

**'The Million Go Forth':
Early Railway Excursion Crowds, 1840-1860**

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Abstract

The travelling masses on their railway excursions were a unique phenomenon in Britain in the 1840s and 1850s. Using a wide range of contemporary press evidence, now searchable online, this research offers new perspectives on the consumption of working class leisure mobility in the early Victorian period, combining cultural and business history. It focuses on the shaping and construction of the railway excursion crowd in Britain at a time of concern for crowd unrest. This study undoubtedly shows how the effects of powerful groups – railway companies, excursion agents, voluntary societies and church groups – who shaped the excursion crowd, are differentiated by the relative strengths of the forces at play at a particular location. In an innovative approach, it positions these powerful groups as early social entrepreneurs, seeking social as well as economic goals. It has also demonstrated an important use of branding as a tool during an earlier period than previously suggested. The role of Thomas Cook has been re-interpreted, he was clearly not the dominant figure so far assumed.

For the first time sources have been found which give evidence for accounts of personal experiences on excursions. These uncover underlying themes such as feelings of dehumanisation in crowded cattle wagons and the attractions of sociability. Building on Canetti's analysis of crowd characteristics, this research further reveals aspects of the relationship between the new public spaces formed by the railway excursion, such as the travel space of the carriage or wagon and the station, and crowd behaviour, for example the occurrence of roof travel. Space at the destination was often contested and the research examines the way that powerful groups succeeded in influencing accounts of this contestation.

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Author's declaration

Material from Chapter 3 on Henry Marcus and the excursion agent as social entrepreneur was presented at the Social History Society Annual Conference, Manchester, April 2011 and at a conference at the University of Manchester in February 2011 on Rational Recreation?: Histories of Travel, Tourism and Leisure. An article on Henry Marcus and Charles Melly was published in the *Historic Model Railway Society Bulletin* 20 (2011) 383-385.

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Excursion Train Galop, ca 1860 (Courtesy of the Spellman Collection of Music Hall Covers, University of Reading.)

Chapter 1

Introduction

'the Million go forth, a thousand strong at a time, on an excursion trip, with blithe faces and liberal hands so long as daylight and their money last.' (Whitsun, 1853)¹

The explosion of railway excursions in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century played an important role in the spatial mobility of all classes, offering new incentives of price, speed and opportunity for people to venture long distances away from their usual neighbourhood. While steamer companies had offered mass excursions accommodating up to 700 people or so on river and coastal trips since the early part of the century, their activity was limited to coastal areas and rivers.² Many more people could access the new railway lines which extended through heavily populated parts of the country. Permanent migration driven by industrialisation was common in the mid-nineteenth century, but the ability to use a cheap railway excursion to travel away and return home meant that now the working-classes could take part in tourism and leisure activities for the first time in great numbers. This was generally viewed as a public good, with the press supporting this activity: a correspondent for *The Era* was moved to make the above comment at Whitsun 1853, emphasising the revolutionary effects of the new excursions.³

Although there were early claims that one of the contributory factors behind the 'industrial revolution' in Britain was the high level of consumer demand generated to sustain growth, a demand supposedly stimulated by the desires of the masses to emulate their social superiors, more recently this has been subject to debate, for example by Maxine Berg.⁴ However it is possible to see how the tremendous demand for the new railway excursions in the 1840s among the working-classes

¹ *The Era*, 22 May 1853.

² J. Armstrong and D.M. Williams, 'The steamship as an agent of modernisation 1812-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, XIX (2007), p.154.

³ 'The Million', the working-class masses, was a term widely used in the nineteenth century.

⁴ H.J. Perkin, 'The Social Causes of the British Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 18 (1968), p.140; Maxine Berg, 'Consumption in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Britain', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain: Volume 1: Industrialisation, 1700–1860* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 359.

arose from a desire to imitate the leisure habits of the middle classes, for example in Lancashire, where ordinary people had traditionally flocked to the Blackpool seaside in great numbers on foot or in heavily laden carts before the railways arrived.⁵ While crowds of people had traditionally visited local fairs and taken part in 'wakes week' celebrations in some northern areas, the new excursions generated a different kind of mobile crowd phenomenon in new travel and destination spaces, transforming the leisure experience for many ordinary working people.

The forming of the new large railway excursion crowds, from the 1840s onwards, had implications for both participants and observers. The railway excursion changed the way that the railway was perceived as a technological system, and created new public travel spaces populated by these crowds. The experience of being part of a large leisure crowd, with a mingling of classes, possibly for the first time, had the potential to change perceptions of community, class and identity. Dean MacCannell has argued that an 'aggregate of sightseers' or crowd can mark a sight and be a sight in itself, and the sudden arrival of thousands of excursionists in a town or city was a new phenomenon, inspiring 'people watching' as an attraction in itself.⁶

There is much merit in looking at people participating in leisure crowds, despite their apparent triviality. Social scientists such as MacCannell argued in favour of examining sightseers to find structures other than class in society, for example age, race, life-styles, political beliefs.⁷ In illuminating the tourist gaze Urry and Larsen suggest that we can learn more about the 'normal', in many respects an unknown feature of the past, by looking at touristic departures, even though they appear to be relatively trivial.⁸ Such departures evoke comparisons between work and leisure, but it is only recently that historians such as Cross and Walton have studied leisure crowds and the concept of playfulness in the context of the development of leisure attractions and resorts, with the experience of 'turning the world upside down' in 'the unalloyed pursuit of pleasure'.⁹ However as a research topic the railway excursion crowd has attracted much less attention than for example the development of the

⁵ James Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: a Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday* (London, 1978), p. 31. Gary Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2005), p.12-13.

⁶ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Rev.edn., Berkeley, 1999), pp. 127, 130.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁸ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (3rd edn., London, 2011), p. 3.

⁹ Gary Cross, 'Crowds and Leisure: Thinking Comparatively across the 20th Century', *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2006), 631-650; Gary Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2005), p. 5.

seaside resort in the nineteenth-century, yet it can be looked at as paradigmatic for the leisure experience.¹⁰

Walton has argued for a greater study of the role of tourism in history, where it has traditionally been sidelined in favour of politics, economics and manufacturing, maintaining that it ought to be valued for its interdisciplinary nature. The absence of serious historical research into tourism practices has led to clichéd narratives which need to be challenged. For example as Walton points out, the constant reliance on Thomas Cook as the 'originator' of excursions is based on his prominence and the availability of his company archive, and has obscured the important role of many other excursion agents, especially in the north of England, in the 1840s and 1850s.¹¹ Eric Schatzberg argued that 'most history of technology is written from the victor's viewpoint', thus the longevity of the Thomas Cook operation has ensured that his role is firmly embedded in railway history.¹²

The consumption of the railway in transport history is an important perspective, one which Colin Divall has urged historians to consider in more depth.¹³ So far the history of consumption has focused on exploring and analysing the rise of a consumer society in Britain.¹⁴ However the Parliamentary Trains Act 1844 demonstrated to railway companies that there was an enormous mass market in people travelling third class, when enforcing railway companies to provide cheap tickets. Walton argued that the development of a mass market for consumer goods and services dates from the late nineteenth century, but it might be claimed that

¹⁰ James Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: a Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday* (London, 1978); John K. Walton, 'The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England', *Economic History Review* 34 (1981), 249-265; John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983); John K. Walton, 'The World's first Working-class Seaside Resort? Blackpool revisited, 1840-1974.' *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 88 (1992), 1-30; John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester, 2000).

¹¹ John K Walton, 'Introduction', in *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity, and Conflict* (Clevedon, 2005), p. 4.

¹² Eric Schatzberg, 'Culture and Technology in the City: Opposition to Mechanised Street Transport in Late Nineteenth Century America', in Michael Thad Allen and Gabrielle Hecht (eds.), *Technologies of Power* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2001), p. 57.

¹³ Colin Divall, 'What happens if we think about Railways as a kind of Consumption? Towards a new Historiography of Transport and Citizenship in Early-Twentieth-Century Britain', (2007) http://www.esocialsciences.com/articles/displayArticles.asp?Article_ID=1179 [accessed 16 August 2011].

¹⁴ John Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880-1980* (London and New York, 1994); Neil McKendrick et al, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington, 1982); John K. Walton, 'Towns and Consumerism', in Martin Daunton (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Volume 3 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 727; Maxine Berg, 'Consumption in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Britain', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain: Volume 1 Industrialisation, 1700-1860, Vol. 1.* (Cambridge, 2004), 357-387.

excursions in the mid-nineteenth century predated this. The railway excursion offers excellent possibilities to explore leisure and consumption, but apart from Douglas Reid, who examined Birmingham in 1846, other historians have not explored this topic in any depth, much less from a consumer perspective.¹⁵ Railway history has tended to favour aspects such as business and technology, even though Michael Freeman has recommended that we consider context, that railway historians should try to recover 'not only material features of the railway age but the way that it was apprehended by a society with very different sympathies and outlooks from our own.'¹⁶ On a positive note Gijs Mom has described how transport history is now breaking away from the 'narrative succession' approach and supply side of transport services, in favour of investigating a complex interaction of modes, markets, context and mobility cultures, importantly how the railway was used.¹⁷ But despite such encouragement there is still little work done in this area. The absence of studies on working-class consumption of railway travel is explained partly because of the difficulties of sourcing evidence, thus references to railway excursions have focused on economic perspectives, looking at the companies involved.¹⁸ However the increasing availability of nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals in searchable electronic form has opened up new avenues of exploration.

New crowds in new spaces

In extending mass mobility from the 1840s onwards, the railway excursion created new crowds which were shaped by the technological system of the passenger train, in new kinds of space. This new public space was shaped by social components as well as physical constraints, before the journey (at the station), during the journey (in the carriage or compartment) and after the journey (at the destination). These new crowds were perceived to represent the 'masses' in vast mobile groups, and this had important implications, as they had not been viewed

¹⁵ Douglas A. Reid, 'The 'Iron Roads' and 'the Happiness of the Working-classes': the Early Development and Social Significance of the Railway Excursion', *Journal of Transport History*, 17 (1996), 57-73.

¹⁶ Michael Freeman, 'The Railway as Cultural Metaphor', *Journal of Transport History*, 20 (1999) p. 165.

¹⁷ Gijs Mom, 'What kind of Transport History did we get? Half a century of JTH and the future of the field,' *Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2003), 121-138; Gijs Mom, Colin Divall and Peter Lyth, 'Towards a Paradigm Shift? A decade of Transport and Mobility History', in Gijs Mom, Gordon Pirie, Laurent Tissot (eds.) *T2M Yearbook 2009: Mobility in History: The State of the Art in the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility* (Neuchâtel, 2009), 13-40.

¹⁸ For example Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), pp. 270-289.

before in this way by other classes.¹⁹ In exploring the effects of this new mobility in new kinds of travel space the current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How were excursion crowds socially constructed by people in powerful groups out of the technology of the passenger railway system?
2. What was the nature of the new experiences created for participants?
3. How were perceptions of crowd behaviour shaped by the newly created public spaces: in travel space and at the destination?

In order to address these questions, evidence from contemporary newspapers and periodicals which are searchable online is used, focusing on the activity of ordinary people; the online *19th Century British Library Newspapers* is a fruitful source of evidence, for example.²⁰

The research uses newspaper evidence on excursion crowds and their behaviour in the period from 1840 to 1860, when excursions were developing from an exceptional and dramatic experience into a routine occurrence, for the masses partaking in trips, for the press observers and for the organising groups and companies.²¹ By 1860 their routine reputation had developed, with the availability of regular trips being offered annually at key points in the season. Excursion traffic had become much more standardised, with better management and 'tolerable' rolling stock; signalling developments around 1860 also began to lessen the dangers of unpredictable and heavily laden excursion trains.²² The period also reflects changes in attitudes to the working-classes as a group, which are discussed on pages 27-31.

The historiography of the railway excursion

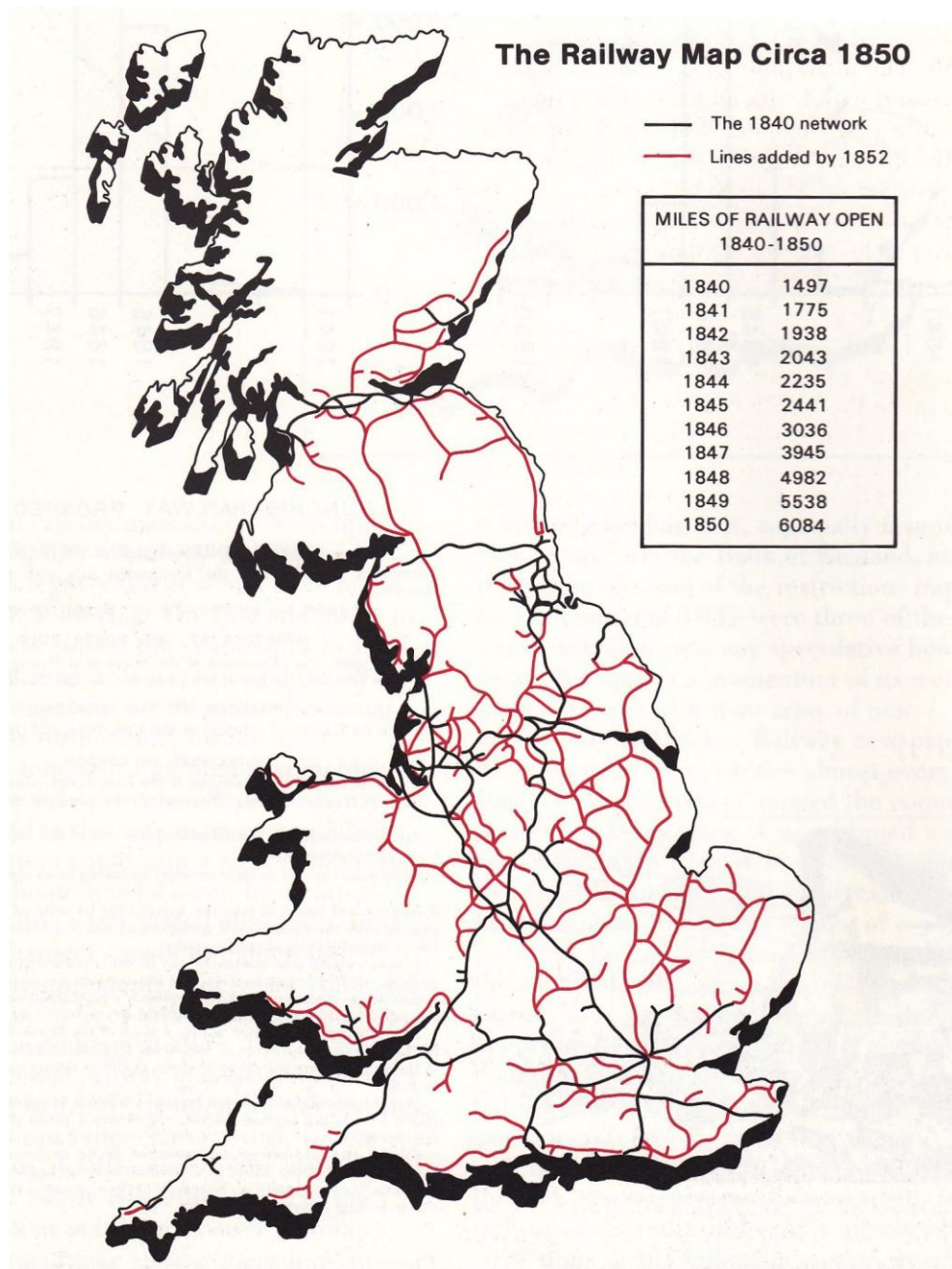
Railway excursions first appeared with the introduction of the passenger railway, and from the late 1830s they proved attractive to large numbers of people, despite a poor safety record in the 1840s. The map on the following page demonstrates the growth of railway lines during the 1840s, showing the developing potential for excursion trips, much of which was concentrated in the heavily populated areas of England.

¹⁹ See pages 27-31 for discussion of the 'masses'.

²⁰ *19th Century British Library Newspapers*, <http://newspapers11.bl.uk/blcs> [accessed 11 June 2012].

²¹ Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c1780-c1880* (London, 1980), p.158.

²² Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), p. 301; Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* (Oxford, 1997), p. 448. The 'time intervals' used in the early days caused particular problems with excursion trains which were usually delayed because of crowd handling.



(from Michael Freeman and Derek Aldcraft, *The Atlas of British Railway History* (London, 1985).)

However the travelling experiences of the masses in the Victorian period have tended to remain rather more hidden than those of the middle and upper classes, who often recorded these in published diaries and literary works.²³ In the

²³ Many examples of these can be found in John S. Batts, *British Manuscript Diaries of the 19th Century: an Annotated Listing* (London, 1976); see also Katherine H. Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: creating Caledonia* (Aldershot, 2005); Marjorie Morgan,

historiography of tourism and leisure, the railway excursion has been marginalised in favour of other well-researched topics, for example seaside resort development, international tourism, twentieth-century tourism, automobility and the experiences of modern travellers. By contrast there has been less engagement with the historical role of tourism and leisure activity in developing mobility practices and crowd behaviour, apart from the work of Cross and Walton.²⁴

There are two narrative monographs on the history of the railway excursion in Britain, by Alan Delgado, published in 1977, and by Arthur and Elizabeth Jordan, published in 1991. Both provide pointers to evidence but make little attempt to place excursions in a scholarly framework.²⁵ In his wide-ranging work on the Victorian railway, Simmons has rightly suggested that the railways were not responsible for introducing new forms of leisure to ordinary working people, as most of these leisure activities were already taking place, but it was the nature of their scope and size which changed. His discussion of excursions however tends to adopt the viewpoint of railway companies and their infrastructure rather than the experience of the passenger in travelling.²⁶ In their work on the tourist gaze, Urry and Larsen refer to a tendency for day excursions to be more popular in the south in the nineteenth century and trips where the working-classes could stay overnight being more popular in the north, with whole towns closing down.²⁷ This view seems to be based on little empirical evidence and reflects only certain leisure practices in the north west in particular. It might be challenged more generally in the light of evidence presented in this study.

Where research has looked at participants, such as the work of Susan Barton, it has been in the context of industrial labour history. She studied trips and tourism by organised groups of working-class people, focusing on how urban industrial workers in particular managed to claim periods of time away from work, and contrasting travelling for pleasure with travelling for economic reasons, such as emigration and 'tramping' for work.²⁸ Her work examines changes over a long period between 1840

National Identities and Travel in Victorian Britain (Basingstoke, 2001); Wilkie Collins, *The Works of Wilkie Collins: Vol 12: No Name* (London, 1862).

²⁴ Cross, 'Crowds and Leisure: Thinking Comparatively across the 20th Century', 631-650; Gary Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century*.

²⁵ Alan Delgado, *The Annual Outing and other Excursions* (London, 1977); Arthur and Elizabeth Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991).

²⁶ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 270-308.

²⁷ Urry and Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, pp. 40-41.

²⁸ Susan Barton, *Working-Class Organisations and Popular Tourism 1840-1970* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 4, 23.

and 1970, mostly covering the late nineteenth century and twentieth century, apart from the Great Exhibition of 1851, focusing on the organisation of the labour movement and its negotiations with employers. On looking at railway excursions she argues that the strong sense of group identity of the industrial workers, with their societies and other activities, and their experience of overcrowded housing, equipped them to feel at home in large crowds and in the shared culture of the public space of cramped railway carriages, in comparison to middle class excursionists. Excursion travel involved having to develop modes of behaviour in this new space, and she suggests that traditionally the middle classes preferred not to be 'rubbing shoulders with the mass'.²⁹ Her analysis assumes however that the middle classes did not make use of the third class carriage, a claim which might be questioned. She also draws attention to the liminality of the carriage — the sense that it was neither the home environment nor the destination — and the transience of encounters within it, which may have affected crowd behaviour. Her work only touches on the subject of crowds and their behaviour obliquely, accepting the traditional narratives about well-behaved working-classes in large groups. I hope to examine the effects of the relationship between the new excursion crowds, travel space and their reported behaviour, focusing on the 1840s and 1850s.

In his pioneering study on the early development and social significance of the railway excursion, Douglas Reid focused on evidence from Birmingham in 1846, examining local newspaper advertisements and occasional commentary from the *Birmingham Journal* on 29 excursions.³⁰ This was a period when the excursion was becoming popular, but before the year of the Great Exhibition in 1851, seen by many as a watershed in working-class leisure mobility.³¹ Reid's research indicates that participants in railway excursions in Birmingham were mainly better paid artisans.³² However Birmingham is only one example and might be seen as unrepresentative of other large cities, because of its landlocked location, its many small craft employers, a large number of working mens' clubs and societies, and the prevalence of Saint Monday working practices, thus Reid's conclusions about the

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 34-37.

³⁰ Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

³¹ Unfortunately Birmingham is the only major English town not currently represented in the *19th Century British Library Newspapers* online collection during the period 1840-1856, thus it was not possible to explore Birmingham evidence further online.

³² In looking at costs Reid has used an arithmetic mean, whereas the median would be a more suitable representative measure, preventing the few expensive excursions from distorting the calculation.

excursion profile might be questioned in relation to other urban areas.³³ He does not explore the repressive influence of Sabbatarianism on the organisation of Sunday trips or the failure of the railway companies to organise their own excursions in 1846, as they did in other towns. This may have been a blip in 1846 for example, caused by restructuring, or may have been consistent across the decade.³⁴

Reid concludes that generally the excursion arose from 'essentially popular institutions' in the first five years, something that may have been true of Birmingham in 1846 but was not necessarily true of other large towns, and my research explores some comparisons.³⁵ This raises the issue of how far excursions actually responded to popular demand. Reid uses the predominance of the friendly society component of his excursion profile to support this, arguing that Yeo's claim of the contribution of 'contrivance from above' in capitalist systems might be questioned as a result.³⁶ At the same time however he demonstrates the important role of the excursion agent as a local entrepreneur, supplying trips in response to what might be perceived to be a demand from the masses.³⁷ In common with many other writers Reid highlights Thomas Cook in his introductory remarks, despite Cook's absence in the list of agents in his Birmingham data from 1846, thus the influence of Cook has once again predominated, despite evidence about his place to the contrary.³⁸ The current study builds on Reid's results, by exploring excursions from alternative locations in the north of England during the same year, 1846, to demonstrate the complexity of the competing factors which shaped the development of the railway excursion.

The historiography of two other topics is relevant to the study of excursions in this period: the Great Exhibition and the development of seaside resorts. The Great Exhibition of 1851 introduced many ordinary people to excursions, once the first 'shilling days' were established in May of that year, especially as the cost of excursions from the North were eventually reduced by competition to a return fare of only five shillings. Some historians have used contemporary commentators to examine crowd behaviour at the Exhibition, for example R.J.Morris has explored

³³ P.E. Razzell and R.W. Wainwright (eds.), *The Victorian Working-class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London, 1973), p. 320; Reid, 'Iron Roads', p. 59, Saint Monday was a particular interest of Reid, see Douglas Reid, 'Weddings, Weekdays, Work and Leisure in Urban England 1791-1911: The Decline of Saint Monday revisited', *Past and Present*, 153 (1996), 135-63.

³⁴ Reid, 'Iron Roads', p. 66. Restructuring involved the creation of the LNWR (1846) and the Midland Railway (1844) around this time.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68; Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure* (Sussex, 1981), pp. 137, 299.

³⁷ Reid, 'Iron Roads', pp. 65-66.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58.

how a community network of formal organisations in Leeds persuaded working people to take excursion trips to the event, with favourable comments on their behaviour in the *Leeds Mercury*.³⁹ Peter Gurney has used varied sources to assess the working-class component of these crowds, which was understandably dependent on variation in admission price.⁴⁰ My research looks at the Great Exhibition as a focus for enterprise by excursion agents and railway companies.

Other work has been carried out on the development of seaside resorts, which attracted excursions. Walton analysed the role of differing economic patterns of holiday observance for industrial workers across the country, with their effect on seaside resort development.⁴¹ While much of his focus is on the later nineteenth-century, his research underpins an exploration of earlier seaside excursion crowds, by demonstrating how these patterns might affect participation. He notes that the Lancashire cotton towns had longer consecutive recognised summer holidays at an earlier date than anywhere else in industrial England. Because people also had a regular working week and a history of savings clubs and mutual assistance groups they were able to save for holiday trips. They also had a background of visits to the seaside by large crowds of working-class people from Manchester in the early 1800s on foot and on carts.⁴² Walton notes that while the West Riding woollen districts exhibited similar patterns, these were much slower to develop. Other parts of the country however had completely different holiday observance patterns. While Walton's work often focuses on the destination, rather than mobility, it illuminates the context in this study for the social construction of the excursion crowd, especially in destination space.

The crowd

In common/popular usage, then and now, a crowd is understood as 'a large number of persons gathered so closely together as to press upon or impede each other'. 'Crowd', in this vernacular sense, is used throughout this thesis, as it does not distinguish between indoor and outdoor crowds or prescribe the number of participants, very relevant in studying railway space. An earlier word from the

³⁹ R.J.Morris, 'Leeds and the Crystal Palace', *Victorian Studies*,13 (1970), p. 296.

⁴⁰ Peter Gurney, 'An Appropriated Space: the Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace and the Working-class', in Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: new Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 119-20.

⁴¹ John K.Walton, 'The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England', *Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), 249-265.

⁴² James Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: a Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday* (London, 1978), p. 31.

thirteenth century was 'press', which might be particularly characteristic of railway excursion crowds because of its emphasis on physicality and touching in a confined space, one of the features of the travel spaces of the station and the carriage.⁴³

The historiography of the crowd has generated a range of sociological, psychological and historical perspectives and theoretical frameworks. These give rise to various problems however in examining mid-nineteenth-century leisure crowds.⁴⁴ Firstly, the term crowd has been used and discussed in different ways, and definition is important to ensure that assertions are based on the same topic. Secondly, most work to date has centred on crowds which had gathered for political action, often militant crowds, partly because these were deemed worthy of research, possibly because they were seen as more exciting and important in historical terms. In the nineteenth century it was possible to use the crowd as an indicator of the popular mood in the absence of opinion polls, or as an expression of collective speech, for example in 1837 when O'Brien led a petition to Parliament accompanied by 200,000 men pressing for representation.⁴⁵ The crowd at the hustings in elections at that time played an important role in political interaction, helping to shape a candidate's perceived position in his constituency.⁴⁶ It may be worth examining how far a crowd such as a large Chartist group visiting a convention or meeting might be considered a 'leisure' crowd, and this is discussed further in Chapter 4. The absence of debate on other types of crowd leads to the assumption that these were perceived to be unimportant, thus there is little on leisure crowds, apart from those forming in the twentieth century.⁴⁷ Thirdly, many writers have assumed the crowd to consist of men, and have excluded women and children from their debate.⁴⁸ Fourthly, studies of, for example, class participation and behaviour, cannot be supported by visual images of early nineteenth-century crowds, as this period predated the popularisation of photography.

⁴³ OED.

⁴⁴ See methodological issues raised by Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 35.

⁴⁵ John Plotz, *The Crowd: British Literature and Public Politics* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 127-8.

⁴⁶ Jon Lawrence, *Electing our Masters: the Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 7, 18-19, 74-75.

⁴⁷ Cross, 'Crowds and Leisure: Thinking Comparatively across the 20th Century', 631-650; Cross and Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century*.

⁴⁸ See for example Gustav Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, (1896, reprint, Kitchener, 2001), p.19. However there are limited references to women in the crowds discussed in Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835*, and in George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730-1848* (New York, 1964).

There have been a number of theoretical studies which might be considered in exploring crowds in history. Gustave Le Bon limited his analysis to the concept of individuals gathered together in a crowd for purposes of action, implying political and militant crowds.⁴⁹ His view of crowds was negative: 'so far as the majority of their acts are considered, crowds display a singularly inferior mentality' and 'isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian - that is, a creature acting by instinct.'⁵⁰ His analysis is typically distorted by his omission of women as playing no part in organised crowds, viewing them as inferior beings, along with savages and children.⁵¹ Le Bon suggests that his crowds possess 'a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation'.⁵² His analysis features characteristics such as 'a sentiment of invincible power', contagion, suggestibility and impetuosity (all of which might have a particular relevance to the unexpected crowd behaviour during the English urban riots of August 2011).

Robert Park focused on the crowd as a 'movement' leading to disruptions and riots, when looking at the collective behaviour of crowds from a sociological theory perspective.⁵³ George Rudé's work on the crowd defined it as a 'face-to-face' or 'direct contact' group, but focused on political and aggressive crowds, and specifically excluded sightseers, without a clear justification for this, apart from implying that they were not especially significant to historians.⁵⁴

Elias Canetti's study of crowds and power takes an approach which resonates with the older vernacular understanding of the crowd with its 'press' on page 23, by exploring the experience of *being* in a crowd, how in a crowd one has to be touched and then the fear of being touched might be released, leading to *surrendering* to the crowd.⁵⁵ This study will draw on a number of his concepts, such as *open* and *closed* crowds and the 'blackest spot', in an analysis of the crowd in travel and destination space, for example in the carriage or compartment and at the station.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, p. 4. His focus was mainly on French crowds, although there are references to other countries.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6,19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

⁵³ Robert E. Park, *The Crowd and the Public and other Essays* (1904, reprint, Chicago, 1972), p. 47.

⁵⁴ Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730-1848*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (London, 1962), p. 15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

In looking at the crowd in history, Harold Perkin's work on 'the structured crowd' argued that close up, the crowd is differentiated by age, sex, class and character in the same way that society is differentiated.⁵⁷ He took a very broad approach to the crowd as society rather than discussing the physical agglomeration of a mass of people in time and space, referring to 'the immense crowd which makes up any society'. It might be argued that a study of the new excursion crowds reflects a study of society as a whole, because of their mixed composition, and this study will attempt to find evidence of gender, age and ethnicity as conceptual categories, in addition to class. Jerry Rose tries to avoid the stance of traditional accounts of collective behaviour as either 'progressive' (such as food riots with the aim of solving a problem for the masses) or 'pathological' ('a reversion to the bestial nature' of the crowd), by focusing on the impact of crowd behaviour, but he still focuses on disasters and protests rather than leisure crowds.⁵⁸

Mark Harrison's work on crowds as a mass phenomenon in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century attempts to include recreational crowds but much of his emphasis falls on non-recreational crowds, such as those gathering for public meetings and elections, as well those involved in protest.⁵⁹ The role of crowds attending fairs for example is only mentioned in passing, possibly because of the lack of specificity in reporting on numbers and time. He stressed the importance of crowds in urban communities in the nineteenth century, and a perceived transition in the mid-nineteenth century with the 'taming of the crowd' from bad behaviour to good behaviour in the 'age of equipoise'. This study will examine the role of the new excursion crowds in changing these perceptions.⁶⁰ Harrison notes that 'the history of the crowd remains essentially the history of the reporter's perceptions of the crowd': newspaper reports provide a selective context and observations on the crowd and the role of the media in reporting on crowds and their behaviour will be discussed in Chapters 2, 6 and 7. Harrison discusses the role of crowd descriptors in shaping perceptions: a procession, a gang, a multitude, mob, assemblage, gathering. However the newspaper evidence in this study reveals a very limited range of alternative descriptors, when featuring railway excursions.⁶¹ Harrison suggests that commentators were disturbed by the idea of

⁵⁷ Harold Perkin, *The Structured Crowd: Essays in English Social History* (Sussex, 1981), p. ix.

⁵⁸ Jerry D. Rose, *Outbreaks: The Sociology of Collective Behaviour* (New York, 1982), pp. 2-5.

⁵⁹ Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835*.

⁶⁰ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, pp.19, 55.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24,169,183,191.

'the masses' because of their relationship to the problems of crowded cities and argues that there are several reasons why it was in the interests of a town to portray itself as well-ordered with no crowd troubles. A positive presentation achieved and retained commercial benefit, for example a town or city needed to be seen as an attractive trouble-free visitor destination, the ruling class needed to display status to retain their prestige, and the important new Victorian value of civic pride came into play.⁶² This research will test Harrison's arguments about the relationship between the commentator and crowd events, in relation to excursion crowds.

Harrison's working definition of the crowd as 'a large group of people assembled outdoors in sufficient proximity to be able to influence each other's behaviour and to be identifiable as an assembly by contemporaries' is useful, but excursion crowd characteristics are relevant both outdoors at the station and the destination and also *indoors* in the space of station waiting areas and inside the railway carriage or wagon.⁶³ All excursion crowds can be taken to be 'large groups' of people, by their very nature, although the crowds in this study can vary from around 70 to many thousand people.⁶⁴ The spatial constraints of the booking office, the platform, the railway carriage and indeed sometimes the destination, meant that people were frequently in extremely close proximity and able to influence each other's behaviour. Many of the effects of such spatial constraints will only be apparent in the evidence of experiences in Chapter 5. Harrison's emphasis on context is also relevant: this study examines the characteristics of an excursion crowd in the context of work and leisure, urban development and economic conditions, as well as within a framework of influences by organising groups, and these will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

More recently Gary Cross and John Walton have demonstrated how an exploration of twentieth-century leisure crowds can illuminate the study of consumer culture and social behaviour patterns, looking at transformation.⁶⁵ They note that previous studies have tended to look at leisure using power relations derived from work and money, such as class, ethnic, gender or religious identities, and seek to take a different perspective, looking at cultural practices. Class is inevitably discussed, for example the role of middle class sensibilities in choosing destinations and modes of travel and the need for industrial workers to achieve release from their daily grind for playful experiences. Cross and Walton successfully show how

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶⁴ Where possible, estimates from the press have been noted for each town or city.

⁶⁵ Cross, 'Crowds and Leisure: Thinking Comparatively across the 20th Century', 631-650; Cross and Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century*.

leisure crowds at Blackpool and Coney Island, while similar in some respects, exhibited differentiating characteristics arising from factors such as political context and climate, culture as well as class issues. This approach focuses on a very select number of products of twentieth-century leisure consumption in the UK and US, with an emphasis on the leisure attraction rather than the leisure crowd, however some of their work is relevant to the current study, for example the role of available transport modes and the effect of annual leisure habits.

Approaches by Canetti, Harrison, Cross and Walton are helpful in the analysis of historical evidence on excursion crowds, and this research will examine how their concepts and arguments can be used to explain crowd behaviour in the new public travel spaces.

The masses and class

Asa Briggs examined the complexities of the use of the term 'masses' in the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Originally it related to an aggregate, such as of number and scale and 'the bringing together of people in towns and factories', but the term quickly began to develop attributes reflecting value and power, which led at times to feelings of fear by other people when considering 'the masses' as a group. Williams suggested two opposing approaches to the use of the phrase 'the masses': a negative expression of contempt, with a sense of moral superiority over the masses by other classes, and a much more positive word used in the revolutionary tradition.⁶⁷ Briggs notes that Mill included the middle class and operative classes when talking about the masses in 1836, but suggested that 'the masses' was seen as mainly coterminous with the working-classes by the mid-nineteenth century, and it is this use that is adopted in the current study, while recognising the difficulties acknowledged by Briggs.⁶⁸

In popular usage the 'masses' was understood to be 'the populace' or 'the ordinary people'. It might also refer to 'a large number of human beings, collected closely together or viewed as forming an aggregate in which their individuality is

⁶⁶ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Mass' and 'Masses' in Nineteenth-Century England', in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs: Volume I: Words, Numbers, Places, People* (Brighton, 1985), 34-54.

⁶⁷ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Rev.edn., London, 1983), pp.192-195.

⁶⁸ Briggs, 'The Language of 'Mass' and 'Masses' in Nineteenth-Century England', pp.38-39, 43.

lost'.⁶⁹ Whereas the first reflects Perkin's viewpoint of 'the crowd' as society, mentioned earlier, the second aligns clearly with that of a physical crowd, present at an occasion, and both are relevant in this study. The singular version, 'the mass' (of people), dates from the seventeenth century, however the plural form 'the masses' only came into use in the early nineteenth century, possibly reflecting the growing importance of class by the middle of the nineteenth century, arising from analytical work by social and political commentators on the way that power — being able to control the behaviour of others as well as resources such as wealth and income — shaped the relationships between different social groups in society and fashioned the human experience.⁷⁰ There are of course other contributory factors such as those noted by Morris: moral difference, economic interest, gender, religion and race.⁷¹

Harold Perkin noted the paternalistic way in which the group later known as the 'working-classes' had been described as the 'lower orders' at the turn of the eighteenth century, emphasising rank and order in describing social groups.⁷² He suggests the birth of the 'working-class' was about 1815-1820, around the time of the Peterloo Massacre. Chartism was described by Briggs as the first 'large-scale self-consciously 'working class' movement'.⁷³ Joyce has suggested that 'the working-class' at this time featured proletarians, or dependent, manual waged workers. Further concepts were developed in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when class descriptions of the 'middle classes' and the 'working-classes' were being extended into divisions between the 'industrious classes' or 'producers' in contrast to the others, reflecting value systems.⁷⁴

At this time industrialisation had led to a major increase in scale for most social groupings.⁷⁵ As industrial cities grew, the industrial 'masses', the factory workers, were segregated into certain central areas and often ignored, living in very crowded conditions.⁷⁶ The bulk of factory operatives were semi-skilled, compared to those who had formerly been described as the 'aristocracy' of highly skilled labour, but

⁶⁹ OED.

⁷⁰ OED.

⁷¹ R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect, and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class: Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990), p. 2.

⁷² Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society* (London, 1969), p. 26.

⁷³ Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society*, p.213; Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs: Volume 1: Words, Numbers, Places, People* (Brighton, 1985), p. 15.

⁷⁴ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', pp.5-7.

⁷⁵ Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society*, p.118-9.

⁷⁶ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', p. 6.; Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society*, p.118.

were regarded as above the mass of unskilled labourers, casual workers and paupers.⁷⁷

Concepts which have been used to try and classify employed people into groups are deference and authority. Briggs referred to the role of deference in reflecting ideas of social gradation, and Razzell proposed deference as a structuring factor in examining working-class lives, looking at principal allegiances.⁷⁸ He differentiated between firstly the 'traditional deferential' worker, for example working in small workshops or in service or on the land, with a close relationship with his employer, secondly the traditional proletarian, for example factory workers who stood in opposition to their employer but united with their fellow workers, and thirdly the 'privatised home-centred' worker, not attached to either the local community or fellow workers, but who was family and home-centred. Such a classification is particularly relevant in looking at leisure practices, because of the presence or absence of controls over time off work to participate in railway excursions on certain days of the week, and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.⁷⁹

Briggs also highlighted the way that social groups which were more specific than just middle class or working-class might be described as 'interests', for example specific labour interests.⁸⁰ In his discussion of conflict groups Neale has also highlighted the role of 'sensations of collective identity of interest' and the views of authority in shaping such groups.⁸¹ He differentiated between the traditional middle class, who were deferential to the upper class and needing to be accepted by them, and a 'middling class', including the petty bourgeois, who were less deferential to the upper class, and seeking to remove their privileges.⁸² These could include artisans of course, who might otherwise have been regarded as working-class. Neale questioned the three class model in favour of five classes, with two working class groups and his 'middling class' as well as the traditional middle and upper class.⁸³ Many commentators have differentiated the 'working-classes' from the 'poor', and broken down the working-classes into skilled and unskilled workers,

⁷⁷ Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society*, p.131.

⁷⁸ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', p. 21.

⁷⁹ P.E. Razzell, 'Introduction' in P.E. Razzell and R.W. Wainwright (eds.), *The Victorian Working-class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London, 1973), pp. xxix.

⁸⁰ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', p. 21.

⁸¹ R.S. Neale, 'Class and Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?', *Victorian Studies*, 12 (1968), p.10.

⁸² R.S. Neale, 'Class and Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?', p. 23.

⁸³ R.S. Neale, 'Class and Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?', p. 5-32.

because of the implications for their ability to control their leisure time for example.⁸⁴ Neale's working class A group were the industrialised proletariat in factories (non-deferential) and his working class B were agricultural labourers, servants, the urban poor and working class women.⁸⁵

Importantly however by the mid- nineteenth century there was a certain amount of individual mobility, and Neale likened his class groupings to pools of water with differential ability to flow into other pools.⁸⁶ The boundaries of class divisions were difficult to be precise about, and most importantly the divisions within classes were as big as those between classes.⁸⁷

A further important element in examining working-class behaviour in this period is the concept of respectability, based on a value system regarded as important at the time. For example traits associated with respectability included self-control, 'good' behaviour, 'good' language, sobriety, 'moral rectitude', self-improvement, clean and tidy dress, and the ability to save.⁸⁸ On the other hand roughness was associated with drunkenness, gambling, petty criminality, swearing, poor dress/undress, poor language and dirtiness. This value system served to enable some elements of the working-class to reflect middle class values, for example the artisan elites evolved 'sub-cultures of respectability'.⁸⁹ Importantly in Peter Bailey's view respectability was dynamic, a working-class person could easily lose it.⁹⁰

There are assumptions that the respectable working class behaved consistently but this might not always be true.⁹¹ Bailey argued that this was less a continuity in casting, more in performance, with differential behavioural roles in many different settings and contexts.⁹² For example he suggested that the Bill Banks' day out story, reflected firstly a 'self-improving artisan' and then later a 'workman on a spree', showed signs of a single-role performance.⁹³ Bailey also warned of the problems caused by stereotypical descriptions in the press about 'respectable' crowd behaviour, which ascribed respectable behaviour when reporting an event,

⁸⁴ Barton, *Working-Class Organisations and Popular Tourism 1840-1970*, p.10.

