth', 1908

The GWR assisted the interpretation of this imagery by including small textual panels alongside the photographs. These emphasised that a holiday should be child-centred; a good

parent would take their children on a GWR holiday. Entitled ‘The Children’, the company proclaimed;

How they love to be “off for the holidays”...every turn of the line reveals new wonders to the child travellers...take YOUR children along the Holiday Line this summer – ensure for them a Happy Healthy Holiday.⁴⁵

The emphasis on ‘YOUR’ children indicated how people should read the photographs. In one sense the GWR encouraged viewers to imagine their own offspring as the ones in the photographs. Figure 3.8 was one such image which appeared alongside this descriptive text. Showing children playing peacefully with a toy yacht in the breakers, the composition mimicked the parental gaze and encouraged the feelings of delight and satisfaction at two siblings playing so happily together. Happiness and health were seen as key aspects of childhood, politically and socially sanctioned,⁴⁶ and thus the GWR turned to imagery which would speak right to the heart of the fond parent. Alternatively, ‘YOUR children’ may have been read as a challenge. To make one’s children as happy as the ones in the pictures a parent should book a trip by GWR straight away. Although, of course, it is impossible to be certain, it appears that the GWR was aware of the wider appeal in advertising more generally which associated the parent’s position with a high degree of risk. Unless customers consumed in a certain way, advertisers told them that they risked upsetting or, more seriously, harming the development of their children.⁴⁷ Loeb’s research, which covers Edwardian as well as Victorian Britain, shows that certain advertisements sensationalised parental anxiety by talking about child injury in an effort to enforce consumption of a range

⁴⁵ GWR, *Holiday Haunts*, (1908) and (1911).

⁴⁶ Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History Of Britain 1970-1914*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 75.

⁴⁷ Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, pp. 114-15.

of products.⁴⁸ The GWR's appeal was not so forceful, but the equation of a child's happiness with holiday time suggests the company's grasp of a deeper set of social desires. Whereas in the previous chapter this was disappearing historic Britain, for the family market it was health and happiness of children.



Figure 3.8: 'The Children', 1911

It is useful to compare the GWR to the Kodak photographic equipment company. The two companies employed a similar argument; time with your children was precious and you should not let it slip by. Kodak also employed the rhetoric of the 'idealised family', encouraging consumers to 'Kodak your Children' (Figure 4.9). Owing to reproduction capabilities and cost, Kodak had to rely on pen-and-brush illustrations in its advertisements. The visual rhetoric of smiling cherub-like children was the same as in the GWR's

⁴⁸ Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, pp. 114-15.

photographs, however both used a large amount of text alongside images, suggesting that both companies thought the customer had to be ‘coaxed’ into a correct interpretation. For example, although eagerly anticipated, the fin de siècle family holiday constituted a major operation which necessitated enormous amounts of packing and sending luggage away in advance. Departure day might demand long journeys along rural lines to reach the final destination, all the time keeping the children constantly amused.⁴⁹ In response to this, the GWR encouraged people planning their holidays to focus on the pleasure to be had on arrival at the destination.⁵⁰ Kodak’s first major British advertising campaign was in 1910,⁵¹ and thus the GWR’s appeals were already developed. One can therefore see the GWR’s novelty of specialised imagery accompanied by well-composed text to shape family considerations. Although interrupted by war, it is important to introduce the parallel between Kodak and the GWR here. It is a way of grounding the company’s efforts alongside another major marketer which is recognised as an innovator in this period.

⁴⁹ Several reminiscences of such trips across the twentieth century appear in Rosa Matheson, *Trip: The Annual Holiday of GWR’s Swindon Works*, (Stroud, 2006), and more specifically for the Edwardian years in Phillip Unwin, *By Train In The Edwardian Age*, (London, 1979), pp. 24-26 and 59-60.

⁵⁰ ‘How Big Railways Advertise’, *The Railway Magazine*, June 1902.

⁵¹ John Taylor, ‘Kodak and the ‘English’ Market Between the Wars’, *Journal of Design History*, 7:1 (1994), p. 29.

**Kodak
your
Children**

Nothing can ever make good our loss if we let the childhood of our children slip by without making a picture record of their baby ways.

Start to-day a "Kodak Baby Book" for each of your children—a little scrap-book in which their life-story will be told, week by week, in the simple pictures that you will take with your own Kodak.

Your Kodak will give you pictures of your children while they are children—pictures of them as they really are—pictures of them in the tub, in the garden, laughing, romping, "pretending"—pictures of them in dozens of delightful poses.

Get a Kodak to-day! Any Kodak dealer can supply you. Anyone can take Kodak pictures—even the children themselves!

"Kodak Baby Book"—Free

A charming booklet full of amateur snapshots of children. With it we will also send a copy of "Some Pleasures of Kodaking" and a packet of seven ordinary Kodak photographs—all free—to those who write to Kodak, Ltd., 57, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C., mentioning the *Daily Mirror* of June 9th.

There are Kodak dealers in every town. All Kodak supplies can be obtained from them.

Figure 3.9: 'Kodak Your Children', 1910⁵²

There is another parallel between Kodak and the GWR, one which further suggests the latter's deeper engagement with its potential market. As stated in the introduction, beyond the notion that the content and composition of the photographs was directed to a family market, there was a more nuanced concern of which family members these photographs were intended to target. Although there is considerable evidence to suggest that the railways addressed family imagery to the mother's gaze,⁵³ one should take care in suggesting that the photographs represented an appeal only to the female consumer.

⁵² *The Daily Mirror*, 9th June 1910.

⁵³ Harrington, 'Beyond The Bathing Belle', p. 41; 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. 26.

Historians have revised the perception of the early-twentieth century father as a commonly absent, uncaring, and authoritarian figure who was marginal to family life.⁵⁴ Despite regional and social variation, in Edwardian Britain the playful father was rather very much in evidence.⁵⁵ Fathers were increasingly seen as protectors and partners rather than the source of ultimate moral power.⁵⁶ This understanding helped shape popular photography and marketing. Holland argues that much of the imagery in family photograph albums represents a male gaze as it is traditionally the husband who takes photographs. Kodak held the same belief, although the father did not appear as readily in advertisements as the ‘Kodak Girl.’⁵⁷ In the photographic record this creates the initial impression of an absent father, but in reality it is their gaze which structures the appeal.⁵⁸ Indeed, it is entirely possible that the GWR’s male photographers may have selected imagery which appealed to them.

This important recognition frames further discussion about the GWR’s gendered marketing, analysed more closely in the following chapter. Indeed, it may well have been the family man, as opposed to the family woman, that sales publications and photographs were aimed at. Quite possibly however, as evident above, by not showing mother or father in the photographs the GWR sought to appeal to both parents. Although some scholars claim that appreciation of the female market relied on pictures of children, and others that women’s (and children’s) mobility was structured in relation to that of a male breadwinner,⁵⁹ the photographic evidence here is inconclusive about the precise gendering. Rather, the GWR cast its net more widely to satisfy a range of perspectives.