⁸⁵ R.S.Neale, 'Class and Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?', p. 23.

⁸⁶ R.S.Neale, 'Class and Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?', p. 23.

⁸⁷ Asa Briggs, 'The Language of 'Class in Early Nineteenth Century England', p. 22.

⁸⁸ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?": Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*, 12 (1979), p. 338.

⁸⁹ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?"; p. 337.

⁹⁰ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?"; p. 336.

⁹¹ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?"; pp. 337-8.

⁹² Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?"; pp. 339-341.

⁹³ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?"; p. 346.

rather than a more realistic interpretation.⁹⁴ This research will examine descriptions of behaviour in press in the light of this and question their perspectives where possible.

Using manual labour to represent the working-class, Benson suggests that 75-80 per cent of the population were in this group in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century, a total of 16-18 million people between 1851 and 1861.⁹⁵ Others have noted the relative obscurity of women and children when dealing with the working-classes, and argued whether economic, social or cultural criteria should be used. Occupation was inevitably the focus for analysis, particularly manual labour, despite the lack of clarity with regard to the positioning of clerks for example. Writing about the progress of the English working-class in 1867, Ludlow and Jones restricted this group to male waged workers, working chiefly with their muscles, and specifically excluded the poor, as well as women. They focused on men working in workshops and factories, unfortunately excluding agricultural labourers and people working in service, or in trade, extremely large groups at the time, on the grounds that little was known of their views.

Whereas in the 1840s the working-classes were still feared as a mass, by the 1860s a degree of class conciliation had developed, with the working-classes co-operating with the middle classes against the aristocracy to try to achieve their radical aims.⁹⁶ Ludlow and Jones described a coming together of the working-class with other classes over a twenty year period up to the 1860s, dispelling the 'fog of distrust' which had been there between the classes, and attributed this to the growing number of organisations and societies where the two were able to mingle, and the 'improved conduct of political agitation'.⁹⁷ As a result a large crowd of ordinary working people was not necessarily perceived as an unknown dangerous mob, and it may well be that the new excursion crowds played a role in this changing perception, showing the working-class in a new light, and possibly these crowds represented a new social grouping. Relevant organisations and societies will be discussed in Chapter 3, when the role of powerful groups in shaping excursions is explored.

⁹⁴ Peter Bailey, "Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?", p. 344.

⁹⁵ Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 10; John Benson, *The Working-Class in Britain, 1850-1939* (London, 1989), pp. 3-4

⁹⁶ Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History, 1750-1997* (2nd ed., London, 1997), pp. 126-127.

⁹⁷ J.M. Ludlow and L. Jones, *Progress of the Working-Class, 1832-1867* (1867, reprint, Clifton, 1973), pp. 3-4, 282, 284.

Technology, space and behaviour

It is now generally accepted that the history of a technology has to be considered within the social, economic, political and cultural context of the period and place in which it developed, including the 'human dimensions', rather than as an inevitable and autonomous arrow of progress.⁹⁸ The passenger train and its supporting mechanisms — the railway line and stations — was a technology from which excursion crowds developed, constructed socially in new spaces by complex factors involving people in powerful groups. This research will include an examination of the importance of the technology of the locomotive, for example, to the passenger experience on an excursion and to the observer, or whether it was the spectacle of the crowd and its behaviour which was paramount.

Bijker's work on the social construction of technology, with trade-offs and compromises between powerful groups in shaping the development of technological systems in society, helps us to uncover the shared meanings adopted by powerful groups about the excursion, perceived as a tool for rational recreation by urban elites, a possible source of profit by railway companies, a threat to Sunday observance by the Sabbatarians, a fear for public safety by the government, a competitive concern by the steamer companies, but importantly a way of accessing new space by the masses. Political, social, economic and cultural factors all played their part in driving the new phenomenon.⁹⁹ Schatzberg has referred to technological change involving 'the mutual production of material artifacts and cultural meanings', and the powerful role played in this by political bodies such as the state and municipal government.¹⁰⁰ This research will examine the actions of railway companies and central government in shaping technology to meet the needs of excursionists in the 1840s and 1850s.

This technology was used to harness space, which played a role in attracting people to travel, in a phenomenon discussed by writers such as Benjamin, who referred to the 'aura' of natural objects as 'a unique phenomenon of distance', and

⁹⁸ John Staudenmaier, 'Disciplined Imagination: the Life and Work of Thomas and Agatha Hughes', in Michael Thad Allen and Gabrielle Hecht (eds.), *Technologies of Power* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2001), pp. x, xix.

⁹⁹ Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (eds.), *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change* (London, 1994); Wiebe E. Bijker, 'The Social Construction of Bakelite: Towards a Theory of Invention', in Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor Pinch (eds.), *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (Cambridge, 1987), p.172.

¹⁰⁰ Eric Schatzberg, 'Culture and Technology in the City: Opposition to Mechanised Street Transport in Late Nineteenth Century America', in Michael Thad Allen and Gabrielle Hecht (eds.), *Technologies of Power* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2001), pp. 59, 61.

'the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer ' spatially and humanly'.¹⁰¹ A key feature of the development of the railway excursion was the generation of new public spaces, which can be shown to play an important role in shaping behaviour, for example in and around the crowded carriage, in travel space at the station and at the destination, where space might be contested. This research will show how new space shaped by the excursion was an attractive force, drawing workers towards it after they had been confined to dark, cramped and unhealthy working and living conditions in industrialised urban areas. Space was constructed and limited by groups with power, but at the same time the crowds used their mass as a form of power.

This study will explore how the new public spaces of the railway carriage attracted aspects of sociability. Writing in 1910, Georg Simmel referred to the feelings and satisfactions arising from the 'impulse to sociability in man', driven by artistic and play impulses, describing sociability as 'the play-form of association'.¹⁰² While there were many reasons that people associated as a result of special economic and cultural interests, he referred to 'the pure essence of association, of the associative process as a value and a satisfaction...it therefore constitutes what we call sociability in the narrower sense'. Simmel also noted that 'in sociability talking is an end in itself,' the opposite of a business-like interaction. Thus what transpires between passengers in the space of the railway carriage might reflect the temporary nature of an association, embodying a frictionless conversation, which Simmel refers to as 'a miniature picture of the social ideal that one might call the freedom of bondage'. Excursions are intriguing because they feature both the sociability of the crowd and the intimate new space of the closed carriage. Julia Harrison linked sociability with intimacy, commenting that 'sociability and intimacy both mean sharing something, communicating in some recognizable manner. To be sociable means connecting with others at a much more generalized, some might say superficial, level, or 'public' way.'¹⁰³ It was the confines of the carriage which had the potential to produce this sense.

By comparison, writing in 1844, Engels suggested that 'crowds in the limited space on the streets of London, all classes and ranks, show 'brutal indifference' to

¹⁰¹ Hannah Arendt (ed.), *Walter Benjamin: Illuminations* (London, 1970), pp. 222-3.

¹⁰² Donald N. Levine (ed.), *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings* (Chicago, 1971), pp.128-138.

¹⁰³ Julia Harrison, *Being a Tourist* (Vancouver, 2003), p. 48.

each other, not even a glance, 'the unfeeling isolation' of the individual.¹⁰⁴ It might be argued that although the space available in these London streets was limited, those crowds were able to move on, rather than be bounded by the confined space of a station or railway carriage, where sociability was enforced much of the time, as passengers could not remove themselves from fellow human beings.

Sociability was closely linked to behaviour. In Simmel's view pure sociability was dependent on the ways in which individuals conducted themselves and therefore relied on a sense of tact to constrain behaviour in an associative group. This has implications for how people behaved in the public space of a railway carriage who had never associated before. An important feature of the new spaces was that they were 'liminal', thus excursionists might exhibit unusual behaviour. Harrison refers to 'tourists entering a state of *liminality*, or in-betweenness, while away, which frees them from the existing structures that encumber their normal lives.'¹⁰⁵ There is a suggestion here that these new experiences in liminal spaces produced unusual behaviour, and this will be explored in Chapter 6.

Methodology and source issues

The railway excursion is generally defined as a return trip at reduced fares, either organised and promoted by a railway company or by a private organiser working in concert with the railway company, and restricted to a discrete group and/or offered to the general public.¹⁰⁶ There are overlaps with the use of 'special trains', which were passenger trains provided by railway companies for a particular purpose.¹⁰⁷ In theory anyone with money could hire one of these, and clubs and other organisations could do this with the aim of taking their members on a mass excursion. In some cases participants might be carried in carriages attached to an existing train under a special arrangement, at times the railway companies offered return tickets on normal trains for a single fare, usually at holiday times such as Whitsun. The latter may perhaps not necessarily be thought of as an excursion but it generated large crowds and from the participants' point of view it was considered to be a special trip at a greatly reduced price.

¹⁰⁴ Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (1892, reprint, New York, 2008) p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Harrison, *Being a Tourist*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History*, p. 150.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 462. In June 1846 the Oddfellows advertised a trip as an 'Especial Train', from Nottingham and Leicester to Northampton (*Leicester Chronicle*, 16 May 1846).

Excursions could be day or staying trips, although the latter had implications for time off work and accommodation costs. They were often referred to in publicity and reporting as ‘cheap trips’. Importantly these excursions generated very large crowds, beforehand at the station, during the journey in travel space and after the journey at the destination. The working definition of a crowd has been used as ‘a large number of persons gathered so closely together as to press upon or impede each other’.¹⁰⁸

Two broad geographical areas have been selected in the north of England — Yorkshire and the North West — taking advantage of the availability of a range of regional newspapers. These reflect regions both east and west of the Pennines, each consisting of industrialising conurbations surrounded by small towns and rural communities. A comparison of the two regions seeks to highlight the differentiating role of local factors in shaping the experience of working class groups, such as the observance of ‘Saint Monday’ and the forces of Sabbatarianism.

While recognising that there are many nuances involved in an examination of the working-classes in this period, the evidence does not enable a more refined analysis of these, and third class travel has been used as a proxy in studying working-class leisure mobility and behaviour.

Excursion reports feature heavily in the contemporary press. Mark Harrison notes that ‘local crowd gathering events were, perhaps, the single most newsworthy subject in the eyes of most newspaper proprietors and editors’.¹⁰⁹ Aled Jones has contended that within print culture the nineteenth century press transformed the way in which the social world was represented.¹¹⁰ As well as reflecting on events it helped to create and shape them by its periodicity, its instant reactions as events unfolded and the publication of informative debate. With a collective readership of millions the press therefore had tremendous potential power to inform, to mislead and persuade, acting as an echo chamber and contributing to the process of constructing public opinion in nineteenth century Britain.¹¹¹ The press also helped to shape the development of modernity, communicating new inventions and activities to ever widening groups of people, and in many cases saw itself as a tool for moral

¹⁰⁸ OED.

¹⁰⁹ Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835*, p. 45.

¹¹⁰ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth Century England* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 87.

reform.¹¹² The press played a role in the forming of spatial identities — local, regional and national — and the intensification of territories.

However, importantly, ‘descriptions of events were encased in particular readings of those events...either implicitly within the news item, or explicitly by juxtaposing the story with editorial comment.’¹¹³ This might be achieved even more subtly by placing a news item near another news item showing a contrasting theme, for example placing a report of a well-behaved works trip near to a report about workplace agitation.

In view of the importance of the press in reporting and reflecting on events and activity, newspapers have been chosen as the major source for this study. They benefit from a wide-ranging geographical coverage and newly available ease of searching online, enabling material to be extracted from varied perspectives, such as railway news, crime reporting and business dealings. Because of the large number of newspapers we can sometimes benefit from alternative descriptions and viewpoints of the same event. Importantly however, the use of the contemporary press as a source can counteract the historical emphasis on Thomas Cook as the originator and major player behind the railway excursion, as the press serves as an archive for other originators and a counterweight to the Thomas Cook company archive. In addition, the press presents the railway excursion as it appeared in the public domain at the time, rather than merely from the point of view of the operating company, which would be the case if company records were used to research this new phenomenon. The latter lack useful records of excursion operations, and government statistics of the period are also deficient in this topic. At the same time a complete assessment of the profile of railway excursions from and to a particular area is impossible, because evidence is extremely patchy and incomplete from newspaper advertisements, press reports, company handbills and records. Walton noted the variation in press coverage of excursions which lead to difficulties in making comparisons over time.¹¹⁴ An analysis of evidence mediated by this type of source also has to take into account the motivations behind press reporting, the narrative styles and the political stance of the proprietors, and these are discussed in Chapter 2.

Electronic searching is invaluable in extracting information on excursions which might appear not just as an advertisement or a commentary but also in unusual

¹¹² Ibid., p. 102.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹⁴ Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914*, p. 31.

columns such as police and court reports and 'miscellany' items.¹¹⁵ It is this use of new resources which makes the research more effective than traditional methods of extracting railway news evidence from newspapers. These are major advantages but there are some disadvantages to using online newspapers for historical research.¹¹⁶ Inevitably there is scope for a distortion of research priorities because of a focus away from those geographical areas not yet covered by British Library online sources. Digitised records become the 'default voice of the press' and research on a city which was the base for more than one newspaper, of which only one is online, would reflect a particular political stance. There are other methodological issues, for example articles may appear out of context on the page, although rather than zooming in on a small paragraph the British Library resource does usually present search results in the context of their column, frequently with a number of adjoining columns. It also offers the facility to browse an issue of a newspaper, enabling the researcher to look at advertisements, for example, to assess their visual impact, their prominence and proximity to other news items. On a positive note it is possible to trace references to terminology through time, an invaluable feature, and to assess frequencies and trends.

The potential of some other sources has been explored, rather less successfully. We should know nothing about people's travel experiences if these had not been written about, but evidence of working-class participation from diaries of the period is rare. There are a few example of working-class descriptions of trips published in newspapers and occasionally in memoirs and literature, and these have been used where relevant. Government accident reports have provided evidence about the reported behaviour of excursion crowds, albeit sourced from interrogations of company staff, together with occasional evidence on the occupation of excursionists where these were injured or killed. There is also limited evidence in Railway Clearing House records of meetings of passenger superintendents, to set excursion policies each year.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ At the same time it is not infallible, as occasions have been found where it has not identified certain reports which include the search terms.

¹¹⁶ A. Bingham, 'The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21 (2010), 225-231; Laurel Brake, 'Half Full and Half Empty', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17 (2012), 222-229.

¹¹⁷ The National Archives, London, *RAIL 1080. Railway Clearing House: Minutes and Reports, 1841-1963*.

Thesis overview

The effect of the railway excursion was to create new crowds in new spaces, with people undergoing new experiences, which changed the perceptions of both participants and observers. This study aims to respond to the questions posed on page 17, filling an important gap in transport history on the shaping and consumption of railway travel for the masses in the 1840s and 1850s, looking at working-class groups travelling in third class compartments or wagons. It uses evidence from contemporary newspapers, mainly the provincial press, where railway excursions featured extensively, often linked to discourse about moral reform and rational recreation, key interests at the time. The use of mediated evidence is discussed. Chapter 2 examines the nature of this source material, looking at approaches to reporting on railway excursions, and the use of the press as an advertising vehicle for excursions.

The impact of powerful groups on the railway excursion

The railway excursion developed differentially in diverse regions because of the competing roles of powerful groups and forces, reflecting a 'geography of constraint and enablement'.¹¹⁸ Reid's paper on excursions from Birmingham in 1846 is the only significant work on the railway excursion to date, and this research questions how far his findings can be generalised. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the way that groups and forces socially constructed the railway excursion, generating crowds with varying characteristics, dependant on complex factors. The research expands Reid's analysis by using data from a selection of other towns and cities during the same year - Leeds, Hull, Preston, Liverpool and Manchester - to demonstrate the differentiating effects of the powerful groups and forces on the shaping of excursion crowds, when compared to Birmingham, and to reposition his work. In examining the work of other excursion agents in the North of England, the chapter aims to counterbalance the overemphasis of Thomas Cook in the literature.

The nature of the new experiences created for participants

Personal descriptions of the experience of working-class excursionists were rare in the press during the 1840s, compared to the many official press reports, which

¹¹⁸ John Law and Wiebe E. Bijker, 'Postscript: Technology, Stability and Social Theory' in Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (eds.), *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change* (London, 1994), p. 301.

offered a very stylised and flattering account of crowd behaviour and their reception by people at the destination, with scenes of rational recreation, good behaviour, excellent relationships between participants and organisers and a safe return home. Schivelbusch, in seeking to 'recover the subjective experience of the railway journey', focused on the middle class traveller, ignoring the experiences of the travelling masses, the vast majority of passengers, and this research tries to redress the balance.¹¹⁹ Chapter 5 uses new evidence from personal accounts which has not previously been examined in this context, to explore how trains were used by the working classes in extending their mobility.

Excursion crowds and their behaviour in the new spaces

The railway excursion created new public spaces for the masses, in the crowded carriage, at the station and at the destination, with implications for behaviour and its reporting by observers. There has however been little focus on these aspects to date. Chapters 6 and 7 explore how the behaviour of excursion crowds in these spaces was reported, to assess how far it was affected by the physical constraints of the carriage for example, and the management policies of the railway company. The study will look at evidence on codes of behaviour associated with excursions, which might be illuminated by press reports of transgressors, reflecting work by Simmel and by Julia Harrison. There are particular gender implications for space and behaviour, and the study looks for evidence on the experience of working-class women travelling in the new spaces, in the light of work by, for example, Amy Richter.¹²⁰ At the destination there were times when space was contested by excursion crowds, for example in the 1850s the class characteristics of the masses were a particular issue, with much discourse on the contested and nuanced meanings behind 'the excursionist as traveller', arising from the imposition of legislation. The final chapter will examine elements shaping this contestation, including powerful hegemonies, and how this contestation was reported from two dimensions, based on the perspective of the commentator.

The aim of this research is to extend the history of early railway excursions beyond clichéd narratives, by exploring the interplay between the powerful groups impacting upon the developing excursions, looking at the travel habits and practices

¹¹⁹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, 1986), pp xiv-xv.

¹²⁰ Amy G. Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (London, 2005).

of working-class excursionists, and the ways in which the new spaces shaped the reporting of behaviour. In doing so it seeks to make a contribution to the history of nineteenth century leisure and consumption generally.

Chapter 2

Railway excursions in the media

It is interesting to walk among the knots of persons—mostly of the working classes—thus brought from inland, and to hear their observations on the various objects which meet their eye for the first time. Some of them are exceedingly naïve.¹ (Press report from Scarborough 1846)

This chapter will examine the media as a source for research on excursions in the study period, looking at approaches and perspectives used in contemporary evidence. Different publications might focus on social or economic effects in their analysis, or give greater or lesser coverage to excursions in their reporting. Some reported straightforward factual details, others displayed perspectives on working class mobility, as in the above extract from the *Leeds Mercury* in 1846.

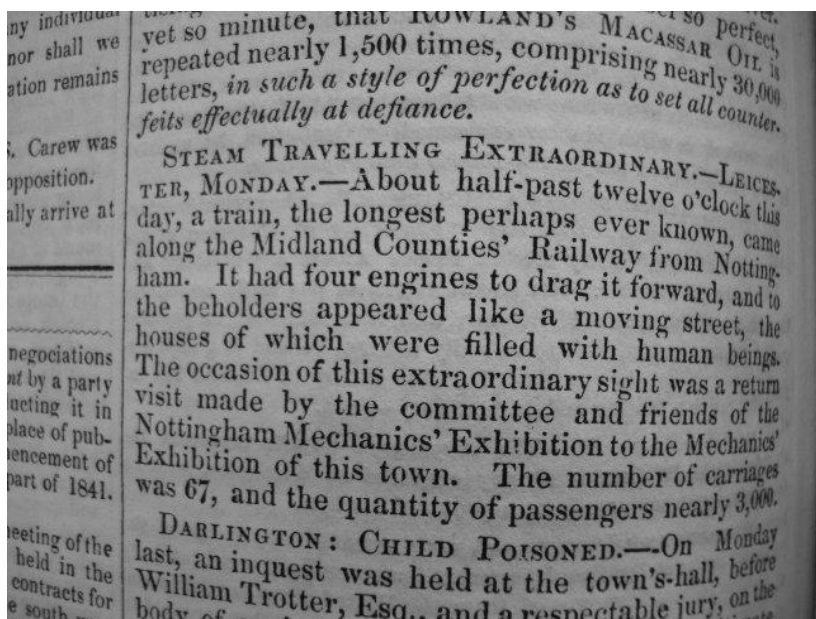
Excursion travelling by the masses featured in advertisements, reports and commentary, mainly in the provincial press but also in 'national' newspapers and occasionally periodicals. The value of online sources, primarily those from the British Library but also from other organisations, was highlighted in the introduction, and has facilitated researchers in searching, collecting and analysing material which was previously scattered across newspaper archives throughout the country.² Evidence from the press offers a mediated view of the excursion crowd, seen through the eyes of middle class observers, and edited according to the views and political stance of the newspaper proprietor. However there are occasional first hand accounts by working class excursionists, and newspapers provide much information

¹ *Leeds Mercury*, 29 August 1846.

² *19th Century British Library Newspapers* <http://newspapers11.bl.uk/blcs> [accessed 11 June 2012]; *19th Century UK Periodicals*, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/history/19th-century-uk-periodicals-parts-1-and-2.aspx>. [accessed 11 June 2012]; *The Economist Historical Archive 1853-2007*, <http://www.tlmea.com/economist/home.asp> [accessed 30 August 2011]; *British Periodicals*, <http://britishperiodicals.chadwyck.co.uk> [accessed 30 August 2011]; *Guardian and Observer*, <http://archive.guardian.co.uk> [accessed 30 August 2011]; *Times Digital Archive*, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/times.aspx> [accessed 11 June 2012]; *Illustrated London News Historical Archive, 1842-2003* <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/history/illustrated-london-news.aspx> [accessed 30 August 2011]; *Internet Library of Early Journals: A digital library of 18th and 19th Century journals* <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej> [accessed 30 August 2011].

about the scale, characteristics and diversity of this new phenomenon. Razzell has argued that the rich empirical detail of the Victorian working class accounts from correspondents to the *Morning Chronicle* inform analysis in ways not available from other sources.³

During the 1840s, railway excursions were an exciting innovation, and as a result this shaped the way that activity was reported, in great detail, often theatrically in the early days. For example in 1840 the following paragraph in *The Yorkshireman* painted a dramatic picture of an excursion from Nottingham to Leicester:



The Yorkshireman, 29 August 1840

By 1860 however, the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* was describing a wide range of trips in every direction from Nottingham at Whitsun, involving thousands of excursionists:

³ P.E. Razzell, 'Introduction' to P.E. Razzell and R.W. Wainwright (eds.), *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London, 1973), pp. xxix, xxxii-xxxiii.

and *The Benicia Boy* will be performed.

EXCURSIONS.—The excursion season may now be fairly said to have commenced, and if we may judge from advertisements, intending tourists will have ample opportunities before them to satisfy every wish for change of scene, abode, or residence, during the ensuing summer months. Huge "posters," moderate-sized placards, and the diminutive "handbills," announce, on every hand, some unprecedentedly "cheap trip" to distant towns and favourite resorts for pleasure seekers, and places almost from John o'Groat's to the Land's End, can now be visited at a comparatively small cost, and in a few short hours. The weather during the past week has not been of the most favourable character for the occasion, and may have had a counteracting influence upon the inducement held out by the low fares; nevertheless, as will be seen below, Nottingham has not failed to contribute its quota to each excursion train passing through the town: and added its hundreds of passengers, to be disgorged per chance, at the quiet little watering place, or to intermingle with the denizens of our large manufacturing towns. On Saturday Mr. Cook's cheap excursion train to the north arrived about noon, at the Midland Station, bearing an immense number of excursionists from the Southern and Midland districts. About 350 passengers were taken up, and again the train was on its course, en route to Sheffield, Bradford, York, Scarborough, Sunderland, Durham and Shields. Scarcely had the platform been cleared, than a second time the station was alive with excursionists, and a second train was despatched in its westerly course—visiting Manchester, and Liverpool; from whence the Isle of Man could also be reached by those desirous of a short sail to that interesting island. About 250 left Nottingham by this train. On Monday, an excursion train was despatched from Nottingham to the Metropolis, carrying away about 300 passengers: and on the same day, two special trains were run to Derby for the temperance festival and gala at the Arboretum. About 1,200 persons were booked from this town. On Tuesday the cheap train to Hull was taken advantage of by many persons whose business or pleasure called them to that port, about 500 passengers being booked: and the special trains for Newark, on the same day, conveyed many militia-men to the rendezvous announced for the assembly of the regiment. Two excursion trains also left the Great Northern Railway station during the morning; the first to Bottesford for Belvoir Castle and grounds; the second having Boston for its destination. Both experienced a fair share of support,—about 700 passengers being carried by the former; the latter securing about 350. Yesterday (Wednesday) an excursion train departed for the port of Grimsby: and special trains were also run to Matlock. This day, morning trains started for Birmingham Whitsuntide fair; and for Southwell Races.

Nottinghamshire Guardian, 31 May 1860

A similar development can be traced in reporting from Manchester. In 1840 a brief paragraph described short 'excursions' available from Manchester at Whitsun, along the numerous railways that were by now open, as well as water-borne vessels. These were however opportunities for pleasure trips on normal services, thus not designed to suit the pockets or time available of the working-classes.⁴ By

⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 June, 1840.

comparison in 1860, the paper was describing the abundance of cheap trips and special trains at Whitsun, accommodating hundreds of thousands of people.⁵ Certainly during the 1850s the railway excursion had begun to be taken for granted: it was remarked in Bradford for example in 1850 that as they were 'so frequent and abundant, they have ceased to be a novelty, and consequently, mere records of such events will be deemed only commonplace and trivial'.⁶ That year, with much evidence of the maturity of excursion market development, the *Standard* reported that almost every company was projecting trips for the middle and working-classes, creating a 'comparatively new species of traffic'.⁷

Hobbs and others have maintained that we should guard against differentiating the nineteenth century 'national' press from the provincial press with a modern perspective, using assumptions about national coverage and circulation, as there was little difference in practice between the 'national', ie London-based press, and the provincial press, the non-metropolitan newspapers, at that time.⁸ The 'national' newspapers tended to focus on London news, and were effectively London newspapers, with relatively low sales in comparison to the provincial press, selling only around two thirds of the copies sold by provincial newspapers in total. At the same time the provincial press used a complex national network of links and syndicated reports to achieve an extensive geographical coverage, copied from many other London and provincial newspapers received in the local office. Coverage of excursion reporting therefore appears in the provincial press in many parts of the country in relation to activity in other distant areas, providing a very useful spread of evidence. Advertising was also widespread, supported by advertising agents who were able to buy space for advertisements across many provincial newspapers.

At this time there were economic constraints placed on newspapers which limited their reach however and made them expensive for the ordinary working person. Thus it is unlikely that the masses necessarily received their information about trips directly from such publications. Advertisement duty, stamp tax and paper duty were not abolished until 1853, 1855 and 1861 respectively, which limited the potential for

⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 2 June 1860

⁶ *Bradford Observer*, 1 August 1850.

⁷ *The Standard*, 16 September 1850.

⁸ Andrew Hobbs, 'When the Provincial Press was the National Press (c1836-c1900)', *International Journal of Regional & Local Studies*, 5 (2009) 16-43.

mass circulation.⁹ As a result many provincial newspapers were controlled by printers at this time, to maximise production economies. There was an extensive campaign by powerful middle class groups to eliminate these taxes and duties.¹⁰ Curran has argued that press campaigning on this front might not be credited with generous goals such as enhancing freedom of expression, but rather that the groups hoped that by increasing working class readership this would benefit their aims of indoctrinating the labour force with capitalist views and as a result support the existing social order. Thus despite the press's apparent freedom from state interference, Curran views it as an agent of social control.¹¹ The abundance of judgemental reporting on excursions supports this theory.

Despite the innovative pictorial nature of the new excursions, the tax on space constrained the use of illustrations in most newspapers in the 1840s and 1850s, although many excursion advertisements were headed by a small drawing of a train, one of the 'emblematic devices' used to categorise advertisements by type. Advertising space was bought by the line, and surprisingly took no account of the differences in potential circulation between newspapers. Newspapers were borrowed, hired and circulated in many ingenious ways thus many people would have read a particular issue, possibly supporting a more working class readership.¹²

Approaches to reporting

A discussion of the value of newspaper evidence to explore working class mobility has to take into account the characteristics of reporting during this period. Curran has highlighted the way that the provincial press in this period tended to 'block out conflict, minimise differences, and encourage positive identification with the local community, its local traditions and its middle-class leadership,' and this research examines how far this was mirrored in approaches to the reporting of

⁹ T. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain, A History* (London, 1982), p. 25. These taxes had also impacted on the frequency of the regional press, which was usually weekly before their abolition. In relation to the advertising duty the *Essex Standard* pointed out that before its abolition each advertiser had to pay 1s 6d per advertisement in duty, often at least half the cost, whether they were a domestic servant looking for a place, a lowly tradesman or a railway company, who could well afford the sum (*Essex Standard*, 29 July 1853).

¹⁰ Nevett, *Advertising in Britain, A History*, p. 48.

¹¹ James Curran, 'The Press as an Agency of Social Control: an Historical Perspective', in D.G. Boyce, J. Curran and P. Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London, 1978), pp. 51-61.

¹² Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, pp. 45, 49-52.

excursions.¹³ Asquith noted that advertisers were able to control the press effectively at this time, preventing the editors from conflicting with their political and commercial interests, because of a growing dependence on this income.¹⁴ The press in the early days of excursions often took very a deferential stance in reporting on excursions, for example referring to the 'liberality of the Directors' after Hull & Selby railway excursions in 1843.¹⁵ This was not limited to the railway, following a successful steamboat trip from Hull to Grimsby, the *Hull Packet* reported that 'it is gratifying that the exertions of the spirited proprietors are thus appreciated. We do not know of any company more anxious to accommodate the public with cheap trips than the Gainsbro' United Steam Packet Company'.¹⁶ Railway advertising became substantial and therefore could not be ignored, in addition the provincial press proprietors and editors (often the same person) were members of the urban elite who supported the railway excursion as a tool for moral reform, and at the same time were keen to be seen to respond to the wishes of their public. The press acted as a vehicle for such elites and other organised campaigners to carry out a very public debate with the railway companies about their policies. In some cases, for example the Sabbatarian movement, this was to have important implications for the way that excursions developed (see Chapter 4).

Approaches to reporting tended to reflect a particular stance on railway issues, depending on which power group the publication supported, and this would shape perspectives. However occasionally publications would change their stance, for example in 1844, when the legislation about the need to make third class travelling accessible to the masses was being hotly debated, the *Economist* argued in favour of cheap travelling for the million, aspiring to the Belgian model at that time, although the writer seems to be advocating this for everyday use rather than for leisure. By 1857 however the *Economist* shared the view of the *Times* in coming out against excursions, with an elitist concern about 'the rage for travelling which has infected all classes'.¹⁷ Specialist railway publications might take different stances. Simmons noted that in 1844 the *Railway Chronicle* supported the new excursions but *Herapath's Railway Journal* was against them, as they were one of the

¹³ James Curran, 'The Press as an Agency of Social Control: an Historical Perspective', p.71.

¹⁴ Ivan Asquith, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1780-1855', in D.G. Boyce, J. Curran and P. Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London, 1978), p. 113.

¹⁵ *Morning Post*, 15 April 1843.

¹⁶ *Hull Packet*, 31 July 1846.

¹⁷ *The Economist*, 20 July 1844; 5 September 1857.

innovations which the irritable elderly proprietor of the publication took against. The *Chronicle* was more interested in social effects and was therefore willing to see the benefits of mobility for the masses.¹⁸ Although the *Railway Times* in general supported excursions, during 1856 it gave a large amount of space to a lengthy and detailed correspondence from 'Observer Z' against excursions - presumably a shareholder - who carried out a meticulous analysis, segmenting the type of traffic, for example Sunday trains, holiday trains, excursions to London, arguing that in his opinion excursion trains displaced income from ordinary traffic.¹⁹

Many excursion reports adopted a stereotypical narrative when describing behaviour, which was almost always reported as good, and a positive appreciation of a trip. These clichéd narratives may well have often been prepared in advance of the completion of a trip, to meet deadlines. A clue to this appeared in a satirical piece in the *Northern Star* in 1844, referring to a report in the *York Courant* of the previous Thursday, which described a Mechanics' Institute trip from Huddersfield to York the day before (Wednesday). It recorded the progress of the trip and that 'the strangers returned home at six 'o'clock, apparently highly delighted with what they had witnessed'. The *York Courant* was actually printed and delivered to Leeds by three pm on Wednesday, and thus the *Northern Star* accused the *Courant* of clairvoyance.²⁰

An alternative viewpoint

One publication took a slightly different approach in the discourse about excursion trains. *The Builder* was not dependent on advertising income from local railway companies, or in thrall to a local urban elite, keen on pursuing their own aims. In addition it was exempt from stamp duty because it related to a particular profession.²¹ It was therefore able to be more honest about the problems of the excursion experience in its regular 'railway jottings'. Excerpts from these reports were also sometimes syndicated to the provincial press and from the content it appears that they sometimes included sources from other journalists outside the publication. The architect and sanitary reformer, George Godwin, *The Builder's* very successful editor from 1844 until 1883, had a particular interest in railways, having

¹⁸ Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 243-4, 273.

¹⁹ Observer Z in *Railway Times*, 28 June 1856, 5 July 1856, 12 July 1856, 19 July 1856, 13 September 1856.

²⁰ *Northern Star*, 31 August 1844

²¹ T. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain, A History* (London, 1982), p. 43.

published a paper on the subject in 1837, emphasising the role of the railway in disseminating knowledge out of the metropolis and supporting moral improvement, also implying (as did many others) that the 'habits and morals of the rural population' were in need of particular improvement.²²

As a result, articles in *The Builder* tended to avoid the kind of stereotypical formula of words compared to other media when writing about the excursion, and could be quite critical. Its 'railway jottings' were usually straightforwardly factual, full of statistics, rather than the flowery prose adopted by the provincial press, who sought to appease their advertisers. During 1846 there were articles about the lack of qualified engineers employed by railway companies, leading to falls of railway bridges and tunnels, and about the profits made by the London & North Western Railway when reducing their charges.²³ In 1852 Godwin appeared surprisingly to be laying claim to the initiation of excursions on the strength of his paper, referring to 'the excursion train system, which we may be said to have originated'. He lists the problems caused by railway companies seeking quick profits, noting that the excursion train system was 'conducted in a disorderly and shameful manner...ideas of scrambling, want of accommodation, neglect of time, destruction of clothing in horse-boxes near the engines, and other disagreeables, are fast obliterating all pleasanter associations as to railway excursions in the minds of the working classes'.²⁴

The evidence from *The Builder* therefore provides a welcome balance to the style of reporting from the provincial press, which paints an overwhelmingly rosy picture of excursion events unless there was a serious accident. Stereotypical language in the general media coverage of excursions in this period points to those aspects of reporting which were important to a newspaper. These featured for example a positive view of a crowd of ordinary people (attempts to move away from the idea of presenting crowds as potential rioters), a universal admiration for all that the excursionists saw (a somewhat patronising view of the working classes), the lack of damage at the host destination (important to the local economy), the absence of any injury and a safe return home (supporting the railway company). In using this material therefore these perspectives have to be taken into account, and the

²² *The Builder* was published from 1842 -1966 (*Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800-1900*, <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com> [accessed 2 August 2011]; George Godwin, *An Appeal to the Public, on the Subject of Railways* (London, 1837).

²³ *The Builder*, 10 October 1846, 31 October 1846, 14 November 1846.

²⁴ *The Builder*, 21 August 1852.

research has attempted where possible to find alternative accounts where these are available (see examples of these in Chapter 7, on contesting destination space).

Advertising puffs

Excursion advertising was often supported by accompanying ‘puffs’ in the reporting columns, as in the following two examples. Such items would start in a normal way by commenting on the joys of excursions and then slip in a reference to an excursion advertisement which was carried either on the front page or another page. From the two examples it will be seen that the amount of ‘advertorial’ gained appeared to bear no relationship to the size of the paid-for space. It is unclear whether the payment for the advertising space carried a promise of editorial support as a ‘sweetener’.

**CHEAP TRIPS ARRANGED FOR AUGUST, 1850.
TO DERBY, BIRMINGHAM, AND
BRISTOL.**

ON TUESDAY, 13th August, 1850.—To leave NORMANTON STATION at Half-past Nine in the Morning, for the above three important places.

FARES FROM NORMANTON.

	First Class.	Second Class.	Third Class.
To Derby and Back	9s. 0d.	7s. 0d.	5s. 0d.
To Birmingham and Back	12s. 6d.	9s. 6d.	7s. 6d.
To Bristol and Back	17s. 6d.	13s. 0d.	10s. 0d.

Children under Twelve Years of age Half-price.

The Train will return on Monday, 19th August, leaving Bristol at 6 30 a.m., Birmingham at 12 noon, and Derby at 2 30 p.m.

TO HULL AND BURLINGTON.

On WEDNESDAY, 21st August, 1850.—To leave NORMANTON STATION at Half-past Nine o'clock in the Morning, for the above last named two places.

FARES FROM NORMANTON.

	First Class.	Second Class.	Third Class.
To Hull and Back	4s. 6d.	3s. 6d.	2s. 6d.
To Burlington and Back ...	6s. 0d.	5s. 0d.	4s. 0d.

Children under Twelve Years of age Half-price.

RETURNING FROM

Hull the same evening, or Thursday, 22nd, at 6 p.m.
Burlington on Friday or Saturday, 23rd and 24th, at 4 p.m.

N.B.—The RETURN on Saturday the 24th being only extended to First and Second Class passengers from Burlington.

Parties can join the above two Trips at Normanton by Train leaving MANCHESTER at 6 a.m., calling at

Sowerby Bridge, at.....	7 38 a.m.
Halifax, at	7 35 "
Elland, at	7 50 "
Brighouse, at	7 58 "
Huddersfield,	8 3 "
Mirfield, at	8 13 "
Dewsbury (Thornhill Laes), at.....	8 26 "
Horbury, at	8 35 "
Barnsley, via }	8 20 "
Wakefield, at }	8 45 "

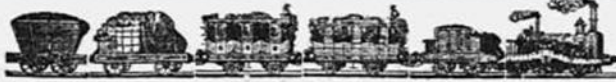
Tickets may be bought at the Huddersfield and principal Stations, or will be sent by return of post on receipt of a post-office order. Letters prepaid, and enclosing postage stamp for reply, addressed to Mr. JOHN CUTTLE, ACCOUNTANT, WAKEFIELD.

learned to the tenants ten per cent.

CHEAP TRIPS.—Our day is pre-eminently a pleasure seeking one, and the good old people who never thought of peering beyond the narrow circle of their personal friends, look with wonder and astonishment to the marvellous series of travels and sights which their juniors have, and continue to enjoy. So strong is the interest excited in the mind of some of those who are in “the sear and yellow lead” that they have laid aside their local prejudices and visited the great towns and marts of commerce of which they have so often heard but never seen. Amongst young people it is considered as a matter of every day life, and the pleasure and relaxation of mind and body whilst enjoying a railway excursion is ample recompense, apart from all other considerations, for the loss of time and additional expense. To those who enjoy—and who does not?—such trips, we observe that an excellent opportunity presents itself on Wednesday next, for parties visiting the beautiful little watering place of Burlington, and during the succeeding week the towns of Derby and Birmingham, and the seaport of Bristol, under the careful arrangement of Messrs. Cuttle and Calverley, of Wakefield.

DISTURBING THE PUBLIC PEACE BY STRANGE CRIES.—
Three names were given to the...

Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser, 10 August 1850



EXTRAORDINARY
CHEAP PLEASURE TRIP
FROM
CHESTER, WREXHAM, SHREWSBURY, AND INTERMEDIATE STATIONS
TO THE
WREKIN, WOLVERHAMPTON, AND BIRMINGHAM,
ON MONDAY, 20TH JULY,—SEVEN HOURS' STAY AT BIRMINGHAM

For Particulars see Small Bills.

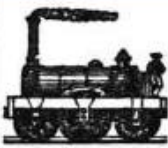
ALFRED LOCKWOOD & CO

CHEAP EXCURSIONS.—What a change has steam produced in the social habits of our country! It has not only lessened the toil of the artizan and relieved the mechanic from much of the burthens of labour, but has enabled the "White Slaves" to enjoy many of the comforts, as well as the luxuries of life, and amongst the latter not the least is the facility and the cheapness with which they may spend an occasional day in innocent and healthy recreation and amusement—a boon which was denied to our forefathers. Now the hard-worked and pent-up workman can enjoy a ride across the hills and dales, "for many a weary mile," at a price which in the "olden times," it would have cost to get to the nearest hamlet. And what can be more conducive to the "toiling mechanic" than a ride by rail or steamboat, where free from dull care, he can spend a few hours gazing on the beauties of nature and beholding its vast variety and its glorious harmony. In "ancient times" a journey of 100 miles was a task far too great to be undertaken without preparing for all the accidents of life by giving the law a slice for making the last will and testament of the bold adventurer. But now what a change has come "over the spirit of our dream." We travel 100 miles in three short hours, an idea which would have set the "village folks a gaping." Now the rustic youth, whose days have been spent around his father's homestead, can have a ride to some of our busy hives of industry and feast his soul on things unseen before and return a "better and a wiser man." Apropos of the above remarks, we find a Cheap Excursion announced for Monday next to Wolverhampton and Birmingham, and we hope the public will avail themselves of the day to go and see those places. We can promise them, if they go "wide awake" they will not have spent the day in vain, but will be glad that such an opportunity has been afforded of seeing where so many of our "precious metals" are produced.

*Wrexham and Denbighshire
Weekly Advertiser,
18 July 1857*

In both examples, these were the only trips advertised in the issue, and it may be that the newspapers were attempting to attract more excursion advertisers by offering extra space. The ‘puffs’ certainly added to the marketing offer, by emphasising the ‘careful’ arrangements of excursion agents Messrs Cuttle and Calverley of Wakefield for example, and providing descriptive and encouraging elements not included in the straightforward factual details of the advertisements themselves. As a source of evidence they also provide valuable insight into both the media view on the excursion and the market for such trips, with terms used such as ‘old people’, ‘workmen’ and ‘rustic youth’, although it is possible that the perspective of the newspaper on the potential market may not have coincided with reality.

In 1850 there was an unusual example of copywriting language by a railway company – the Midland – in promoting a trip to Matlock, which might be seen to incorporate its own advertising ‘puff’, whereas by contrast most railway excursion advertisements were plainly factual.²⁵ In this case the advertisement uses the kind of language adopted by Henry Marcus, ‘the greatest Railway Treat of the Season’ to draw in potential customers.



MIDLAND RAILWAY.—The greatest Railway Treat of the Season! **EXCURSION to MATLOCK.**—On Monday, June the 10th, 1850, a **SPECIAL TRAIN** will leave **LINCOLN** at 7.0 a.m.; **NEWARK** at 7.30 a.m.; and **NOTTINGHAM** at 8.30 a.m., for **MATLOCK**.

Passengers by this Train will be admitted **FREE** to that extraordinary and stupendous Work of Nature, the Royal Rutland Cavern, through which visitors will pass direct to the summit of the Heights of Abraham and Victoria Prospect Tower, commanding one of the most extensive and interesting views in the County of Derby. From this lofty eminence, the High Tor, a broad mass of perpendicular Rock rising to the height of 400 feet from the River, is seen to advantage; also Middleton and Wirksworth Moors, Cromford Moor, Crich Chase and Cliff, Riber Hill; and between these bold objects, the lovely Vale of the Derwent, rich in meadow, wood, and water.

Visitors will also have **FREE** admission to the Romantic Lovers' Walks and far-famed Cliffs of Matlock, without any charge for the Ferry across the River Derwent.

The celebrated Petrifying Well will also be shown to visitors.

Fares there and back:

	First Class.		Second Class.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
From Lincoln,.....	7	0	5	0
Newark,	6	3	4	6
Nottingham,	5	6	4	0

The Train will leave Matlock in returning at 6.0 p.m.
An early application for Tickets is requested, as only a limited number can be issued.—Tickets to be had at the Railway Station, only.
(By order) **JOSEPH SANDERS,**
June 1st, 1850. **General-Manager.**

Nottinghamshire Guardian,
6 June 1850.

²⁵ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 6 June 1850.

The advertisement then goes on to shape the excursionist's consumption of the landscape by describing the elements which he or she will see at the destination, and covers special features which can be viewed free of charge, offering value for money. Finally, it encourages readers in a call to action by suggesting that tickets may run out soon. This kind of text is useful in demonstrating embryonic approaches adopted by railway companies, and the development of tourist practices for the masses.

Such advertisements formed only one element of the marketing of excursions at this time, as a press report from Nottingham in 1860 describes a range of advertising material, aimed squarely at the working class masses. These included 'huge "posters", moderate sized placards, and the diminutive "handbills" ...on every hand', announcing cheap trips.²⁶ Posters and handbills were particularly useful for the excursion organiser, as they were free of duty, not subject to the limitations of costly space which newspapers charged, and were fast to produce and distribute or post on walls.²⁷ This Stockton & Darlington Railway excursion handbill shows a typical economy of detail, similar to that usually adopted in the press, with no attempt to promote the attractions of a trip to Redcar in June 1859:



*Stockton & Darlington Railway excursion handbill 1859
(courtesy of the National Railway Museum collection)*

²⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 31 May 1860.

²⁷ Nevelt, *Advertising in Britain, A History*, p. 53.

The political viewpoint

In 1847, Mitchell listed 555 newspapers or journals published in the British Isles, of which 230 were Liberal, 187 Conservative and 138 identified as 'neutral or class papers'. This proportion broadly reflects the political ratio represented in the source material for the current study.²⁸ A paper's political perspective would shape the nuances of its approach; in general most of the provincial press represented in the large towns in this study and sourced from the *19th Century British Library Newspapers* were liberal in their politics (or occasionally Whig), supporting some elements of social reform to a greater or lesser extent. These included the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Preston Chronicle* for example. The Conservative perspective tended to be represented in the county papers such as the *Lancaster Gazette*, together with a few other town papers, such as the *Derby Mercury* and the *Hull Packet*.

Arnold and McCartney have demonstrated how the partisan nature of the press could influence public thinking about railway activities, for example in Yorkshire, George Hudson was supported by the *Yorkshire Gazette* (which also supplied *The Times* with material), and by the *Railway Chronicle*, but criticised by *The Yorkshireman* and the *Railway Times*.²⁹ The political views of a proprietor/editor might be seen to influence excursion reporting: in 1855 the Conservative *Blackburn Standard* described a trip by Preston working men to the seat of the Earl of Derby and his son Lord Stanley, at Knowsley, to raise funds for a free library in Preston. The *Preston Chronicle* published a positive report of this excursion, but the following week published a highly critical editorial about Lord Stanley's efforts to support the free library for the masses, arguing that 'if he intends to raise the condition of the working classes...he must not begin at the wrong end by providing them with amusements...but must first begin with his belly and his back'.³⁰

Many provincial newspapers published in the mid-nineteenth century were owned by middle class reformers, but tended to favour manufacturing and commercial interests rather than the working classes.³¹ There were a few papers serving working class interests, such as the Chartist *Northern Star* (1837-52) and

²⁸ C. Mitchell, *Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1847), p. 364.

²⁹ Anthony J. Arnold and S. McCartney, *George Hudson : the Rise and Fall of the Railway King: a study in Victorian Entrepreneurship* (London, 2004), p.148.

³⁰ *Blackburn Standard*, 19 September 1855; *Preston Chronicle*, 15 September 1855, 22 September 1855.

³¹ G. A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society: from Caxton to Northcliffe* (London, 1978), pp.189-191.

Reynolds's News (1849-1967). The *Northern Star* might be considered a truly 'national' newspaper, with a circulation of 48,000 in 1839, compared to the *Times*, which only achieved 18,500 in 1840, and unlike the *Times*, it reported on all parts of the country.³² *Reynolds's* had a strong working class artisan readership, but both papers tended to have to take a large amount of patent medicine advertising in the absence of other advertisers, as a result of their radical profile compared to other newspapers.³³ These papers reported on excursions in a straightforward way, either carrying reports of accidents or factual reports on excursion activity, with little sign of the approach used in other provincial newspapers, which often carried patronising editorial commentary about the excursion as a tool for moral improvement and stereotypical narratives about the good behaviour of excursionists at a destination and their appreciation of the organisers. In 1844 the *Northern Star* carried an angry report from a correspondent from Huddersfield, complaining bitterly about conditions on a Manchester & Leeds Railway trip from West Yorkshire to Liverpool in July. Unlike other complaints appearing from time to time in the more traditional provincial press, it stridently captures the elements of class conflict and the humiliating unfairness of this treatment by the company, at a time when other papers seemed loathe to criticise their advertisers.³⁴ The following year it carried a satirical report on the contribution of MPs Plumtre and Spooner to parliamentary debates on Sunday railway travelling.³⁵ Later, in September 1851, it used dramatic rhetoric in its comment piece headed 'The Blood Red Rail', critical of the 'railway magnates' and 'the Treasury Benches', in causing a large number of serious accidents, often involving excursion trains.³⁶ It is noticeable that this issue of the newspaper (which was already failing) carried only advertisements from patent medicine suppliers and radical publishers.

³² Hobbs, 'When the Provincial Press was the National Press (c1836-c1900)', p. 22.

³³ Curran, 'The Press as an Agency of Social Control: an Historical Perspective', pp. 62-63; *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900* <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com> [accessed 16 January 2012]; Asquith, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1780-1855', p. 100.

³⁴ *Northern Star*, 3 August 1844.

³⁵ *Northern Star*, 29 March 1845.

³⁶ *Northern Star*, 13 September 1851.

Information presentation

Evidence from contemporary newspapers and periodicals favours topics such as destinations, timings, pricing and class of carriage. There are some problems associated with using class of carriage as an indicator of social class of traveller, as there is evidence to show that some middle class users chose to travel more cheaply to save money, a matter of great concern to the railway companies.³⁷ However in the absence of any alternative it will generally be used in this study. Many excursion reports plainly described a railway excursion in terms of origin, destination, railway company, organiser, timing, numbers of people, engines and carriages. Coverage was not comprehensive nor consistent, some trips were advertised but not reported, others were reported but did not appear in advertisements. One of the most common elements found in this period was the summary of excursions which were advertised or had occurred, both inward and outward, to a particular large place at holiday times, especially Manchester and other places at Whitsun.³⁸ These often contained extensive lists of Sunday school group excursions and almost always included the number of participants, demonstrating a typically Victorian obsession with numbers: people, carriages and engines. Although outings by cart, steamboat, canal boat or on foot had predated the railway, typically presented as a processional spectacle, it was the magnitude of the numbers involved now which appeared to lead to such extensive reporting.³⁹ Similarly there would be descriptions of all the works' outings at a particular time when these became popular, for example from Preston in the summer of 1850.⁴⁰ In 1851 the Great Exhibition was the subject of many reports detailing large numbers of excursion trains to London.⁴¹ The press found it useful to summarise the range of potential railway excursions available to their readers at holiday time, for example from Manchester in 1854, and from London in 1856, presumably to encourage their advertisers.⁴² *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* gave a summary of both the presence

³⁷ See for example 1844 (318) *Fifth report from the Select Committee on Railways*, para. 4381.

³⁸ For example *Manchester Guardian*, 5 June 1841, 17 May 1845, 29 May 1847, 2 June 1849, 25 May 1850; *Hull Packet*, 5 July 1845; *Leeds Mercury*, 2 June 1849, 29 May 1860; *Preston Chronicle*, 14 June 1851; *Daily News*, 10 June 1851.

³⁹ Families had previously made trips on foot or in vehicles to Blackpool from Manchester, but large scale excursion parties were unknown (John K. Walton, 'The World's first Working-class Seaside Resort? Blackpool revisited, 1840-1974,' *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 88 (1992), pp. 8-9.)

⁴⁰ *Preston Chronicle*, 3 August 1850.

⁴¹ *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 15 June 1851; For example the *Manchester Times* commented that these gave the assemblages a 'countrified aspect' (*Manchester Times*, 21 June 1851).

⁴² *Manchester Times*, 3 June 1854; *Morning Chronicle*, 12 August 1856.

and absence of trips available from railway companies and excursion agents during the summer season in 1853, both in Scotland and England.⁴³

The statistical aspects of reporting and the keenness for detail are characteristics of the press at this time which makes it an invaluable resource in collating a wide range of disparate evidence, not otherwise available.

Moral judgements

The second major feature of press reporting at this time was the exercising of moral judgements about the way that the working classes enjoyed themselves. This reflected concerns about the kind of appropriate 'respectable' working class behaviour referred in the Introduction.⁴⁴ A writer in *The Economist* in 1857 argued that while a level of 'over-excitement' about the new excursions was acceptable for the upper and middle classes, the catching of the travelling 'disease' by the 'lower orders' might lead to less money available for ordinary household comforts. The implication being that the masses could not be trusted to spend their disposable income in a sensible manner, supposedly unlike other classes.⁴⁵ However this type of reporting can at times generate useful evidence of working class practices and culture, which supports the analysis of excursions. A moral reform perspective however led the press to be selective in its reporting: it is possible to see how newspaper editors used the juxtaposition of reports and news items to achieve a subtle underlining of their political and moral stance. For example in 1850 the *Bradford Observer* carried a report on a Weekly Half Holiday Association outing for people working in Bradford stuff warehouses to Studley. The account is typical of its kind, reporting satisfactory arrangements reflecting credit on the railway company and the association. By contrast it appeared alongside a report headed 'Prize Fight: Disgusting Exhibition' which described how thousands of people travelled from miles around to a prize fight in the area.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, 1853, pp. 279-281.

⁴⁴ See page 30.

⁴⁵ *The Economist*, 5 September 1857.

⁴⁶ *Bradford Observer*, 6 June 1850.

The use of lyrical writing

The third feature of excursion reporting was the use of lyrical writing in describing the new spectacle, often combined with moral judgements, which sometimes led to stereotypical accounts, painting the event with a dramatic description, but in reality suiting the perspective of the writer, ignoring perhaps a rather more mundane but realistic account of what happened. Commonly used phrases in relation to cheap trips included the description of people in a 'perpetual state of locomotion', and the argument that a 'passion for locomotion is a sign of the times'.⁴⁷ Certain Shakespearean phrases were sometimes adopted in descriptions of experiences, such as 'the pelting of the pitiless storm' when crowds packed into open carriages suffered torrential downpours on long journeys.⁴⁸ The central motif of a crowded excursion train led to flights of fancy from report writers, who often conjured up mythical or animal-related elements, sometimes based on literature. This reflects Nye's assessment of the sublime, when he suggests that those who were not used to a particular technological spectacle tended to turn to the supernatural in their representation, and the evocation of fear from 'magic powers', as they were unable to decode the experience in any other way.⁴⁹ For example in 1840 the *Leicester Chronicle* reported on a visit to the Leicester exhibition from Nottingham, with 65 carriages, when a large crowd of anxious spectators gathered and finally after a delay 'a long lingering undulating mass of animated wood and iron slowly emerged from the dark mass of vapour which accompanied it, like a body-guard, and rushed along the line with a noise resembling the dashing of a thousand surges on a rocky shore'.⁵⁰ In 1844 a writer in the *Preston Chronicle* invoked Milton's *Paradise Lost* when describing the railway trip for the poor to Fleetwood, with passengers flocking at the station 'thick as bees in Spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides, pour forth their populous youth about the hive in clusters'.⁵¹ The *Hampshire Telegraph* in 1844 described the way that 'the great automata stood ready to transport these working thousands from the close lanes and crowded dwellings of cities to the green fields, the smokeless heavens, and the fresh free beauties of nature'.⁵² The excursion train was described as a 'sort of vertebrated ark' in 1844, but the use of

⁴⁷ *Bradford Observer*, 8 August 1844; *Manchester Guardian*, 11 August 1856.

⁴⁸ *Bradford Observer*, 5 October 1848; *York Herald*, 26 August 1848. The phrase is from *King Lear*.

⁴⁹ David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1999), p. 55.

⁵⁰ *Leicester Chronicle*, 29 August 1840.

⁵¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 17 August 1844.

⁵² *Hampshire Telegraph*, 29 April 1844.

'pig-pens' on a monster trip to York led to the passengers amusing bystanders by 'grunting, bleating and bellowing their goodbyes!'⁵³ In 1848 a Sunday school excursion train bound for Scarborough was described as 'dashing along with colours flying, music playing, and children singing, so that the snorting and panting, and foaming of the *fiery* steed was but faintly heard.'⁵⁴ Lyrical writing can sometimes draw a veil over rather more realistic accounts of what actually happened on an excursion, but on occasion it can encapsulate a sense of the experience.

The foregoing features of press reporting can be seen to contribute to this research, either by presenting factual evidence not otherwise available, or by demonstrating the powerful forces shaping the excursion. While the use of lyrical writing presented the event from the observer's viewpoint, it might be regarded as another perspective on how the new excursions might be experienced by participants. Chapter 5 discusses this topic in more detail.

Conclusion

The above analysis has examined the approaches and perspectives used by the press in reporting and commenting on railway excursions in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the aim of setting this source of evidence in context as an important tool for examining the role of the new excursions in working class mobility. This evidence has been enhanced by the availability of new online searchable resources. In many respects both the provincial and national press were comparable as a source of evidence, because of the geographical coverage of the former, although the circulation of both was constricted by taxes and duties during the period being studied.

Almost all reporting, with few exceptions, adopted a positive approach to railway excursions, with stereotypical narrative reports, and publications made great use of positive 'puffs' to support their commercial advertisers. The chapter has discussed the political stance of publications in relation to their coverage of the topic, and the effect of advertising income on the traditional London and provincial press, which appears to have restricted their ability to criticise railway companies, in comparison to working class papers such as the *Northern Star* and also specialist publications such as *The Builder*.

⁵³ *Leicester Chronicle*, 5 October 1844.

⁵⁴ *Hull Packet*, 4 August 1848.

It is important also to take into account that most of the evidence on working class excursion crowds in this study has been mediated by the narrative descriptions and moral judgements of the middle classes. Three key features of excursion reporting were identified. Firstly publications made great use of the presentation of information about excursions at holiday times, both past and future, with many statistics on the number of passengers carried, and this has proved a valuable resource in the absence of other evidence. Secondly the debate about moral reform and the rational recreation role of excursions illustrated the powerful groups and forces shaping such excursions, and these are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Lastly the chapter examines how the lyrical writing used at times complemented the more factual accounts, offering a mediated view of the experience of the excursion, and this theme is developed in Chapter 5.

The value of comparing newspaper reports from alternative political perspectives will be demonstrated in the following chapters where possible. At the same time it has also proved productive at times to use evidence from other sources such as government publications and court reports.

Chapter 3

Three powerful groups

Mr Marcus may be said to be the father of cheap trips as the late Mr Stephenson was said to be the father of railways. Certain it is that millions of the working classes are indebted to the exertions of Mr Marcus for a great accession to their health, their enjoyment and their instruction. (December 1853)¹

The railway excursion grew into a phenomenon of mass mobility in the 1840s and 1850s, generating large crowds in new spaces, illustrated by the remarks made in the testimonial above to excursion agent Henry Marcus. He represents one of a range of powerful groups or stakeholders, whose competitive effect was to construct the characteristics of these new excursion crowds. This chapter will discuss these groups in the context of working class mobility during this period.

Social constructivism draws attention to the social components of the development of technological systems, with theorists such as Nye, Rowland and Mack demonstrating how a variety of groups played a role in developing technologies.² At the same time it also highlights how the meanings of technological systems are themselves socially constructed. In the case of the railway excursion it was not the technology itself which developed, but a new way of using this technological system, generating large crowds as a result. In fact the technological system displayed remarkably few advances to meet the needs of the new crowds and spaces in the period under review, although excursion platforms were starting to be constructed towards the end of the period.³

¹ *North Wales Chronicle*, 31 December 1853 (reprinted from *Liverpool Chronicle*).

² Quoted in Trevor Pinch, 'The Social Construction of Technology: a review', in Robert Fox (ed.), *Technological Change* (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 19-20.

³ For example the Bristol & Exeter Railway built these at Weston-super-Mare and Bristol in 1854 (*Bristol Mercury*, 26 August 1854, *Morning Chronicle*, 21 August 1854). Much later, the plans for the new station at Middlesbrough in 1874 show the scale of the need for space, with a proposed new excursion platform 520 yards long, to be constructed so that trains could stand either side, with the ability to divide an enormous train into two parts. There was to be 'ample' booking office accommodation to expedite departure of excursion trains, and 'a large waiting-room and covered shed with conveniences for each sex'. (*British Architect*, 9 January 1874).

A group has been defined as 'a number of persons... regarded as forming a unity on account of any kind of mutual or common relation, or classed together on account of a certain degree of similarity'.⁴ Such groups become powerful when they have the freedom to make choices in their decision-making, and importantly have the resources at their disposal to do so.⁵ In the context of excursion crowds the three most powerful groups were the railway companies, the excursion agents and voluntary and church groups, such as temperance groups and mechanics' institutes. They were key players, acting differentially across towns and cities, exerting a powerful cultural hegemony to produce varied outcomes. There were other groups and forces, such as urban elites, the press and the state, but these are discussed in the following chapter.

There has been little study of the transport user's perspective in the context of these new crowds: Chapter 5 will examine this in relation to personal experiences and Chapters 6 and 7 will look at the reporting of user behaviour. The user was reflected in the approach of writers such as Cowan, who focused on the role of the consumer of the technology.⁶ This also echoes the approach of marketing theorists today, who base their work on the needs of the user of the product or service.

The current chapter explores the approaches and strategies adopted by railway companies, excursion agents, voluntary and church groups, looking at those characteristic features and elements which they harnessed in their innovatory moves to develop successful railway excursions. The organisational culture of the powerful groups involved and the level of competition were important factors and those groups which were able to dominate would shape the profile of excursions in their locality. This may lead to a repositioning of their place in transport history.

When these groups interacted, their power might be enhanced; for example railway companies could choose whether or not to offer excursions, they had the means, the technological system, to shape mass mobility. If they chose to do so they were able to work closely with large voluntary and church groups to manipulate the desire of the working classes for mass mobility for leisure purposes, illustrating a level of pent-up demand. Voluntary societies had little direct power, they could not

⁴ OED.

⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Thinking Sociologically* (Oxford, 1990), p.113; Jason L. Powell, 'Power', in Ritzer, George (ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology* (2007) Blackwell Reference Online http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405124331_chunk_g978140512433122_ss1-89. [accessed 4 September 2011].

⁶ Ruth Schwartz Cowan, 'The Consumption Junction: A Proposal for Research Strategies in the Sociology of Technology', in Wiebe E. Bijker et al (eds.), *The Social Construction of Technological Systems* (Cambridge, Mass, 1989), p. 263.

access the technological system of the railway themselves to run excursions, but they had a high level of influence, resulting from the position of their urban elite members, who used their authority to highlight certain values such as rational recreation, and they had mass in many cases.⁷

The rational recreation debate

The role of these shaping groups will be examined in the context of the rational recreation debate, which featured prominently in the press at this time, and which could be observed to give the powerful groups 'approval' for their activities. The 1840s were a decade of political agitation, with plug-plot riots and the Chartist general strike in 1842 in the North; in 1846 the Corn Laws were repealed, following lengthy campaigns.⁸ The varying level of crowd activity generated by Chartism and Radicalism in the 1840s meant that large and sometimes angry crowds might be a regular phenomenon in many towns, giving rise to concerns about the mob, potentially impacting on how excursion crowds were perceived.

The rational recreationalists were primarily the middle classes, especially Sabbatarians, reformers involved in voluntary societies, churchmen and the press. These groups were keen to persuade the working classes to avoid what they saw as immoral pursuits, such as the public house, cruel sports, gambling and street games, in favour of the provision of libraries, museums and baths.⁹ Although the idea of rational recreation as a form of social control inflicted by powerful groups on the working classes was heavily promoted and debated in the 1830s and 1840s, the concept was not new. As early as 1775 in a House of Lords debate on the Manchester Playhouse Bill, a speaker suggested:

I see no ill consequences that can flow from the poor workman alleviating the severity of his labour, by a rational recreation, by an amusement which will tend to soften his mind, to mend his morals, and to teach him in an agreeable manner the lessons of humanity.¹⁰

The growing industrialisation of urban settings had resulted in overcrowded narrow streets, restricting the open air space available to the working classes. The new excursions gave them access to a significant amount of new space, much more

⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Thinking Sociologically* (Oxford, 1990), pp.117-119.

⁸ C. Cook, *Britain in the Nineteenth Century 1815-1914* (London,1999), p.128.

⁹ J. Clarke and C. Critcher, *The Devil makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (Basingstoke, 1985), p. 58.

¹⁰ *London Chronicle*, May 13, 1775.

than their traditional control of space at markets, fairs and race meetings and during Wakes celebrations, which had led to the 'mass breakouts' referred to by Peter Bailey.¹¹ Leisure historians have varying views on the influence of the rational recreation debate. Bailey highlighted the perceived need for 'regulated amusements' promoted by moral reformers, rather than the traditional scenes of drunkenness and debauchery seen in fairs and at race meetings.¹² Such amusements should be set in the context of the separation of work and leisure in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when employers bargained with their workers to allow more time off at weekends for leisure in return for more concentrated efforts in the new factories during the working week.¹³ Stedman Jones adopted a class analysis, criticising the lack of clarity about the term 'social control', as this might relate to any type of agent and activity or interaction. He argued that work itself was the most effective form of social control, in constructing and restricting opportunities for leisure, and the role of the employer will be discussed in the next chapter as an economic influence impacting on the development of railway excursions for the masses.¹⁴ Stedman Jones also proposed that those groups normally supposed to have been agents responsible for new forms of social control, for example Sabbatarians, moral reformers, temperance and charity organisers, were not as effective as leisure capitalists, and a discussion of the role of the excursion agent as an important leisure capitalist is a key element of the current chapter.¹⁵ Bailey disagreed with Stedman Jones' class analysis, arguing that powerful groups had complex and divisive interests and there were mixed responses from those being imposed upon. His view was that rational recreation was therefore unsuccessful as a perceived means of social control because of these varied responses by the working classes.¹⁶ Cunningham argued for the role of the voluntary provision of counter-attractions to the public house as far greater than that of the state.¹⁷

The new evidence collected for this chapter and the next suggests that several types of group played an important shaping role on excursion crowds in the context

¹¹ P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London, 1978), pp.14-15.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ G. Stedman Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control: a Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of Leisure', *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (1977), pp.163-4, 165, 169

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁶ Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, p. 9; P. Bailey, 'The Politics and Poetics of Modern British Leisure: A Late Twentieth-century Review', *Rethinking History*, 3 (1999), 131-175.

¹⁷ H. Cunningham, *The Challenge of Democracy: Britain 1832-1918* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 94-5.

of rational recreation. It demonstrates that commentators on excursions supported traditional views of rational recreation, with discourse on excursions frequently linked to this, and as a result the three powerful groups discussed in this chapter – the railway companies, excursion agents, voluntary and church groups – were generally given support in their new railway initiatives.

Historiography

Powerful groups had an impact on the generation of excursions for the masses, for example their timing, frequency, seasonality, pricing, comfort and geography, but the ways in which they shaped excursions in this early period remains largely unexplored, even in the transport literature. Simmons's work on railway history has provided some very useful background material, but he admits that 'of all the main branches of Victorian railways' passenger business this one is much the most obscure', as excursion traffic does not appear separately in railway returns. Work on leisure and the seaside by both Walton and Walvin is particularly comprehensive in providing a context for the development of leisure opportunities for the masses, although Walton's focus is mainly on the later nineteenth century. Leisure contexts were varied and both Reid and Walton have emphasised the importance of local economies, local popular cultures and accessibility to the coast in developing holiday patterns in towns.¹⁸

Histories of railway companies make only passing reference to excursions in this early period, with very little discussion of business strategies apart from Gourvish's work on Mark Huish, General Manager of the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) from 1846 to 1858. The roles of individual managers and decision-makers were rarely discussed in relation to this topic, but the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* does provide background biographical detail on important railway managers and members of the urban elite, which supports an assessment of their

¹⁸ D.A Reid, 'The 'Iron Roads' and 'the Happiness of the Working Classes': the Early Development and Social Significance of the Railway Excursion', *Journal of Transport History*, 17 (1996), 57-73; A. Delgado, *The Annual Outing and other Excursions* (London, 1977); A. and E. Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991); Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991); Jack Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914* (Newton Abbot, 1986); Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s* (Oxford, 1997), pp.149-152; John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983); John K. Walton, 'The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England', *Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), 249-265; James Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday* (London, 1978).

perspectives on social reform for example.¹⁹ Considerable research has been carried out on Mechanics' Institutes by Tylecote, Barton and Royle, with very detailed information on northern excursions in particular, with analysis and debate on class composition, and these are used to inform the analysis later in this chapter.²⁰ In the case of excursion agents, Thomas Cook features extensively in the literature as a representative and/or originator, which is unfortunate as his activity was almost exclusively targeted at extended tours by the middle class, but is often uncritically quoted in a working class context. Walton is almost alone in seeking to redress a perspective on agents and the masses.²¹ There are only rare brief references in the literature to other excursion agents in the north of England which were operating in the 1840s and 1850s, despite their tremendous impact on the leisure mobility of the mass of working people. This chapter will reveal that this is an important omission, and use new evidence to reposition these in relation to Thomas Cook, filling an important gap in history.

There are two productive sources of evidence in examining the role of powerful groups impacting on excursions. Firstly the provincial press contains advertisements, reports and comments for analysis, including extended coverage of common discourses such as Sunday travelling and rational recreation. Most of the material for the chapter is drawn from northern England, with its substantial industrial and urban characteristics, rather than from areas such as the Midlands, the more rural southern half of the country and the metropolis.

Secondly, government publications such as parliamentary debates, government commissions and committees and accident reports offer occasional details of the views of company directors and managers as well as Sabbatarian debates affecting traffic. A further source is the records of the Railway Clearing House, established in 1842 by a number of important railway companies to co-ordinate their operations where these involved traffic across several lines. The minutes of their Coaching

¹⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <http://www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 10 June 2012].

²⁰ T. Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management* (Leicester, 1972); M. Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851* (Manchester, 1957); E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', *Historical Journal*, 14 (1971) 305-321; Susan Barton, 'The Mechanics Institutes: Pioneers of Leisure and Excursion Travel', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 67 (1993), 47-58.

²¹ John K. Walton, 'Thomas Cook: Image and Reality', in Richard Butler and Roslyn Russell, *Giants of Tourism* (Cambridge, Ma., 2010), 81-91; P. Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London, 1991); Jack Simmons, 'Thomas Cook of Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 47 (1973), 18-32; J. Pudney, *The Thomas Cook Story* (London, 1953).

Superintendents' meetings offer limited evidence on how the major railway companies worked together to set policy guidelines on aspects such as advertising, timetabling and pricing.²²

This chapter starts by looking at *railway companies*. While there are some business histories of railway companies, these pay rare attention to excursion activity and this chapter seeks to redress that balance by using this element of the railway company business as its focus. The role of the company in shaping excursions was particularly dependent on the views, energy and enthusiasm of key players such as managers, chairmen or individual directors. The chapter will also examine evidence from the Railway Clearing House, which had the potential to enable the larger railway companies to secure their power by acting in unison on policy issues concerning the operation of excursions.

The second group was the *excursion agents*, who were private individuals working in combination with one or more transport companies. In the case of excursion agents, the reputation of Thomas Cook has completely overshadowed that of other agents, and the chapter will question his importance in the context of other players. Agents were to have a tremendous impact on mobility for the masses, and this chapter breaks new ground in investigating the role of one of these.

Lastly the chapter examines existing work on *voluntary and church groups* in the light of press evidence, to draw out conclusions about the ways in which their activity shaped excursion crowds. These used the vast numbers of their members, and desire to travel, to organise excursions and extend the market for these, as many trips were promoted to friends and families of members and to the general public. These organisations included Sunday Schools, mechanics' institutes, temperance societies and friendly societies. The role of an individual philanthropist in this field will also be discussed.

²² The National Archives, London, *RAIL 1080. Railway Clearing House: Minutes and Reports, 1841-1963*.

Railway companies

The most important player in the development of railway excursions for the masses was the railway company, which quickly became a powerful institution. The relative newness of passenger operation in the 1840s meant that railway company decision-making was not generally based on years of habitual practices, but more often determined by an ad-hoc process. Those taking decisions found it hard to move away from pre-railway thinking about moving freight, and Gourvish has noted that the main aim of the companies was 'to supply improved transport facilities for existing companies'.²³ The larger trunk line railways specialised in high-tariff passenger business, but Gladstone's 1844 Railway Regulation Act led to a growth in cheap travelling, and traffic managers had to move towards a larger volume lower margin business. Between 1845 and 1870 there was a gradual changeover in the profile of passenger traffic on the railways: whereas in 1845-6 third class passengers numbered almost half the total traffic and a fifth of total revenue, by 1870, 65 per cent of the passengers were third class, providing 44 per cent of the revenue.²⁴

Following a brief outline of the context and progress of early excursions, this section will examine how far senior managers and board members of railway companies used their powerful positions and the background values to shape excursion policy. Evidence from newspaper advertisements and reports indicates that some entrepreneurial chairmen recognised the potential for speculative strategies for excursion outings at an early stage in the early 1840s, at a time when excursion agents were also promoting trips using railway company lines.²⁵ Some railway companies were running, for instance, temperance day excursions themselves rather than as commissions.²⁶ The companies organised special trips, usually at half fare, with a free return journey to minimise passenger duty and tended to be during the Easter or Whitsun holiday.²⁷ The following handbill

²³ T.R. Gourvish, *Railways and the British Economy, 1830-1914* (London, 1980), p. 26.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

²⁵ Later in 1850 for example the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway was offering cheap trips from Lancaster to Preston and to Windermere in the Lakes at Whitsun, while Marcus was offering London trips on the same line (*Lancaster Gazette*, 13 April 1850, 4 May 1850).

²⁶ For example railway excursion trains were bringing people to a big Temperance meeting in Derby on Monday 2 August 1841 from a range of towns in the Midlands and North of England (*Derby Mercury*, 21 July 1841).

²⁷ See for example: North Midland Railway (*Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 26 September 1840), Hull & Selby Railway (*Hull Packet*, 28 May 1841), Great North of England Railway (*Yorkshireman*, 21 May 1842), Midland Counties Railway (*Derby Mercury*, 24 May 1843), York & North Midland Railway (*Yorkshireman*, 19 March 1842; *York Herald*, 25 May 1844). Occasionally it is unclear whether an agent is involved but not mentioned in the advertisement, for example the trips promoted by the Manchester & Leeds Railway in

promoted one of these early excursions at Easter 1841, from York to Leeds and Hull, presumably offered by the York & North Midland Railway, although their name is not used.



Excursion trip, Leeds and Hull, on Good Friday, April 9th, 1841. (Courtesy of National Railway Museum archive)

Lines in the north east of England had recognised the potential of trips at an early stage: the Leeds & Selby Railway ran trips from Leeds to Spurn Point at Whitsun 1835, using a steam packet from Selby to Spurn, and the Whitby & Pickering line offered a trip to Grosmont in 1839.²⁸ Very early ventures were often devised by

conjunction with other lines, in May 1843 (*Railway Times*, 13 May 1843). See Chapter 4 for a discussion on the effects of passenger duty.

²⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, 13 June 1835; W.W. Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development* (London, 1915), p. 372.

railway companies in response to the demands of large groups, each guaranteeing a number of passengers and therefore at no risk to the railway company – for example Mechanics' Institute members visited a Polytechnic Exhibition in Newcastle at reduced fares on nominated trains on the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway in May 1840.²⁹ Unusually there is at least one early example of a private individual running trips in his own locomotives - John Hargreaves Jr of Bolton, a local carrier, who organised excursion trips, from Bolton to Liverpool, London and Manchester from 1841 until 1845, when the Grand Junction Railway took over.³⁰

There were of course other modes of excursion transport operating in the 1840s, for example steamer trips, which had a long tradition, and which influenced the railway excursion in a number of ways. The case for the steamer companies as pioneers in cheap recreational travel for the masses, leading to 'the democratisation of leisure', has been successfully argued by Armstrong and Williams.³¹ Steamer companies operated excursions themselves, demonstrating to the railway companies how it could be done and setting an example to influence railway company thinking, in dealing with a market which only had a fixed time for leisure. However their activity was limited to coastal areas and rivers, whereas railway line access was much more widespread. Steamships had started commercially on the Clyde in 1812 and were operating widely on rivers and estuaries in England by 1816. In the early 1820s they were also working on coastal routes in the North Sea, the Irish Sea and across the Channel. By the 1830s technological improvements meant that they could operate throughout the year.³² The development of steamer excursion business had depended on the coastal attractions near the ports, and the lack of these around Liverpool meant that it did not benefit initially in the same way

²⁹ Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development*, p. 372. The following month members of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution went on a Monday trip to York on the Leeds & Selby and York & North Midland Railway, again paying a reduced price (*Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1840). A works outing from R & W Hawthorn in June 1840 from Newcastle to Carlisle carried 320 passengers at half price. In August 1840 a trip from Leeds to Hull, with around 1,250 textile operatives in 40 carriages, apparently a record for the time, was referred to by Simmons as the first 'monster train'. Both works' outings took place on Sundays, despite Sabbatarian pressures at this time (W.W. Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development* (London, 1915), pp. 372-3; D. Brooke, 'The opposition to Sunday rail services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 6 (1963), p. 95; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 272). Certainly a trip from Nottingham to Leicester on 24 August 1840 was reported as a 'monster train' in the *Leicester Chronicle*, 29 August 1840.

³⁰ G.O. Holt, *A Regional History of Railways of Great Britain: North West* (Newton Abbott, 1978), p. 23. Eventually the railway companies themselves took over responsibility for running all traffic on their lines (Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, pp. 31-33.)

³¹ J. Armstrong and D. M. Williams, 'The steamboat and popular tourism', *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), 61-76.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

as Glasgow and London (local excursions were offered from Glasgow from 1816 and from Liverpool from 1822).³³ Steamer travel was much less capital intensive than the railway, as it required no track building, and steamboats could be moved around the navigable rivers and coastal areas, thus this new technology could be diffused speedily. By the 1830s steam excursions were very common, with steamer companies relying on freight business for their year round income but benefiting from passenger income in the summer. The acknowledgement of a new competing form of transport was highlighted in 1835 by a new steamer called *Railway*, which travelled from Selby to Spurn Point, carrying '550 males and females of different ages, occupation and station in life'. By linking with this, the new railway was able to promote excursions to Spurn by train from Leeds, changing mode at Selby.³⁴

The London & South Western Railway started excursion activity as early as 1841-2, and offered cheap weekend tickets from 1842.³⁵ Many of the other southern railway companies embarked upon excursion business from Easter 1844, such as the London & Brighton, Eastern Counties and South Eastern Railways, with the press heralding 'a new era of holiday travelling'.³⁶ It was suggested that this arose from railway company directors following the lead of steamer companies in offering cheap holiday trips, and that once the lines to Dover, Brighton and Southampton were open in the early 1840s, it was a natural progression to offer cheap railway trips to those seaside places. The press also attributed this innovation to a desire by railway companies to reduce fares and published evidence which indicated that low fares did not detract from regular traffic.

The first excursion from London to Bath, Bristol and Exeter on the Great Western (GWR) ran in September 1844, although the company had run its first trip in the opposite direction as early as 1842.³⁷ Break of gauge problems added lengthly

³³ Armstrong and Williams, 'The steamboat and popular tourism', pp. 64, 70-71; J. Armstrong and D. M. Williams, 'The steamship as an agent of modernisation 1812-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, XIX (2007), pp.147-8

³⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1835; *Leeds Mercury*, 20 June 1835. The trip allowed visitors the choice of two hours 'recreation' on the promontory or a cruise on the German Ocean.

³⁵ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp.273, 292-3; *Preston Chronicle*, 9 October 1841. There may have been a gap after the early 1840s, as an LSWR report in March 1851 implies that excursions were a new experiment in 1850 (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 1 March 1851).