⁵⁴ Martin Francis, ‘The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity’, *The Historical Journal*, 45:3 (2002), pp. 637-52.

⁵⁵ Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 139; Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, pp. 76-79.

⁵⁶ Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit*, p. 79; Roland Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream: Making Way For Modernity, 1920-1940*, (Berkeley, 1986), p. 248.

⁵⁷ Taylor, ‘Kodak and the ‘English’ Market Between the Wars’, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Spence and Holland, *Family Snaps*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ 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. 7.

The photographs analysed so far achieved a number of aims. At the most fundamental level they showed consumers that different experiences could be enjoyed in different places, thereby encouraging a very broad segmentation of the market. The company showed families what they could expect at destinations by employing, in today's language, a 'mass' or 'collective' gaze. This also may have been a part-ploy to encourage anticipation of the kinds of sights, smells and noises of the seaside. Additionally, however, more personal imagery of children intended for the parental gaze suggests a deeper consideration of potential yearnings which could be connected to the holiday to sell travel. The focus on groups of children demonstrates the company's recognition that 'the hand which rocked the cradle paid the bills', and in this period the GWR asked mothers and fathers to remember their children and select activities and destinations which would appeal to them also. Clearly, the company had already developed visual techniques for reaching this market segment, helping define it from others. The presence of the collective gaze is additionally interesting because it encourages us to question our assumptions regarding the potential of such imagery for companies like the GWR. The analysis continues into the 1920s when, as well as developing its existing techniques, the GWR commissioned a range of toys and games to 'educate' children about the GWR, and by extension to reach their parents.

Section 2: From Pretty Beaches to Painting Books: Family Marketing in the 1920s

As seen in previous chapters, in some ways the organisational upheavals occasioned by war made little impact on the GWR's advertising policy in the 1920s. Rather, it continued many pre-war practices. This was true of the promotional photography which greeted post-war families which largely replicated conventions trialled in the Edwardian years. The collective gaze remained the principal means of advertising the more sociable resorts to this

market, and detailed family vignettes developed to include more family members. A significant movement was that the number of destinations advertised using the mass beach image rose in response to the gradually shifting patterns of holiday consumption. The economic boom immediately after the war meant longer holidays were no longer the privilege of a social elite, or at any rate a solidly upper-middle-class market. The increasing availability of holidays was greeted excitedly as for many, even amongst the comfortable middle-classes, they proved the first proper taste of an extended holiday at the coast.⁶⁰ As Walvin states, there was a firm belief amongst holidaymakers and resort publicity managers that the crowd connected to the resort in a special way; ‘visitors liked crowds because they made the place more lively, and more crowds meant resorts could spend more on bands, illuminations and sideshows’.⁶¹ It is telling that as more resorts targeted families and shifted appeals, photography which pictured crowds even began to replace some of the picturesque imagery analysed in the previous chapter. An increase in the sheer amount of destinations advertised in this way, as well as a difference in the kinds of ‘mass’ activities included, indicates the GWR somewhat broadening its scope to include lower-middle class families throughout the 1920s.

But as a result, there was greater consideration about how to divide the appeals between the middle and the lower-middle class tastes. Customers would probably have been familiar with the social tone of resorts nearer to home, but needed educating on what would be suitable further afield. In this case the GWR responded by offering different ‘perspectives’ to its collective gaze, framing the destinations to give a particular sense of what was available. The decision becomes clear when analysing, for example, the different presentation of Weston-Super-Mare and Dawlish (Figures 3.10 and 3.11). Both were popular, but there was a distinction between the two. Weston was one of the largest ‘family-

⁶⁰ Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 56.

⁶¹ James Walvin, *Beside The Seaside: A Social History Of The Popular Seaside Holiday*, (London, 1978), p. 117.

centred' resorts in the South West by the 1920s, a development begun in the Edwardian years.⁶² It had the flagship role for families from adjacent communities as well as further afield in the Midlands and London. Since the 1880s it had sought fame as an extravagant resort, and substantial investment in a new seafront, swimming baths, theatres and beach lawns attempted to attract a mass audience continued in the 1920s.⁶³ By contrast Dawlish's reserved feel attracted a more select clientele in part based on the fact that it was much smaller than many other rivals in the South-West. There were similarities: in both cases the activities outlined above –relaxing in deck chairs, donkeys rides, paddling and beach games – were well represented. But the viewer's perspective was shaped in different ways. For Weston, the photographer employed a wide, sweeping gaze framed by the crescent of the beach and capturing the massed ranks of holidaymakers. For Dawlish, a more intimate, closer, and lower view was chosen even though it too offered 'safe bathing, boating, water polo, cricket, golf, tennis'.⁶⁴ Although Dawlish featured 'tempting shops and modern amusement', the whole atmosphere was described as 'soft and peaceful',⁶⁵ a fact reflected in the promotional photograph.

⁶² Walton, *The British Seaside*, p. 29.

⁶³ Hassam, *The Seaside, Health and The Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, pp. 55-57.

⁶⁴ GWR, *Holiday Haunts*, (1927).

⁶⁵ GWR, *Holiday Haunts*, (1927).



Figure 3.10: 'Weston-Super-Mare', 1928



Figure 3.11: 'Dawlish – The Beach', 1927

One might suggest that this difference simply related to the size of each resort; Dawlish's population was roughly 5000 compared to Weston's 25,000.⁶⁶ But the conventions were carried over to other resorts suggesting that this was a widely-used photographic strategy. The sweeping beach filled with holidaymakers as seen at Weston was replicated for Barry Island, a resort with a similarly lower-middle and working class clientele drawn from the Welsh mining towns and industrial cities (Figure 3.12). The same was true of others such as Swansea (South Wales), Burnham (Somerset) and Paignton (Devon). By contrast a more sheltered gaze, appearing from behind the changing tents, characterised the more exclusive beach at Duporth near St. Austell (Figure 3.13). It seems in this case that although a populous image featuring a range of activities was the overarching requirement, the 'framing' of the image had more to do with marking out resorts for different social classes. Although the same tropes appeared time and again - a haphazard arrangement of deck-chairs spread along the beach, backed by bathing tents and huts, small children taking their first steps into the waves watched over by parents and grandparents - the position of the photographer might be seen to replicate the social standing of those about to venture onto the beach. In both cases however, the collective gaze was still desired. Rather than discourage potential viewers of any class, it was intended to create pleasurable anticipation. The point, as Gillis has noted, is that anticipating and remembering the holiday is as much, if not more important, as the real experience:⁶⁷ when viewing the GWR's imagery one was not meant to consider potential experiences of stifling temperatures and overcrowding, although we cannot rule this interpretation out.

⁶⁶ Walton's statistics between 1911 and 1951 indicate that during the interwar years the population's of these two resorts grew at roughly the same rate and percentage incremental growth was 57% and 74% respectively, Walton, 'The Seaside Resorts of England and Wales, 1900-1950: Growth, Diffusion and the Emergence of New Forms of Coastal Tourism', pp. 27-28.