³⁶ *The Standard*, 9 April 1844, 9 September 1844; *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 29 April 1844. There were complaints about the South Eastern Railway in 1847, when it used placards promoting 'Holiday Trains' from London to Ramsgate, Margate and Dover. It was assumed that these were cheap trips but in fact normal fares were charged. (*Morning Post*, 10 April 1847 (from *Railway Record*).

³⁷ A cheap two day trip from Bath and Bristol to London for the Michaelmas holiday in September, with around 800 excursionists (*Bristol Mercury*, 17 September 1842, 24

delays to excursion trains between the North East, Birmingham and the South West in the 1840s, where passengers had to change carriages. This was in addition to occasions when carriages had to be lifted one at a time on to different rails, at Birmingham in 1849 for example.³⁸ There are other examples of early southern excursions, for example the Bodmin and Wadebridge Railway advertised a trip in June 1836.³⁹ In April 1840 an excursion train ran from Wadebridge to see the public execution of the Lightfoot brothers at Bodmin Gaol, who had been convicted of murder, with three trains carrying 1100 people.⁴⁰ The railway companies took advantage of the availability of steamer companies to enhance the popularity of their excursions, for example the new Preston & Wyre Railway, which opened in 1840, encouraged steamers to use Fleetwood for a service to Ardrossan, with onward travel by railway to Glasgow.⁴¹ By 1845 Joseph Crisp and Thomas Cook both came forward with mixed mode excursion trips combining rail and steamer. Cook's Scottish trip by rail and steamer in 1846 was the first to that country, as there was no continuous railway line at that time.⁴² Thus the success of the steamboats in joining up the gaps on these routes shaped the development of the railway excursion, encouraging railway companies to develop longer excursions when later lines were constructed.

Where there was competition from steamer companies, this kept trip prices down, constraining railway company pricing policies for excursions. This worked both ways, a writer in 1853, talking about the excursion season, noted that 'if a steamer be not cheaper than a railway, it fails to obtain sufficient traffic'.⁴³ Gourvish describes how Scottish railway companies in the 1840s designed pricing policies to compete with steamboats on the Clyde.⁴⁴

Railway companies rarely reflected the advertising approaches of the steamboat companies, who emphasised speed and power in promoting their trips, whereas railway companies used the minimum of factual information, presumably because they provided the only means of making a particular land journey within the timescale available, as illustrated by the following joint advertisement:

September 1842); *Morning Post*, 30 September 1842; *Bristol Mercury*, 7 September 1844; *The Standard*, 17 August 1844; *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, 29 October 1853, p.279.

³⁸ *Bradford Observer*, 9 August 1849.

³⁹ From Wadebridge to Bodmin, for 1s. for the day, and accompanied by a musical band (*Cornwall Royal Gazette*, 10 June 1836).

⁴⁰ Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day*, 1991), p. 103.

⁴¹ Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914*, p. 202.


⁴² Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 295-6.

⁴³ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* (1853), p. 279.

⁴⁴ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway*, p. 66.

Row. YORK AND NORTH MIDLAND RAILWAY. LEEDS.—No. 13, Park

YORK AND NORTH MIDLAND RAILWAY.



CHEAP PLEASURE TRIP TO HULL.—
SEA VOYAGE.

On **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1844,** a **SPECIAL TRAIN** will leave the **LEEDS STATION** at Six o'Clock in the Morning; and return from **Hull** at Seven o'Clock in the Evening of the same Day.

FARES TO HULL AND RETURN GRATIS.
First Class, 4s. Second, 3s. Third, 2s.

Fares for the Sea Voyage—First Cabin, 2s. Second Cabin, 1s.

The above comprises a novel and delightful Excursion by Railway and Steam Ships, returning the same Day to Leeds.

The Large, Powerful, Sea-Going **LONDON STEAM SHIPS, WATER WITCH,** Captain Gibson; and **GAZELLE,** Captain Hurst, will on the above Day convey Passengers to Sea, along the North Coast, as far as **BRIDLINGTON BAY,** and return to **Hull** in Time for the Special Train at Seven o'Clock in the Evening.

These Two Steam Ships, being of great Size and Power, afford an opportunity to the Public of enjoying the refreshing Breezes of the German Ocean, and the delightful Scenery of the North East Coast.

The Vessels will sail from **Hull** at Nine o'Clock precisely. Provisions, &c., on board at moderate Charges.

Passengers Booked at the Station for **Hull and Sea Voyage** also.

Early Application should be made for Sea Tickets, as the Vessels cannot comfortably convey more than One Thousand Passengers.

MANCHESTER AND LEEDS RAILWAY

Leeds Mercury, 7 September 1844

Where the railway excursion was competing directly with the steamer excursion, then it is noticeable that the steamer company will use descriptive phrases, such as 'favourite and fast-sailing' and 'having undergone a complete overhaul in every department' in relation to the steamboat in the example overleaf:

GLASGOW AND AYRSHIRE RAILWAY.
FAIR HOLIDAYS.



GRAND PLEASURE EXCURSION to KILMARNOCK and AYR, on FRIDAY and SATURDAY the 18th and 19th July.
TWO SPECIAL TRAINS,
OF FIRST, SECOND, and THIRD CLASS CARRIAGES, for KILMARNOCK and AYR, will, on each of the above HOLIDAYS, Start at the undernoted Hours:—
† AT HALF-PAST EIGHT O'CLOCK MORNING, AND HALF-PAST NINE O'CLOCK MORNING,
When the following REDUCED FARES will be Charged by these Trains only:

	1st Class.	2d Class.	3d Class.
To KILMARNOCK AND BACK,	4s.	3s.	2s.
To AYR AND BACK, ...	5s.	4s.	3s.

Passengers purchasing a KILMARNOCK Ticket, will be allowed to travel to and from LOCHWINNOCH, BEITH, KILBIRNIE, DALRY, or STEWARTON; and Parties having an AYR Ticket, will have the privilege of coming out at any Station on the Line, and return to GLASGOW.

The RETURN TRAIN will leave AYR at 6 o'clock Evening, and KILMARNOCK at 20 minutes past 6 o'clock Evening.

Parties will thus have an opportunity of spending SEVEN or EIGHT HOURS in Viewing the Beautiful and Romantic Scenery of the

LAND OF BURNS.
† TO AILSA CRAIG.

The LADY BRISBANE Steamer will leave AYR (weather permitting), on FRIDAY the 18th, and SATURDAY the 19th, on a PLEASURE EXCURSION round AILSA CRAIG. Passengers going by the Half-past Eight Train will be in time for the Steamer.

Fares—Cabin, 1s. 6d.; Steerage, 1s.
Glasgow Station, 5th July, 1845.

GLASGOW PAISLEY AND GREENOCK RAILWAY

June, 1845.

CHEAP PLEASURE SAILING.



THE Favourite and Fast-sailing STEAMER ENGINEER, having undergone a complete overhaul in every department, before resuming her regular Station, will make a
PLEASURE EXCURSION TO CAMPBELTON, ON THURSDAY THE 17th JULY,
Leaving GLASGOW BRIDGE at Six o'clock Morning, calling at GREENOCK, GOUROCK, DUNOON, and ROTHEISAY. The Steamer will then proceed to CAMPBELTON, allowing Passengers sufficient time to view the beauties of the Town and surrounding Country, calling at all the above Ports on her return in the Evening.
The following Low Fares will be taken for the Whole Day's Sailing:—
From Glasgow—Cabin, 4s.; Steerage, 2s.

The Public are respectfully informed that the ENGINEER will shortly commence to Ply between GLASGOW and CAMPBELTON, Via AYR, in connexion with the GLASGOW and AYR RAILWAY. The Passage will then be accomplished betwixt Glasgow and Campbelton in 5 Hours, instead of 9 Hours, as taken by the Steamers from the Broomielaw. The time of Sailing, and other arrangements, will be announced in future advertisements.
Glasgow, 11th July, 1845.

Glasgow Herald, 14 July 1845

It may well be that railway companies could not predict which of their stock would be used for a trip, possibly it might be old and unsuitable, whereas the steamer companies could be clearer about their planning, with state-of-the-art steamers.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a turning point, with a market clearly demonstrated by the formation of exhibition clubs, and hundreds of thousands of people taking advantage of cheap trips to London. Railway companies such as Great Northern, the Midland and the London & North Western offered trips from West Yorkshire to London, and the Great Western ran similar excursions.⁴⁵ This business success was supported by the recent availability of an extensive infrastructure of railway connections, a reasonable level of working class prosperity,

⁴⁵ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 275-7.

and a good supply of affordable lodgings in London.⁴⁶ The price war between GNR, the Midland and London & North Western caused considerable problems for the companies, the Midland complained that half their ordinary passenger traffic was destroyed by the Exhibition, because of low fares and short distance over their lines, and the diversion of profitable traffic from other parts.⁴⁷ The price war led to a GNR excursion agent offering to undercut the extremely low price of 5s return from Leeds by sixpence, but the Great Northern eventually had to withdraw, as the toll they had to pay the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway cancelled out their profits.⁴⁸ On this occasion a railway company used its technological system to competitive advantage, as the LNWR benefited from the new electric telegraph to allow staff to communicate with London over the levels of traffic expected.⁴⁹

Evidence on the number of excursion passengers and receipts from these is scarce, and is only available occasionally in newspaper accounts of half-yearly meetings.⁵⁰ For example the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway reported a substantial increase in excursion passengers for the second half year 1849, with 26,329 of these, generating £1,981, compared to 2,373 the previous year, which had only generated £481, and that there had been no decrease in regular traffic.⁵¹ By 1851, their excursion traffic was generating £17,715 for the year, an increase of £15,695 over 1850, but they admitted to a decrease in local and London traffic.⁵²

In an analytical report in *The Builder* in 1850, contemporary colleagues' estimates of the profit of excursion traffic were used, taking working expenses and estimated income, for example the estimated income from a trip from Oxford to London with 3,200 passengers was reported to be £650, less working expenses of £30. Editor Godwin was keen to support this profitability at this time, arguing that cheapening the cost of leisure travel was different to 'cheapening and screwing in trade', although he changed his mind later.⁵³ Such simplistic calculations on the cost of running excursions were later refuted by Knoop, who explained the need to add a contribution to general expenses to the traffic expenses (which were usually merely

⁴⁶ *Morning Post*, 4 July 1853.

⁴⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, 26 February 1852.

⁴⁸ Charles H. Grinling, *The History of the Great Northern Railway 1845-1895* (London, 1898), p.103.

⁴⁹ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 9 August 1851; Charles H Grinling, *The History of the Great Northern Railway 1845-1895* (London, 1898), pp.103-4.

⁵⁰ It is also clouded by the competitive and diversionary effects of Great Exhibition excursion traffic in 1851.

⁵¹ *Morning Post*, 30 January 1850.

⁵² *The Observer*, 25 January 1852; obviously affected by the Great Exhibition.

⁵³ *The Builder*, 14 September 1850.

labour and coal), and also to take special costs into account, such as the need for extra trains and delays to other traffic.⁵⁴

The Great Western Railway was prominent in running excursions in 1850, especially on Sundays, which were reported to have increased their weekly receipts by £2,000.⁵⁵ Their Chairman claimed in 1851 that their excursion trains were cheaper to run than other lines as they were heavier and only needed one engine.⁵⁶ In the first half of 1851 the company were reporting that they received £5,000 more from excursions than in 1850 (out of a total passenger receipt increase of £37,115).⁵⁷ By the second half of that year they benefited from a 'remarkable' increase in Exhibition excursion traffic, with half year passengers rising by 487,549 of which 266,645 were in excursion trains, and receipts increasing by £122,427 of which £43,329 was from excursion trains.⁵⁸ By contrast there were complaints that the Great Northern Railway was running no excursions at Whitsun in 1852.⁵⁹

In 1857 up to a third of a million excursion passengers were reported to come through Chester Station during the second half-year, around 12,000 a week, in addition to ordinary traffic, which generated 110 trains a day and 50,000 passengers a week. Half travelled on the Great Western Railway through North Wales, and the rest from Birkenhead to Manchester and London. The Chester & Holyhead Railway company were pleased to report somewhat optimistically however that 'it involved no additional outlay, but much cheerful labour to the railway employees'.⁶⁰ While these figures might seem impossibly excessive, it was reported in 1858 that over 52,000 excursionists visited Chester by rail in Whit Week.⁶¹

There were a number of ways in which the organisation and policies of the railway company shaped the generation of excursion crowds in the mid-nineteenth century. Decisions about fares, timing, seasonality and frequency of services were relevant, for example, in encouraging or discouraging the working classes from taking part. Companies made decisions about facilities offered – a comfortable carriage or an open wagon – which might encourage or discourage excursionists. Lastly companies used their power to take advantage of existing connections to

⁵⁴ Douglas Knoop, *Outlines of Railway Economics* (London, 1913), pp. 71, 81, 167-8, 230.

⁵⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 13 September 1850.

⁵⁶ *Morning Post*, 15 August 1851.

⁵⁷ *Daily News*, 15 August 1851.

⁵⁸ *Daily News*, 13 February 1852.

⁵⁹ *Railway Times*, 29 May 1852.

⁶⁰ *Blackburn Standard*, 10 February 1858 (from *Liverpool Daily Post*); *Cheshire Observer*, 6 February 1858. These were 'conducted' by Mr Jones and Mr Mills at Chester, Mr Kelly at Shrewsbury and Mr McKee at Birkenhead, presumably all excursion agents.

⁶¹ *Cheshire Observer*, 5 June 1858.

attractive geographical features such as a coastline, lakes, towns and cities as a resource.

Companies might be supported and encouraged in their initiatives by commentaries in the press about economic benefits, with attempts to assess the spending power generated by excursion passengers, recognising the beneficial effect on the local economy. In 1852 it was estimated that spending by excursion crowds to Sheffield at an August temperance demonstration amounted to £1,500, including railway fares, gardens admittance and other costs.⁶² In 1857 a report from Blackburn on the Art Treasures Exhibition described Manchester as 'the cheap trip district' of Great Britain, and predicted that the Exhibition in drawing crowds from other parts of the country would stimulate the staple trades of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire.⁶³ At the same time it was common in editorial features to use railway excursion business as a proxy for prosperity levels for the masses, and this may have served to allay the conscience of the more sensitive of the middle classes about social and economic conditions among the (deserving) poor.⁶⁴ In 1850 it was suggested that the evidence of thousands of travellers on cheap trains arriving in Liverpool from Whitsun to the summer meant that times were prosperous, especially as they all looked well clothed and well fed: 'people...who are earning not only enough to supply them with necessaries, but a little more to make life pleasant'.⁶⁵ Thus the middle classes felt reassured at the 'respectable' values presented by the appearance of these working class excursionists. The *Liverpool Standard* noted in 1851 that the East Lancashire Railway helpfully produced a tabular printed listing of excursion events, with origin and destination, number of passengers carried and type of organising body, and that this was 'a tolerably good criterion of the moral and industrial condition of the manufacturing districts.'⁶⁶

There was little technological development to meet the needs of excursionists in the mid-nineteenth century, with a mixture of existing and old carriages, both open and closed, with no lighting or heating, sometimes freight wagons being used, and problems with crowding at stations, ill-equipped to deal with thousands of excursionists massing at a single time. By 1852 it was reported that the general

⁶² *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 4 September 1852. Demonstration here meant an orderly meeting rather than its modern use as a campaigning event.

⁶³ *Blackburn Standard*, 22 April 1857.

⁶⁴ The Lancashire manufacturing districts were reported to be better off in 1849 and thus able to participate in excursions (*Morning Chronicle*, 21 June 1849, 5 November 1849.); J.F.C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain 1832-51* (London, 1988), p. 169.

⁶⁵ *Manchester Times*, 17 August 1850 (from *Liverpool Times*).

⁶⁶ *Railway Times*, 14 June 1851 (from *Liverpool Standard*).

opinion of some railway boards was that 'extra-ordinary income' from excursion traffic should be retained rather than issued as dividend, as it incurred much wear and tear on the system – rails, engines, carriages – and that stations and sidings should be improved.⁶⁷ It might be argued that railway companies were unable to decide if excursions were a profitable opportunity and thus to be encouraged, although eventually, later on in the century, stations gradually adapted to solve the problems of large and unpredictable passenger loads.

Five shaping elements have been identified which account for the way that the railway company might construct its excursion business: the Railway Clearing House, business strategies, the use of co-operative networking, the company stance on Sunday services, and, most importantly, key personalities driving this business activity.

The Railway Clearing House

The Railway Clearing House (RCH) was established in 1842 by nine railway companies, with the aim of co-ordinating their operations, including, importantly, facilitating the through booking of passengers.⁶⁸ Thus it played a crucial role in enhancing the ability of companies to organise excursions which extended across several different lines, something which was desirable in response to market needs and to stimulate traffic. The RCH had support from powerful players such as George Carr Glyn, chairman of the London & Birmingham, George Hudson of the York & North Midland and Captain Laws of the Manchester & Leeds among others, covering lines from London to Darlington and to Bristol, and Liverpool and Manchester to Hull (see map overleaf). Glyn was the prime mover as he was particularly keen to standardise practices across the railway companies. Although through booking was important for excursions, the RCH was not particularly interested in third class passengers until the 1851 Great Exhibition, when regular meetings of general managers started, which continued until 1947.⁶⁹ Indeed there was a lack of interest generally by the RCH in the third class passenger until 1872.⁷⁰ Excursion affairs feature rarely in the minutes of the Clearing House Meeting of Coaching Superintendents, the sub-committee responsible for making

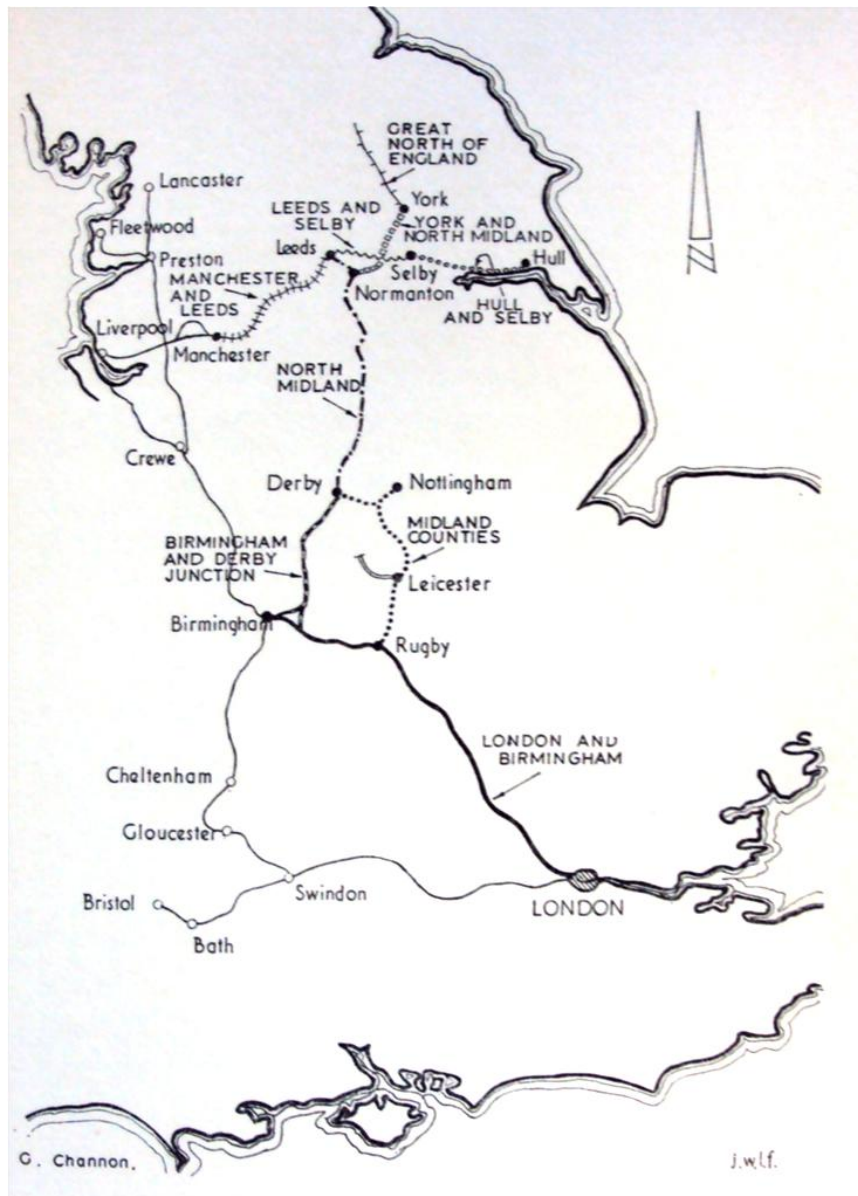
⁶⁷ *The Observer*, 2 February 1852 (from *Railway Times*).

⁶⁸ Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, pp. 412-13.

⁶⁹ P. S. Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy* (London, 1968), pp. 56-57.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

recommendations to companies about issues relating to passenger traffic. However the little evidence available provides an important insight into interdependencies and networking strategies of companies at that time, which impinged on the way that excursions developed. The following discussion points have been identified, relating to pricing, advertising and commission to agents.⁷¹



*Railway Clearing House lines in 1842 (from P. S. Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy* (London,1968))*

⁷¹ *The Railway Clearing House: its Object, Work, and Results : with a description of the Clubs and Societies in operation amongst the Officers* (London,1876), pp. 7,13. It was modelled on the Bankers Clearing House. T.L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies : Joint-Stock Politics in Victorian England* (London,1998), pp. 177-8; The National Archives, London, RAIL 1080; Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*, pp. 56-7; Charles Babbage, *An analysis of the statistics of the Clearing House during the year 1839: with an appendix on the London Railway Clearing House* (London, 1856). It has also proved difficult to follow through recommendations and decisions.

In 1851 managers were keen to meet under the auspices of the RCH to discuss strategy on the conformity of excursion fares and staying times to what was predicted to be an important event – the Great Exhibition – likely to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors travelling long distances.⁷² They decided that there should be no excursion trains to the Great Exhibition until 1 July, but Paxton, the Crystal Palace designer, had greater power and influence, persuading them to allow these from 2 June.⁷³ He was able to do this at a Clearing House meeting as a director of the Midland Railway and an important member of the sponsoring commission. Paxton was a populist, in favour of encouraging the working classes to extend their horizons, but also presumably keen to ensure the Midland took a share of the traffic as soon as possible.⁷⁴ A further argument seems to have been to divide the traffic which the Whitsun holidays generated in the north of England especially.⁷⁵ Because of competition from the Leith to London steamships, companies had to agree to reduce their fares, and they also agreed to give members of working class exhibition clubs reduced rates, together with their families, recognising the value of these committees in generating high levels of excursion traffic. Trade was so extensive that excursionists had to be carried home on ordinary trains as well as special trains.⁷⁶

There were however underlying concerns about the effects of rivalry between companies in pricing them out of the market or causing business failure. The strategy of reducing fares to encourage excursion business was not universally popular: some shareholders complained of a loss of profit, due to the drastic reduction in fares in 1851, especially as omnibus proprietors were apparently taking a different approach that year, raising their fares by 25%, on short haul journeys with possibly limited competition.⁷⁷ For the 1853 season the RCH turned their attention to excursion agents, keen to ensure the conformity of commission paid to these, 'with the view of preventing the present ruinous competition'. A group was set up by Hargreaves of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, but this does

⁷² The National Archives, London, RAIL 1080/99, *Railway Clearing House Superintendents' Meetings Minutes*, 20 February 1851.

⁷³ Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*, pp. 56-7; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 275; *Blackburn Standard*, 28 May 1851 (from *Herapath's Journal*).

⁷⁴ Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*, pp.56-57. Paxton and the Duke of Devonshire encouraged thousands of pleasure seekers to visit Chatsworth (see Chapter 7), and his Crystal Palace at Sydenham was known as the 'People's Palace' (Jan Piggott, *Palace of the People: The Crystal Palace at Sydenham 1854-1936* (London, 2004)). See also letter from Paxton to *Hampshire Advertiser*, 25 January 1851.

⁷⁵ *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 30 May 1851.

⁷⁶ Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*, pp. 56-7.

⁷⁷ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 26 July 1851.

not appear to have included LNWR. It was recorded that statements were produced listing amounts produced by excursion trains in the previous three seasons, together with commission paid, and the printing costs of publicity for those trips promoted by the company. A set of recommendations was agreed for circulation to companies and recommended for adoption.⁷⁸ These covered excursion fares and rates of commission to agents, which had apparently varied from 5 to 20 per cent. The committee recommended a maximum rate of 7½ per cent for provincial towns where necessary, although they proposed that agents should be avoided where possible. Finally they suggested that excursionists should not be allowed to travel by ordinary trains as this 'seriously obstructs and injures the regular traffic'. Thus the RCH companies displayed oligopolistic aspirations: although they were major players in the market, they were worried about competition and keen to use co-operation as a tool to defend themselves against this. It is frustratingly unclear what happened after this discussion. The recommendations are very sweeping, therefore it may be that they were not carried by the boards of the full RCH membership.

In April 1857, with the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of that year on the horizon, the Passenger Superintendents met again to discuss excursion arrangements for the coming season. Their recommendations included minimum fares in Whit week for scholars and friends, with no commission to 'the Proposer or Conductor' of school trips, that third class excursion trips from Manchester to Liverpool should be day trips only, apart from Saturday to Monday, and that excursion passengers should be restricted as far as possible to special excursion trains.⁷⁹ This indicates that companies recognised the need to plan ahead for critical events likely to generate lucrative mass excursion business and to co-ordinate their arrangements, adopting protective measures against others who might seek to undercut their rates.

In facilitating mechanisms for through booking the RCH was an essential element to the success of excursions across the country, although in 1845 only 55 per cent of railway mileage was owned by RCH companies.⁸⁰ However there is little

⁷⁸ The National Archives, London, RAIL 1080/99, *Railway Clearing House Superintendents' Meetings Minutes*, 23 September 1852, 21 October 1852, 2 December 1852. The group consisted of Blackmore from the Lancashire & Yorkshire, Hargreaves (Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire) and two representatives from the York & North Midland. There appears to be no record in later minutes of decisions made by the whole group.

⁷⁹ The National Archives, London, RAIL 1080/114, *Railway Clearing House Superintendents' Meetings Minutes*, 7 April 1857.

⁸⁰ Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*, p. 60.

evidence that it employed a strategic outlook in shaping excursions during this period. For example they could have chosen to standardise elements such as pricing, timing, seasonality and commission arrangements, or even to declare that excursions would no longer run. However in the face of competition, companies appeared to prefer to keep their commercial approaches to the use of agents secret, and their dealings appeared to be reactive rather than pro-active, for example in agreeing positions about traffic to large scale events. The companies chose to retain their individual power rather than dilute this through the RCH. However the evidence indicates that there was only limited decision-making to shape the timing and fares for excursions.

Business strategies

The business strategies adopted by railway companies in relation to excursion train activity were influenced by the attitudes of decision makers such as chairmen and directors, and could be based therefore not only on profit but on underlying beliefs which might militate against profit in some circumstances. These affected the availability, pricing and timing of excursion trips. Some directors could see the benefits; they recognised that in being viewed as acting for the public good, then this might improve their reputation and assist them in gaining support for new developments, thus enhancing the value to shareholders. On occasion, particular companies were criticised publicly in relation to other companies, who were perceived to be more helpful in offering cheap trips, for example complaints about the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway in Preston in 1850.⁸¹ Similarly a writer in *Household Words* in 1851 compared the South Western with the Great Western Railway company policies on excursions.⁸² Public perceptions of company motives changed, in the early days the provincial press generally expressed gratitude for the 'liberality' of directors in allowing such traffic, but later commented critically on the profitable nature of excursion traffic, for example comments on the Sheffield & Lincolnshire company in 1850 as 'up to the dodge of 'small profits and quick returns'' in running excursions.⁸³

⁸¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 31 August 1850.

⁸² *Household Words*, III 1851, pp. 355-6. Anon. but probably Ossian MacPherson according to A. Lohrli, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859* (Toronto, 1973), p. 352.

⁸³ *York Herald*, 29 June 1844; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 14 September 1844; *The Standard*, 9 September 1844; *Manchester Times*, 26 July 1845 (also syndicated to the *Morning Post*, 29 July 1845), *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 25 July 1850; *Bradford Observer*, 19 September 1850 (taken from *The Builder*). In 1850 the *Standard* and other papers attempted to

Profit should of course have been a key factor in the operation of excursions within a company's business portfolio, but railway companies for many years found it difficult to understand the economics of traffic operation, mainly from the lack of appreciation of overhead costs.⁸⁴ Some contemporaries thought that on the Brighton line in 1844 the new excursions were not only profitable but they barely affected income from regular traffic, such was the demand.⁸⁵ In 1850, the London & South Western Railway (LSWR) half yearly gross receipts from newly offered excursion traffic were over £10,000, with over 200,000 excursionists carried, of which £4,000 was produced by Sunday excursions. It is likely that this was misleading, their calculation of extra working expenses here was £223, and porters and clerks were not rewarded for the extra work.⁸⁶ When later questioned about the economics of this activity in government committees, many directors and managers would say that they lost money, particularly on trips over several days (because of the necessity of running empty rolling stock back to the original station) and especially as excursions were perceived to displace traffic on normal trains at higher prices.⁸⁷ Perceptions of profitability appear to have been variable, perhaps in some cases it might be assumed that the continuance of excursion traffic was seen as a public relations exercise, to enable a railway company to be reflected in a good light to the general public which would encourage public support for other more profitable initiatives, something which became more important in the 1860s, when companies came under increasing scrutiny.

To make the best use of existing resources in running excursions, railway companies often adopted a strategy of economies of scale, keeping their costs low by crowding the most passengers they could into long heavy and dangerous trains, for example a large York & North Midland excursion in September 1844 carried 6,600 people from Leeds to Hull, in four trains with 10 engines and 240 carriages.⁸⁸ The newly amalgamated Midland Railway (from 1844) had built up a reputation for excursion trains under the chairmanship of George Hudson, despite not having direct access to London until 1857, but its excursion trains were often far too long

summarise the impact of the excursion train on the profits of various railway companies (*The Standard*, 17 September 1850).

⁸⁴ It was very complex, see Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History*, pp. 114-116; Douglas Knoop, *Outlines of Railway Economics* (London, 1913), pp. 71, 81, 167-8, 230.

⁸⁵ *The Standard*, 9 September 1844 (from *Railway Chronicle*).

⁸⁶ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 22 February 1851, 1 March 1851.

⁸⁷ For example 1846 (687) *Second Report from the Select Committee on Railway Acts Enactments*, p. 235; 1867 (3844) *Royal Commission on Railways*, pp.509, 588-89, 614, 863.

⁸⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, 14 September 1844; Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p.150.

for safety, carrying huge crowds hauled by several engines, leading to complaints in the Leicester press in 1844 about conditions on these.⁸⁹ The heavy loads caused couplings to break, leading to collisions when sections of a train rolled back down inclines, and there might be insufficient guards to work the brakes. Extremely long trains exceeded the platform length, sometimes stopping on viaducts, leading to passenger falls. This characteristic of a lack of safety management grew to typify the excursion in the eyes of the public, although failed to act as a deterrent.⁹⁰

Competition and a company's response played an important role in shaping usage, for example some contemporary analysts welcomed the competitive effects of steamboats on the new excursions in keeping railway excursion prices low.⁹¹ The price war in the summer of the Great Exhibition in 1851 demonstrated how far companies would go in bringing prices down to retain business. A closer look at one year, 1846, can reveal some findings about the effects on competition on working class excursion crowds.⁹² Both Liverpool and Manchester generated working class crowds when compared to the skilled artisan/middle class crowds of Birmingham, for example, but for different reasons. In Liverpool in 1846, the LNWR had a railway monopoly until the mid-1860s.⁹³ As a result, almost all the excursion trips from Liverpool that year were cheap steamer trips, many on Sundays, to nearby coastal destinations, with relatively small crowd sizes.⁹⁴ The LNWR would not offer Sunday trips (see page 100) so they had difficulty in competing against the steamer, and they did not seek to innovate by offering trips to inland locations. Steam excursion fares were low, the timings and destinations reflected the interests of working class people and it may well be that in Liverpool a high proportion of unskilled and low paid working classes featured in excursion crowds, compared to

⁸⁹ Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p. 322; *Leicester Chronicle*, 26 October 1844. St. Pancras was not opened until 1868.

⁹⁰ The dangerous size of excursion trains eventually led to a Board of Trade report with safety recommendations (1846 (698) (752) *Report of the Officers of the Railway Department to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade: with appendices I. & II. for the years 1844-45*).

⁹¹ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, 21 September 1844 (excerpts from this appeared in the *Manchester Times* of the same date); *Bradford Observer*, 18 October 1849. See also Chapter 4.

⁹² *Leeds Mercury*, 18 April 1846 - 10 October 1846; *York Herald*, 24 October 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 30 July 1846; *Hull Packet*, 22 May 1846 - 25 September 1846; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 May 1846 - 2 October 1846; *Manchester Times*, 30 May 1846 - 25 July 1846; *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1846 - 5 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 4 April 1846 - 12 September 1846; Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

⁹³ John R. Kellett, *Railways and Victorian Cities* (London, 1979), p.18.

⁹⁴ *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 May 1846 - 2 October 1846; *Manchester Times*, 6 June 1846.

other cities such as Reid's Birmingham data.⁹⁵ By contrast Manchester had a range of competing companies in 1846; including Salford, it had four terminus stations serving five lines.⁹⁶ Routes were available in all directions by 1846: south to the Midlands (on the Manchester & Birmingham line which opened up pleasure traffic to Alderley Edge) and to London on the London & North Western Railway, east to Sheffield on the Sheffield, Ashton under Lyne and Manchester Railway (opened 1845), to Leeds on the Manchester & Leeds Railway from 1840, with a branch to Halifax opening in 1844. A further link with Bolton opened in 1845. Opportunities were available for excursionists to travel north to Scotland using strategic links to Preston, Fleetwood, Ardrossan and Glasgow. Other resorts were reachable in 1846, for example Lytham and Blackpool via Fleetwood in 1846, the Isle of Man and the Lakes via steamers from Fleetwood.⁹⁷ In 1846 there was a large scale close-down of the factory workplace at Whitsun in Manchester, which offered a ready market for competing railway companies to offer affordable trips to working people in all directions during the week. This compensated for the lack of Sunday trains, thus the railway companies were dominant in innovating and shaping excursion crowds, assisted in some cases by excursion agents. Together these demonstrated a huge spectacle of mobility at Whitsun, around 400,000 people, with large numbers of the working classes free to take holiday using excursion trains over a lengthy period at this time.⁹⁸

The power of cooperative networking

The railway company was able to shape excursions by recognising the power of co-operative networking with other organisations, often encouraging large groups to participate. Individuals with responsibilities within railway companies, such as directors and managers, might have extensive links to voluntary organisations, generating a form of social capital which they could use to attract their business for leisure trips. To date the Midland Railway (and its predecessors) has featured often in the secondary literature about excursions, because of its relationship with Thomas Cook), however it is important to recognise that one of its predecessors,

⁹⁵ Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

⁹⁶ Kellett, *Railways and Victorian Cities*, p.18; Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History*, p. 308.

⁹⁷ Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914*, pp. 110-112, Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History*, pp. 308-11, 396-7.

⁹⁸ *Manchester Times*, 30 May 1846 - 25 July 1846; *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1846 - 5 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 6 June 1846.

the Midland Counties Railway, had run excursion trains as early as 1840, encouraged by Secretary John Fox Bell.⁹⁹ It pioneered mass excursions as soon as it opened, working with publishers Allen and Allen of Nottingham and Leicester, who produced a touring guide, a "*Railway Companion*" in 1840, a cooperative venture which recognised the value of support mechanisms for marketing purposes.¹⁰⁰ The railway company offered four large scale excursions between Leicester and Nottingham in the summer of 1840, and it was later claimed that these were 'the first trains of this character ever run on English railways'.¹⁰¹ The company clearly recognised the benefits of working with local organisations: the first trip on 20 July 1840 was organised by Nottingham Mechanics' Institute Committee, who took names before guaranteeing the sale of tickets to the railway company.¹⁰²

Directors and managers of most early railway companies inevitably had wide social and commercial contacts because of the nature of their role and activity in developing business opportunities, and those which took advantage of these in their networking would reap results in working with voluntary and church groups to generate excursion business.¹⁰³ There were however missed opportunities noted by reporters, as companies failed to see the potential demand, for example *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* in 1853 made suggestions for the expansion of excursions, calling for more coordination and cooperation between transport and accommodation providers.¹⁰⁴

Further examples of networking can be seen in the way that Henry Blackmore (Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway) and Mark Huish (London & North Western

⁹⁹ This line had opened up from Derby to Nottingham in June 1839, with a link to Leicester in May 1840 and on to Rugby in July 1840 (C.E. Stretton, *The History of the Midland Railway* (London, 1901), pp. 38-40.)

¹⁰⁰ *The Midland Counties' Railway Companion: With Topographical Descriptions of the Country Through Which the Line Passes and Time, Fare and Distance Tables Corrected to the 24th August Also, Complete Guides to the London and Birmingham, and Birmingham and Derby Junction Railways* (Nottingham, 1840). The Liverpool & Manchester Railway had generated guide books as soon as it opened, for example *A Guide to the Liverpool & Manchester Railway* (Liverpool, 1830).

¹⁰¹ Stretton, *The History of the Midland Railway*, p. 42.

¹⁰² A similar return trip ran a week later on 27 July. In order to reduce the amount of passenger duty payable, the fares were only charged one way (Susan Barton, 'The Mechanics Institutes: Pioneers of Leisure and Excursion Travel', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 67 (1993), 47-58). Recognising the economic benefits of these two trips, the Midland Counties Railway itself organised two further trips in August, for example from Leicester to Nottingham at 2s. return third class (Stretton, *The History of the Midland Railway*, pp. 42-44).

¹⁰³ T.L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies: Joint-stock Politics in Victorian England* (London, 1998), pp. 1-2, 173, 176.

¹⁰⁴ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, 1853, p. 279.

Railway) worked with a number of organisations to attract excursion business (see pages 90 and 97).

Sunday services

The railway company was unusually perceived as public property, an organisation which provided such an important new service that people perceived it as owned by all, despite being a private company. The railway employed and carried local people with a range of incomes, it transported their families and their goods, supported local traders and negotiated with local landowners, thus its role was very visible and the public felt they could demand of it features which suited their own interests. Divall has argued that the railway was perceived as a kind of social service, and thus its consumers felt they had the right to demand a better experience as well as excursion fares.¹⁰⁵ As a result the railway company suffered constraints which shaped its business strategies, especially in relation to Sunday services, shaped by the nature of its business structure. In contrast to other commercial companies, for example manufacturers, banks and insurance companies, it had to constantly react to public demands, as illustrated in a report by the Directors of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway in 1848.¹⁰⁶

Railways are often spoken of, and even openly claimed, as the property of the public; and unfortunately, have too often been dealt with as such, instead of being regarded in their true light – that of a private commercial enterprise, depending for its success upon the amount of benefit conferred on the public.

Alborn has suggested that joint-stock companies such as LNWR were effectively operating as 'political institutions...with some degree of accountability to a 'public' composed of shareholders, customers, and workers,' and needing an aura of legitimacy to survive.¹⁰⁷ Carruthers saw joint-stock companies as 'partisan battlegrounds, highly centralised and strategic locations from which political

¹⁰⁵ M. Freeman, 'The Railway as Cultural Metaphor', *Journal of Transport History*, 20 (1999), p.165; Colin Divall, 'What happens if we think about Railways as a kind of Consumption? Towards a new Historiography of Transport and Citizenship in Early-Twentieth-Century Britain', (2007), http://www.esocialsciences.com/articles/displayArticles.asp?Article_ID=1179 [accessed 16 August 2011].

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Salt, *Railway and Commercial Information* (London, 1850), p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ T.L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies: Joint-stock Politics in Victorian England* (London,1998), pp. 1-2.

leverage could be exerted and political support provided'.¹⁰⁸ The railway mania of the mid-1840s however dented the reputation of the joint stock company, and they were subject to a number of legislative changes in the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁰⁹ These widespread perceptions led to much public debate which influenced the way management responded to excursion traffic potential; for example, debates about Sunday services. The stance of the chairman and directors of a railway company on Sunday services was a key to the shaping of excursion crowds, as Sunday was usually the only day available for the masses to participate in leisure activity, ensuring or losing immense levels of business.¹¹⁰ Importantly the profit motive was constrained by wider cultural and social norms. The Sabbatarians were the most powerful opponent of a profitable business strategy, and this perspective was so pervasive that often the railway decision-maker also opposed Sunday travel. The impact of the Sabbatarian power group on railway companies and their excursions is discussed in the next chapter.

Key personalities

The most important factor driving and shaping the way that excursions developed up to 1860s appears to have been the presence in the company of key personalities, who used their energy and enthusiasm to develop a strategic approach to opportunities. They needed sufficient social capital to harness resources effectively – engines, carriages, workers and publicity – in the face of stiff competition for resources from within their companies, as Channon has argued in relation to the role of the general manager in moulding an effective team to work efficiently.¹¹¹ Without such drive excursions would have been extremely limited. It was only after 1850 that a few railway companies started to standardise their executive structure, headed by a general manager. Before then a variety of disciplines might take the lead, Gourvish has noted these could be 'traffic managers, engineers, secretaries, solicitors and occasionally committees of

¹⁰⁸ Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996), p.137.

¹⁰⁹ James Taylor, *Creating Capitalism: Joint Stock Enterprise in British Politics and Culture* (Woodbridge, 2006), p.145,

¹¹⁰ For example the Stockton & Darlington Railway was a Quaker railway and therefore did not run services on Sundays. (D. Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 6 (1963), pp. 96-97; Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p. 478.)

¹¹¹ Geoffrey Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940: Studies in Economic and Business History* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 42.

directors'.¹¹² These would have little overall executive responsibility, which had implications for entrepreneurial activity. They were responsible for co-ordinating a team of departmental specialists, a structure which lasted for the rest of the century.¹¹³ Some major companies were very slow in following the general manager approach, for example the Great Eastern, Great Western, London & South Western and London, Brighton & South Coast.¹¹⁴ As late as 1865 the Lancashire & Yorkshire lacked a general manager, although in their case other factors ensured the relative success of their excursions (see pages 90-97).¹¹⁵ Channon has noted that the departmental approach dominated until 1920, causing great difficulty for the company in assessing realistic net revenues for an operation, and in persuading departments to co-operate as a team.¹¹⁶ While it might be thought that a railway company would act with one voice, there were times when the directors, the managers and their staff might support or obstruct excursions in different ways, depending on their role, especially arising from the differences in executive responsibility already noted. Thus the fact that railways were internally differentiated led to problems with focusing on devising and promoting excursions, a key tool in ensuring that public needs were anticipated and met.

Individual directors and or managers could make a personal difference to strategic decision-making, depending on their power base, both within the company and within their community, and professional background, and importantly the use of their charisma and energy to augment their power. For example, George Hudson was equivocal about cheap fares. After he gained control of the North Midland Railway in 1842 excursion traffic was developed with Whit Monday trips from Leeds to Ambergate, connecting with boats for Matlock, and cheap weekend tickets to London.¹¹⁷ Hudson also saw the appeal of Sunday excursions for the working class as a moneymaking exercise, when other companies were deflected by the Sabbatarians.¹¹⁸ However he recognised in 1844 the need to judge these in the context of a particular line catchment area, whether a line was a 'pleasure line' or a

¹¹² T.R. Gourvish, 'A British Business Elite: The Chief Executive Managers of the Railway Industry, 1850-1922', *Business History Review*, 47 (1973), p. 292.

¹¹³ Geoffrey Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940: Studies in Economic and Business History* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 41-42.

¹¹⁴ Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940*, pp.41-42.

¹¹⁵ T.R. Gourvish, 'A British Business Elite: The Chief Executive Managers of the Railway Industry, 1850-1922', *Business History Review*, 47 (1973), 289-316.

¹¹⁶ Channon, *Railways in Britain and the United States, 1830-1940*, p.42.

¹¹⁷ D. Joy, *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: Vol VIII South and West Yorkshire (the Industrial West Riding)* (Newton Abbot, 1975), pp. 38-9; *Derby Mercury*, 24 May 1843.

¹¹⁸ D. Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 6 (1963), p. 96.

'business line'. He commented on the need to balance low fares, populous districts, travelling habits and shareholder dividends, and acknowledged that his railways could not compete with the cheap fares offered by steamboats.¹¹⁹ Hudson recognised the risks of low fares, on giving evidence to the Select Committee on Railway Acts Enactments in 1846 about his lines, he claimed that company income had been reduced as a result of offering day tickets at a fare and a half, extended over the weekend when issued on a Saturday.¹²⁰ At the same time he referred to his strategies for increasing traffic, for example by excursions, 'we carry 2,000 to York from Birmingham, 140 miles, for 3s 6d', but suggested that in general increased traffic on his lines was due to factors other than low fares. It appears that he was concerned at this time about being forced by the government to reduce fares, preferring to be selective about this, and about competition from competing lines. However his influence was powerful in showing others innovations in carrying excursion traffic.

There are other examples of managers, directors and chairmen playing a leading role in generating excursion traffic. Peter Clarke, Manager of the London & Brighton Railway, was pro-active in using press advertising in 1845 to encourage Sunday school and voluntary associations to take advantage of special trains at low fares to Brighton on weekdays, with a minimum of 400 passengers required.¹²¹ The Chairman of the London, Brighton & South Coast, Samuel Laing, was a supporter of cheap travel for the poor, presenting a clear economic and moral case in 1850 for the success of excursion trains. His was the first London company to use excursion traffic as a regular source of income.¹²² Laing argued that the poor needed a change of scene on Sundays and that the staffing involved for a train – four – was minimal to enable 600 people to visit Brighton. His arguments deliberately ignored the safety issues involved in running large trains with minimal staffing, and the need for staff at stations to cope with crowds (see Chapter 6). He stressed that people in towns should not be 'hermetically sealed' on a Sunday, and that the Scottish evidence following cessation of Sunday transport suggested that this had led to much drunkenness. He calculated the running costs of an excursion train at 2s a mile, but based this only on the non-fixed costs such as coke: thus his estimation of the

¹¹⁹ 1844 (318) *Fifth Report of the Select Committee on Railways*, paras. 4214, 4278-4280, 4298, 4343, 4347, 4381.

¹²⁰ 1846 (687) *Second Report from the Select Committee on Railway Acts Enactments*, paras.3319, 3328.

¹²¹ *The Standard*, 26 June 1845, 1 July 1845.

¹²² Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, pp.150, 248.

running costs per head at 1/25th penny a mile for 600 passengers, was not realistic. He also influenced thinking on excursion traffic publicly, by presenting data showing that while excursion traffic generated much income, in his view it did not displace income from regular traffic on other days, although it was not until LBSC offered reduced fares to the Exhibition that they were able to improve their financial results.¹²³

The following case studies demonstrate the role that key personalities played in developing excursions for the masses. When they left their respective companies, changes in policy led to a diminution of excursion traffic. This suggests that the success of excursion strategies depended on factors such as the structure of the company and the drive of an excursion 'champion', to harness resources.

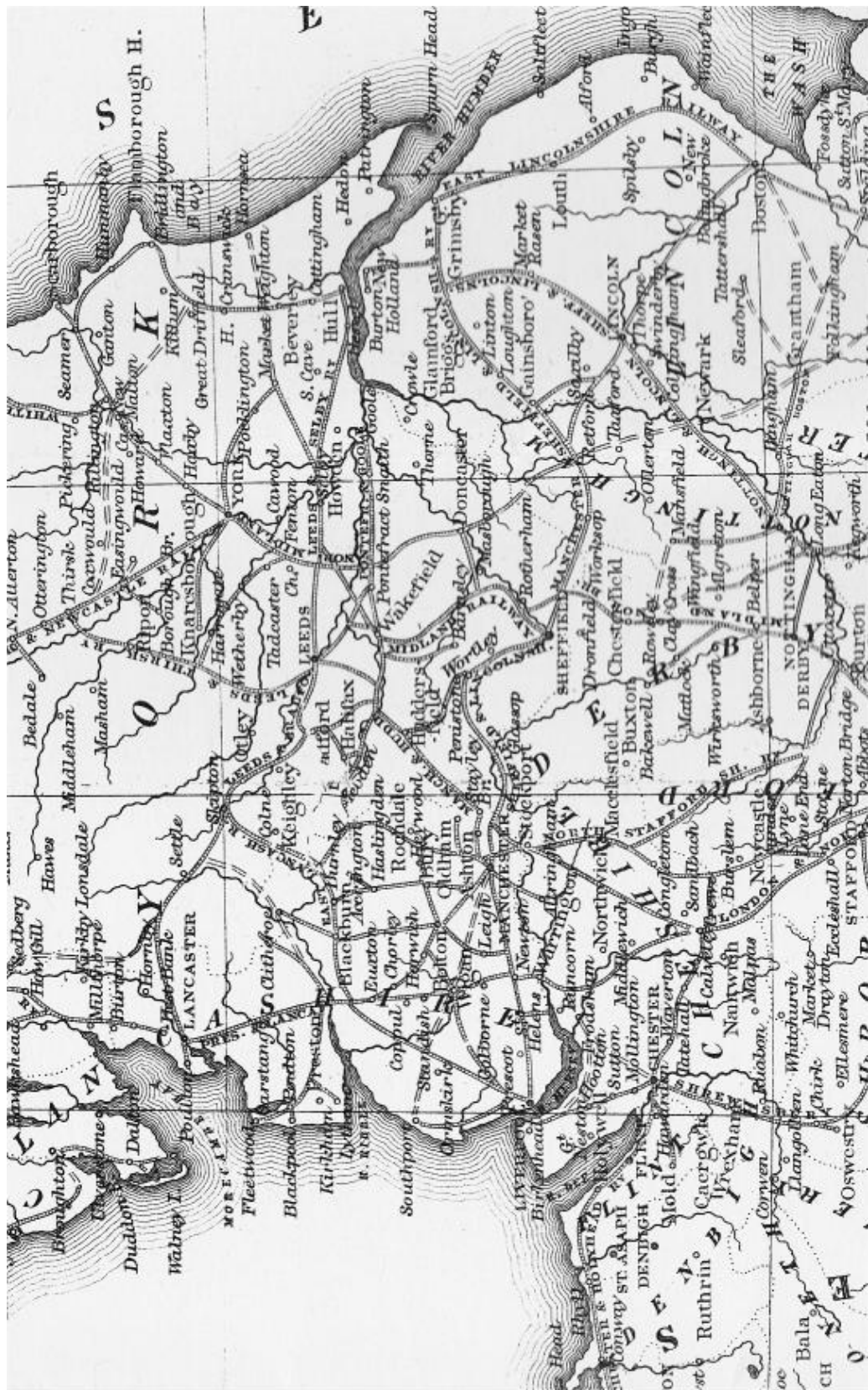
HENRY BLACKMORE AND THE LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY

The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (which had changed its name from the Manchester & Leeds in 1847) was a company which gained powerful benefits from connecting areas of high population. The North West regional rail network was more or less complete by 1850 and also functioned as part of the route between London and Scotland (the map overleaf shows the lines connecting regional towns and cities in 1851).¹²⁴ There had been a culture of operating excursion trains in the area, as one of its predecessors, the Preston & Wyre Railway, which had opened from Preston to Fleetwood in 1840, had offered cheap trips from an early stage, encouraged by the level of interest in road trips by cart to the coast.¹²⁵ With regular cheap Sunday trips from 1844, the Preston & Wyre stimulated the development of

¹²³ *Morning Post*, 26 July 1850. Laing reported that in 1852 the company had generated £17,750 from excursion traffic in 1851, of which around £15,000 related to the Great Exhibition; *Morning Post*, 24 January 1852.

¹²⁴ John K. Walton, *Lancashire: a Social History 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), p.116.

¹²⁵ With contemporary commentators even in 1849 describing the sight of 30-40 large carts leaving Preston for Lytham every Sunday, around 12 miles away, each laden with around 20 passengers (*Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1849.)



Section from Railways in England 1851

from Edward Churton, *The Rail Road Book of England* 1851 (London, 1851).

Fleetwood as a resort and led to steamers using the port for a service to Ardrossan, with onward travel by railway to Glasgow. Although short, this line was strategically important because it linked up with the sea and rail route to and from London. The opening of branches to Blackpool and Lytham in 1846 led to huge numbers of working class excursionists visiting these resorts.¹²⁶

The Lancashire & Yorkshire (LYR) developed a reputation for its prominent excursion traffic, especially as it was able to hold out against the Sabbatarians, although it eventually abandoned Sunday excursions in 1856.¹²⁷ Several directors had resigned over the issue and a number of strategies had been discussed to avoid excursion trains clashing with church services. At least one director suggested that the issue being a moral one, it should not be considered by the board alone but by all the shareholders.

It appears that the obvious success and profitability of the Sunday trips encouraged the board to continue these, especially as those directors most vehemently opposed had left.¹²⁸ Importantly however it had a passenger superintendent, Henry Blackmore, who played a crucial focusing role in encouraging and supporting excursions over a long period. Blackmore had become the LYR divisional passenger superintendent for Lancashire in 1850 under general manager Captain Laws, along with two others for Manchester and Yorkshire. When the Manchester passenger superintendent resigned in 1853, the company was divided into two, with Blackmore responsible for the Western division.¹²⁹ LYR amalgamated with the East Lancashire Railway in 1859, when an East Lancashire division with its own passenger superintendent was included. In 1871 divisional management was discontinued, and Blackmore became line superintendent.

Henry Blackmore was later described by his LNWR colleague Superintendent Neele as:

¹²⁶ Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914*, pp. 201-2; John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), p. 26. The Lancashire & Yorkshire took over the Preston & Wyre jointly with the London & North Western (LNWR) in 1849.

¹²⁷ Walton suggests that this was not as a result of Sabbatarianist pressure but more an economic move (John K. Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: A Social History* (Manchester, 1978), pp.18-19.)

¹²⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1849.

¹²⁹ T. Normington, *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway* (London, 1898), pp. 49, 53.


a regular attendant at the Clearing House and Excursion meetings, the very apostle of cheap trips for workpeople and Sunday School children, an excellent organiser, and a thoroughly blunt, straightforward fellow.¹³⁰

It appears that Blackmore's success owed much to his taking his responsibilities seriously, in working co-operatively with other Clearing House members, and importantly his ability to generate support from his colleagues, who held him in high regard. Blackmore's entrepreneurial strategy seems to have focused on supporting excursions in two ways. Firstly he used co-operative networking, working with voluntary societies and church groups to generate guaranteed business. He was the principal contact for a Manchester Mechanics' Institution trip to Blackpool from Manchester in September 1849, when in order to offer a price of 1s return for a 100 mile round trip (together with an option of a next day return for an extra shilling) he secured a guarantee from the mechanics' institute that they would sell 1,500 tickets. From the press description it appears that Blackmore organised the trip very efficiently and pro-actively, taking particular care to manage the crowds of operatives, in a very mixed group, as Athenaeum and mechanics' institute members would have been rather more middle class in status.¹³¹ Blackmore was pro-active in encouraging group excursions where he knew there was untapped demand, in 1855 he advertised that the Lancashire & Yorkshire were willing to make arrangements with Sunday school conductors for Whitsun trips around Manchester, along with similar advertisements from the LNWR, the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire, and East Lancashire.¹³² Some of Blackmore's advertisements invited business from any group involved in making arrangements for cheap trips at Whitsun, for example in 1851:

¹³⁰ G.P. Neele, *Railway Reminiscences* (London, 1904), p. 59; J. Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume Two* (Newton Abbott, 1970), p. 250. Blackmore retired in 1875.

¹³¹ *Manchester Times*, 12 September 1849.

¹³² *Manchester Times*, 21 April 1855. The East Lancashire Railway offered a free copy of a guide to attractions along the line as an incentive.



LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE
RAILWAY COMPANY.

BLACKBURN DISTRICT.

WHIT-WEEK.

THIS Company is prepared to make arrangements, on liberal terms, for **CHEAP TRIPS**, on **MONDAY, TUESDAY, and WEDNESDAY**, in **WHIT-WEEK**, from any part of the Blackburn Line, to **MANCHESTER, LIVERPOOL, WHALLEY, CLITHEROE, or CHATBURN.**

Parties are permitted to visit the beautiful Ruins of **Whalley Abbey, Clitheroe Castle, and Sawley Abbey**, every day (Sundays excepted).

Early application is requested to either **Mr. BLACKMORE**, Superintendent, Salford Station, Manchester; or to **Mr. YEO**, Darwen Street Station, Blackburn.

BY ORDER.

May 20th, 1851.

Blackburn Standard, 4 June 1851

The following 1855 advertisement was unusual at the time, in that Blackmore was by now adopting a very interesting advertising strategy, using very positive words to market the experience, such as ‘unlimited numbers’, ‘delightful Sea-bathing places, at very Low Fares...all in covered carriages’, an approach which railway companies normally tended to avoid in their very plain and factual advertisements. It demonstrates an early marketing approach, using particular words to whet the appetites of groups, but Blackmore might have been inspired by his company’s introduction of new carriages, affording accommodation for more passengers.¹³³

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.
CHEAP TRIPS TO
FLEETWOOD, BLACKPOOL, SOUTHPORT,
AND LYTHAM.

THE Public are respectfully informed that the above Company are prepared to make arrangements with **Manufacturers, Members of Institutions, Sunday and other School Conductors**, for the conveyance of unlimited numbers to any of the above delightful Sea-bathing places, at very **Low Fares**, all in covered carriages, application for which must be made to **Mr. Byrnes**, Superintendent, Preston, or to the undersigned,

H. BLACKMORE.
Superintendent's Office, Victoria Station,
Manchester, July 6th, 1855.

N.B.—Steamers at Fleetwood for **Furness Abbey, Morecambe Bay, &c., &c.**, at very **Low Charges.**

Preston Chronicle, 7 July 1855

It could also be argued that the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway employed their ‘brand’, by ensuring that their advertisements were always headed by their name, a practice which many other railways followed (for an extended discussion of the importance of branding to the excursion agent see page 111).

¹³³ *Manchester Guardian, 30 May 1855; Manchester Times, 2 June 1855.*

Some evidence for Blackmore's business policy is provided in a press report of an inquest in 1858, on a serious accident involving a very cheap Sunday School excursion train on the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Railway near Dudley, where he was called as an expert witness on the practice of excursion trains. He stated that his own company advertised that they were prepared to 'furnish trains' to Sunday schools, as opposed to advertising trains for Sunday schoolchildren. After providing the trains 'they never allowed their station masters to issue tickets indiscriminately to people who were not connected with Sunday Schools...' their practice was 'to issue the tickets in the mass to the persons who engaged the trains'.¹³⁴ This appears to be an effective way of distancing himself and his company from the work involved in selling individual tickets for such excursions, and a way to control passenger numbers too.

There is further evidence however in accident reports that Blackmore and his colleagues pushed for economies of scale in the running of LYR excursions, by minimising staffing and rolling stock costs. A goods train had collided with an excursion train of factory operatives returning to Wigan from Liverpool in 1857, and one of the reasons for this collision had been a delay at Kirkby.¹³⁵ There is some disparity between the press report of the accident and the inspector's report. The former suggested that only one man and a boy were collecting the tickets from the 1,100 passengers (which was the reason for the stop at Kirkby) and that the collision occurred after 20 minutes, when the ticket collecting was not 'half over'. The inspector reported that three guards as well as the station master and a boy were doing this, for a period of only five to eight minutes before the collision. Wherever the truth lay, it was this unwieldy process in passenger handling which contributed to the collision, which was mainly attributed to the goods train driver and guard ignoring signals, together with timing discrepancies. Simmons has suggested that the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway was generally an 'ill-run company', dominated by profits, and there is clear evidence that the company took advantage of its passengers.¹³⁶ In 1849, working class excursionists were herded into open cattle wagons without even a seat, with experiences recorded of a six hour journey

¹³⁴ *Manchester Times*, 2 October 1858.

¹³⁵ *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 July 1857; 1857 Session 2 (2288) *Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department upon certain Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the months of March, April, May, June, and July, 1857. (Part third.)*, pp. 32-34. Blackmore took care of his charges where possible, he personally visited the injured and arranged for money to be given on this occasion. The railway company's liability to its passengers extended as far as a duty to use care and diligence and avoid neglect (R. W. Kostal, *Law and English Railway Capitalism 1825-187* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 279-313.

¹³⁶ Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914*, p. 248.

out and five hours back, mainly caused by repair stoppages, standing all the way.¹³⁷ The same policies were still in practice in October 1859, when a government inspector objected to the line's passengers being left unprotected from the weather, and temporary roofs were fitted.¹³⁸

The enormous growth of excursion traffic on the line had led to the use of carriages withdrawn from regular traffic and station porters having to work as guards, and in 1853 the company was heavily criticised by a Select Committee for unsafe practices in respect of the running of its excursion trains.¹³⁹ This was partly due to the use of excursion agents. It was found that where an excursion agent was used to sell the tickets, such as Joseph Stanley, paying him 10% commission for example on gross receipts, the company could not predict the demand. Frequently these trains were insufficient for the number of passengers, leading to a dangerous overloading of engines, which were attempting to haul too many carriages or wagons. Where the excursion was commissioned directly from Blackmore by a large group for a specific amount of people, then these were slightly safer, in that the size could be predicted. By 1860 LYR Superintendent Normington suggested to the company that they dispense with excursion agents, to save money, and presumably to aid the prediction of demand, with safer loading. The directors decided to leave the 'guaranteed' excursions 'such as millhands, schools, institutions and day trips to Belle Vue', the easy business, to the district officers, and only use agents for the speculative ventures – the advertised excursions – with commission of 4% on net earnings up to £9,580 and 7½% above that.¹⁴⁰

Blackmore's second strategy was to develop rather more speculative excursions to seaside resorts, still using economies of scale, and following on from the success of Blackpool. His role in stimulating excursion traffic to Blackpool was recognised in 1860 when he was presented with some silver plate by the leading men of commerce there.¹⁴¹ In July 1855 LYR and the North Eastern Railway offered special

¹³⁷ *Manchester Times*, 30 June 1849.

¹³⁸ It was also reported that until 1872 each Whitsuntide 150-200 cattle wagons were 'fitted up' for use on their excursion trains. Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914*, p. 248; J. Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume One* (Newton Abbott, 1969), p. 258; *Manchester Times*, 30 June 1849.

¹³⁹ 1852-3 (246) *Third Report from the Select Committee on Railway and Canal Bills*,, *Appendix No 10*.

¹⁴⁰ J. Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume Two* (Newton Abbott, 1970), p. 250; Normington, *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 14 January 1860.

cheap return trips from Manchester to Scarborough, with further trips from Lancashire to Scarborough, Bridlington and Hull four years later.¹⁴²

The importance of key figures was apparent particularly in a climate of rapid change on the railways, where they could still shape strategy despite alternative views held by other railway companies. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway continued to support excursions throughout the 1860s, when other companies were no longer keen. By 1867, J. Smithells, their Traffic Manager, was reporting to the Royal Commission on Railways that they had a large amount of profitable excursion traffic over their lines, especially at Whitsun and they were keen to encourage it.¹⁴³ This traffic was short distance, around 10 miles, over the company's lines.¹⁴⁴ The company changed their policies however in the early 1870s, significantly around the time that Blackmore retired in 1875.¹⁴⁵ One of his colleagues has suggested that the discontinuation of divisional management caused a drop in the success of excursion traffic, with a move to centralisation in 1871, when enquiries from local groups seeking arrangements were diverted to the Manchester headquarters, delaying responses. The company also increased excursion fares, which led to passengers favouring other companies with cheaper fares.¹⁴⁶

Thus Blackmore's role in developing excursions for his company focused on business strategies which were sensitive to some social goals. It appears that his focus was a major factor in the company's success with this business. However the company's approach to exploiting economies of scale damaged Blackmore's reputation, as despite his providing a very popular facility for the masses, the very poor conditions under which they travelled generated a negative reputation for the company.

MARK HUISH AND THE LONDON & NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

A much larger company, the London & North Western (LNWR), 'the largest joint-stock concern of the day' when it was formed in 1846, was able to take

¹⁴² D. Joy, *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Vol VIII South and West Yorkshire (the Industrial West Riding)* (Newton Abbot, 1975), p. 108.

¹⁴³ 1867 (3844) *Royal Commission on Railways*, paras.13,187-13,194.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, paras.12, 998-13,001.

¹⁴⁵ John K. Walton, 'The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England', *The Economic History Review*, New Series 34 (1981), p. 253; Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume Two*, p. 250.

¹⁴⁶ Normington, *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway*, pp. 53, 62, 65, 70,138, 148.

advantage of its trunk route between London (Euston), Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester, with a monopoly of traffic from London to the North until 1850, to develop and promote excursions between those cities and the north of England.¹⁴⁷ Its predecessors, the Liverpool & Manchester, London & Birmingham and the Grand Junction, had focused generally on first class traffic between major cities in the 1840s, rather than third class, adopting a policy of high fares and less traffic, rather than reducing fares to maximise traffic.

LNWR excursion activity in the later 1840s and 1850s was very much shaped by Mark Huish in his role as manager between 1846 and 1858.¹⁴⁸ His entrepreneurial talents and energy, co-operating with the agent Henry Marcus as well as running his own excursions, generated excursion crowds along his routes throughout the period. In his earlier role as secretary and general manager of the Grand Junction Railway Mark Huish had benefited from wide ranging responsibilities, with flexibility in looking after the running of the railway, including negotiations with external people, a good preparation for developing the kind of entrepreneurial skills he would employ later. He had organised excursions to race meetings at Wolverhampton and Chester and to local assizes at Stafford, excursions for the Birmingham Mechanics' Institute in 1841, Birmingham Music Festival in 1843 and worked with the London & Birmingham and excursion agent Crisp on his trips to Paris in 1844 and 1845. Some of these trips were used to experiment with the effects of reducing fares on profits, and he eventually persuaded the directors to cut fares generally in 1844.¹⁴⁹

Huish appointed excursion agent Henry Marcus of Liverpool in 1846 to offer excursions to London (see also page 107-114).¹⁵⁰ In the late 1840s he extended LNWR excursions to the north of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and English spas and lakes.¹⁵¹ He was also keen to make use of the new Conway Tubular Bridge which

¹⁴⁷ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 108; T. Gourvish, 'Huish, Mark (1808–1867)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn., Jan 2008
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/46519> [accessed 20 Aug 2009]; R.A. Hough, *Six Great Railwaymen: Stephenson, Hudson, Denison, Huish, Stephen, Gresley* (London, 1955), p. 139.

¹⁴⁸ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, pp. 181, 188, 199, 254; T. Gourvish, 'Huish, Mark (1808–1867)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn., Jan 2008
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/46519> [accessed 20 Aug 2009]; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 276, 279, 294; 1867 (3844) *Royal Commission on Railways*, p. 509.

¹⁴⁹ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, pp. 36-7, 39, 57-58; *Manchester Guardian*, 24 July 1844.

¹⁵⁰ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 276.

¹⁵¹ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 121; *The Standard*, 15 June 1849.

opened in 1848, to expand options for excursion traffic from Manchester to North Wales.¹⁵²

These excursions were promoted heavily in the press, with Mark Huish often working with other railway companies and with Henry Marcus, providing evidence that he was keen on excursion traffic at this time. Simmons has offered conflicting views about LNWR and excursions; while originally he suggested that Huish favoured excursions, and this is supported by Gourvish, he later wrote that LNWR was against excursions, preferring 'special trains', but this does not appear to be reflected in his advertisements.¹⁵³ Sometimes trips were advertised as 'excursions', sometimes as 'cheap trips' or 'special trains'. The use of these terms was not consistent, although a special train originally meant a train hired for a personal purpose, it was also used later as a label for an excursion train at times, for no distinctive reason.¹⁵⁴

The use of Marcus as a contractor may have blurred the perspective of observers, as a press correspondent in 1851 perceived the London & North Western as having 'very little to do with excursion trains', apart from those organised by Marcus. He was referring to those which started from London, but at the same time the writer recognised that the northern railways were 'the theatre' of other successful and plentiful excursions organised by contractors.¹⁵⁵ An examination of press advertisements in 1853 reveals that LNWR did advertise excursions that year, to Harrogate and Scarborough for example from Liverpool, but they were advertised locally rather than in the London press, and continued to be couched in a plain and factual style, compared to the brasher and market-focused copy used by Marcus. It was only trips such as a fairly expensive ten-day return ticket to the Lakes from London (£2.10s) which were advertised in the metropolis, and day trips from London to Warwick Races at a cheaper 6s.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² *The Standard*, 18 April 1848 (from *Liverpool Albion*).

¹⁵³ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 293; T. Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 121; Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p. 150. Some activity was clearly aimed at the middle class however, judging by the fares for his Irish trips, but these were clearly labelled as an 'excursion', and demonstrated the ability of Huish to negotiate with other companies to allow through traffic (*The Standard*, 15 June 1849). Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 121.

¹⁵⁴ Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p. 462.

¹⁵⁵ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* (1853) p. 279.

¹⁵⁶ See for example *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 July 1853. On the other hand their excursion agent Henry Marcus was offering a large number of cheap trips on LNWR, for example between towns and cities such as London, Preston, Liverpool, Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bangor, Belfast and Dublin (see for example *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 14 May 1853).

Simmons has also suggested that Huish did not offer Sunday trips on the new railway, preferring weekend tickets (returning on Monday) for economic and religious reasons: a press report in 1849 refers to an LNWR resolution which demanded that its staff be allowed time for Sunday worship.¹⁵⁷ However a spot check on the *Manchester Times* reveals LNWR offering Whit Sunday excursions from Manchester to Liverpool in 1849 and 1850, albeit at 6am before divine service, and there may be many more (see illustration).¹⁵⁸ It may be that it was only at Whitsun that such traffic was permitted, but Huish was willing to exploit a potential for Sunday outings, while working within the constraints of leading opinion formers who pressurised companies to keep church service times free.¹⁵⁹

EXCURSION TRAINS.—LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.—An Excursion Train, consisting of first, second, and third-class Carriages, will LEAVE Victoria Station, Manchester, for Lime-street Station, Liverpool, on WHIT-SUNDAY next, at six a.m.
 An Excursion Train will also leave Victoria Station, for Liverpool, on the other morning of Whit-Week, at seven o'clock.
 The trains will return from Lime-street Station, each day, at 8.45 p.m.
 Passengers can come back on any day during the week by these trains, or on Sunday, June 3rd, at 1.30, 3, or 8.45 p.m.
 Fares, there and back:—First class, 6s.; second, 4s. 6d.; third, 3s.—Tickets can be had on any day during the ensuing or Whit-week, either at Victoria Station, Ordsal Lane, or the company's parcel office, Market-street.
 Manchester, May 19th, 1849. By Order.

*Advertisement in
Manchester Times,
19 May 1849*

An examination of Whitsun excursions offered from Manchester in 1850 gives some indication of the number of overlapping and competing options offered by companies, and varying policies on using agents.

¹⁵⁷ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 293; *Manchester Times*, 11 August 1849. The actual times of church service have proved difficult to ascertain, and this might involve attendance in the morning, afternoon and/or evening, dependant on denomination.

¹⁵⁸ *Manchester Times*, 19 May 1849, 11 May 1850.

¹⁵⁹ Sabbatarianism was not just linked to the Church of England, see also Chapter 4.

Table 1 Excursion destinations advertised from Manchester at Whitsun 1850¹⁶⁰

<i>Railway company</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Excursion agent</i>
London & North Western	Alderley, Stockport, Liverpool	Cheap trips	None
	Bangor London and Paris	Middle class trips**	Marcus Marcus and Crisp
Lancashire & Yorkshire	Liverpool, Chester, Rhyl, Blackpool, Fleetwood, Bangor*, the Menai Straits, Shrewsbury, Isle of Man*, Windermere, Carlisle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Belfast*, Furness Abbey.	Cheap trips	J.Stanley
	Hull, York, Scarborough, Edinburgh	Middle class trips**	Grant & Co. (‘special select’ excursion trains)
East Lancashire	Liverpool, Chester, Bangor*, Isle of Man*	Cheap trips	Richard Stanley
	Edinburgh	Middle class trip**	Thomas Cook
Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire	Hull, Grimsby	Cheap trips	None

* including steamer ** based on price and duration

The table demonstrates that trips to Liverpool were available on several lines, a level of competition which ensured a cheap fare, for example 3s for a third class return fare. It appears that trips tended to run from Manchester to Liverpool, as a Liverpool artisan complained in 1851 that there should be cheap Whit trips in the other direction.¹⁶¹ (In addition to this wide choice there were also a large number of excursion trains commissioned to carry thousands of Sunday school children to destinations from Manchester at Whitsun.)

Huish continued to promote excursions heavily, Gourvish notes that there was at least one large scale event each year over the company’s lines after the Great Exhibition, with the help of a Birmingham agent.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p.126; *Manchester Times*, 11 May 1850, 22 May 1850; *Manchester Guardian*, 11 May 1850, 18 May 1850.

¹⁶¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 June 1851.

¹⁶² Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p.186.

Table 2 *Excursions promoted by LNWR to large scale events 1852-8* ¹⁶³

1852	Duke of Wellington's funeral
1853	Dublin Industrial Exhibition (via Holyhead)
1854	Lady Godiva Show and Crystal Palace Exhibition
1855	Birmingham Music Festival
1856	London Cattle Show
1857	Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition
1858	Birmingham Music Festival

Huish seems to have been keen to maximise opportunities and reinforce the LNWR 'brand' in meeting the expectations of the public for regular opportunities to travel long distances. By the late 1850s his strategy was to offer excursions at Easter and Whitsun, to London, the Midlands and the North, helped by co-ordinating arrangements with the Railway Clearing House.¹⁶⁴ There were problems however, as a competitive price war developed between LNWR and its allies with the Great Northern in 1856, on routes between London, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, Manchester and Liverpool, leading to extraordinary and ruinous excursion fares of 5s. Once again many thousands of ordinary people were able to take advantage of the competition effect to enhance their mobility, as in the year of the Great Exhibition, 1851. GNR chairman, Denison said 'If this goes on, I should think that the great majority of my West Riding constituents, washed and unwashed, will visit London in the course of the next week'. In the summer of 1858 the two companies signed an agreement to co-operate on the Liverpool and Manchester fares. However Huish's management style led to his falling out of favour with the Board and he resigned later that year.¹⁶⁵

Huish's influence lingered for a year or two, as even in 1859 William Cawkwell, the new manager of the LNWR, was still advertising 'tourist tickets' at 'cheap fares'

¹⁶³ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p.186.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.188.

¹⁶⁵ In February 1856 Huish introduced new fast trains at much lower fares from London to Yorkshire and Lincolnshire on behalf of the Confederacy. Charles H. Grinling, *The History of the Great Northern Railway, 1845-1895* (London, 1898), pp. 157-9, 164-5, 181-2; *Morning Chronicle*, 25 February 1858; *Blackburn Standard*, 10 February 1858.

for July to a wide range of destinations in England, Ireland and Scotland, although these were by ordinary trains.¹⁶⁶

The new chairman from 1861, Richard Moon, disapproved of excursions and agents, contending that it took business away from ordinary traffic, and was 'a practical loss'. In fact Gourvish has suggested that Moon had already been reviewing excursion traffic as early as 1858. Although another director Oscar Leslie Stephen took an active interest in excursion traffic around 1862, LNWR Superintendent Neele was told by Moon to use his efforts at Clearing House meetings to 'curtail cheap excursions as far as possible'.¹⁶⁷ By 1867 the new LNWR manager Cawkwell was taking a moral stance, claiming that excursion trains induced people to take long journeys which they could not afford and that 'the labouring classes spend a great deal of money in that way sometimes which would be better spent at home'.¹⁶⁸ He also felt that excursion business between Manchester and London took away from normal income, as people waited for the excursion service to take place. In his view excursion trains were not profitable, because of a high level of empty running, apart from day trips from Lancashire and Yorkshire to the seaside.¹⁶⁹ Typically however there appears to be no clear evidence of economic benefits or losses.

Thus Huish's role was crucial in developing excursion business in the 1840s and 1850s, both directly and through the use of an agent. As in the case of Blackmore, after the loss of his energy and drive in this respect, excursion traffic on the LNWR declined.

Senior managers and board members of railway companies in the early period therefore adopted a mixture of responsive and speculative strategies to developing excursion traffic, but factors such as the culture of tripping before the railways came to their areas also played a part. Evidence on the profitability of these ventures is rare, and often decisions for and against seem to have been made at the highest levels of the company on the basis of stubborn views, perceptions of profitability and concerns about the displacement of regular traffic, rather than hard evidence. However the effect on users of factors such as comfort did not seem to be an issue in developing excursions, as trips seem to be popular despite appalling conditions.

¹⁶⁶ *The Standard*, 2 July 1859.

¹⁶⁷ Neele, *Railway Reminiscences*, pp. 140-1.

¹⁶⁸ 1867 (3844) *Royal Commission on Railways*, p. 509-10.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 509-10.

Excursion agents

Although the railway companies and their staff played a major role in providing excursions for the masses in the 1840s and 1850s, a further group of entrepreneurial players was particularly significant - the independent excursion agents – who also sought to use excursions for profit, but in doing so achieved social goals which enhanced their reputation in the eyes of the public. Many excursion agents built up their powerful reputations during the 1840s and 1850s as ‘friends of the masses’, especially in the north of England, using a mixture of entrepreneurial, marketing and organisational skills to extend the mobility of huge crowds of ordinary working people. They recognised what we now describe as the power of branding to enhance the reputation of their offering and some also developed guidebooks and other mechanisms as marketing devices to support their excursionists.

Thomas Cook is the most well known of these excursion agents today, almost always appearing as the ‘first’ excursion agent, ‘the originator’ and representing the sector, with his first tour in 1841.¹⁷⁰ However he served a middle class market, albeit lower middle class and provincial, and there were others equally as important at the time, especially in the north of England, with Richard Stanley, Joseph Stanley, Joseph Crisp, John Cuttle and John Calverley, Joseph Dearden and Henry Marcus. In the Midlands for example were John Houlston (Houlston’s Cheap Excursions) of Wellington and Oakengates and Mr Booth of Walsall.¹⁷¹ Many of these were well known to the masses and well used by them. There is also early evidence of entrepreneurs offering steamboat excursions, rather than steamboat companies, for example in 1844 George Knight, host of the Wellington Tavern, hired the steam-packet *Lord Yarborough*, offering the public a trip from Portsmouth to Netley Abbey in Southampton and to view the Southampton Regatta, charging 5s including dinner and refreshments.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Simmons and Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s*, p. 150.

¹⁷¹ John K. Walton, ‘Thomas Cook: Image and Reality’, in Richard Butler and Roslyn Russell, *Giants of Tourism* (Cambridge, Ma., 2010), p. 87. For examples of agent advertisements and comments see *York Herald*, 24 September 1853; *Berrow’s Worcester Journal*, 3 June 1854, 12 July 1856; *Wrexham and Denbigh Weekly Advertiser*, 15 July 1854. A Mr. Jones was organising cheap trips from Liverpool in 1857 (*Liverpool Mercury*, 5 June 1857). See also notes about Crisp on page 106.

¹⁷² *Hampshire Advertiser*, 10 August 1844. Infrastructure to support steamboat trips rapidly grew, for example on the Thames it was noted in 1842 ‘every village between Richmond and Gravesend has now its steam-boat pier for the accommodation of passengers’. (*Morning Post*, 27 July 1842).

Looking at advertisements in 1846 in six towns, as an example, a variety of railway excursion agents were in evidence.¹⁷³ As well as those operating in the Birmingham study (Jones & Co., Gardener and Sansum Day & Sutton), there were agents such as Henry Marcus advertising trips from Preston, Liverpool and Manchester, Richard Stanley advertising from Manchester, and Thomas Cook and one other unnamed agent from Leeds. Hull was the only town lacking an advertisement by an excursion agent. Thus Thomas Cook was only one of a number of agents operating at the time, and he was operating at a rather more expensive end of the market, with first and second class tickets only, although his fares reflected the longer distances travelled, and in 1846 were comparable to those of Stanley and of Marcus for longer trips.

There were certain key factors which helped these excursion agents to develop their traffic, and these were discussed by a journalist writing in 1853. Firstly the availability of a single gauge across most of the country made long distance travel possible without necessarily changing trains, secondly the Railway Clearing House system enabled the through booking of passengers across multiple lines, and thirdly the low fares charged were appealing to the masses.¹⁷⁴

The business practices of agent excursions are rarely described, sometimes agents appeared to buy up tickets in blocks on ordinary trains, offering discounted sales, more often there were special excursion trains. At the same time there were issues about economic risk, level of commission and guarantees to the railway companies. Agents were frequently commercial people who had other roles in the trade of a town, although some appeared to operate on a full-time basis. Certainly the ability of a major railway company to give exclusive rights to an agent made sure that such agents were major players in this arena.¹⁷⁵

Thomas Cook owed his initial success to his ability to make use of a network of temperance colleagues to forge strong relationships with key people in railway companies. His background as a travelling village missionary in his youth would

¹⁷³ *Leeds Mercury*, 18 April 1846 -10 October 1846; *York Herald*, 24 October 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 30 July 1846; *Hull Packet*, 22 May 1846 - 25 September 1846; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 May 1846 - 2 October 1846; *Manchester Times*, 30 May 1846 - 25 July 1846; *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1846 - 5 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 4 April 1846 - 12 September 1846; Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

¹⁷⁴ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*, (1853) p.279.