⁶⁷ Gillis, *A World Of Their Own Making*, pp. 106-07.



Figure 3.12: 'Glamorganshire - Barry Island', 1923



Figure 3.13: 'Duporth Near St. Austell', *The Cornish Riviera*, 1929

In contrast to the increasing reliance on the collective gaze, the closer, more intimate appeal of children and the nuclear family also returned after the war. Two images, appearing towards the end of the 1920s, exemplify the GWR's usage of this more personal scene. 'St

Ives – Porthminster beach’ (Figure 3.14) pictures two younger children and an older male. They adopt inherently childish postures, crawling and digging inquisitively in the sand, although we cannot say for sure whether they were posed in this way. In a way similar to the Edwardian years, these children were ‘watched’ by the viewer, connoting a parental gaze. ‘Pangbourne – The Thames’ (Figure 3.15) demonstrates the evolution of this kind of imagery towards the end of the decade, this time with a parent, the mother, dividing out a picnic between children. This image invites multiple interpretations. Potential holidaymakers may have viewed this image inspirationally: that is, to see that a locale more commonly associated with riparian activities could also be a place which the family might enjoy. Others may have read the image aspirationally, as a perfect scene of family bliss. The physical photomechanical process assisted a favourable reading of the company’s messages. The photogravures used by the GWR looked warmer than black and white photography by virtue of its softer, sepia tint. This was a useful characteristic for beach imagery as it conveyed the impression of clement weather: the GWR never showed poor weather unless it was helpful to dramatic cliff or ocean imagery. But when showing the contrived image of the ideal family, this golden hue also connoted ‘heavenly favour’, a technique well known to place marketers on both sides of the Atlantic to suggest links to a higher plane of consumption.⁶⁸ As Ramamurthy argues, modern eyes cannot quite grasp the interest that photographs attracted in the early part of the twentieth century.⁶⁹ Yet just as modern tourists seek in some part to replicate through photography what they see in brochures and guides,⁷⁰ so the consumer of the 1920s probably did too. Here again lies the GWR’s significance in capturing and

⁶⁸ Gold and Gold, ‘Building Societies, Home Ownership and the Imagery of English Suburban Promotion in the Interwar Years’, pp. 88-89; Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, p. 276.

⁶⁹ Anandi Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders: Images of Africa and Asia in British Advertising*, (Manchester, 2003), p. 16.

⁷⁰ Olivia Jenkins, ‘Photography and Travel Brochures: The Circle of Representation’, *Tourism Geographies*, 5:3 (2003), p. 5.

enforcing difference in its photographic messages rather than simply ascribing to a universal type.



Figure 3.14: 'St Ives – Porthminster Beach', 1923



Figure 3.15: 'Pangbourne – The Thames', 1929

The 1920s saw the further expansion of personal photography, and the fact that the GWR no longer included lengthy textual descriptions suggests that it recognised the growing familiarity with personal family photography. Kodak's creation of the mass market meant that in taking their own family imagery people became well-equipped in decoding these

advertising messages. Certainly, Kodak used less text and a more contrived image to sell, insisting that customers, ‘Make today’s moments tomorrow’s memories’.⁷¹ Although Kodak still relied on pen-and-brush imagery in its adverts owing to reproduction costs and qualities associated with daily newspapers, it shared many parallels with the GWR’s idealised family. Kodak relied on family intimacy,⁷² referenced clearly in Figures 3.16 and 3.17 by the mother’s watchful gaze. In the GWR’s imagery the viewer, not some illustrated character, took up the role of ‘parent’, and this suggests the capabilities of photography over pen-and-brush illustrations: that one could be made to feel unconscious of any intervening manipulator and regard the children as if they were one’s own.⁷³ The GWR, for example, no longer needed to employ the kind of persuasive text that Kodak did, suggesting that the GWR knew at least that when although people ‘accepted’ the wider meanings of the well-composed family photograph, they approached it with their own interpretive meanings.

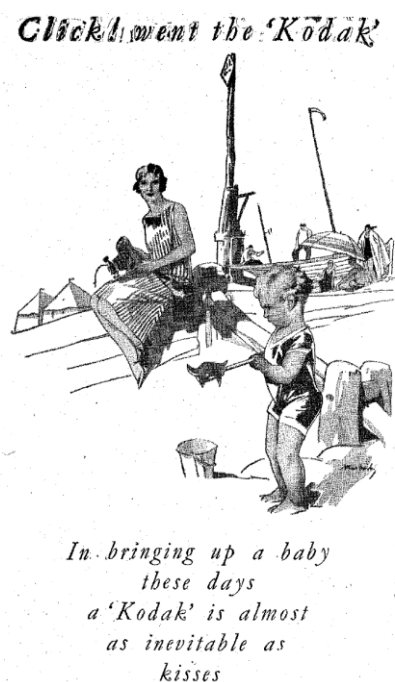


Figure 3.16: ‘Click went the Kodak’, 1928⁷⁴



Figure 3.17: ‘Tell it with a Kodak’, 1923⁷⁵

⁷¹ Holland, *Picturing Childhood*, p. 10.

⁷² Holland, “‘Sweet it is to scan...’”, pp. 128-29.

⁷³ Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, p. 153.

⁷⁴ *The Daily Mirror*, 13th June 1928.

⁷⁵ *The Daily Mirror*, 10th June 1923.

By the 1920s the GWR was also not the only railway using this kind of imagery. Although others were slow to produce their own 'all-line' sales publications,⁷⁶ they appear to have quickly grasped the kind of photographic conventions most popular amongst contemporaries. As a brief comparison here, other members of the Big Four railways used the child as a key motif, albeit with contrasting narratives. The London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) referenced a parental gaze (Figure 3.18) with all three children meeting the viewer's gaze and acting out an unquestionably child-like activity. The stillness of the water suggests the carefully composed nature of this photograph: one might expect young children riding an inflatable at the seaside to display more unpredictable spontaneity. The London and North Eastern's (LNER) image displays more artistry, the large towel and the downward-looking perspective creating the impression of the child who needed be cared for (Figure 3.19). This again represents a carefully posed appeal to a parental gaze, the child's eye's meeting the viewers' head-on. This snap-shot of company techniques corroborates the idea that in the 1920s the railways paid more attention to the conventions of family photograph albums. It also suggests that the GWR offered its services in a more creative culture, one which also spurred competition.

⁷⁶ Allen Middleton, *It's Quicker By Rail!: The History Of LNER Advertising*, (Stroud, 2002), pp. 41-43.



Figure 3.18: 'All at sea but quite happy', Holidays by LMS, 1929



Figure 3.19: 'After the Dip' The Holiday Handbook (LNER), 1929

The photographs clearly indicate the GWR's fixed strategy regarding the family. Other examples show the company using the messages in the photographs to further influence family consumption. The GWR issued books, games and jigsaws intended to make the child a salesperson. As Walvin notes, aside from the costs of transport and accommodation, the holiday brought entertainment expenses which were dangled temptingly

before parents and children.⁷⁷ The popularity of ice-creams, buckets and spades and other toys was recognised by the company in several incentive purchases, chiefly puzzles.⁷⁸ In his memoir, Felix Pole recalled that jigsaw puzzles, cut by the Chad-Valley Company and supplied with GWR photographs, were sold at low prices by bookstalls, stations and shops, with over a million sold.⁷⁹ The GWR surpassed American retail and railway companies, for whom ‘premiums’ (free-gifts) had become de rigueur,⁸⁰ by extracting payment for these commodities. As with most GWR publicity ventures the cost to the company was extremely small. By selling very cheaply, receipts from sales approximated to net cost but also encouraged more people to become ‘railway minded’.⁸¹

The company offered many more goods to even younger children. Of postcards, the report on the company’s activities at the Empire Marketing Board exhibition of 1924 recorded large sales mainly amongst schoolboys; ‘Not infrequently we had 50/100 lads round the table at one time’.⁸² Jigsaw-puzzles again proved great publicity, 4072 being sold at the exhibition alone.⁸³ But the company also discerned a demand for something inexpensive for children too young to appreciate its books intended for adults such as *10.30 Limited* or *Caerphilly Castle*. The report’s author recommended that ‘a bright coloured book to include engines, stations, signals and signal-boxes would, I think, find ready sale on such occasions’.⁸⁴ This was swiftly acted upon, and by Christmas the following year the GWR was able to offer *The GWR Painting Book* to the parents of young children.⁸⁵ These examples not only illustrate the value which was placed on the GWR’s pictorial literature by the company and the consumer, but the value of the rudimentary market research outlined in

⁷⁷ Walvin, *Beside The Seaside*, p. 110.

⁷⁸ Roger Wilson, *Go Great Western: A History Of GWR Publicity*, (Newton Abbott, 1987), p. 5.

⁷⁹ Felix Pole, *Felix J. C. Pole: His Book*, (London, 1968), p. 83.

⁸⁰ Cook, ‘The Rise of “The Toddler”’, p. 116.

⁸¹ Pole, *Felix J. C. Pole: His Book*, p. 83.

⁸² The National Archives (TNA), RAIL 267/389, Report Upon Great Western Railway Arrangements at The British Empire Exhibition, Wembley 1924, p. 12.

⁸³ TNA, RAIL 267/389, Arrangements at The British Empire Exhibition, p. 11.

⁸⁴ TNA, RAIL 267/389, Arrangements at The British Empire Exhibition, p. 12.

⁸⁵ GWRM, December 1925, p. 470.

Chapter One which allowed the GWR to judge the value of using the child as salesperson. It encouraged the GWR to get its holiday marketing into the middle-class home under the guise of children's books, games and jigsaws.

Both the photographs and toys of the 1920s attest the GWR's considered conceptualisation of the family, as well as the use of children as a persuasive influence on parents. The imagery continued to fulfil two roles; firstly, to display destinations in an alluring but instructive manner seen in the 'collective gaze'. This recorded destinations as offering something explicitly different to the imagery targeted at the lover of the picturesque. Elements of artistry and drama helped connect this outwardly crowded imagery with family-role fulfilling values and, above all, fun. Secondly, the visual appeal attempted to convey a sense of family togetherness on holiday, displaying a wish to target customers' most heartfelt desires. Rather than record authentically, this body of images reflected the pleasures and codes associated with families which praised the family 'as we live by'; an idealised construction promising social benefits from holiday consumption. The balance between these two styles was continually renegotiated, but as the analysis moves towards the 1930s, we see that in this decade the contrived, intimate family image came to dominate the pages of *Holiday Haunts*. To sell a 'friendly' family holiday to consumers with an ever greater degree of choice, the GWR re-focussed its appeal on creating an aspirational family 'lifestyle' which brought familial relations under closer scrutiny.

Section 3: Vignettes of Family life: Marketing Between 1930 and 1939

The GWR's appeals to families after 1930 reflected the abrupt change in style which characterised most of its marketing in this decade. This question is, however, to what extent was this shift either a response to new ways of picturing people - for example, in closer, more

active style increasingly popular in advertising photography - or a renegotiation on the company's part of the values connected to the family holiday? In the GWR's case it seems that both explanations are partly apposite. Improvements in reproduction technologies and techniques certainly allowed a more intimate, refined focus on individual consumers. The rudimentary lighting and framing techniques seen above were polished and joined by professional photographers' models. Moreover, relaxation of morals associated with bathing, freedom to bathe in public and wear less cumbersome attire,⁸⁶ epitomised a change whereby the beach holiday became a more gregarious place at which the restrictions of home were reduced. But whereas previously the GWR had shown the family as part of the beach environment, the beach now became a secondary consideration to the symbolic value of family life. For example, although children had ostensibly represented 'the family' in the 1910s and 1920s, in the 1930s all family members were now pictured. The message was clear; the GWR now saw its customers as ripe for emotional manipulation or, as in the company magazine, 'the successful salesman...can 'put over' his subject in such a way that the prospective customer judges not only from the point of view of price but is also persuaded by the subtle appeals which careful analysis indicates as those which make a sale'.⁸⁷

The company was driven by other demands. At the start of the 1930s more resorts clamoured for the lucrative family market. Traditional resorts in particular faced fresh competition from the arrival of new, child-centred holiday camps mid-way through the 1930s.⁸⁸ With the arrival of the cheap four-seater car, families were targeted by manufactures which developed their own 'family image' such as Hillman, Austin and Morris. Chevrolet's advertisements had long offered 'Your family's health and happiness for £198'.⁸⁹ Some years

⁸⁶ Walton, *The British Seaside*, pp. 98-99.

⁸⁷ GWRM, June 1936, pp. 289-90.

⁸⁸ Dawson, *Holiday Camps in Twentieth Century Britain*, pp. 1-10; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn., p. 138.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 3rd July 1923; also see Alexander Medcalf, 'The Romance of the Road: The Motor Car, Advertising and Gender Relations in Britain 1918-1939', (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of York, 2008), pp. 42-57.

later caravanning became popular, a development which worried hoteliers who had researched how many regular customers were deserting hotel room for caravan.⁹⁰ The cost of caravanning was prohibitive for many families with only 3,500 private caravans in use by 1933.⁹¹ But the rental market soon expanded allowing an estimated 150,000 families to go caravanning by 1935.⁹²

As well as hoteliers, these changes made railway companies and resorts more responsive. Indeed, the GWR emphasised yearly the fresh benefits and reduced fares available to families;

The family man deserves something special and gets it. The tiny tot, under three, is carried free, and even the biggest of big kiddies under fourteen years of age travel at half-fare rate...the collapsible perambulator or cot [are] all carried free.⁹³

These concessions reveal a desire to win families through rational arguments based on price; but beyond purely economic motivations the GWR's marketing shift underlined the company's commitment to the idea that 'the hand that rocked the cradle paid the bills'. The supplementary appeals described in the previous section, books and games, were now joined by dedicated 'family' services such as the 'Kiddies expresses'. This, a surprise trip for children on Whit Monday, proved so popular that it was necessary to provide a second train to convey the 1500 passengers.⁹⁴ In Christmas 1938, the company placed its marketing on the shop floor. The GWR collaborated with department stores in London and Bristol, turning a corner of one floor over to a cinema-train complete with Santa, GWR guard, and a mocked-up station setting with booking office and posters. The 'train' made alternate 'journeys' to

⁹⁰ Sean O'Connell, *The Car In British Society*, (Manchester, 1998), p. 89.