¹⁷⁵ In Wakefield in 1846 Mr Hepworth (printer) and Mr Oldfield (accountant) sold excursion tickets to Scarborough (*Bradford Observer*, 16 July 1846); Mr Sharples, proprietor of the Star Concert Room in Bolton, demonstrated entrepreneurial talents in organising a special train in 1845 to bring customers from Manchester for a day out and a concert (*Manchester Guardian*, 24 September 1845); John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), p. 26.

also have helped him to engage with a range of people at short notice, sometimes using preaching techniques to generate business.¹⁷⁶ It can be argued however that Cook and his tours were irrelevant to day excursions for the masses, as they were aimed at different classes, taking costs and timings into account for example.¹⁷⁷

The dominant focus on Cook concealed the role of the Midland Counties Railway and the later Midland Railway in organising early excursions, as they were doing this at the same time as Cook.¹⁷⁸ The Midland Counties 'monster' Mechanics' Institute excursions in 1840 are likely to have influenced him to embark upon his enterprise. Furthermore John Fox Bell of the Midland Counties organised other trips, for example from Preston and Liverpool to London, and excursions to Ambergate to connect with boats for Matlock in June 1842, from Leicester to Rugby and from Nottingham to Derby, and onwards to Liverpool in 1843. At this time, when a railway company was not pro-active and there was no commercial agent involved, people interested in organising a trip in the early 1840s had to collect names and negotiate with the railway company, without the support of an entrepreneur, and this involved an element of risk to the individual(s) concerned.¹⁷⁹

Cook has predominated in the literature because he was perceived to be the first in initiating tours as an individual on a commercial basis in 1845 and subsequently his enterprise developed into a large scale operation which remains today. The presence of a substantial archive has also generated much work on his importance. However there were other commercial agents operating at the same time, for example, Joseph Crisp, but because they were relatively short-lived, they have been long forgotten.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ A diary of a Ripon tradesman in 1851 records how Cook arrived there in 1851 to announce his Great Exhibition excursions and when he found no-one at a pre-arranged meeting, he went outside and stood on an ale barrel to drum up interest. (J. Denton (ed.), *The Thirlway Journal: A Record of Life in Early Victorian Ripon* (Ripon, [1997]))

¹⁷⁷ Jack Simmons, 'Railways, Hotels and Tourism in Great Britain 1839-1914', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19 (1984) p. 209; Walton, 'Thomas Cook: Image and Reality', pp. 81-91.

¹⁷⁸ See for example the Midland Railway three day excursion from Leicester to Scarborough at 7s second class return fare in 1845 (*Leicester Chronicle*, 30 August 1845).

¹⁷⁹ Jack Simmons, 'Thomas Cook of Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 47 (1973), p. 23; for example when a group of 'ordinary persons' booked a train to take 600 people from Brighthouse to Liverpool, and only 100 went as the weather was poor (*Leeds Mercury*, 18 April 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 16 April 1846).

¹⁸⁰ *Derby Mercury*, 26 August 1840; Jack Simmons, 'Thomas Cook of Leicester', pp. 22-23. Joseph Crisp of Liverpool was offering trips in the early 1840s, advertising in a variety of cities around the country and pioneering excursions to the Continent from 1845. (Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 295-6; Simmons, 'Thomas Cook of Leicester', p. 26; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 April 1844; *Liverpool Mercury*, 11 July 1845). However his advertisements for cheap trips from Preston to London in 1844 appeared to be aimed at the middle classes,

Cook's role in the invention of excursions is significant but as one of the first creators of 'tours', rather than cheap trips, pioneering for example annual tours from South Wales through Birmingham to the north of England and to Edinburgh. The implication however was that such tours were very much a middle class experience, because of the costs and time needed away from work. Simmons has highlighted how the terminology used – excursion, trip and tour – might be seen to elevate through the class structure, rising in time spent and class of person involved. His view was that Cook was different from other excursion agents at the time, as he designed tours as a rounded experience and combined tickets. Certainly organisational ability was key to the success of such ventures, and when added to Cook's networking skills and temperance connections, this led to commercial success which would not have occurred without these elements. His importance in mass mobility is that along with other agents he was able to demonstrate to railway companies how such business could work, although in some cases companies were already running excursions themselves.

The following case study will show how excursion agents could be quite powerful people in their own right as a result of their popularity with a wide range of local people.

Henry Marcus

To many people in the North West of England, excursion agent Henry R. Marcus was known as the 'father of cheap trips' and 'the originator of excursion trains' from the mid 1840s.¹⁸¹ Marcus's market for excursionists tended to be the working classes, in contrast to Cook's middle class tourists, and his trips were often directly promoted as such: 'a grand treat for the working classes', with cheap fares and flexibility in the time away from home.¹⁸² He focused on excursions to London with the London & North Western Railway, appointed as their agent from the railway's

and it was certainly Simmons' view that this was the case (*Preston Chronicle*, 4 May 1844). Crisp's advertisements for London trips in the *Liverpool Mercury* and *Preston Chronicle* in May 1843 included accommodation, despite Simmons' claims that Cook added accommodation to his tours from 1845 but not Crisp. These advertisements also refer to trips the previous year (1842) thus Crisp started early, working with a Mr Healey and contracting with the Grand Junction Railway and the London & Birmingham (Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country, 1830-1914*, p. 134; *Liverpool Mercury*, 19 May 1843; *Preston Chronicle*, 27 May 1843)

¹⁸¹ *North Wales Chronicle*, 31 December 1853; *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 March 1869, 24 March 1869; the comments mention 25 years service, but LNWR was only formed in 1846 so he may have been working with the Grand Junction previously.

¹⁸² *Preston Chronicle*, 11 May 1850.

formation in 1846 and working on his own from home in Liverpool, receiving a percentage from both LNWR and other lines.¹⁸³ By April 1849 he was offering extension trips to Paris and Brussels and supported his excursions with 'a book of instructions' which included information on 'places of amusement' and 'respectable hotels and lodging houses'.¹⁸⁴ Marcus had a prominent reputation, he was referred to as 'the grand mover of the whole...general benefactor of the community at large'.¹⁸⁵ He tried to keep his prices low, for example from Liverpool to Birmingham return 7s and to London return 18s in 1852.¹⁸⁶ His role in achieving social goals was recognised publicly in 1853, when a committee of gentlemen was organised to promote a testimonial for Marcus, highlighting the value of his work in the Liverpool and Manchester area.¹⁸⁷

Marcus's excursion traffic was immense, at the later stages of the 1850 season he was advertising excursions from London to Edinburgh and Glasgow, Dublin, Liverpool and Manchester, Bangor and Conway, Chester and Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Carlisle, Penrith, Windermere, Kendal, Lancaster, Preston and Huddersfield.¹⁸⁸ For the five year period 1846-1850 it was reported that he had carried over 100,000 on his trips, and by the end of 1851 this figure was 200,000.¹⁸⁹ LNWR Superintendent George Neele remembered Marcus for his push and energy in promoting excursions to the Great Exhibition in 1851, carrying 90,000 passengers in 145 special excursion trains to that event.¹⁹⁰ (By comparison Thomas Cook announced that he had carried 15,246 travellers during the 1850 season.¹⁹¹) Marcus's traffic to London kept its momentum and in 1853 the line was reported to have carried 75 excursion trains to and from London, with 29,181 passengers.¹⁹²

¹⁸³ G.P. Neele, *Railway Reminiscences* (London, 1904), p. 30; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 276.

¹⁸⁴ *North Wales Chronicle*, 24 April 1849, 21 December 1850. Although at 34s third class return between London and Paris these were not particularly cheap.

¹⁸⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 29 May 1852.

¹⁸⁶ *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 August 1852. Most cheap trip fares were very reasonably priced, these worked out at around ½ pence a mile, compared to the LNWR average in Jan-Jun 1851 of .92 pence a mile for third class travel (Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 123). Liverpool dock labourers earned 18s-24s, and shipwrights 20s weekly in 1850 (*Morning Chronicle*, 17 June 1850, 9 September 1850), thus a return trip to London around this time would have cost the equivalent of a week's wage for a male worker.

¹⁸⁷ *Manchester Times*, 24 December 1853.

¹⁸⁸ *The Era*, 29 September 1850.

¹⁸⁹ *North Wales Chronicle*, 21 December 1850; *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 November 1851.

¹⁹⁰ Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management*, p. 187.

¹⁹¹ *Bradford Observer*, 5 December 1850.

¹⁹² *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 March 1854.

Marcus also promoted trips to the Duke of Wellington's funeral in 1852 and the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857.¹⁹³

Marcus demonstrated an efficient business strategy in his use of resources. For example he made good use of rolling stock - a press correspondent in 1853 describes Marcus's trips as being available both ways, which meant that both Londoners and northern people could benefit and trains would carry a 'double series of pleasure seekers - the one going out and the other returning home'.¹⁹⁴ At the same time he had a reputation for taking care of his charges, a correspondent to the *Liverpool Mercury* refers to an unfortunate occasion on returning from a day trip to Windermere, when at their return to Liverpool Edge Hill station, staff ordered excursionists out of the train far away from the platform in the darkness, and Marcus was at hand with a lantern to show them the way to the steps. The press in 1850 reported on his 'indefatigable exertions in catering for the amusement of his passengers'.¹⁹⁵ Marcus recognised the importance of his business reputation in the media and was keen to defend any criticisms about adverse experiences in the press about his trips, with a careful and detailed refutation of the points raised.¹⁹⁶ Occasional press reports of county court cases against Mr Marcus, brought about by an excursion passenger with a ticketing problem, shed some light on his business. For example it was reported that he received a sum of money at the end of the season from the company for publicising excursions, selling tickets and 'conducting trains'. The use of handbills was clearly important in publicising the trips, known as 'Marcus's Cheap Excursions'.¹⁹⁷

A press record of a meeting in 1869 organised by his supporters, following the cessation of his contract with the LNWR, sheds an interesting light on the commercial arrangements between Marcus and the company in the 1840s and 1850s, and demonstrates that although he was a clever businessman, his negotiation skills in the matter of his personal income seem to have been sadly lacking.¹⁹⁸ It records that he carried nearly a million and a half excursion passengers during his time as agent, a substantial number. It appears that arrangements

¹⁹³ *Liverpool Mercury*, 10 March 1854; *Manchester Times*, 6 November 1852; *Morning Post*, 28 May 1857.

¹⁹⁴ *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* (1853), p. 279.

¹⁹⁵ *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 August 1864; *North Wales Chronicle*, 21 December 1850.

¹⁹⁶ For example see item in *Liverpool Mercury*, 11 May 1847. The original letter cannot be traced in this paper.

¹⁹⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 11 October 1851, 22 November 1851; *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 November 1851, 9 June 1859, 9 November 1859; *Birmingham Daily Post*, 22 September 1858; *North Wales Chronicle*, 31 May 1862.

¹⁹⁸ *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 March 1869.

between 1843 and 1850 were satisfactory, but then opportunities arising from the Great Exhibition of 1851 changed the temperature of his dealings with the company. A competitor had offered to take over the business for 12½% (of gross receipts), but in response Marcus suggested to Mark Huish that he would carry out the work for a 'discretionary remuneration' together with reimbursement of his printing and advertising costs. He was appointed sole agent for the Exhibition by LNWR and the Lancashire & Yorkshire, and clubs and societies were requested to contact him with commissions on their lines.¹⁹⁹ Unfortunately LNWR took advantage of this and although they took £65,000 worth of business in the four months of the Exhibition, they apparently only paid Marcus £300 for his services. The following year they attempted to recruit him directly to their staff to conduct excursions, which he refused. Subsequently he carried on as an independent excursion agent under the direction of Huish, bearing the printing and advertising costs himself, conducting the excursion traffic and receiving 16% of the gross receipts. Unfortunately Huish left the company in 1858, although it was reported that he provided a very positive commendation for Marcus to the new manager, William Cawkwell, and so Marcus was able to continue on the same basis until 1862, when the second Exhibition was staged. Marcus appears to have suffered by not negotiating a clear agreement with the company over the terms of their business at this time. A misunderstanding led to him receiving a minimal amount of commission for the traffic which he generated to the event, and it was reported that his subsequent profits were very low, around £50 a year, especially when set against the costs of producing and distribution handbills, around £1,500 a year, because the most profitable business had been taken away from him. This might well reflect the changing policy of LNWR with regard to excursionists at that time. Cawkwell took issue with the way Marcus described the excursions in his advertising, placing emphasis on 'Marcus's Excursion Trains' rather than the LNWR, and even complained that Marcus was able to get printing done more cheaply than the company, using his accomplished business skills. When LNWR dispensed with his services in 1869 there was a huge groundswell of public support against the shabby way he had been treated.²⁰⁰ LNWR Superintendent Neele reflected the official stance in his reminiscences, recording that 'it was with regret that at last we had to part company with excursion agent Mr Marcus, but some little want of discretion on his part brought about the final dissolution of the arrangement.' Sadly Marcus was eventually killed by a train in

¹⁹⁹ The National Archives, London, RAIL 1080/99, *Railway Clearing House Superintendents' Meetings Minutes*, 20 February 1851.

²⁰⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 March 1869, 24 March 1869.

1875, when due to his deafness he failed to heed a warning as he was walking along a line at Rainford.²⁰¹

It appears that Marcus trod an uneasy path, in that the more he met the needs of his market for excursions, with a tremendous impact on the mobility of the working classes, this appeared to threaten his relationship with his major business partner, LNWR. In the end however they had the controlling power to destroy that relationship.

BRANDING

Studies of the historical development of marketing techniques have tended to focus on consumer goods rather than services, identifying the inception of 'modern marketing' from the period around 1870-80.²⁰² However writers have periodicised the development of advertising as a commercial weapon during the first half of the nineteenth century, expanding greatly after the repeal of newspaper duties in the 1850s, with a growth of demand-led advertising seeking to differentiate between suppliers. Importantly this also enabled provincial entrepreneurs to reach their markets through the provincial press. There was a developing role for middleman after the mid-nineteenth century, and this can be seen to apply to services in the case of the excursion agents. A growing working-class consumer market was appearing at this time, who could be reached by advertisements, which were typically viewed as 'rational', seeking to inform rather than appealing to sentiment.²⁰³

The term 'brand' was referred to as a kind of trade mark in the 1850s and 1860s, its use as a marketing technique would not be recognised until much later in the century as an important tool.²⁰⁴ Koehn suggests in looking at product branding that it was not developed until the late nineteenth century, but certainly the current research suggests that the branding of services by excursion agents such as

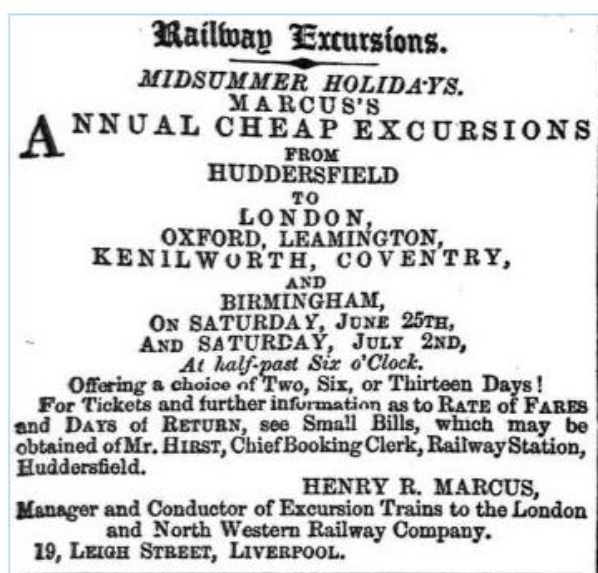
²⁰¹ G.P. Neele, *Railway Reminiscences* (London, 1904), pp.140-1; *Manchester Times*, 11 December 1875 (Marcus was recorded as Managing Director of the Victoria Colliery Company of Rainford at the time of his death).

²⁰² For example George S. Low and Ronald A. Fullerton, 'Brands, Brand Management, and the Brand Manager System: A Critical-Historical Evaluation', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (1994), 173-190; Robert Fitzgerald, 'Marketing and Distribution', in Jonathan Zeitlin and Geoffrey Jones (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Business History* (Oxford, 2008), p. 397.

²⁰³ Mark Thomas, 'The Service Sector', in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain: Volume 2: Economic Maturity, 1860–1939* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 114; Roy Church, 'Advertising Consumer Goods in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Reinterpretations', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 53 (2000), 621-645.

²⁰⁴ OED.

Marcus was well developed in the 1850s.²⁰⁵ Mira Wilkins has argued for the importance of a unique branded name to an advertiser in persuading the consumer to choose a product or service rather than those of a competitor.²⁰⁶ She suggests that such a name supports the permanence of a business, by persuading the customer of the knowledge and experience built up by the brand, and embodying its resultant reputation. In Henry Marcus we see an excellent early example of a businessman who used branding to great effect, using his own name as a symbol of quality, value and range in meeting the needs of the public for mass mobility. This was ultimately to contribute to his downfall. The following example of one of his advertisements shows how his own brand sometimes took prominence, something which annoyed the railway company but he recognised as of great value in successfully promoting his services.²⁰⁷



Advertisement in Huddersfield Chronicle, 25 June 1853

He used terms such as 'Midsummer Holidays' and 'Annual Cheap Excursions' to consolidate the idea of a regular outing at a particular time, with his own brand name prominent. In addition he offered flexibility – both of destination and length of stay. Wernick has argued that products (including services) are inseparable from 'language (including visual language) and from patterns of use that are overlaid with ceremonial and cultural significance' and Cook and Marcus both used their own

²⁰⁵ Nancy F. Koehn, 'Henry Heinz and Brand Creation in the Late Nineteenth Century: Making Markets for Processed Food', *Business History Review* 73 (1999), 349-393; Nancy F. Koehn, *Brand New: How Entrepreneurs earned Consumers' Trust from Wedgwood to Dell* (Harvard, 2001).

²⁰⁶ Mira Wilkins, 'The Neglected Intangible Asset: The Influence of the Trade Mark on the Rise of the Modern Corporation', *Business History*, 34 (1992) p. 67.

²⁰⁷ *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 25 June 1853.

names as a brand with great success, linking the product to its provider. In using his brand consistently Marcus was developing reliance and trust between himself and the customer as actors in the marketing relationship, although it could not be said that he was actively developing or marketing his brand in the modern sense.²⁰⁸ Koehn notes how modern brand management involves the importance of all a company's decisions pro-actively focusing on supporting its brand identity: the meaning of the name of the company in the minds of its customers, developing loyalty.²⁰⁹ This might include for example decisions on product development, pricing and distribution as well as advertising copy.

Wernick suggests that 'naming a product both facilitates the pinning of a borrowed meaning to it, and fixes its association as a sign', and the excursion agents' names were employed so that their trips could be identified and signalled for their quality. He portrayed the naming of a product after its 'manufacturer' as a way of personalising 'that shadowy presence', promoting the idea of a dominant paternalist or father figure, something for which Marcus had a particular reputation, as described earlier.²¹⁰ As Armstrong et al have said, 'brands represent customers' perceptions and feelings about a product and its performance – everything that the product or service *means* to consumers.' A good brand helps a business to develop a continuous relationship with its public and a powerful brand represents 'a profitable set of loyal customers.'²¹¹ The deliberate use of promotional media, style of wording and price served to position the brands of excursion agents, signalling their offerings and enabling the consumer to make easy judgements about perceived value and service in relation to other suppliers in the marketplace. Marcus clearly decided to position his brand for the mass market, using advertising copy – 'a grand treat for the working classes' – and price, for example, whereas entrepreneurs such as Cook and Crisp focused on middle class targets, with longer, more expensive tours. Excursion agents cleverly developed what was later defined as branding with great success, encouraging their customers to ask for their excursions by name and running annual trips at certain times, in contrast to the railway companies at this time. The latter, possibly because of their monopolistic activity in relation to many destinations, did not feel the need to highlight the selling

²⁰⁸ Jagdish Sheth and Atul Parvatiyar, 'The Evolution of Relationship Marketing', *International Business Review*, 4 (1995) 397-418.

²⁰⁹ Nancy F. Koehn, *Brand New: How Entrepreneurs earned Consumers' Trust from Wedgwood to Dell* (Harvard, 2001), p.116.

²¹⁰ A. Wernick, *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology, and Symbolic Expression* (London, 1991), pp. 52-55.

²¹¹ G.M. Armstrong, P. Kotler, M. Harker and R. Brennan, *Marketing: an Introduction* (Harlow, 2009), pp. 243-4.

points of their new technology and the facilities offered by this mode of transport in their advertisements, apart from occasionally promising 'covered carriages' and emphasising the low cost. It appears that they realised that the organisation of a cheap and fast means of transporting large numbers of ordinary people would be sufficient to generate demand and this was true. By contrast steamer excursions were more innovative in the same period, using a modern approach to advertising, describing their vessels as 'splendid' and 'powerful and fast-sailing... excellently fitted up for the accommodation of passengers', to attract custom.²¹²

Excursion agents operated throughout the nineteenth century, in 1894 it was reported that 'the ubiquitous excursion agent has once more networked the whole Kingdom'.²¹³ During the study period they had little direct power – they were at the mercy of decisions made by railway companies. However their public relations strategies rewarded them with a tremendous amount of influence, because of public perceptions about their social role and the manner in which their activity matched the values prevailing at the time. In the case of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, when Superintendent Normington complained that the excursion agent for Yorkshire was not doing as well as expected and persuaded the directors to give him notice, this agent was able to use his influence with the directors to be reinstated.²¹⁴ Excursion agents therefore used this influence to harness the railway systems to the interests of mass leisure mobility, while at the same time developing successful business for themselves.

Voluntary and church groups

The final group examined in this chapter is that of voluntary societies and church groups, such as Sunday Schools, mechanics' institutes, temperance societies and friendly societies. Their 'respectable' image meant that their activities were supported by the middle classes as an 'appropriate' way to enhance working class leisure opportunities. These played a large part by developing a demand for the new railway excursions in the early period, providing ready-made groups with a desire to

²¹² *Liverpool Mercury*, 26 June 1846.

²¹³ *Weekly Standard*, 24 March 1894. In addition to Thomas Cook, excursion agents included for example Mr Bower with the Midland Railway in the 1870s (*Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 April 1870, 28 June 1870), Mr Caygill with the Great Northern Railway in the 1870s and 1880s, eventually declared bankrupt (*Leeds Mercury*, 12 April 1879; *Leicester Chronicle*, 12 May 1883; *The Standard*, 6 November 1884), Mr Coles with the Great Western Railway in the 1870s (*Leeds Mercury*, 27 May 1872).

²¹⁴ J. Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume Two* (Newton Abbott, 1970), p. 250; T. Normington, *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway* (London, 1898), p. 67.

travel and an ability to negotiate as a body with the railway companies. In this respect they were also able to represent the users in this activity, unusual in the history of nineteenth century mobilities. The *Manchester Guardian* in 1844 commented that it was demand by religious groups that was shaping cheap fares on excursions, rather than the railway companies themselves.²¹⁵ The motivations of voluntary societies could be varied, they could be treating the poor, seeking to expand their membership or promoting their reputation as a moral force. They might even be hoping to raise funds, and there are many examples in the provincial press in the 1850s of voluntary societies offering trips for fund-raising purposes, encouraging excursionists to take part in a trip to benefit a good cause with any profits.²¹⁶ Simmons states that ‘the specially arranged day excursion was almost entirely the creation of the passenger-carrying railways’, and differentiates between a steamer excursion where people made their own arrangements and the rail trip which involved agents or groups.²¹⁷ However steamboats could be hired for day trips by groups, in the same way that trains could be commissioned, for example *The Nile*, which travelled between Lancaster, Fleetwood and Blackpool, advertised this function in 1844.²¹⁸ This aspect is not specifically covered by Armstrong in his review of the steamboat and popular tourism, but he hints at it in his reference to fund-raising trips for charity.²¹⁹

This chapter will now examine the role of Sunday Schools and voluntary societies based in local areas, such as mechanics’ institutes, temperance societies and friendly societies, in shaping the development of the railway excursion, by using their influence to generate a desire for travel. For the first time it will further reveal, using the example of a London parish, how excursions for working men and the poor were organised on a very local scale by an enterprising philanthropist. All these groups were able to use their influence to develop mass leisure mobility,

²¹⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 27 July 1844.

²¹⁶ For examples see Preston Working Men’s Committee Free Library Fund (*Preston Chronicle*, 19 July 1856), Peel Park Committee (*Bradford Observer*, 4 September 1856), LNWR Literary Institution (*Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 16 July 1858).

²¹⁷ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 295.

²¹⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 10 August 1844.

²¹⁹ J. Armstrong and D. M. Williams, ‘The Steamboat and Popular Tourism’, *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), p. 67. Fund-raising steamer trips appear from time to time in the press in the 1840s and 1850, for example a trip on the iron steamer *Brilliant* from Newcastle to Middlesbrough in July 1853, in aid of Newcastle Infirmary (*York Herald*, 30 July 1853). There is further evidence of groups participating on steamers in the early 1840s, but it is not clear if they commissioned the vessel for their own use, for example the Oddfellows from Middlesbrough, Stockton and Sunderland travelled on a steamer excursion to Whitby in 1842, and the same year a group from Stockton Mechanics’ Institute took a steamer excursion to Tynemouth (*The Yorkshireman*, 21 May 1842, 28 May 1842).

demonstrating Walton's point that early railway excursions responded to demand as well as stimulating it, as large groups were prepared to travel.²²⁰

Sunday Schools

Sunday schools were an important feature of the childhood experience in the mid-nineteenth century, with 38 per cent of the English population under fifteen enrolled in a Sunday School in 1851, although in the large industrial towns and cities fewer than 1 in 10 people attended church or chapel at the time.²²¹ Edward Baines of Leeds calculated in 1843 that there were 158,528 Sunday School scholars in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, 218,412 in Lancashire and 30,591 in Cheshire and Derbyshire, a total of 408,531, thus around 1 in 5 of the population in these areas attended Sunday School, the majority linked to Dissenting congregations. He also calculated that there were only around 210,592 scholars at day schools in these manufacturing areas, only half of the above total.²²² There are some variations however. Baines calculated the number of Sunday School scholars and Day School scholars in some of the major manufacturing towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1843. This indicates that while Sunday School scholars in Manchester, Leeds and Preston vastly outnumbered those at Day Schools at that time, this was not the case in Liverpool, possibly because of the role of Catholicism in the religious profile of the area, augmented by Irish immigration, although Preston also had a large Catholic population.²²³

²²⁰ John K. Walton, 'The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England' *Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), p. 249; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 273, 292-3. There may have been a gap after the early 1840s, as an LSWR report in March 1851 implies that excursions were a new experiment in 1850 (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 1 March 1851).

²²¹ D.A. Reid, 'Playing and Praying', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.III 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 797; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 63.

²²² E. Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts; with Statistical Returns of the Means of Education and Religious Instruction in the Manufacturing Districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire* (London, 1843), pp. 22-6, 71.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-6, 71.

Table 3 Sunday school and day school scholars in selected manufacturing districts, 1843

	<i>No. of Sunday school scholars</i>	<i>No. of Day School scholars</i>
Manchester and Salford	51,079	28,553
Liverpool	21,016	35,546
Preston	9,391	5,805
Leeds	26,411	15,155

Data from Edward Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts; with Statistical Returns of the Means of Education and Religious Instruction in the Manufacturing Districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire* (London, 1843).

Snell confirmed that most of the children and young people attending Sunday Schools were working class, and Reid has also pointed out that in some areas such as Manchester, the Sunday School was the club for the young people of the working classes.²²⁴

It is clear that the numbers of Sunday School scholars and the desires of their leaders and reformers for rational recreation led to a new group of entrepreneurial middle class Sunday school managers, who were able to use their organisational muscle to develop and promote excursions to a huge market. These were a major component of railway excursions in the 1840s and 1850s, shaping the profile of and demand for trips, often advertised as a way of removing large groups of children away into the country from potential scenes of debauchery, such as race weeks. Such trips were commissioned as early as 1831.²²⁵

In Manchester there had been a tradition of Sunday schools using canal packets to Dunham with a capacity of up to 300 passengers, before the railway made mass travel possible. An infrastructure developed around the demand for holiday railway excursions, for example the '*Half-Holiday Hand-Book*' was published in Manchester in 1846, to help Sunday Schools to plan their excursions in the area.²²⁶ During the Whitsun holiday of that year around 14,000 Sunday School children took part in railway excursions on the Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester Railway out of Manchester, with a further 3,000 children left disappointed as the line was at

²²⁴ K. D. M. Snell, 'The Sunday-School Movement in England and Wales: Child Labour, Denominational Control and Working-Class Culture', *Past & Present*, 164 (1999), p. 163; D.A. Reid, 'Playing and Praying', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.III 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 797.

²²⁵ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p.272.

²²⁶ P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control*, p.46.

capacity. There were also 12,000 scholars on trips the Manchester & Leeds line, with their carriages all attached to regular trains, for safety reasons.²²⁷

The press colluded with the Sunday school movement in emphasising the railway excursion as an element of rational recreation. Reporters and commentators had a tendency to wax lyrically over the sight of Sunday school excursionists, conceptualising it as a kind of pastoral idyll:

The managers and teachers of Sunday schools gather together the whole of their interesting flock, and, having engaged a train for the purpose, take the children into the country, where they are feasted in the open air with buns, cakes, and milk and where they are permitted to enjoy themselves in almost any manner that their fancies dictate. The traveller on the railway will frequently see some beautiful wooded field dotted over with numberless parties of these delighted Sunday School children.²²⁸

However correspondence in the Leeds press in 1848 with evidence from Manchester highlights the variation in the nature of Sunday School trips: whereas some trips would be purely for Sunday School scholars, controlled by their superintendents, others included the general population, and led to the scholars being subject to the occasionally rather more disreputable behaviour of a large mixed crowd.²²⁹ Trips could sometimes turn out to be dangerous affairs and often enormous crowds were generated: a scholars' trip in September, to York in 54 carriages, by the St George's and St Philip's Schools in Leeds, emphasised that children under six had to be accompanied by a parent or friend.²³⁰

Sunday school excursion organisers shaped the outing as a crowd performance, an expression of power relations in the context of moral reform. When children were involved it was usual for them to be organised as a formal procession both at their own locality and at the destination, to highlight their good behaviour to the watching public. This carried a significant meaning: Morris has pointed out that 'the right to walk the streets of a community was a fundamental way of claiming attention and

²²⁷ *Manchester Times*, 6 June 1846.

²²⁸ *Manchester Times*, 6 June 1846.

²²⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, 26 August 1848, 9 September 1848.

²³⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, 12 September 1846. In comparison to modern times in Britain, children as young as six or seven would take part in these activities with minimal supervision, but then as a result of the 1842 Factories Act children as young as eight could be legally employed in textile mills at the time (C. Cook, *Britain in the Nineteenth Century 1815-1914* (London, 1999), p. 119).

claiming to be a legitimate part of the community'.²³¹ Processions were of course a traditional activity for children on festival days even before the development of excursions, and could not be said to be an 'invented tradition' brought in by the railway excursion, but excursions meant that these processions would take place in areas far away from their normal living spaces.²³² A further tool which Sunday School organisers used to shape their excursion crowds was encouraging the singing of hymns in travel space, linking performance with moral reform. For example the Leeds Sunday School trip to Scarborough in August 1846 took around 2,540 people including 870 scholars in two massive trains of 54 and 40 carriages, and leaders took the opportunity to use the railway as a moral motif by encouraging the children to sing *The Spiritual Railway*, a rousing and somewhat threatening hymn composed a few years earlier by the American poet J. Adams in response to railway development (see overleaf). It suggests that only those who kept the faith would be on the upward lane to Heaven, those who did not repent would be on the downward line to Hell.²³³ Thus the railway line is a metaphor for a good life, but that only

²³¹ R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: the Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990), p. 197.

²³² For example a Sunday School trip from Hull to Beverley in July 1849 (*Yorkshire Gazette*, 28 July 1849). See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983).

²³³ See also A. and E. Jordan, *Away for the Day: the Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991), p. 15. An early use of the railway as a moral theme appeared in Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Celestial Railroad", published in 1843, and based on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and this theme was then used in many American poems and songs in the nineteenth century. Usually only the upline stanzas appear in print - the downline stanzas about hell appear rather less often, as a parody (Norm Cohen and David Cohen (eds.), *Long Steel Rail: the Railroad in American Folksong* (2nd edn., Urbana, 2000.) p. 607.

THE SPIRITUAL RAILWAY²³⁴

THE UPWARD LINE

The line to Heaven by Christ is made,
With Heavenly truth the rails are laid;
From Earth to Heaven the line extends.
And in eternal life it ends.

Repentance is the station, then,
Where passengers are taken in --
No fee for them is there to pay,
For Jesus is himself the way.

God's word is the first Engineer,
It points the way to Heaven to clear,
Through tunnels dark and dreary there,
It does the way to glory steer.

God's love the fire, His grace the steam,
Which drives the engine and the train,
All you who would to glory ride,
Must come to Christ in him abide.

In first, second and third class --
Repentance, faith and holiness --
You must the way to glory gain,
Or you with Christ can never reign.

Come, the poor sinner, now's the time,
At any station on the line,
If you'll repent, turn from sin,
The train will stop and take you in.

If all those trains should by you pass,
And you are found in neither class, --
When neither truth, or fire or steam,
Can make you willing to get in.

Then sinners you will weep at last,
When Heaven is lost, and time is past --
The Heavenly train are all gone by,
The sinner must forever die.

When all these trains at Heaven arrive,
With all who did in Christ abide,
How sweet their voices, how they sing,
And praise their great eternal King.

The King eternal on his throne,
Announces that the trains are come,
There robes are ready to put on,
And Jesus says the words "well done".

THE DOWN LINE

There is a Railway downward laid,
Which God the Father never made,
But it was laid when Adam fell --
What numbers it conveys to Hell.

Six thousand years are nearly gone,
Since first this Railway was begun.
The road is wide, and smooth, and gay,
And there are stations on the way.

Appollyon is the Engineer,
His coat of arms his servants wear.
The steam is breath, which drives the train,
The fire is sin, which feeds the flame.

The first, second, and third class,
Are full of passengers within,
The steam is up, the flag unfurled,
How quick they move to yonder world.

Her fortunes smiles, and pleasures gay,
As every station on the way,
Her dress and fashion you may find,
Of every sort and every kind.

The cheerful glass is drunk with glee,
And cards and music you may see --
Both old and young, rich and poor.
All standing near the station door.

Appollyon begins to boast,
Of numbers great -- a mighty host,
Who are inclined their place to take.
To travel downward to the lake.

Oh! think on this while yet you may,
And stop your speed without delay.
Oh! leave the train that leads to Hell,
If you wish Christ would ever dwell

²³⁴ Cohen and Cohen, *Long Steel Rail: the Railroad in American Folksong*, p. 607.

people who have repented would be able embark on the train, leaving sinners at the station. Thus the technology of the railway system is drawn into the performance of the outing, with the aim of reinforcing the outlook and behaviour of schoolchildren.

Voluntary societies

Many voluntary societies were developing in the 1830s and 1840s, and their diversity in manufacturing towns and villages was highlighted by Edward Baines Jr of Leeds, in 1843.²³⁵ Voluntary societies were inextricably linked with the growth of urban culture and with leading middle class members of elites, reacting to economic problems in society and responding to concerns about radicalism. Such organisations were predominately based in urban settings, because these offered a more viable catchment area, and the number of such societies indicated a level of stability in a community. These organisations populated a natural market and driver for excursions, being large groups with urges for sociability and the development of experiences further afield. Morris has suggested for example that in Leeds the voluntary societies showed greater powers 'to innovate and experiment' than the state, and they certainly provided the driver for railway companies to experiment in using their technological systems for this new kind of traffic.²³⁶ Leading opinion formers were keen to encourage trips for members as a form of rational recreation, and at the same time members were keen to share ideas and break down barriers with other communities.²³⁷

There are examples of excursion organising societies in smaller places: Samuel Robinson, who founded a Village Library in Dukinfield to the east of Manchester, was a keen supporter of mechanics' institutes, although concerns about growing Chartist influence led him to urge workers to co-operate with employers while distributing knowledge. At a meeting in 1839 Robinson toasted:

our village Travellers and much pleasure to them in their excursions;
and may the easy and rapid and economic communication effected by
railroads and steamboats induce many to employ their holidays in

²³⁵ Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, p. 62.

²³⁶ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: the Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850*, p. 197.

²³⁷ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851*, pp. 121-122, 274.

forming an acquaintance with the beautiful scenes of nature, and curious monuments of art which abound in their native land.²³⁸

It seems that like other elite members, Robinson was keen to use the power of the voluntary association to facilitate the excursion as a cleansing agent, giving workers an opportunity to take advantage of the beauties of the sights. At the same time Robinson was concerned about the power struggle between workers and their employers, thus he saw excursions as a kind of 'sweetener' to take away any thoughts of class conflict and demands for workers' rights.

Morris highlights how most voluntary associations were designed to underline the power and identity of a leading urban elite and the majority of these organisations were dominated by the middle class.²³⁹ An example of their ability to wield a certain amount of power occurred in 1846, when the Whit Monday Procession Committee at Blackburn were unhappy about the lack of hospitality support from local traders for benefit societies' Whit celebrations, and threatened to commission an excursion trip elsewhere the following year.²⁴⁰ There are also many examples of middle class leaders taking great pleasure in negotiating access with the aristocracy to country houses for excursion visits by well-behaved voluntary societies.²⁴¹

In some locations it appears that the lack of a powerful middle class able to organise societies to commission trips led to others taking this role, such as in Hull in 1846, despite the presence of a Mechanics Institute and a Literary and Philosophical Society.²⁴² All but two of the excursions from Hull that year were organised directly by railway or steamer companies. Hull's middle class was generally small and voluntary societies did not appear to play the powerful role in arranging excursions as in Leeds and Birmingham for example.²⁴³

While most voluntary organisations had middle class origins, friendly societies were often essentially working class organisations, for example those in Manchester. These were attacked by the middle classes for a number of reasons, not least because they met in public houses. Many organised railway excursions, for example the Oddfellows and Foresters from Leeds to Scarborough in 1846, with a

²³⁸ M. Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851* (Manchester, 1957), p. 122. Presumably distributing knowledge refers to the shared learning of useful subjects and access to newspapers.

²³⁹ R.J. Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: an Analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), 95-118.

²⁴⁰ *Blackburn Standard*, 12 August 1846.

²⁴¹ See Chapter 7 on the destination.

²⁴² *Hull Packet*, 22 May 1846 - 25 September 1846.

²⁴³ Victor Bailey, *'This Rash Act': Suicide Across the Life Cycle in the Victorian City* (Stanford, 1998), pp. 105-115

further trip by the Ancient Order of Foresters from Leeds to Hull in September 1846.²⁴⁴ Similarly a large crowd, 4,000 Foresters, went on a pleasure trip in a 'monster train' of 97 carriages from Wakefield to Hull in 1844.²⁴⁵

Evidence from two types of social organisation, the mechanics' institutes and the temperance societies, will serve to illustrate the major role they played in shaping the profile of railway excursions in the 1840s and 1850s.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

Concerns about rapidly growing towns in the 1820s had led to instability and worries about working class unrest, and philanthropists were keen to fund mechanics' institutes as a possible solution to these problems. The laudable aim was to attract 'the humbler classes of a town or locality' to their membership and to 'instruct members in the science, literature and the arts'.²⁴⁶ The first mechanics' institutes were founded in London and Glasgow in 1823 and in Birmingham in 1825, and by 1849 there were 204 mechanics' institutes in England and Wales.²⁴⁷

There has been much debate about the profile of their members. It is not clear how far they ever attracted ordinary workers, as cultural hegemony led to mechanics' institutes being dominated by the well-meaning middle classes.²⁴⁸ Tylecote suggests that most Manchester Mechanics' Institution members were 'clerks, warehousemen, small tradesmen and shopkeepers rather than manual workers'.²⁴⁹ Royle argued that contemporary evidence demonstrated that mechanics' Institutes in Manchester, Liverpool and London were beyond the reach of ordinary people and that in Lancashire, Cheshire and the Midlands, few MIs were attended by 'considerable numbers' of the working classes.²⁵⁰ He makes it clear however that there is conflicting and confusing evidence on the lack of participation generally by the working classes and problems of definition with regards to the class status of members, thus he concludes that many attracted 'young men of low social,

²⁴⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, 15 September 1846; John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), p. 28.