⁹¹ O'Connell, *The Car In British Society*, pp. 89-90.

⁹² O'Connell, *The Car In British Society*, p. 90.

⁹³ GWRM, May 1936, p. 212.

⁹⁴ GWRM, June 1932, p. 229.

the North Pole and the Cornish Riviera. The publicity stunt proved extremely popular throughout the whole Christmas shopping season, entertaining as many as 2,000 children in a day.⁹⁵

As well as targeting parents through their children, the key change in structuring a heightened family message was to emphasise more fully the companionate nature of family holidays. Everybody, mothers and fathers as well as children, was told that they could attain domestic bliss. This built on wider subscription, apparent in the media and amongst other marketers, to the ideology of domesticity. Not a new idea by any means, it was however adopted forcefully by a range of businesses in 1930s visual advertising. For example, the British building industry created a domestic ideal presented as a key element of a new, suburbanised, aspirational lifestyle.⁹⁶ It was available simply by taking out a mortgage. The message was extended through many new mass-circulation women's magazines, women's sections in newspapers, ideal home exhibitions and advertisements for new consumer durables.⁹⁷ Each promised that one could be a good parent by consuming certain advice or products. This section argues that the GWR employed a similar visual rhetoric in its holiday advertising, making a more emotional appeal to family members. This strategy hinged less on showing the populous beach imagery, and more the intimate family group.

The visual rhetoric – examined below - was supported by the massive amount of literature released by the company which give an indication of how it wanted customers to approach the photographs. The GWR understood familial consumption shaped by 'the family we live by',⁹⁸ and the company encouraged families to search for the perfect versions of themselves on holiday. The impression of a transformative, fantastical experience, begun

⁹⁵ GWRM, January 1939, p. 23.

⁹⁶ Peter Scott, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership and the Creation of the Modern Working-class Consumer in Interwar Britain', *Business History*, 50:1 (2008), pp. 4-25.

⁹⁷ Scott, 'Marketing Mass Home Ownership', p. 14; Jill Greenfield and Chris Reid, 'Women's Magazines and the Commercial Orchestration of Femininity in the 1930s: Evidence from Woman's Own', *Media History*, 4:2 (1998), pp. 161-174; Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making*, p. xv.

⁹⁸ Gillis, *A World Of Their Own Making*, pp. 106-07.

in the small text-panels seen in the Edwardian years, became the defining element in the 1930s, whether in *Holiday Haunts* or the many other publications. For example, in the 1934 edition of *Glorious Devon*, S.P.B Mais encouraged potential consumers to consider both the bad and the good elements of the holiday. In a similar way to how the advertisers of consumer durables asked consumers to remember when they had been let down by an inferior product, Mais began;

There was a time when families moved en bloc from what Matthew Arnold called the ‘dismal and illiberal’ surroundings of a suburb to the equally ‘dismal and illiberal’ surroundings of some well-advertised seaside resort. They exchanged the crowded Strand of London for the same crowd on a smaller strand by the sea. They sat in deck chairs for a month reading the same papers that they read at home, knitting and mending the same socks, quarrelling, if they were children, over the same possessions. This they called a holiday. We have changed all that. The holiday-maker of today demands, and rightly demands, a change. He wants to forget the daily news. He wants to get away from crowds. He wants to be transported into a different world.⁹⁹

Mais posited family disharmony as evidence for the failure of previous holiday choices. Crucially for the consumer, this disappointment was something that the GWR suggested it could help avoid. The idea was to encourage potential consumers to see something of themselves in this vignette and seek a change to the more enjoyable family life promised on a GWR holiday. Likewise in *Holiday Haunts* at the end of the decade;

⁹⁹ GWR, *Glorious Devon*, (1934).

Holidays! Every year, for months ahead, the favourite topic on thousands of family debates is ‘Holidays’; there is some magic in the very word that can call up bright visions of sea and sunshine even on the gloomiest day. How light-heartedly the debate proceeds, as each member of the family offers suggestions and propounds plans! But sooner or later three problems emerge from the discussion which must receive careful consideration: the first, of course, is ‘where shall we go?’; the next, ‘when shall we go?’; and the third. ‘how shall we go?’¹⁰⁰

This presented holiday selection as a warm, family-centred process, not the sole responsibility of either parent. The same themes of companionship and domestic harmony raised in Mais’s excerpt were paraded alongside the idea that choosing a holiday was not stressful but almost as fun as the holiday itself.¹⁰¹ Whether the GWR could actually provide a change was irrelevant; the text proclaimed unconditionally that it could.

Placing the photographs into this context reveals a substantial change in how the GWR perceived families and how it thought they should be marketed to. The established pictorial conventions were no longer enough; additional aspirational benefits needed to be worked into the service to differentiate it from that of competitors. Crucially, the collective image, whilst still employed for certain large destinations, was largely discarded as a means of selling. Apparently now well aware of what a beach holiday offered, the GWR discerned in consumers the need for something new. As a result, as well as showing that a family holiday would not just be replicating the same quotidian experiences, in the 1930s the GWR showed consumers that their families could become ‘perfect’ by consuming a holiday in, say, the South West or West Wales.

¹⁰⁰ GWR, *Holiday Haunts*, (1939).

¹⁰¹ *The Daily Mirror*, 9th May 1936.

'Holidaymaking in Smiling Somerset' (Figure 3.20) confirms the GWR's desire to reference more prominently the emotions connected to the family. The idealised family was central to the composition. It evinced the GWR's increasing use of professional models to more effectively communicate the specific messages and align it with developments in other visual media. Although enjoying an activity which mimicked the 'locals' who advertised other places, the text confirmed these people as holidaymakers. They represented the GWR's contrived and idealised family group of mother, father and children of each sex, a small unit which excluded grandparents who were almost never seen in the company's 1930s photographs. Fashionably attired in casual clothes, 'Holidaymaking in Smiling Somerset' suggested how the holiday allowed this family to relax away from their everyday urban surroundings. The whole family unit is in shot: all faces are visible and nobody's enjoyment is privileged over others. Again, a universal reading is impossible to establish: some might interpret the mother-children bond, and the fact the father looks away from this, as evidence of different levels of family commitment. However, reading this image alongside the others which depicted the father (see below), the GWR intended this gentleman to be seen as taking up his role at the head of the family, and probably not wishing to go somewhere on his own to smoke his pipe. This kind of image provided visual confirmation that the holiday was easy, enjoyable, and emotionally fulfilling. Instead of the distant beach scenes and massed deckchairs of the previous decades, the viewer was entreated to a range of possibilities and benefits that family harmony could bring.