²⁴⁵ *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 18 August 1844.

²⁴⁶ E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', *Historical Journal*, 14 (1971) pp. 307-8.

²⁴⁷ E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997* (2nd edn., London, 1997), p. 253; E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', p. 305; Birmingham Mechanics' Institute only lasted for twenty years, closing as a result of financial pressures and lack of support (E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', p. 318.)

²⁴⁸ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851*, pp. 68-9.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-5.

²⁵⁰ E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', p. 305.

but relatively secure economic, status'.²⁵¹ However in Yorkshire the position appears to be different, as Ludlow and Jones, writing in 1867, suggested that although many of the working classes had deserted MIs by the 1860s, this was not the case in that county. They draw on Blake, arguing in 1859 that the Yorkshire MIs did support the educational needs of working men, and were in many cases managed by them. Similarly Godwin reported that Bradford MI had 1203 members in 1858 of which 65% were 'mechanics, labourers and warehousemen'.²⁵² The reasons for a lack of working class participation in other areas appear to include the absence of attractive topics and exclusion of party politics, the need for more basic education, and power play by the middle classes to control the working class.²⁵³

Excursions by mechanics' institutes developed with several objectives, depending on the interests of their major players. They welcomed the potential for using the new railways, seeing these as an enlightened way of taking workers out into the countryside, or to introducing them to cultural experiences. In general Tylecote suggests that these excursions by members and their friends and families served the broader purposes of the MI and in doing so spread the word about their role.²⁵⁴ Excursions were encouraged, not only in the interests of rational recreation, but also 'to enlarge the sphere of observation, to improve the intellect, and to nurture all the kindly and benevolent principles of our nature'.²⁵⁵ Banker Benjamin Heywood of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution (founded in 1824) suggested that trips might be made to 'places of geological, botanical or zoological interest' or to see railway sectional cuttings, coal mines or salt mines.²⁵⁶ He also encouraged members to visit Blackpool, where he had a house and strong associations, not for light amusement, but to view the setting sun over the sea and reverere 'the Almighty power which formed the universe and which controls the elements', however this did

²⁵¹ E. Royle, 'Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', 305-321.

²⁵² J. M. Ludlow and L. Jones, *Progress of the Working Class, 1832-1867* (1867, reprint, Clifton, 1973), pp. 169-170; Barnett Blake, 'The Mechanics Institutes of Yorkshire', *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*, (1859), 335-340; John V Godwin, 'The Bradford Mechanics Institute', *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*, (1859), 340-345.

²⁵³ Leicester Mechanics' Institute passed a motion in 1841 'if any opponent of Mechanics' Institutes...charges them with being hot beds of political discussion, and schools for Socialism...would take the trouble to attend a few of the meetings at the Leicester Mechanics' Institute...we believe his mouth would be for ever stopped in this strain' (*Leicester Chronicle*, 22 May 1841).

²⁵⁴ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851*, p. 274.

²⁵⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1840.

²⁵⁶ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851*, p. 173.

not occur until 1849.²⁵⁷ Some MIs aimed to help members experience fresher air in rural areas, at the same time it was reported in the 1840s that Huddersfield MI excursions were organised to take young people away from 'feudal orgies' at feasts.²⁵⁸ Loftier purposes included the aim of breaking down barriers between communities.²⁵⁹ It was partly the idea of developing relationships with other mechanics' institutes that drove excursions, and in some case encouraging other localities to establish their own institute. There were few mechanics' institutes in agricultural districts, but there is evidence that excursions were used as a form of missionary activity, to expand mechanics' institute coverage from urban to rural areas, for example the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes (one of whose founders was Edward Baines of Leeds) organised a trip to Flamborough Head in June 1849, and encouraged the Flamborough people to open an institute.²⁶⁰

Heywood was inspired by the new steamships and had proposed the idea of a mechanics' institute excursion as early as 1827, but this did not happen until Manchester Mechanics' Institution organised an excursion to Liverpool in 1833, and then there were no more until the late 1840s.²⁶¹ Leading speakers hailed the power of steam in creating such mass excursions for the group.²⁶² As early as 1838 York Mechanics' Institute organised an aquatic excursion on the new steam packet *Ebor* along the Ouse from York to Naburn, with 220 participants, aiming at a combination of relaxation and amusement with the 'intellectual and moral culture of the mind'.

It was the mechanics' institute trips in 1840 which caught the eye of the press and the public, with their huge crowds looking like a 'moving street, the houses of which were filled with human beings', and inspired others to follow suit.²⁶³ Newcastle & Carlisle Railway allowed reduced travel for mechanics' institutes excursionists to the Polytechnic Exhibition in Newcastle, in May 1840, with return tickets at 10s each (a reduction of 6s) so this was possibly not for the ordinary working man.²⁶⁴

Simmons suggests that the first monster train ran in August 1840 from Leeds Mechanics' Institute to Hull, with 1,250 passengers in 40 carriages, the first of many

²⁵⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1840; Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851*, pp.120-1,173-174; John K. Walton, 'The Social Development of Blackpool, 1788-1914' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1974), p. 23.

²⁵⁸ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851*, pp. 220-1
²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7, 274; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 9 June 1849; J.R. Lowerson, 'Baines, Sir Edward (1800–1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004)

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/1090>, accessed 18 Sept 2009]

²⁶¹ It is not clear whether this was at a special reduced rate.

²⁶² *York Herald*, 16 June 1838.

²⁶³ *The Yorkshireman*, 29 August 1840.

²⁶⁴ Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development*, p. 372.

monsters, with Nottingham and Leicester following suit.²⁶⁵ There are many examples of annual excursions by mechanics' institute groups in the 1840s and 1850s. Leeds Mechanics' Institute organised trips to Wentworth Park (1846), Castle Howard (1847), Bolton Abbey (1848), Chatsworth (1849), the Lakes (1850), Whitby (1852), Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition (1857).²⁶⁶ Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute organised trips to York (1844 and 1846), to Liverpool (1845) and became ambitious in 1847, journeying to Fleetwood, Blackpool, the Lakes and the Isle of Man. Clearly this had become a tourist activity rather than a visit to another mechanics' institute.²⁶⁷

The Leeds Mechanics Institute July 1846 excursion was typically segregated by class. This was a large and powerful middle class led group, with 1,500 members and subscribers, with Edward Baines playing a significant role. The Institute was able to use its influence to organise a trip to Wentworth Park, home of Earl Fitzwilliam.²⁶⁸ Originally proposed for a Monday, a potential clash with another Midland trip from Derby to Leeds led to a change of date to a Wednesday. Three classes were offered - the cheapest at 2s - and 1,800 tickets sold. In the event the first train set off with 36 carriages, mainly third class, and then half an hour later the second train set off with first and second class of 31 carriages, each accompanied by a band and flags. This seems to indicate a determination to separate the middle classes from the hoi polloi, of which there might be presumed to be roughly equal numbers judging by the number of carriages, but neither date seems suitable for the ordinary operative. Furthermore it was not always just the working classes who travelled third class, there is evidence that the middle classes were not averse to saving money by doing so, despite the basic level of amenity.²⁶⁹

As leading press figures were member of the urban elites who were often involved in MIs, there were usually lengthy and detailed newspaper accounts of MI trips.²⁷⁰ Their advertisements also had a tendency to be verbose, for example in 1848 Bradford MI took a lengthy and presumably expensive advertisement in the

²⁶⁵ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 272.

²⁶⁶ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851*, p. 78; *Leeds Mercury*, 20 July 1850.

²⁶⁷ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851*, pp. 220-1.

²⁶⁸ This trip unfortunately resulted in a fatal accident: *Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1846, 4 July 1846, 18 July 1846, 20 July 1846, 8 August 1846; *Northern Star*, 25 July 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 16 July 1846.

²⁶⁹ The trip was offered to members, subscribers and friends including neighbouring Mechanics Institutes at Bingley, Bramley, Kirkstall and Garforth, and they were later joined by 200 members of Bradford MI. See for example 1844 (318) *Fifth Report from the Select Committee on Railways*, para. 4381.

²⁷⁰ See for example *York Herald*, 16 June 1838; *Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1840.

Bradford Observer, to announce their trip to the newly opened station at Skipton, including a third class fare of 1s 6d. A penny guide was available and a free lecture on the area to be visited, and the advertisement included a paragraph from Wordsworth about the beauties of the area. On this occasion the trip was unsuccessful, only 348 tickets were sold, with twelve third class carriages out of a total of sixteen, and the press commentator assumed a loss by the MI.²⁷¹ The lack of success seems to be due to a number of reasons. The weather was unsettled, with rain on the day, there were worries about large crowds as a result of Chartist militancy in Bradford, and economic conditions were poor, with much unemployment among textile workers, which would have impacted on traders in the town. A report in the *Leeds Mercury* illuminates another aspect that the *Bradford Observer* omitted to mention, which was that the MI had wanted to hold this trip during the Whitsun holiday, which was the following week, but was prevented in doing so by the railway company (the Leeds and Bradford Extension), who 'refused to enter into arrangements' for some reason, thus it was held on a normal working day, when many people could not travel, it also faced stiff competition from other trips at Whitsun, for example to the Lakes.²⁷² A surprising feature was that the full details of the trip on 5 July 1848 were only advertised on 1 June, with a twenty four hour deadline to apply for tickets. There are other examples of short deadlines in advertising, and it appears therefore that MIs either depended on other means of promotion such as word-of-mouth or handbills, or they were accommodating a market used to making short-notice decisions about participating, a risky strategy for the MI to adopt.²⁷³

In general however it appears that MI trips were usually successful. Barton notes that the 1840 mechanics' institute excursionists on the Midland Counties line appeared to be mainly lower middle class rather than working class, judging by the fares they paid.²⁷⁴ It is possible however, and not considered by Royle, that the commissioning of an excursion by a mechanics' institute led to a far wider group of people participating compared to those who went to classes and lectures, as members were often encouraged to involve their family and friends in excursions, and trips were advertised to the general public.

²⁷¹ *Bradford Observer*, 25 May 1848, 1 June 1848, 8 June 1848; *Leeds Mercury*, 10 June 1848.

²⁷² *Bradford Observer*, 8 June 1848. The MI did not mention the name of the railway company involved, but this appears to be a frequent practice in such advertisements.

²⁷³ See for example the Leeds MI trip to the Lakes, *Leeds Mercury*, 20 July 1850.

²⁷⁴ Susan Barton, 'The Mechanics Institutes: Pioneers of Leisure and Excursion Travel', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 67 (1993), p. 50.

Mechanics' institutes played an important role in generating and organising demand for excursions in this early period, sometimes in the face of economic risk, thus their entrepreneurial drive shaped excursion development, generating crowds which accelerated the reputation of the excursion as an acceptable leisure activity.

TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES

The temperance movement, which had its origins in societies starting in the 1820s, with around 150,000 members of the movement by 1833, was another powerful entrepreneurial group driving the development of excursions.²⁷⁵ Concerns about crowd behaviour, including drunkenness, led commentators and reformers to hope that well-organised railway excursions would contribute to ameliorating such problems.²⁷⁶ The movement also had links to Sabbatarianism, Dissenters and Chartism.²⁷⁷ Once more, the secondary literature focuses primarily on the role of Thomas Cook. There is no doubt that his networking links with the temperance movement drove the development of his distinctive tours, whose branding made his excursions visible and enabled the press and the public to see how desirable touristic mobility could be, but it is important to recognise the role of the temperance movement itself.

Temperance societies consisted of large groups of men, certainly working class in the early period, with radical undercurrents in Manchester for example; they did not come under middle class control until the 1860s.²⁷⁸ They had a fiercely evangelical approach, a burning desire to spread their aims across the country.²⁷⁹ This created a natural market and driver for mass excursions, using the new technological system of the railways, which was further promoted by regular accounts in the press in the 1840s and 1850s. In addition temperance societies saw the advantages of the new railway trips as a kind of natural advertisement which

²⁷⁵ *The Temperance Movement: its Rise, Progress and Results* (London, 1854).

²⁷⁶ Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 45.

²⁷⁷ F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain 1830-1900* (London, 1988), p. 310; Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History, 1750-1997*, p. 46.

²⁷⁸ M. Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 173-7.

²⁷⁹ The temperance movement was riven with class struggle, the working classes complaining that temperance reformers were seeking to deny them their beer shops but at the same time allowing the middle and upper classes to drink wine for example at home and in hotels. They had varying approaches to the issue of drinking, with some advocating a total ban and others only barring spirits. The Leeds Temperance Society had brought in a teetotal pledge in 1836 but this was opposed by the elite founding members, who eventually had to leave the society. (Morris, 'Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850', pp. 102-3.

could not be ignored, their enthusiasts could be seen 'en masse', in the same fashion as the mechanics' institute crowd, passing through the countryside. Lastly the demand for large temperance groups to travel increased, because they regularly held conventions in large cities and towns, which also generated profits for the railway companies prepared to offer trips; for example a Great Temperance Festival was held at Derby in 1841, when thousands of visitors arrived from Birmingham, Burton, Tamworth and Nottingham.²⁸⁰ A similar event in Hull in 1850 attracted over 6,000 visitors by train.²⁸¹ It might be said that the temperance excursion was an expression of the group's potential power, by showing the hosting destination their strength as a large crowd. Such excursions based on the movement's structure could be much more far-reaching in pursuit of the aims of the movement than the activity of one excursion agent, Thomas Cook. Some Temperance Committees actively organised cheap trips for workers and the poor; in Preston the Temperance movement was behind an annual Poor People's day trip to the seaside, organised for twenty years, sometimes known as the Buttermilk trip as a large amount of milk was carried with buns for passenger refreshment. Cheap tickets at eight pence a head including refreshments were bought by charitable people and employers and distributed to those whom they considered in need.²⁸²

Others organised trips for fund-raising purposes: Bradford Long-Pledged Teetotal Association reported in 1849 that they had organised day trips to Liverpool and Skipton with various railway companies, with profits channelled into the debt repayment for the cost of their hall, although a later trip to Kirkstall in 1858 proved loss-making.²⁸³

The temperance movement was therefore particularly significant in driving the development of the excursion crowd in this period. It created a natural market, recognising the advantages of the new railway trips as an kind of living advertising vehicle which could not be ignored. Regular conventions in large cities and towns increased business by attracting members to travel, and supported the profits of the railway companies involved.

²⁸⁰ *Derby Mercury*, 4 August 1841.

²⁸¹ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 13 July 1850.

²⁸² *Preston Chronicle*, 17 August 1844, 14 June 1845, 25 October 1845; James Weston, *Joseph Livesey: The Story of his Life, 1794-1884* (London, 1884), pp. 93-4. Joseph Dearden was one of the committee behind it.

²⁸³ West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS): Bradford. DB16 C25, *The sixth annual report of the Bradford Long-Pledged Teetotal Association, 1849*; *Bradford Observer*, 8 April 1858.

There is one last example ‘projector’ of trips worth highlighting, not least because he fails to feature in any historical accounts, but also to demonstrate the power and drive of individual personalities in making a success of the railway excursion on a very local level. Reverend Joseph Brown, of Bethnal Green, London, was remarkable for his abilities and indefatigable efforts to improve conditions for the poor of his parish. An 1850 article in *The Leader* noted that he ‘truly lived among his people...entering heartily and thoroughly into their ways of life.’²⁸⁴ Brown recognised the value of affordable holidays for people with little resources, organising heavily subsidised large scale annual railway excursions for local working men and the poor for twenty years until 1865, firstly from his Bethnal Green parish (from 1844) and subsequently from his parish of Christchurch, Blackfriars, London (from 1849). These excursions usually took place on a July Monday and involved thousands of people, for example 1,500 to Richmond (1851), 7,000 to Brighton (1859), 2,500 to Hampton Court (1865). They were funded partly from his own resources, partly from benefactors, partly from low fares negotiated with railway companies and partly by a contribution from those in work. He harnessed the wealth of his numerous contacts and sponsors to fund them – he had an extensive circle of ‘noble and wealthy friends’. His other philanthropic initiatives included the Albert Institution in Blackfriars (comprising ragged schools, a reading room and lending library, dormitories, bath and wash houses), the Cholera Orphan Home at Ham in Richmond, and the Female Servants’ Home Society for servants ‘out of place’, with two homes in London.

Brown’s excursions involved workhouse inmates, tenants of almshouses and charity school children and their families. Trips involved several railway companies - the London & South Western, the London, Brighton & South Coast and the South Eastern. While some excursionists paid a small contribution, others such as those from the workhouse benefited from free places. Fares were very low, for example 6d for the Richmond trip, and refreshments were provided, including tea and cakes, with extras of beer and tobacco for the older people. Occasionally details of the fares were provided in press accounts, for example in 1859 for the trip of nearly 7,000 people to Brighton, the fare for the working participants was 1s.2d (apart from the free places), with Brown reportedly paying the LBSCR 2s 6d, thus meeting the

²⁸⁴ *The Leader*, 27 July 1850.

difference from his own purse and from subscriptions from benefactors, a total of around £430 in subsidy for one trip.²⁸⁵

A press account in 1850 gave a vivid description of the excursion crowds on his Richmond trip, evoking Canetti's river crowd symbol:²⁸⁶

never had Richmond Station disgorged such heaps of humanity...”they are welling out sir, oozing out like a flood”, cried an admiring traveller. And so it was - a strange living flood - waves of cleanly children - billows of grey shawled women from the workhouse, gushes of smiling girls more blooming than might have been expected.

The writer suggested that this unusual annual activity generated a greater understanding between the working masses and the poor of the parish:

its easy affluence was confronted with its destitution; and perhaps for the first time in its history, it knew itself in a new aspect, recognised influences at work unseen, and learned to respect its own troubles, its own sorrows, its motives, and its better dispositions. Signs of that awakening knowledge were not wanting at the close...the parish had learned to regret its divisions, and had learned to know its common interests and common feelings.

It appears that this was one of Brown's objectives, the idea that using the excursion to create opportunities for the deliberate mingling of classes led to a more compassionate understanding of social conditions experienced by others living in their neighbourhoods.

In 1852 he was presented by the working classes with a testimonial at Richmond as a result of his renowned trips, an event celebrated with an engraving in the *Illustrated London News* (overleaf).²⁸⁷ This shows a large crowd of poorly dressed people, pressed closely together around a raised platform decorated with flags, with a small number of more affluent looking people watching the event from outside the crowd, perceived to be acknowledging a grateful working class. This portrayal no doubt suited the middle class perspective on how a well-ordered society should be, with the working classes being suitably grateful for the patronage of other classes.

²⁸⁵ *The Leader*, 27 July 1850; *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 20 July 1851, 22 July 1860; *Morning Post*, 23 June 1852, 30 September 1857; *John Bull*, 7 July 1855, 2 July 1859, 17 August 1867; *The Lady's Newspaper*, 7 July 1855; *Daily News*, 28 June 1859, 11 July 1861, 15 August 1867; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 July 1865; *Illustrated London News*, 3 July 1852.

²⁸⁶ *The Leader*, 27 July 1850; Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (London, 1962), p. 83.

²⁸⁷ *Illustrated London News* 3 July 1852



Testimonial to the Rev. Joseph Brown, Rector of Christchurch, *Illustrated London News* 3 July 1852.

Brown appears to have been an exceptional, entrepreneurial person, demonstrating how resources could be exploited by an enthusiastic and well-connected man in the cause of leisure mobility for the poor. He died in August 1867, seemingly unrecognised otherwise since for his achievements.

Powerful groups as social entrepreneurs

This chapter has discussed how the activities of railway companies, excursion agents and voluntary societies shaped railway excursions and their ensuing crowds in the 1840s and 1850s. A suitable model for such activity might be that of the social entrepreneur, extending a growing study of the characteristics of nineteenth century industrial entrepreneurs. Jeremy has reviewed aspects such as the significance of Dissenters in entrepreneurship, and the idea that networks such as those of religious groups had advantages over purely economic factors because they could rely on trust in developing advantageous business relationships.²⁸⁸ Casson has identified entrepreneurial decision-making activities and the qualities needed to achieve these.²⁸⁹ Kirzner has demonstrated how historically a variety of factors have been used to represent the entrepreneur, such as risk, innovation, a location between different markets and a co-ordinating role.²⁹⁰ However the role of social entrepreneurs, a term which has come to the fore over the last twenty years, has received little critical historical attention.

Social entrepreneurs operate in the intersections between public, private and voluntary sectors to initiate social change, using the kind of entrepreneurial qualities summarised by influential economists such as Jean Baptiste Say and Joseph Schumpeter during the last two centuries. In reviewing the work of Schumpeter, Swedberg has demonstrated how he defined the entrepreneur as a person who uses intuition to introduce successful new ways of using existing resources. Importantly the entrepreneur is able to break out of the mould and do things differently, facing risk and uncertainty and driving their ideas forward using willpower and energy. Swedberg then goes on to argue that all these qualities are relevant to social entrepreneurship. A recent review paper by Peredo and McLean undertakes

²⁸⁸ David J. Jeremy (ed.), *Religion, Business and Wealth in Modern Britain* (London and New York, 1998), pp.17-18.

²⁸⁹ Mark Casson, 'The Basic Concepts of Theory in Entrepreneurship', in Norris F. Krueger (ed.), *Entrepreneurship: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management: Volume 1* (London, 2002), pp. 21, 26.

²⁹⁰ Israel M. Kirzner, 'Entrepreneurs and the Entrepreneurial Function', in Norris F. Krueger (ed.), *Entrepreneurship: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management: Volume 1* (London, 2002), p. 65.

a more analytical review of social entrepreneurship, looking at modern day examples, and it is possible to use their analysis to examine the historical role of powerful groups as social entrepreneurs in supplying railway excursions for the masses.²⁹¹ The reviewers however point out that studies inevitably relate to successful entrepreneurs, and that any analysis will fail to take into account the attributes of unsuccessful entrepreneurs because of a lack of evidence and therefore conclusions could be distorted by this. Their review suggests the qualities of social entrepreneurs as creating value, recognising and exploiting opportunities for innovation and change, while unwilling to be limited by existing resources. The groups in this chapter have demonstrated how they used existing resources – trains, stations and staff – to develop railway excursions, a new concept at this time. They faced risks in running these, as large losses might be incurred if an excursion did not attract sufficient traffic, and levels of safety were questionable. It often took a great deal of organisational ability because of the complex nature of railway infrastructure and traffic. This new activity created value for the company or agent, and the social goals achieved, however unwittingly, might enhance their reputation in the eyes of the public.

When examining the role of powerful groups in shaping excursions it is also helpful to examine their motivations. There were a surprising variety of these expressed in reporting in the press and thus it is clear that the new excursions were designed to fulfil many social aspirations in extending mobility for the masses as well as the predictable economic motives. Motivations might be financial, for example trips organised for personal/ company profit by railway companies or excursion agents, or 'fund-raising' by voluntary societies. Some were organised to a specific event. Other excursion activity might be seen as a public relations exercise, as well as trying to promote their causes, voluntary organisations in particular expressed ambitious social motives reflecting rational recreation, such as enabling the working classes to see nature, to improve their intellect and develop experiences, to support 'sociability', to break down barriers between communities using a 'missionary' approach, or to help the poor.

²⁹¹ A.M. Peredo and M. McLean, 'Social entrepreneurship: A critical review of the concept', *Journal of World Business*, 41 (2006), 56-65; R. Swedberg, 'Social entrepreneurship: the view of the young Schumpeter', in C. Steyaert and D. Hjorth (eds.), *Entrepreneurship as Social Change* (Cheltenham, 2006), pp. 27-8.

Agents such as Marcus were social entrepreneurs in that they achieved social goals as well as economic success, and were perceived as such. Their names became synonymous to the masses with cheap tourist mobility. From the little evidence we can only conclude that their business activity was profitable, especially as little capital resource was needed. It is difficult to judge how far Marcus and others were motivated by social aims or whether they produced social change unwittingly by their ability to spot an important opportunity to make money, with an innovative approach to a mass market using existing resources.

Railway companies can be regarded as social entrepreneurs because of the social objectives which accompanied commercial objectives in this activity, however unwittingly. Although their goals were to maximise profits, the effects of their activity in initiating social change, encouraged by leading promoters who favoured concepts such as rational recreation for example, allows such companies to be classified in this study as social entrepreneurs. It appears that they realised that the organisation of a cheap and fast means of transporting large numbers of ordinary people would be sufficient to generate demand and this was true.

Voluntary societies frequently sold tickets for excursions to the general public as well as their own members, thus they might be classed as social entrepreneurs, with social goals predominating over business aims.²⁹²

It can be argued therefore that there might be benefits from further research on the position of social entrepreneurship in transport and mobility history.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the role of three key powerful groups - railway companies, excursion agents and voluntary societies and church groups – involved in shaping the innovation of railway excursions with great vigour in Britain in the 1840s and 1850s, with the result that great numbers of working class excursionists took part. They were able to use power and influence to influence many aspects such as availability, timing, affordability, destination and seasonality.

A number of crucial approaches of railway companies and the Railway Clearing House in the development of excursions have been identified. The fact that railways were internally differentiated led to problems with focusing on devising and

²⁹² For example tickets for a cheap trip to the Lakes from East Lancashire in May 1850 organised by Preston Institution and Burnley Mechanics' Institution were advertised to the public in the *Preston Chronicle*, 11 May 1850.

promoting excursions, a key tool in ensuring that public needs were anticipated and met. The behaviour of those key personalities who were able to prevail constructed the excursion by adopting differential business strategies. In addition where they were able to use cooperative networking then this form of social capital enabled them to take great strides in developing the business. However a constraining feature was their stance on Sunday services, and the forces shaping this are discussed in the next chapter. There is little evidence that railway companies felt the need to highlight the selling points of their new technology and the facilities offered in their advertisements.

The work of little known innovators such as excursion agent Henry Marcus has been discussed, to set in context the much described role of Thomas Cook in the history of railway excursions. Cook's business focused on a limited, middle class market, whereas many other excursion agents at the time shaped mass excursions for the working classes. This research makes important new points about the business practices of other agents, using Henry Marcus as a case study, which challenge traditional narratives about excursion history, and also highlight the part played by branding in the work of agents such as Marcus at an early stage of business history.

Voluntary societies and church groups played a key role in stimulating demand and commissioning trips in this period; the chapter has shown how activity by Sunday schools, mechanics' institutes and temperance societies, together with that of a little known philanthropist, Joseph Brown, shaped the excursion crowd, by working closely with railway companies and opening out their excursions to the general public.

Finally it has argued that these groups can be positioned as social entrepreneurs, demonstrating how attributes of such actors helped them to achieve social goals as well as economic goals in offering excursions for the masses. While these new social entrepreneurs orchestrated the movement of the masses around the country at this time, there were also a number of other social and economic groups and forces encouraging and inhibiting market development. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Social, political and economic forces

Now, do Sunday excursion trains, and such inducements to recreation on Sundays, turn from attendance at church any who would not otherwise be absent from the sanctuary? Those flaming posters in divers colours, describing marvellously cheap trips to places which the walled-up citizen delights to think of, do they seduce the regular worshippers at church from their holy and laudable employment? We say, unhesitatingly, that of all those who go systematically to church on the Sunday, there is scarcely one who is even tempted to break his custom under the pressure of any suggestion of pleasure, however enticing.¹

The above view was one of many expressed in the public debate between the Sabbatarians and those in favour of Sunday leisure opportunities for the working classes, and illustrates the fervour of the feeling on this issue. At the time that the new social entrepreneurs described in Chapter 3 were working on their ambitious and innovative schemes to move the masses around the country, there were a number of other important and powerful groups using their influence to exercise considerable social, political and economic forces to encourage and inhibit excursion development, both directly and indirectly. While they were not social entrepreneurs themselves, they shaped the context in which those entrepreneurs operated, by offering opportunity, by closing down possibilities or by imposing policy.

The most important group was the *Sabbatarians*, an immensely powerful force at this time, using affective arguments, designed to appeal to the emotions, to restrict leisure opportunities on Sunday, which was frequently the only day that the masses were not at work. The second group was local *employers*, who played a large part in constructing or restricting opportunities for the masses to extend their leisure mobility. The third shaping group was the people, almost entirely men, in networks of interconnected *urban elites*, who used their influence to promote the development of the excursion as an element of moral reform and rational recreation. An overlapping fourth group, the *press*, often controlled by members of the urban elite,

¹ E.P. Rowsell, 'Crushed on a Sunday', *New Monthly Magazine*, 110 (1857), p. 447.

played a significant role in advertising and reporting on railway excursions, stimulating and encouraging business and commenting on these new crowds, which might be seen as a potential threat to public order. A fifth force, *central government*, played a role in both encouraging and inhibiting excursion activity, using legislation on tax and safety for example.

Whereas some groups were able to use temporal elements to shape excursions, such as Sabbatarians and the employers, with approval for certain 'leisure' days, others were able to shape activity using economic elements, such as central government with their legislation on cheap fares and employers setting local wage rates, therefore shaping the affordability of fares. In many cases ideology was a structuring factor: for example Sabbatarians, the urban elites, the press and the employers all used their strength to encourage activity which would conform to their own beliefs.

Further groups, not considered in this chapter, were local government and the business lobbies. The former played a major role in the second half of the nineteenth century in developing sanitation and public health reform at seaside resorts, demonstrated by Walton.² Private enterprise played a part in campaigning for and against railway excursions, dependent on positive and negative trading benefits.

The current chapter looks at the forces separately, to examine their role in shaping railway excursions in the period 1840-1860 and exploring at how they were able to do this. It draws upon work by Brookes and Wigley on Sabbatarianism, to illuminate the powerful influence of this particular group.³ Work by Morris and by Reid in the *Cambridge Urban History* series provides an analysis of the urban context and the role of urban elites.⁴

² John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), pp.128-155.

³ D. Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', *Journal of Transport History*, 6 (1963) 95-109.

⁴ R.J. Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.III 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 395-426; D.A. Reid, 'Playing and Praying', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.III 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 745-810.

Sabbatarians

Sabbatarianism was a powerful ideological force which reached its peak in the mid 1850s. Based on an evangelical movement devoted to the observance on Sundays of rest and worship, after the establishment of the Lord's Day Observance Society in 1831, it played a leading role in shaping the provision of railway excursions on Sundays.⁵ Brooke has described an outstanding period of Sabbatarian activity in the North East of England before 1850, when they made great use of petitions or memorials to railway boards and later debated at railway shareholder meetings.⁶ This originated often in smaller towns and villages, where the clergy could use their influence on individuals whom they knew personally. In the North East it was not just one religious group behind the Sabbatarian movement, for example it was the Church of England in York, the Methodists in Hull, the Quakers in South Durham and the Church of England and Non-Conformist Union on Tyneside.

Sabbatarian arguments and debate

Sabbatarian arguments featured Sunday observance but also to a lesser extent Sunday as a day of rest. This was somewhat discriminatory however, as while the Sabbatarians demanded that all work and recreation cease on a Sunday, this took no account of the work in the domestic home, as this was women's work and therefore not to be counted. Sabbatarians claimed the moral high ground, for example a typical debate on Sunday travelling was recorded at a North Union Railway meeting in Preston in July 1845, where it was argued that Sunday excursions lowered the 'moral and religious tone of the community', and were an example of 'a desecration of the Sabbath'. There were concerns that Sunday would be seen as a holiday, with associated mental and physical freedoms, leading to 'vicious indulgences' and 'unsettled habits'.⁷ Certain religious figures painted a very negative picture of Sunday excursionists in attempting to constrict opportunities for Sunday travel, suggesting that excursion trains brought 'idlers and prostitutes' into

⁵ Reid, 'Playing and Praying', p. 752; E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997* (2nd edn., London, 1997), p. 244.

⁶ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p.95.

⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 August 1845. In the case of the North Union Railway on this occasion it was decided that the benefits outweighed Sabbatarian concerns and that Sunday excursions should continue on the line.

the countryside.⁸ There seemed to be a genuine fear that such Sunday travelling would bring about the end of organised religion. A congregational minister at Banbury, Joseph Parker, referred to excursionists in 1856 rather outrageously as including the 'dirtiest, silliest, laziest and poorest of the toiling population'. He suggested that women who travelled on Sunday excursions 'with very few exceptions they are accustomed to licentiousness, robbery and drunkenness.' These comments generated fierce debate at the time, with many people complaining about Parker's expressed views.⁹

Sabbatarians also argued that railway workers were prevented from observing the Sabbath as they were forced to work on it, although evidence identified in this chapter demonstrates that this was not always the case.¹⁰ It was further argued that Sunday excursions only benefited publicans at destinations and railway company shareholders. At the same time it was noted that the people complaining against the practice most vehemently were the local beer shop owners, who had lost trade as a result.¹¹

Those in favour of Sunday excursions, who opposed Sabbatarians, argued that it was the only day that the working class could travel, and that it could not become habitual as they could not afford this, being poor. Advocates suggested that excursionists tended to be prudent and that the cheap train was seen as a means of 'social and intellectual gratification', which would 'exalt, rather than deprave, the minds and habits of the parties'.¹² Rowsell, writing in 1857, suggested that church going was a habit unlikely to be broken by a cheap trip and that those on trips would not be churchgoers anyway. He unusually promoted a view at the time that people could be non-churchgoers, with no religion, and still be moral and law abiding, and that the occasional trip was good for the health of sickly artisans.¹³ The chief of the Manchester Police Force made the case for the benefits of rational recreation on a Sunday excursion.¹⁴

⁸ *Derby Mercury*, 7 November 1860.

⁹ B.S. Trinder, 'Joseph Parker, Sabbatarianism and the Parson's Street Infidels', *Cake and Cockhorse*, 1 (1960), pp. 25, 27.

¹⁰ See page 141. A report in the press in 1857 about Sunday services on the Madras Railway also demonstrates the moral issues involved for British railway directors in imposing Christian practices on a population with a different religion (*The Standard*, 24 July 1857).

¹¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 August 1845.

¹² *Preston Chronicle*, 2 August 1845.

¹³ E.P. Rowsell, 'Crushed on a Sunday', 446-451.

¹⁴ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p.104.

Supporters of Sunday excursions suggested that few workers were needed to run these Sunday trains, as tickets were bought in advance and excursionists had little luggage, in response to arguments that railway workers would be unable to celebrate the Sabbath themselves.¹⁵ A heated correspondence developed on this issue in 1859 in the *Hampshire Advertiser* between Charles E. Mangles, Chairman of the London & South Western Railway, and Archdeacon Wigram of Southampton. Wigram had claimed that he had been told by some railwaymen in Southampton that they had been unable to attend divine service for six years, because of their work on Sundays. Mangles refuted this claim with the following evidence from Southampton Station:¹⁶

ARRANGEMENT OF SUNDAY DUTIES.—SOUTHAMPTON STATION.			
25 clerks	No Sunday duty whatever.	
7 pointsmen, &c.	" " "	
12 porters	Engaged 1 Sunday out of 6.	
4 "	" 1 " "	4.
3 "	" 1 " "	3.
3 Guards	" 1 " "	3.
5 clerks, 6 guards, 73 inspectors, porters, ticket collectors, lampmen, pointsmen, gatemen, and policemen.	}	alternate Sundays, and many of these for about two hours only.	

RD. BEACH.

Hampshire Advertiser, 19 November 1859

Thus the Sabbatarian arguments about railway workers' religious observance could be combatted. But they were not without influence, it was announced in June 1860 that LSWR would no longer be running excursion trains on Sundays, as a result of pressure from the Winchester clergy.¹⁷

There was much conflict in the 1840s between the railway shareholders, who were seeking to make good profits from Sunday excursions, and the Sabbatarians, with some people belonging to both groups. Sabbatarians might also be members of the public putting pressure on railway companies, museums and galleries and other Sunday activities. Excursion supporters highlighted social progress and rational recreation as a key objective for the working classes, whereas the Sabbatarians warned of the dangers of uprisings on Sunday trips, as Sunday trains

¹⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 August 1845; *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 23 August 1856.
¹⁶ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 19 November 1859, 26 November 1859, 17 December 1859; Jack Simmons, *The Railway in Town and Country 1830-1914* (Newton Abbot, 1986), p. 156.
¹⁷ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 16 June 1860. However a subsequent notice declared mysteriously that these would be running after all (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 30 June 1860).

were perceived to be aligned with Chartism, with the potential for inciting the 'humbler classes', whipping up concerns about the dangers of the crowd.¹⁸ In an unsuccessful attempt to add a clause prohibiting Sunday travelling to the Railway Clauses Consolidation Bill in 1845, Mr Plumptre, MP for East Kent, expressed a typical fear of the crowd, complaining about hundreds and thousands of people travelling into towns and suburban districts on Sunday excursions, 'fearful to contemplate in a Christian country'. In the same vein, a colleague reported on 'an immense train of persons entered into a quiet country place just as divine service was about to commence, much to the annoyance of well-disposed persons.'¹⁹

The class perspective was highlighted often by commentators, pointing out that Sabbatarians were seeking to deter the masses from activity while unfairly ignoring richer people who could choose their own time of travel.²⁰ Legislators saw the irrational nature of the position on Sunday travel. A clause to prohibit railway travel on the Newcastle to Carlisle line on Sundays had been debated in 1835, when Lord Wharncliffe argued in favour of Sunday excursions, saying that it was illogical to ban travelling on Sundays by rail but at the same time to allow travel by road, and that for people working all the week it would be good for their health to relax in this way on a Sunday. The Earl of Roden suggested that allowing Sunday travelling would promote riots in trips from Carlisle to Newcastle, but the Duke of Richmond responded that it would be better for Newcastle people to take a railway trip on a Sunday than to pass their time in beer shops. He compared railway trips to travelling by posthorse or by steamboat, and questioned why only the railway traveller should be denied. Some took a patronising view of the needs of the working classes, the Bishop of London claimed in 1835 that there had been no complaints from the poorer classes of Newcastle or Carlisle nor the agricultural districts en route about lack of recreation opportunities on the Sabbath. At the same time he was against the profanation of the rich in travelling on Sundays. The clause was finally rejected.²¹

There were many attempts to add clauses into railway bills to prevent Sunday trains, for example the Great Western Bill in 1835.²² Opponents were indignant

¹⁸ J. Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester, 1980), p. 85.

¹⁹ Railway Clauses Consolidation Bill, *Hansard*, HC Deb., 13 March 1845, vol.78, cols.776-83.

²⁰ J. Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday* (London, 1978), p.42.

²¹ Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, p. 54; Newcastle Railway – Sunday Travelling, *Hansard*, HL Deb., 11 June 1835, vol. 28, cols. 646-54.

²² Western Railway – Travelling on Sundays, *Hansard*, HC Deb., 26 May 1835, vol. 28, cols.150-61.

about the class discrimination aspects of this and proposed that if it was accepted they should also have a Bill preventing Sunday travel on turnpike roads, as was the case in Scotland, which had led to drunkenness and idleness at home on that day. Where railway companies tried to include clauses in their bills prohibiting Sunday trains, the Chairman of the Lords Committee struck these out, as he favoured a general act for this purpose, in effect a powerful move to support Sunday services.²³

In 1841, the Whig *Examiner* had argued against the Sabbatarians who opposed Sunday trains between Glasgow and Edinburgh, pointing out inequalities: while the 'well-appointed carriage' was acceptable for travelling on a Sunday, the railway train was denounced as 'a freight for Satan'. The writer suggested that the 'use of legs' on Sunday should be denounced as a sin and was amused by the Reverend Bagot's implication that people travelling by the Sunday trains must be thieves.²⁴ In 1844, Gladstone's Railway Bill proposed that railway companies would have to run a third class train every weekday on its lines, later amended to compel them to run these every day that passenger trains ran, including Sundays. (Wigley p. 54). During the debate, the Bishop of London tried to prevent railways having to offer third class carriages on Sundays, while at the same time retaining first and second class carriages. His motives were heavily satirised by *Punch* in 1844, in their piece on the 'Railway Moral Class Book'.²⁵ This cynically contrasted the morals of the three classes, implying that as the rich were used to pleasure during the week, it would be cruel to deprive them of this on Sundays, whereas the poor suffered 'toil and hardship' during the week, therefore enjoyment on Sundays would make them 'discontented with their lot'. This may well have been a fundamental concern behind the Sabbatarian strictures, with anxieties about the generation of large uncontrollable crowds on that day.