Figure 3.20: 'Holidaymaking in Smiling Somerset', 1937

This imagery shared some parallels with its predecessors. Initially, many photographs featured not models but 'ordinary' people, captured spontaneously, rather like the close-up images of children in the Edwardian years. The way the images were composed, commonly encircling the viewer, or depicting actors waving to or running towards them, was meant to draw potential consumers into the image by requesting that they complete the circles of family or friends. Being part of the family scene, as opposed to regarding it with detachment, helped cultivate a sense of anticipation. Games and activities were enjoyed by everyone and provided an enticing image which, by not being too specific, was intended to appeal to both adults and children alike. By framing the photographs in this more intimate fashion, the viewer was asked to picture themselves on holiday as opposed to regarding the images with detachment.

But the GWR also developed specific appeals to target the individual aspirations of different family members. Mothers and children regularly appeared on their own, or in a mixture, and father's gaze was again well catered for. The styles of relaxed parenting in the Edwardian and early-interwar years were extended in the 1930s with 'Dad' playing the role of adventurer; the family continued to represent a healing dimension to the world of business.¹⁰² GWR photography mimicked this desire. In Figure 3.21, 'Happy Holiday Makers', the father's attention turns inwards to his children. A technique regularly employed to encourage the viewer to 'look where the parent looked',¹⁰³ this meant that the viewer's attention in this case was drawn to the children. But the children also looked to their father, regarding him not as a disciplinarian but as one of their own. The darker haired daughter and son revealed a blushing love of their father; a comedic aspect is present when one realises the father is wincing as the second-youngest child pours sand down his shirt. Emphasising the child's right to the parent's attention symbolises that selling the holiday through the family was a reminder that you could be something different on holiday, and in this case the father who might not see his children as frequently during the working week could revel in their company on holiday. The front cover of 1933's *Holiday Haunts* made this explicit with father still sporting his work shirt and tie (Figure 3.22). Such a prominent image of the relationship between father and child supports the idea that the GWR knew well the desires associated with family holidaymaking for individual members, but also qualifies Harrington's claim that in posters men were never shown alone with children.¹⁰⁴ This reveals a further benefit of railway photography. As Marchand argues, an illustration might question the deliberate artifice employed by the creator.¹⁰⁵ The photograph did not provoke the viewer to conjure up an image of the photographer who devised it. Rather it encouraged the viewer

¹⁰² Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 139.

¹⁰³ Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, p. 192.

¹⁰⁴ Harrington, 'Beyond The Bathing Belle', p. 41.

¹⁰⁵ Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, p. 153.

to remain unconscious of any intervention. This aligns with the GWR's overall aim, to encourage viewers to place themselves in the image.



Figure 3.21: 'Happy Holiday-makers', 1939



Figure 3.22: Front Cover Holiday Haunts, 1933

Mother's role also became more clearly defined and referenced the appeals amongst other advertisers. Following trends from America, in interwar Britain parental guilt became an increasingly popular advertising technique for domestic goods, especially targeting mothers.¹⁰⁶ For example, the J. Walter Thompson agency prepared for Rowntree's a campaign which emphasised the supposed life-enhancing properties of its cocoa.¹⁰⁷ Testimonials from housewives outlined how their families' health had improved after consuming the brand.¹⁰⁸ This kind of marketing argued that without the product the consumer would be somehow lacking, or failing in their duty as a parent. Parents strove for the best for their children and advertisers were very aware of this, hence the recommendation

¹⁰⁶ Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', pp. 366-68.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and The Marketing Revolution, 1862-1969*, (Cambridge, 1995), p. 295.

¹⁰⁸ Fitzgerald, *Rowntree and The Marketing Revolution*, p. 295.

in *Advertiser's Weekly*.¹⁰⁹ Although adverts for other retail products appealed chiefly to mother's never-ceasing pastoral role,¹¹⁰ the 1930s witnessed further expression of the idea that the family holiday could scarcely have been less attractive to women in search of rest. From making the initial arrangements and economic considerations to packing and making sure the family was at the station at the right time, to organising activities, repacking and the journey home, the holiday often represented more work for mother.¹¹¹ Appeals were made to husbands to 'remember' that it was supposed to be a holiday for mothers and wives too.¹¹² To promote holidays successfully, this aspect had to be subverted; the GWR's resolution was to draw attention to the positive aspects of motherhood, the eternal bond with their children which, though mothers may have sought respite from, they did not wish to break. It therefore framed 'guilt' in a different way. By focussing on the good rather than the bad, the GWR's imagery portrayed familial love as a bond enhanced by the holiday.

'Sun bathers' (Figure 3.23) achieved this in a manner similar to 'Happy Holiday-makers' (Figure 3.21 above). The children were presented as well-behaved and content, and mother took care of them, assuring that their pastoral needs, in terms of food and attention, were taken care of as well as their enjoyment needs, represented by the beach ball. The powerful sun, glinting of limbs and torsos, associates these individuals with 'heavenly favour' seen above in the use of sepia tinting,¹¹³ and further marks the image out as a favoured vignette in which all members played their culturally defined roles to perfection. This contrived view of the family holiday contrasted the kinds of activities available on holiday with a clearer picture of emotional nourishment.

¹⁰⁹ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*, (Oxford, 1998), pp. 72-73.

¹¹⁰ Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', pp. 366-68; Sandy Isenstadt, 'Visions of Plenty: Refrigerators in America around 1950', *Journal of Design History*, 11:4 (1998), p. 316.

¹¹¹ Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960*, (Manchester, 2000), pp. 136-37.

¹¹² Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960*, pp. 136-37; Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, p. 110.

¹¹³ Helen Wilkinson, "'The New Heraldry': Stock Photography, Visual Literacy, and Advertising in 1930s Britain', *Journal of Design History*, 10:1 (1997), p. 29; Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, p. 276.



Figure 3.23: 'Sun Bathers', 1938

Often images formed sequences which regularly appeared in *Holiday Haunts* throughout the decade. One such group (Figures 3.24 to 3.26) further focussed on the mother-daughter relationship. In the first image (Figure 3.24) the daughter appears old enough to not need the help of her mother or the fuss in making sure she is dry. However, mother takes pride in her responsibility, her expression and stance signifying a love of her task rather than desire to escape. The photograph's composition also places childhood in high esteem. Rather than standing to dry the child, the mother is kneeling. In pictorial conventions this almost always connotes servility as relative height of actors in an image is a metaphor for relative power between them.¹¹⁴ This photograph appears as the child's holiday, also noted in its title 'after the dip', an activity which the child has obviously undergone. Although it makes visual references to family holiday 'snapshots' the image is clearly posed, emphasised in the recurrence of the individuals. Used in different years, albeit framed differently, the message remained the same: golden moments on holiday strengthened

¹¹⁴ John Berger (ed.), *Ways Of Seeing*, (London, 1972), p. 138.

family ties (Figures 3.24 and 3.25). Through its photographic marketing, the GWR attempted to turn ‘duties into pleasures’.¹¹⁵



Figure 3.24: ‘After the Dip’, 1933

¹¹⁵ Holland, “Sweet it is to scan...”, p. 106.



Figure 3.25: 'Cornwall at Prussia Cove', 1933



Figure 3.26: 'At Prussia Cove near Marazion', 1934

Photographs which included both mothers and fathers suggest that the GWR selected photographs which had a ‘companionate guidance’;¹¹⁶ the holiday was, once again, not the sole responsibility of one parent but a collective effort. Photography showed idealised visions of father and motherhood which stressed that good parents selected GWR holidays. This would not just benefit children (clearly evidenced by their apparent enjoyment of the holiday) but by doing this the viewer would be doing a good job as parent. Above all the photographs showed that this style of holiday parenting was fun. Whilst manuals and guides still discussed parenting issues, the GWR proffered a way that the family might consume the holiday, one which would end family strife and result in rest and relaxation for all. Recognising that ‘the hand that rocks the cradle pays the bills’, the GWR released diverse imagery which ‘spoke’ to the parent in an effort to influence their holiday decisions. Part of this influence attached weight to the experience of childhood, as seen above, not just that children would enjoy it but parents would too. One would not lose face by playing games on the beach or acting ‘childishly’; indeed, it was a desirable way to ‘let go’.¹¹⁷

However, as seen right from the Edwardian period the child was often the most important sign connected to the holiday, as well as the central icon of family life. Recent research into imagery depicting children shows that images reference a set of narratives about childhood.¹¹⁸ Owing partly to the actions of companies like Kodak and the GWR, by the 1930s these narratives had become widely accepted so that viewers of the GWR’ images became joint actors in their stories.¹¹⁹ At this time the two-or-three-child family was increasingly the norm, which meant that individual attention could be given to each child and there was more time for birthday celebrations, family Christmases and the snapshots which

¹¹⁶ Marchand, *Advertising The American Dream*, pp. 229-30.

¹¹⁷ Gillis, *A World Of Their Own Making*, p. 105.

¹¹⁸ Holland, *Picturing Childhood*, pp. 1-9.

¹¹⁹ Holland, *Picturing Childhood*, p. 3.

accompany these ceremonies.¹²⁰ The holiday was no exception and the GWR placed children at the heart of the holiday experience. The GWR's images were filled with personality (Figures 3.27 - 3.29), actions being supported by captions underneath the photograph which, rather than citing the destination, commented on the children. Although 'king of the castle' in this sense referenced a game, the symbolism also encouraged association of children with high significance. The bucket and spade imagery shown in the introductory section of this chapter, instantly recognisable if un-original, appeared time and again in various guises. Each photograph relied on a similar pose, setting and message suggesting favoured appeals and continuity in the photographic direction. The frequency of this kind of image attests to the perceived influence children had, but also that the GWR relied on a visual 'formula', depicting well-behaved, fun loving children which would remind parents of their own offspring.



Figure 3.27: 'Perfectly Happy', 1937



Figure 3.28: 'King of the castle', 1939

¹²⁰ Holland, "Sweet it is to scan...", p. 134.



Figure 3.29: ‘King of the castle’, 1937

A comparison between these photographs and the GWR’s pen-and-brush illustrations helps understand the ‘ways of seeing’ and authorship involved in both. Muriel Gill’s cover for 1939’s *Holiday Haunts* (Figure 3.30) displayed a number of artistic visual conventions replicated in the photographic gaze. The children, one of each sex, appeared healthy-looking, evoking an air of anticipation in their stance and expectant looks. These were important symbols, along with the holiday accoutrements clutched by these children. Both the illustration and the photographs suggested an ‘every-child’ which one could imagine as their own: they were always conventional-looking in terms of haircuts, dress and age (no teenagers or babies were shown). The comparison shows that by the 1930s the GWR had overcome the common criticism levelled at photography, that it was not artistic.¹²¹ The company’s photographic and brush images were calculated to reach right into the heart of the fond parent. But these images may also have served as an anxiety-reducing mechanism. Catering for the children on holiday could be exceedingly difficult; they could, of course, be

¹²¹ Elspeth Brown, *The Corporate Eye: Photography and the Rationalization of American Commercial Culture, 1884–1929*, (Baltimore, 2005), pp. 162-68.

troublesome if not kept under control.¹²² Holidays was often used as a method to enforce good behaviour, parents warning children to behave or else risk being left behind.¹²³ Thus, many photographs suggested that it was a pleasure to take children on holiday; one would inspire the kind of behaviour and satisfaction on display in the GWR's contrived imagery.



Figure 3.30: Front Cover Holiday Haunts, 1939

How innovative was the GWR's imagery compared to other contemporary marketers? Again, if we compare the GWR's compositions to Kodak's output there is a degree of similarity. Figure 3.31, which showed father and children, included the same signs as those discussed above. Children playing calmly were watched over by a protective gaze; the reader

¹²² GWRM, February 1939, p. 75.

¹²³ Matheson, *Trip: The Annual Holiday of GWR's Swindon Works*, p. 23.

was meant to infer that this was a 'golden moment'. By the 1930s Kodak was able increasingly to use photography in its press advertisements. It used the spontaneity of the medium to its fullest extent when showing a mother being surprised by her son (Figure 3.32). The viewer was meant to absorb the message of 'fun'; the holiday would strengthen familial ties through playfulness. The photograph made this 'fun' seem more immediate; this was a real person being (un)pleasantly surprised by the icy water. But what is interesting is that, as seen above, neither Kodak nor the GWR created a single or 'actual' family. Unlike the Kodak Girl used to sell to women,¹²⁴ in Kodak's family vision the positions of mother, father, son and daughter were standardised for consumers.¹²⁵ By doing so Kodak believed that it would inspire an emotional response, encouraging consumers to buy photographic equipment and replicate these visions with their own private photography. Kodak wanted consumers to buy cameras and film; the GWR wanted consumers to take a holiday, the first step in creating their own memories. This output of both companies was thus never merely decorative; the GWR and Kodak recognised, as John Gillis argues, that fantasy experiences and hopes for the future are an essential part of life. The GWR offered a wide-ranging tableau of family imagery to try to convert these hopes and aspirations into increased train travel. The range of photographs, the people and styles they convey, hints at a more accomplished process of first imagining and anticipating customer requirements before developing these into calculated appeals to consume.

¹²⁴ Taylor, 'Kodak and the 'English' Market Between the Wars', p. 35.

¹²⁵ Taylor, 'Kodak and the 'English' Market Between the Wars', p. 35; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, p. 172.



make golden chances for the Kodak Competition. This year, the pictures you take for pleasure may prove golden indeed. One snap may win £3,300 in the Kodak £20,000 International Competition! There are 379 prizes for the British Isles alone! Only amateurs may enter—there are equal chances for all. There is no entrance fee—and the prizes

will be awarded for picture interest only. *Technical skill will not count—a boy with a Brownie may easily win!* Send in as many snaps as you like, snaps of any subjects. Go into any shop where they sell Kodak Film or cameras, and you will see your entry form on the counter. The competition closes August 31st. Enter now—for pleasure and for profit!

Figure 3.31: 'Golden Moments Snatched From Time', 1931¹²⁶



LET'S HAVE SOME FUN THIS HOLIDAY...

—and
keep it on **Kodak Film**

Sold everywhere by Kodak dealers

Figure 3.32: 'Let's Have Some Fun This Holiday', 1934¹²⁷

¹²⁶ *The Daily Mirror*, 17th July 1931.

¹²⁷ *The Daily Mirror*, 3rd August 1934.

As a final analysis using the signs and rhetoric described above, Figure 3.33 presents a successful melding of the semiotics behind the posed-model image and that which took inspiration from family photograph albums. When looking at this image the viewer is placed in the role of parent regarding children. The children are young and thus need protecting. Their ages are varied enough to suggest a family, and their informal poses suggest 'togetherness'. They engage the viewer's with big, happy smiles. As if confirmation was needed, the caption, arranged as the children's speech, proclaims that they 'love' the coast. The suggestion is that these children are having fun, but that you should also want to maintain this and give them the best holiday possible to, by extension, attain their love. This was the enduring image of the publications of the 1930s, appealing directly to the 'fond parent' and confirming that a holiday on, for example, the Cambrian coast would be joyful. As a descendant of the Edwardian imagery, it shows that the GWR consistently knew the value of a heartfelt appeal to parents, but the technology and the framing of this appeal progressed. For those without children it still had value in its positive connotations; these were children unlikely to misbehave. Once again, we cannot tell ultimately how individual consumers would have responded to this kind of image, but as well as differing content targeted at different market segments, this and the previous chapter displayed a greater appreciation, on the GWR's part, of the emotional involvement in the different kinds of holidaymaker.



Figure 3.33: 'We Love The Cambrian Coast', 1937

In the 1930s vignettes of family life became an increasingly popular method of advertising the family holiday for the GWR. They communicated emotional appeals, but in a way apart from the more common tactic, used by the promoters of electrical and cleaning products, which placed the blame for ill physical and mental health on housewives who 'failed' to clean their houses properly.¹²⁸ The GWR turned this around, taking readily identifiable, albeit idealised, imagery from people's lives and offering access to it as part of the service. In marketing terms, getting the public to think about the railway as something different to just travel represented an innovative use of the possibilities of photography combined to increasingly effective tactics for using the child as salesman.

¹²⁸ Bowden, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', pp. 366-68.

Section 4: Conclusions

The GWR's family photography appeared in complete contrast to that which targeted the lover of the picturesque, reflecting the company's understanding and segmentation of these consumers. Visual content and framing techniques presented destinations in ways which better aligned to customers' perceived interests. This difference is outwardly easy to discern, but this chapter questioned the deeper meaning behind this imagery and what it reveals about how the GWR 'pictured' passengers. The family imagery was sophisticated, going far beyond, simply, the inclusion of children. Although the child was a prominent sign, this chapter demonstrated how the GWR employed a rather more detailed consideration of family requirements. The company had a range of techniques for suggesting difference which utilised the photograph's allusion to both reality and fantasy. On the one hand the relatively simple distinction between peopled and un-peopled imagery was used by the GWR to suggest which destinations were more appropriate for certain customers, but this would ignore a much more complex administration. The way the resort was framed, either in a broad sweeping gaze or in a lower level, intimate focus, immediately connoted, without words, the kind of class appropriateness of the destination.

This, and other kinds of symbolism, was abundant in the photographs. The use of photographs which replicated the happy conventions in family photograph album shows the GWR getting into the minds of customers and trying to see holidays from their perspective. Just as it told the lover of the picturesque that they could fulfil desires for a bucolic, otherworldly experience, the GWR sold travel by suggesting that it was a key to family harmony and happiness. This was a key strategy in asking potential customers to disregard the practical element of holidaymaking in favour of an ideal worldview. Using photography, Christmas displays, books, games and jigsaws it is clear that the GWR used children as

salespersons, but this chapter has also broadened the focus. The examples of companionate consumption and parental guilt afford an interesting contrast to other firms at this time who, whilst acknowledging that ‘the hand that rocks the cradle pays the bills’,¹²⁹ suggested that love would be lost unless certain products were purchased. Rather, like Kodak, the GWR encouraged customers to look upon the photographs as if looking upon their own families, and family life as they would wish to be seen,¹³⁰ demonstrating the GWR’s developed understanding of customer desires and motivations.

The sheer amount of this imagery suggests the importance of families to the GWR, a fact which is not well represented in the current historiography on railway marketing. This chapter has shown what a railway company’s appeal to the family might have looked like, and suggested the value of these customers through the sheer weight of promotional activities. Previously, where families have been considered by other historians, visual imagery has been taken as an appeal solely to mothers.¹³¹ This chapter argued that photographic evidence show’s father’s gaze being equally well-catered to, a fact which not only reveals the value of comparative photographic analysis, but further supports the GWR’s attempts to better understand all of its customers. Moreover, it found that the GWR’s use of the ideology and rhetoric surrounding the family was as developed as companies which sold other products and services: the ‘Kodakisation’ of the family was not exclusive to the company of that name.¹³²

This, and the previous chapter, responded to the call to ‘probe’ the distinctions between the romantic and collective gaze as a way of understanding historical tourism marketing.¹³³ These ‘gazes’ were always important parts of the GWR’s destination

¹²⁹ *Advertiser’s Weekly*, 7th March 1938, p. 382.

¹³⁰ Holland, “‘Sweet it is to scan...’”, p. 107; Gillis, *A World Of Their Own Making*, pp. xv-xvii.

¹³¹ Harrington, ‘Beyond The Bathing Belle’, p. 41.

¹³² Urry, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, p. 172; Taylor, ‘Kodak and the ‘English’ Market Between the Wars’, p. 29.

¹³³ Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, p. 6; Hassam, *The Seaside, Health and The Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, p. 57.

marketing, but they show more than a simple separation of middle and working class desires. This chapter argued that the GWR employed its own collective gaze to show middle class customers that they could satisfy a range of family desires which could best be fulfilled at the larger destinations. It knew that families wanted amusement and entertainment, and that children most of all wanted to spend time on the beach. A distant picturesque vista of a seaside town would therefore have been unsuitable; the GWR needed to show people and suggest fun. As well as enlightening a darkened corner of transport history, the wider implications of this chapter also serve to encourage reflection on the historical applicability of Urry's gazes - beaches were an important public form of consuming holidays, but this went far beyond a division via class to a deeper interaction with individual consumer desires.

Chapters Two and Three therefore indicate that the GWR segmented the wider holiday market based on lifestyle interests as well as class and demographics such as household makeup. A question which has recently interested historians is the gendering of transport and transport marketing specifically. Whilst this chapter has shown that male and female consumers were appealed to in a similar fashion this was not always the case. How the GWR conceived and appealed to gendered difference is further revealing about the use of photography as a marketing and segmentation tool.