The debate about class-based discrimination against Sunday excursionists raised its head again in 1854, when an Act was passed limiting Sunday opening hours in beer houses, except for 'bona fide travellers', a subject of great public debate, as it implied a class distinction, where an excursionist was somehow not a 'traveller' (see Chapter 7). The Act was later repealed and by the mid 1850s there were some moves to encourage Sunday recreation for the masses. The National Sunday League was founded in 1855, and played a role in shaping excursions,

²³ Railway Clauses Consolidation Bill, *Hansard*, HC Deb., 13 March 1845, vol.78, cols.776-83; *Derby Mercury*, 18 April 1861.

²⁴ *The Examiner*, 20 November 1841.

²⁵ *Northern Star*, 10 August 1844; Railways Bill, *Hansard*, HL Deb., 5 August 1844, vol. 76, cols.1720-5; *Preston Chronicle*, 24 August 1844; *Punch*, 24 August 1844. J. Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester, 1980), pp.54-57.

when it campaigned for the opening of parks and museums on Sundays, later promoting railway excursions on Sundays. However a move to persuade London venues to open on Sundays was rejected in 1856, and the LDOS set up a Central Committee for Securing the Cessation of Sunday Excursion Trains in 1860.²⁶

There are differences in the contemporary logic used to debate practices involving Sunday observance between steamboats and railways, with steamboats being allowed practices based on custom, while the railways suffered powerful constraints. This may be because boats were regarded as older and more traditional vehicles for leisure, and it might have been felt that as the railway companies were new, it would be possible to adopt a principle from their opening, to prevent Sunday trips from starting. Steamboat practices had varied, Lewis Gilson, agent and secretary to the New Gravesend and New Margate Companies gave evidence to the Select Committee on the Observance of the Sabbath Day in 1832 that the New Gravesend Company ran trips on Sundays (with profits three times that of other days) but not the New Margate Company, whose shareholders and banker were opposed to Sunday excursions.²⁷ His company provided a service on Sundays to artisans, mechanics and people in business unable to go on other days, and these were described as mostly 'lower classes'. Although Sunday working by crews might be seen to deprive them of the opportunity of attending divine service they apparently gained a share in the profits from the sale of beer and spirits, a major incentive. Another witness, Mr Rowland, shipping agent to the Liverpool Bootle Waterworks Company, described how increased facilities opening up in Liverpool had encouraged Sabbath breaking, for example the increase in steam vessels plying across the Mersey, with the 'lower orders' taking advantage of the small charge for this on a Sunday.²⁸ The steamboat did set a context for Sunday outings and it has been argued that the steamboat excursion helped to secularise Sundays in support of popular tourism.²⁹

²⁶ J. Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester, 1980), p. 120; Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), pp. 285, 287.

²⁷ The Richmond Steamboat Company ran a Sunday boat to Margate. 1831-32 (697) *Report from Select Committee on the Observance of the Sabbath Day*, pp. 205-210.

²⁸ 1831-32 (697) *Report from Select Committee on the Observance of the Sabbath Day*, pp. 91-95.

²⁹ J. Armstrong and D. M. Williams, 'The Steamboat and Popular Tourism', *Journal of Transport History*, 26 (2005), p. 72.

Railway company strategies

From the first stages of railway line development there were excursion trains commonly running on Sundays, although the Liverpool & Manchester had agreed in 1830 not to run Sunday services between 10 and 4pm ('the church interval') and that Sabbatarian shareholders could donate the dividend earned by Sunday traffic to a charity.³⁰ However the Post Office insisted on running mail trains on Sundays and railway companies carried passengers on these too.³¹ In 1847 almost every railway in England carried Sunday services, but only a few in Scotland. The following table selects some of the important lines and shows how many Sunday services were offered at that time:

*Table 4 Number of Sunday services run by selected railway lines in 1847*³²

<i>Line</i>	<i>Number of Sunday services</i>
Eastern Counties	33
Great Western	30
London & North Western	51
London & South Western	46
London, Brighton & South Coast	52
Manchester & Leeds	38
Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire	22
Midland	27
Newcastle & Berwick (North Shields Branch)	26
Newcastle & Carlisle	4
Preston & Wyre	2
South Eastern	10
York & Newcastle	33
York & North Midland	13

Thus it is clear that the major lines in England were running many Sunday services at this time, but this tells us nothing about the presence or absence of Sunday excursions at this time.

³⁰ Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, p. 54.

³¹ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 282.

³² 1847 (167) *Railways. Copy of all Regulations of every Railway Company on the subject of Travelling on Sunday.*

Evidence in the press from selected railway companies from the 1830s and 1840s indicates that the Sabbatarian interest reduced the availability of trips on that day, effectively impacting on a major opportunity for companies to expand the business. The Chairman of the Midland Railway, John Ellis, confirmed in 1855 that they never ran Sunday excursion trains, although they did run some other types of train on that day.³³ However it was not a straightforward battle between companies who wished to offer Sunday services freely and Sabbatarians who refused to support any such services, as each side had some flexibility in their stance on this issue. But few entrepreneurs followed George Hudson in seeking to derive economic benefit by harnessing the appeal of cheap Sunday excursions for the working class.³⁴

Sabbatarianism was such a controversial issue that several directors resigned in the 1840s in protest against Sunday trains, for example various directors from the Lancashire & Yorkshire and George Leeman from the York & North Midland.³⁵ Brooke notes that until Hudson took over in 1845, the Hull & Selby line was 'outstanding in the North East' for its opposition to 'unnecessary' Sunday services.³⁶ In 1835 they were keen to prevent all Sunday trains, a view promoted by two prominent figures in Hull, and at their general meeting in October 1835, Sunday travelling was heatedly debated, amid concerns by a merchant that excursionists would use the steamers instead and would be able to drink all day on these. Eventually a resolution against Sunday travelling was carried, but during the third reading of the bill in March 1836 it was unsuccessful by a very large margin, in the light of arguments from those who claimed it would deny cheap travelling to the poor. Later the Hull board did manage to pass a resolution banning Sunday excursions, but in return, on seeing the demand for such trips, they offered more weekday excursions.³⁷

Railway companies adopted a number of strategies. The Leeds & Selby in 1838 offered reduced fares only on those Sunday trains leaving Leeds before 9am, in order to avoid conflicts with Sunday worship, but by the summer of 1840 their

³³ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 23 August 1856.

³⁴ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 96.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108; *Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1849.

³⁶ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', pp. 95-6; Hull and Selby Railway, *Hansard*, HC Deb., 30 March 1836, vol. 322, cols. 843-6.

³⁷ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 96.

manager, Peter Clarke, went on to arrange a number of Sunday trips.³⁸ The Lancashire & Yorkshire asked its line superintendents to investigate the possibility of running trips from Saturday evening to Monday, but this was said to be impracticable as the trains would not be available on Saturdays and the mill hands would not be free from work on Mondays.³⁹ Other companies devised strategies to limit Sunday services to avoid the times of divine service: in 1849 the East Lancashire line decided to limit any cheap Sunday trains to arrive before 9.30am and leave after 5pm.⁴⁰ In 1852, Henry Tennant, Traffic Manager of Leeds Northern, only allowed excursions to the coast on condition that they reached the sea before church service.⁴¹ In moves to avoid criticism from the public and many directors, rather than offering cheap trips on Sundays some companies used differential pricing and other means to discourage Sunday travel, echoing the approach of toll-bars who would previously charge double tolls for road traffic on Sundays.⁴² The *Manchester Guardian* noted in 1845 that fares from Manchester to Liverpool and back other than Sundays were 2s 6d, whereas Sunday trains cost 4s for the return journey.⁴³ The Stockton & Darlington Railway board were strongly religious and always refused requests for Sunday excursions, and apparently charged 'double duty' on Sundays to dissuade the public from travelling.⁴⁴

There are examples of lines managing to hold out against pressures, where a threatened resignation was not enough to defeat those planning Sunday trips, for example the London & Birmingham Railway refused to close their lines on Sundays, despite protests by director Joseph Sturge, who was a leading Birmingham Quaker and moral radical, and who later resigned on this issue.⁴⁵ The Manchester & Leeds ran four trains each way on Sundays from 1841 but the chairman and various

³⁸ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 96.

³⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1849.

⁴⁰ *Manchester Times*, 1 August 1849. Although by 1850, it appears that their excursions were running from Saturday to Monday again (*Manchester Guardian*, 3 August 1850).

⁴¹ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 102.

⁴² *Manchester Guardian*, 11 August 1849.

⁴³ *Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1845.

⁴⁴ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 97; *Hull Packet*, 16 October 1835. When the Grand Junction Railway under Mark Huish extended third class travel to Sundays in 1844, it was only at very inconvenient hours (T. Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a study of Management* (Leicester, 1972), p. 69.) Sabbatarians were sometimes responsible for creating absurd rules, for example in 1854 excursion visitors to Dudley Castle and grounds were informed once they were inside that they could not leave between three and five o'clock, but would have to wait until after divine service (*Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 22 April 1854).

⁴⁵ Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, p. 54.

directors resigned over this issue.⁴⁶ Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway ran Sunday excursions and was criticised by correspondents.⁴⁷ While it may appear that the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway eventually abandoned Sunday excursions in 1856 due to Sabbatarian pressure, Walton suggests that this was partly an economic move.⁴⁸

The influence of George Hudson showed how a powerful and charismatic leader could use his authority to hold his own against the inroads of Sabbatarianism. The York & North Midland left the issue of Sunday services to the discretion of their Board rather than trying to include a clause in their legislation, and services started to run on Sundays in 1839.⁴⁹ In York public opinion was roused against this at the general meeting in July 1839 by Sabbatarian leaders James Meek and Samuel Tuke, who attacked George Hudson on the issue. Hudson defended the policy on the grounds that banning Sunday services would only affect the poor, winning the argument, and therefore the YNM continued to offer Sunday services.⁵⁰ When Hudson resigned from the York, Newcastle & Berwick and the York & North Midland in 1849, the loss of his championship of Sunday excursions was soon felt. In 1849 the YNB Directors resolved to run no more Sunday excursions, offering Saturday to Monday trips instead, and the YNM Board took a similar stance on excursions. When the North Eastern Railway was formed in 1854, these policies were retained, influenced by the Quaker Pease family. A subsequent review of lines in England in 1864 which were closed on Sundays found that almost half were NER owned.⁵¹

There were sometimes discordant stances between the views of the directors and the actions of managers and/or railway workers in operating services. At the North Midland Railway half yearly meeting in August 1840 Mr Baines had urged the company not to consider Sunday trains and the Chairman George Glyn agreed that the company's position was not to run Sunday excursions. It appears that this was not just a response to public pressure, but also a personally held conviction by Baines that Sunday excursions were morally wrong (see page 151-2).⁵² However a

⁴⁶ J. Marshall, *The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway: Volume One* (Newton Abbott, 1969), p. 49-52.

⁴⁷ Arthur Jordan and Elizabeth Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991), p. 29.

⁴⁸ J.K. Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: A Social History* (Manchester, 1978), pp. 18-19. The Birkenhead Railway offered cheap summer Sunday excursion trains but were petitioned about this in 1859 (*Cheshire Observer*, 25 June 1859).

⁴⁹ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 96.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99; Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, p. 54.

⁵² *Leeds Mercury*, 29 August 1840.

week later it appeared that a Sunday excursion had in fact taken place the previous week, from Leeds to Sheffield, with 63 carriages taking 2,000 passengers at half fare. There was outrage that tickets had been sold with the apparent knowledge of the board of directors, despite rulings to the contrary by the Court of Proprietors in March, but it appeared that this activity had apparently arisen from a misunderstanding about approvals.⁵³

The press played their part in influencing the policies of railway companies on this issue. In 1850 the *Morning Chronicle* leader writer came out in favour of Sunday excursion trains, when reporting a meeting in Bath where Sabbatarians denounced Sunday excursionists who were 'cooped up for seven hours in close carriages, indulging in *trivial conversation*'. The writer suggested that the conversation might be equally light 'in the sylvan bowers of Osborne House'. Reports of drunken disorder at the excursion stations were presented as a class issue, with working class speakers denying the disorder hinted at by middle class Sabbatarians. The writer finally advocated the occasional trip on an excursion train as good for the health of the mechanic.⁵⁴ In 1851 the *Essex Standard* was particularly incensed that the Eastern Counties Railway was not only running cheap trips from London to Cambridge on Sundays, but promoting them in *three languages* in the *Times* (English, French and German).⁵⁵

In some cases railway companies adopted public relations strategies to persuade opinion formers of the value of Sunday trips. In 1850 the Great Western Railway started cheap Sunday excursions out of London and the Great Northern ran trains on Sundays in the 1850s; the GWR secretary published a very carefully argued letter defending their policy on Sunday excursions, on the grounds that a reversal of their decision would withhold 'social and moral benefits' from working people.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Leeds Mercury*, 5 September 1840.

⁵⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, 10 October 1850.

⁵⁵ *Essex Standard*, 16 May 1851; *The Times*, 14 May 1851.

⁵⁶ J. Wrottesley, *The Great Northern Railway: Vol 1 Origins and Development* (London, 1979), p. 96; Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, p. 85; *The Standard*, 26 October 1850.

The effects of Sabbatarianism on excursions in 1846

Reid's paper on excursions from Birmingham in 1846 features no Sunday excursions, pointing to an important shaping role there by local Sabbatarians.⁵⁷ This suggests artisan participation as well as the middle classes, as these were not reliant on Sunday trips because they could travel on Mondays due to their traditional flexibility on that day. To explore this effect further, similar data from a range of other towns have been analysed for this study, focusing on Leeds, Hull, Preston, Liverpool and Manchester in 1846.⁵⁸

This analysis reveals some surprising results, demonstrating differences which have not previously been highlighted. In Liverpool and Preston in 1846 Sunday trips were common, and seem to have arisen for two reasons. Firstly Sabbatarian pressure groups had not been powerful enough to stop the Preston & Wyre Company and steamer companies from operating on Sundays. Walton has noted that organised religion had never been a strong influence in Lancashire and only five English counties had a lower proportion of people attending church or chapel in the religious census taken in 1851; for the Church of England Preston 'had the lowest overall attendance figure...of any English town in 1851'.⁵⁹ There had been some attempts to stop Sunday cheap trains from Preston in May 1846, when objections were raised at the half yearly meeting of the Preston & Wyre Company, seeing them as leading to 'scenes of riot' at Fleetwood 'as would not be seen in any other part of the country'. Objectors favoured working people coming for a week in summer instead, to encourage 'the proper preservation of order', but a responding minister observed that 'people would travel, and that they would not be good'. He suggested that the train times be changed to allow people to get to Fleetwood in time to attend church services there. This was rebutted with the argument that although most of the passengers were working class they had been commended for their orderly conduct. Others agreed, pointing out that on one occasion 5,000

⁵⁷ Reid does not explore the policies of the companies involved around Birmingham – the Grand Junction and the London & Birmingham (later LNWR), the Midland and the Great Western Railway. (D.A. Reid, 'The 'Iron Roads' and 'the Happiness of the Working Classes': the Early Development and Social Significance of the Railway Excursion', *Journal of Transport History*, 17 (1996), 57-73.)

⁵⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, 18 April 1846 - 10 October 1846; *York Herald*, 24 October 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 30 July 1846; *Hull Packet*, 22 May 1846 - 25 September 1846; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 May 1846 - 2 October 1846; *Manchester Times*, 30 May 1846 - 25 July 1846; *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1846 - 5 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 4 April 1846 - 12 September 1846.

⁵⁸ Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

⁵⁹ John K. Walton, *Lancashire: a Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), p.184.

passengers had arrived and they had been seen to be very orderly.⁶⁰ The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway finally ceased running Sunday excursions in 1856, ostensibly down to reduced profits, but their minutes also recorded their regard for the views of the train crews, and there had also been ongoing campaigns by Sabbatarians against such trips.⁶¹ Secondly and importantly however, an explanation of the prevalence of Sunday trips from these towns lies in the concentration of Catholicism in areas of Western Lancashire around the middle of the nineteenth century, supported by Irish migration through Liverpool, and comprising around a third of worshippers in Preston.⁶² Simmons has noted 'two wholly different attitudes towards Sunday recreation: benevolent in Catholic districts, restrictive and grudging wherever Protestantism prevailed.'⁶³ Local Catholics would have been able to attend a vigil mass on Saturday as an alternative to Sunday churchgoing, leaving Sundays free for trips.⁶⁴ The availability of Sunday trips in those two towns meant that it was more likely that industrial workers could take part in cheap trips, unlike the other towns.

In Leeds, as in Birmingham, the fact that there were no Sunday excursions from Leeds might be seen as surprising, as the table on page 145 shows that some railway companies serving Leeds (the Manchester & Leeds, Midland and York & North Midland), were running a few limited Sunday services around the time. The new Leeds & Bradford Railway was also operating Sunday services in the early morning, lunchtime and evening on Sundays, but stated in advertisements that no day tickets would be sold on Sunday.⁶⁵ The dominant religion in Leeds was Methodism, although by 1851 only around 23 per cent of its population attended Sunday morning church or chapel services and significantly few of these were artisans. Harrison and others concluded religion was seen as a middle class activity here at this time.⁶⁶ But the new middle class hegemony was able to exert a powerful influence on working class leisure in Leeds, as the Sabbatarian policies and pressure from urban elite members such as Edward Baines (see page 164) shaped the timetable. In August 1840 Baines had urged the North Midland Railway not to consider Sunday trains and the Chairman George Glyn agreed that this was the

⁶⁰ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 May 1846.

⁶¹ John K. Walton, 'The Social Development of Blackpool, 1788-1914' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1974), p. 383; John K. Walton, *Blackpool* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 24-29.

⁶² E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997* (2nd edn., London, 1997) p. 329; Walton, *Lancashire: a Social History, 1558-1939*, p.184

⁶³ Jack Simmons, *The Express Train and other Railway Studies* (Nairn, 1994), p. 182.

⁶⁴ Reid, 'Playing and Praying', pp. 790-1.

⁶⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, 1 August 1846.

⁶⁶ J.F.C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain 1832-51* (London, 1988), pp. 124-30.

company's position.⁶⁷ In June 1846, Baines' *Leeds Mercury* emphasised the need to avoid 'desecrating the Sabbath' in a report on a Temperance Gala.⁶⁸ This also reflected Granville's experience in 1841, when he found that Sabbatarian pressure had forced the closure of the Leeds Zoological Gardens on Sundays, the only day when the industrial classes were free from work.⁶⁹ It is surprising that George Hudson's York & North Midland Railway and Midland Railway appeared to offer no trips on Sundays from Leeds during 1846.⁷⁰ However in his evidence to the Select Committee on Railways in 1844, Hudson expressed the view that in Leeds, most people were not willing to travel much from home, and even if he provided free travel 'they would remain stationary'.⁷¹ At the opening of the Hull & Bridlington line in 1846 Hudson did his best to avoid discussing the issue of Sunday railway travelling.⁷² Peter Clarke, who was close to Hudson, had been appointed general manager of the newly amalgamated Midland Railway in 1844, following his role at the North Midland, but left in April 1845 to go to the London & Brighton Railway, where he played an important role in promoting controversial Sunday excursions. Thus a potential champion of Sunday trips was lost to Leeds by 1846, although the prevailing mood against Sunday trips there would have almost certainly prevented him from offering such trips and may have contributed to his departure.⁷³ The absence of Sunday trips leads to the conclusion that ordinary working people may not have had the opportunity to participate in most of the trips, despite their low cost.

The picture was similar in Hull, as the Hull & Selby line had banned Sunday excursions in the early 1840s. Hudson had in theory been in favour when he took over in 1845, although there was still strong Methodist Sabbatarian pressures against this activity and this seems to have shaped the policies in favour of trips on other days.⁷⁴

In Manchester there were no Sunday trips advertised in 1846, indicating the dominance of the Sabbatarian groups here. Manchester was a centre of

⁶⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, 29 August 1840.

⁶⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, 6 June 1846.

⁶⁹ Augustus Bozzi Granville, *Spas of England and Principal Sea-Bathing Places* (1841, reprint, Bath, 1971), pp. 411, 415.

⁷⁰ In 1856 the Chairman of the Midland Railway, John Ellis, confirmed that they never ran Sunday excursion trains, although they did run some other types of train on that day (*Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 23 August 1856).

⁷¹ 1844 (318) *Fifth Report from the Select Committee on Railways*, para. 4343.

⁷² *Hull Packet*, 9 October 1846.

⁷³ *The Standard*, 26 June 1845; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 22 May 1852.

⁷⁴ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 95.

non-conformity at this time, with only 39 Church of England churches out of 137 churches and chapels in Manchester in 1844 and non-conformists were particularly opposed to Sunday leisure.⁷⁵ The table on page 142 indicates that railways associated with Manchester were running Sunday services in 1847, but this did not apply to excursions, despite evidence from the police at that time that Sunday excursions were beneficial in improving behaviour.⁷⁶ Evidence on pages 166-171 indicates the level of conflict within the urban elite in Manchester over the running of Sunday excursions in the early 1840s and this appears to have led to the absence of these in 1846.

Leisure practices and their associated excursion crowds were thus shaped to a great degree by the railway company's stance on Sunday excursions in the face of Sabbatarian pressures. The Sunday travellers had some powerful supporters, with the Duke of Wellington writing to Gladstone in 1844, in the context of debate on the Railway Bill that year, expressing the view that it would be most unfair on the poorest travellers if legislation to enforce new cheap trains caused companies to cease offering third class carriages on Sundays.⁷⁷ Where Catholicism was dominant or at least strong, as in Liverpool and Preston, then Sunday trips were frequent however, allowing many more working class people to take part, whereas in towns such as Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Hull it seems more likely from the evidence that the shaping by Sabbatarians led to more skilled artisan and middle class participation, because of their greater flexibility to travel on other days.⁷⁸

Overall, during much of the period in this study, the Sunday excursion was not seen as acceptable in many eyes, including the press, and it would take a considerable period of negotiation before Sunday trips became acceptable again from the late 1860s.⁷⁹ Many people were thus prevented from participating in this mass mobility because Sunday was their only day away from work. Others benefited from the strategies which companies adopted to overcome Sabbatarian pressures, or where a few companies ignored such pressures. In some cases the

⁷⁵ L. Faucher, *Manchester in 1844* (1844, reprint, London, 1969), p. 24.

⁷⁶ Brooke, 'The Opposition to Sunday Rail Services in North Eastern England, 1834-1914', p. 104. There was also evidence in 1845 that Sunday travel was more expensive than other days (*Manchester Guardian*, 23 July 1845).

⁷⁷ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 284.

⁷⁸ Catholicism in Preston was extremely strong, with support from around 35% of Preston people, dominated by a rural elite and few Irish, whereas Liverpool Catholics were mostly working-class Irish (John K. Walton, *Lancashire: A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), pp.184-185; Michael Savage, *The Dynamics of Working-Class Politics: The Labour Movement in Preston, 1880-1940* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 110-11).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 285-6.

practices of employers were helpful in supporting trips on other days, and these will be discussed in the next section.

Employers

It was in the north of England that railway excursions for the masses expanded dramatically, generated by the density of growing populations increased by short distance migration following industrialisation.⁸⁰ The new factories were concentrated in Lancashire, Cheshire, and the Yorkshire West Riding at this time, as well as parts of the West Midlands and parts of central and lowland Scotland.⁸¹ However even in Lancashire the employment profile in 1841 was complex, for example textile workers comprised only one quarter of the adult male workforce in Manchester in 1841, and of these only half were working in factories; at the same time 40 per cent of employed women over 20 were textile workers, and two thirds were in factories.⁸² Thus the market for excursions was not necessarily primarily from factories, but factory workers were an important component.

The shaping role of employers on excursions was significant and involved factors such as wages, working hours and days employed, acceptance of practice such as 'Saint Monday', workplace holiday closing periods and the development of works' trips.

Wages and the cost of living

In general, employers in the industrial manufacturing districts paid higher wages than the agricultural south. While the average wage of with men, women and children in the cotton mills around 1843 was 10s 6d a week, this include a large proportion of women and children, and some men were earning as much as 20s to 30s a week.⁸³ This contributed to a substantial family income, when compared to male agricultural labourers who might only earn 10s a week. Thus these employers facilitated the ability of cotton workers in the industrial north to participate in the new excursions, generally day trips without associated accommodation costs.

⁸⁰ Royle, *Modern Britain*, pp.58-59.

⁸¹ K. Morgan, *The Birth of Industrial Britain: Social Change, 1750-1850* (Harlow, 2004), p.10.

⁸² John K. Walton, 'The North-West' in F.M.L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Vol.1* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 362.

⁸³ E. Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts; with Statistical Returns of the Means of Education and Religious Instruction in the Manufacturing Districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire* (London, 1843), p. 55.

Calculations of changes in the cost of living in the nineteenth century in relation to earnings have been demonstrated to be fraught with difficulties and complex. Any averages will mask circumstances in particular towns or rural areas. However Feinstein has reviewed previous work and produced new tables which indicate that in general real earnings rose steadily during the 1840s, with a dip in the mid-1850s, recovering their former levels towards 1860.⁸⁴

The following table of data from G.H. Wood demonstrates how average wages in towns stayed constant in the 1840s, although Leeds was an exception. During the 1850s Manchester wages remained at a standstill, but Liverpool and Leeds workers benefited from substantial increases, reflecting a general phenomenon:

*Table 5 Index of average wages in selected towns 1840-1860 (1840=100)*⁸⁵

	1840	1845	1850	1855	1860
Liverpool	100	91	107	137	120
Leeds	100	109	119	121	112
Manchester	100	99	97	100	100
Average in towns	100	99	102	116	116

This does of course mask cyclical depressions, for example in Manchester in 1841-2 and 1847-8, with dramatic fluctuations in employment and short-time working.⁸⁶ However evidence does suggest that wages improved significantly for Lancashire workers between 1820 and 1850.⁸⁷

Data from 1839 indicates that Leeds weekly wages in the woollen industry ranged from 20s to 24s 6d on average, compared to 16s for tailors and 14s for shoemakers. In one Leeds spinning mill in 1840, weekly wages were reported as 21s 8d for men, 5s11 ½d for women and 2s 5¾d for children, and therefore a day's income for a spinner and his wife with two working children would have easily

⁸⁴ C.H. Feinstein, 'Pessimism Perpetuated: Real Wages and the Standard of Living in Britain during and after the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Economic History* 58 (1998), 625-658.

⁸⁵ George H. Wood, 'The Course of Average Wages between 1790 and 1860', *Economic Journal*, 9 (1899), pp. 588-592. Wood's data covered 22 towns in total.

⁸⁶ John Burnett, *Idle Hands: The Experience of Unemployment, 1790-1990* (London, 1994), p.93.

⁸⁷ John K. Walton, *Lancashire: A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), p.167.

covered the cost of an excursion, if the timing were suitable.⁸⁸ By 1861 the average weekly wage of a higher skilled male labourer in England and Wales was 28s-35s, and that of a lower skilled male labourer 21s-25s, with unskilled labourers earning 10s-20s weekly; thus a 100 mile cheap trip at a cost of around 4s 6d would have been manageable, given careful saving.⁸⁹

Working hours

Timing was a key factor in the development of excursions, as employees needed leisure time to be able to spend a day on a trip. Many only had Sunday off, and Sunday excursions were the subject of ferocious battles with Sabbatarians.⁹⁰

However it was the observance of 'Saint Monday', still rife in many areas in the nineteenth century, which was significant to excursions. Saint Monday was 'the avowed and self-constituted holiday of the pleasure-loving portion of 'the million', when it was traditional in an area for employees to refuse to work on Monday, usually where power relations between specialised craft workers and their employers gave them the upper hand.⁹¹ It could only be celebrated with the collusion of the employer however, and it was particularly prominent in Birmingham, mainly with better paid working men in urban districts, who even took Tuesdays and Wednesdays too. The public house interest was very strong in Birmingham, and the city was prosperous at this time, with many small manufacturing masters who paid good wages to their men.⁹² The Saint Monday pattern was reflected in other Midland areas, an anonymous potter working in Tunstall in the Potteries in the early 1840s described how there was little work done on Mondays and Tuesdays.⁹³ When the Shrewsbury & Birmingham line opened in 1849, the company planned

⁸⁸ J.F.C. Harrison, *Early Victorian Britain 1832-51* (London, 1988), p. 39.

⁸⁹ R.D. Baxter, 'National Income: The United Kingdom', paper read before the Statistical Society of London, 21 January 1868 (London, 1868).

⁹⁰ Harrison has noted that in general, until 1850, most employed workers in England were certainly working between 6am and 6pm, Tuesday to Saturday, with many workers taking Mondays off, too, while others worked on Mondays (Mark Harrison, 'The Ordering of the Urban Environment: Time, Work and the Occurrence of Crowds 1790-1835', *Past & Present*, 110 (1987) p.140), see following discussion on Saint Monday.

⁹¹ T. Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes by a Journeyman Engineer* (London, 1867), pp. 115-116.

⁹² D.A. Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', *Past and Present*, 71 (1976), 76-101; Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes by a Journeyman Engineer*, pp. 115-116; *Morning Chronicle*, 7 October 1850.

⁹³ J. Burnett, *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 302.

excursions every Monday throughout the summer, to the Wrekin and Wales, for artisans and their families.⁹⁴

The Midlands was quite different to Lancashire in holiday observance, much less 'civilised' for a longer time, as a result of irregular working practices, lower wages and less thrift.⁹⁵ Walton has suggested that Saint Monday was waning in Lancashire by the 1840s in both spinning and weaving, and the process of 'civilisation' of holidays was underway, aided by the policies of local magistrates. However a correspondent to the *Preston Chronicle* opens another perspective on this by complaining about 'vast numbers of working men lounging about the streets' in Preston on Saint Monday in 1841.⁹⁶ There is certainly evidence in the press in 1850 of large numbers of labouring families visiting Liverpool on cheap trains on Mondays over the summer, all apparently well clothed and looking well fed, and very well behaved; these also included mechanics and artisans from Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire.⁹⁷ Poole has described Saint Monday practices among the colliers of Bolton, and there are examples of Saint Monday leisure practices in other regions of England: on the east coast, trips to the seaside at Yarmouth and Lowestoft by operatives from Norwich during the summer season of 1856 were usually taken on Mondays.⁹⁸

A reduction of working hours was also beneficial to the excursion market. Reid has highlighted the role of employers in reacting to popular activism by reducing working hours (often obliged by the state), thus constructing new forms of leisure.⁹⁹ Women and children working in textile factories benefited from the 1850 Factory Act, which prohibited them from working after 2pm on Saturdays, but this did not apply directly to men or to the many people in other workplaces, such as shops.¹⁰⁰ Birmingham was not covered by this but following representations by groups of working men, engineering employers eventually granted the half day in exchange for the discontinuation of Saint Monday and for working extra hours each day in the 1850s. Arguments had been made that 'evil habits' were more likely to take place on Saint Monday than on Saturday afternoon and evenings. In Liverpool it was only

⁹⁴ *Morning Post*, 1 November 1849.

⁹⁵ Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: A Social History*, pp. 34-5.

⁹⁶ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 October 1841.

⁹⁷ *Manchester Times*, 17 August 1850.

⁹⁸ Robert Poole, *Popular leisure and the Music Hall in Nineteenth-Century Bolton* (Lancaster, 1982), p. 52; *Bury & Norwich Post*, 10 September 1856.

⁹⁹ Reid, 'Playing and Praying', p. 747.

¹⁰⁰ Royle, *Modern Britain: a Social History 1750-1997*, p. 271.

the elite employees who gained the Saturday half day in the 1850s.¹⁰¹ The dates of other urban areas differed widely in gaining the half day, for example Sheffield 1840s, St Helen's 1857, Nottingham 1861, Barrow-in-Furness late 1860s.¹⁰²

Some commentators have suggested arguably that the labour needed in the new factories was comparatively light, compared to much agricultural work, as it involved watching machines, and therefore workers were not too exhausted to enjoy trips away, even though their hours were very long.¹⁰³ The passing of the Ten Hours Act in 1847 and the development of new mechanical inventions also contributed to improvements in the physical condition of textile factory workers.¹⁰⁴

Some railway companies responded to changes in working hours. For example in 1844 when commercial firms in Manchester allowed their employees Saturday afternoons off, the Manchester & Leeds Railway offered special excursion rates on trains leaving on Saturday afternoons, to return either Sunday evening or early Monday morning, to give workers the 'opportunity of visiting their friends'.¹⁰⁵ However these opportunities were not available to all workers, as unfortunately despite intensive campaigning activity over sixty years by the Early Closing Movement, retail shop workers in Manchester were denied a half day and were still working excessively long hours, around 85 weekly, on average, until after the turn of the century.¹⁰⁶

Longer holiday periods, when some workplaces closed down, generated much excursion traffic, especially in smaller towns in the Midlands and North of England, where with small units of production, holiday patterns were focused around traditional carnivals and feasts. The significance of Whitsun in places such as Manchester will be examined on page 162.

Works' trips

Works' railway trips began as early as 1840 and were a common feature during the 1840s and 1850s, designed often as a public relations exercise by paternalistic employers to motivate their workers and emphasise the position of an employer in

¹⁰¹ Reid, 'Playing and Praying', p. 751; *Morning Chronicle*, 27 October 1852; Walvin, *Beside the Seaside: A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday*, p. 54.

¹⁰² Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', p. 86.

¹⁰³ Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, p.55.

¹⁰⁴ *Leisure Hour*, 6 April 1854.

¹⁰⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 19 June 1844.

¹⁰⁶ *Manchester Times*, 8 October 1870; *Essex Standard*, 6 August 1856.

the local community.¹⁰⁷ Joyce has discussed the pervasive role of paternalism especially in the industrial north after 1850, the idea of being ‘master in one’s own factory, just as in one’s own home’, and how trips were used to generate feelings of gratitude and respect towards the employer, arising from a shared sense of community.¹⁰⁸ These might be examined in the light of Razzell’s concept of a working class structured by deference.¹⁰⁹ In the case of factory workers – the traditional proletarians standing in opposition to their employers – it could be argued that employers used the works’ trip in an attempt to develop a closer relationship with their workers.¹¹⁰ Some light is shed on a more negative aspect of this activity by a police report in 1858, which records a dispute between an operative, a sweeper in a Preston worsted mill, and his employer, over whether he should be forced by his employer to buy a 1s ticket for a cheap works trip on a Saturday. He bought the ticket despite straitened circumstances, but in the event he did not go on the trip and was summonsed by his employer for stopping away from work. He claimed ‘I was obliged to go [on the trip] or be bagged’.¹¹¹ This report also notes that typically all employees had to assemble in the factory yard and walk to the station for the trip, headed by a band. Accounts of works trips in this period often reflected performances carried out in travel and destination space, for example workers from J.Paley took a trip from Preston to Fleetwood in August 1844, marching in procession to the station, with assorted flags, a band and mottoes fixed to the sides of the carriage, and a procession on their return plus the obligatory three cheers as they went past their employer’s house.¹¹² Press correspondents were keen to emphasise the positive and moral nature of such activities in support of employers: reports from Preston in August 1849 detail a number of works’ outings to Fleetwood, with the reporter at pains to record these as an expression of ‘masters and men...all enjoying themselves in one boat, - no differences, no contentions, no jealousies’ showing mutual respect. Here the writer suggests this was unprompted for example Mr Grundy’s men welcomed him loudly but ‘with no slavish shouting’.¹¹³

While many examples of employers’ trips typically feature factory workers, especially from Lancashire and Yorkshire, on a few occasions other types of

¹⁰⁷ W.W. Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development* (London, 1915), p. 372; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, pp. 303-4.

¹⁰⁸ Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics* (Brighton, 1980), pp.136-154.

¹⁰⁹ See Introduction page 29.

¹¹⁰ P.E. Razzell, Introduction to P.E. Razzell and R.W Wainwright (eds.), *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from Letters to the Morning Chronicle* (London, 1973), p. xxix.

¹¹¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 4 September 1858. ‘Bagged’ means sacked.

¹¹² *Preston Chronicle*, 24 Aug 1844.

¹¹³ *Preston Chronicle*, 11 August 1849.

employer became involved in shaping this activity. For example, there were reports of a Scottish agriculturalist, Mr Cowie, from Mains of Haulkerton, organising local agricultural employers to send their rural farm servants on a railway excursion in 1854, when 2,000 farm servants from Angus and Mearnsire in Scotland travelled to Aberdeen. Cowie was particularly keen on the moral and physical improvement of farm servants and the role of education in facilitating this, and had arranged for tickets to be presented to the men by their employers.¹¹⁴ The men were formed into marching order, four abreast and made ‘a triumphal entry into the Granite City, preceded by the Forfar Band’. Mr Cowie gave them a personal guided tour of a number of buildings, works, docks, barracks and a shipyard, followed by lunch in the Union Hall – a pound of wheaten bread, half a pound of cheese and a ‘chopin’ of beer.¹¹⁵ Mr Cowie expressed the view that people on excursion parties sometimes became excited, foolish and offensive to others, mainly down to the consumption of spirits and he hoped that by providing the servants with a small amount of beer, this would dissuade them from going elsewhere for more liquor. He also hoped that they would show their gratitude for the trip by ‘increased diligence’. A similar excursion took place two years later in August 1856, combining leisure activity with more worthy pursuits, when again Mr Cowie organised another excursion of farm servants to Perth. Only 500, male and female, took part this time, but the day was rainier, reducing the potential for outdoor activities. In the City Hall they were subjected to possibly less exciting activity, a competition featuring ‘arithmetic, farm bookkeeping, reading, the history of Scotland, the history of the Covenanters etc’. The report notes that many of the farm servants exhibited ‘a very creditable acquaintance with the several subjects.’ When the weather had cleared sports and games were held, followed by a prize giving.¹¹⁶ Thus in this case the excursion was used by the employers as a tool for the moral reform and education of workers, possibly a particularly Scottish concern, and these would be classified by Razzell as ‘traditional deferential’ workers. The motivation for this seems to vary from that of the employers from Preston examined above, who were seeking to bring their employees closer together, rather than to educate them.

¹¹⁴ *Aberdeen Journal*, 16 August 1854, *Aberdeen Journal*, 28 January 1852. In mid-nineteenth century Scotland, rural children were obliged to attend parochial schools between October and March, as education was valued, unlike those in England, and therefore farm servants were sometimes able to read (G.Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-75* (London, 1979), p.134.)

¹¹⁵ Half a pint.

¹¹⁶ *Aberdeen Journal*, 4 April 1860, 4 July 1860.

The shaping role of employers on excursions in 1846

Looking at the sample of excursions in 1846 reveals the differential effect of employer practices, particularly in relation to 'Saint Monday'.¹¹⁷ For example in Leeds that year there was a predominance of day trips leaving on a Monday or Wednesday, and staying trips, suggesting involvement by the middle classes or by better paid artisans or self-employed tradesmen with the flexibility of celebrating 'Saint Monday'. This is similar to Reid's evidence from Birmingham.¹¹⁸

By contrast, in Manchester the introduction of steam power meant that manufacturers needed to keep their machinery working to routines and thus could not accept their workers taking time off on Mondays, Manchester was ahead of Birmingham in the development of this technology and thus Saint Monday lasted longer in the Midlands.¹¹⁹ However it was reported in 1850 that LNWR were offering cheap trips to Alderley Edge on the first Monday of each summer month, amid complaints from workers that this may have suited shopkeepers rather more than industrial workers who would have preferred Saturdays.¹²⁰

In Hull in 1846 there were a number of Monday trips, both day and staying. The observance of Saint Monday is usually associated with an urban economy featuring skilled artisans working flexibly in small craft units, but Hull's economy at this time featured import and export shipping, seed crushing, cotton manufacturing, trawl-fishing and industries associated with this, such as transport.¹²¹ A survey in 1839 found that employment was not regular, often seasonal, and there was little work for women and children when compared to Lancashire for example. Importantly there was no 'aristocracy of labour' which drove the observance of Saint Monday in other towns at the time. There was a large lower middle class of small business owners, and clerks for example, but this sector was unstable.¹²² It may well be that in this case rather than employment practices it was the influence of

¹¹⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, 18 April 1846 - 10 October 1846; *York Herald*, 24 October 1846; *Bradford Observer*, 30 July 1846; *Hull Packet*, 22 May 1846 - 25 September 1846; *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 May 1846 - 2 October 1846; *Manchester Times*, 30 May 1846 - 25 July 1846; *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1846 - 5 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 4 April 1846 - 12 September 1846.

¹¹⁸ Reid, 'Iron Roads', 57-73.

¹¹⁹ Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: A Social History*, p. 34; Reid, 'The Decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', p. 84.

¹²⁰ *Manchester Times*, 27 March 1850.

¹²¹ Victor Bailey, *'This Rash Act': Suicide Across the Life Cycle in the Victorian City* (Stanford, 1998), pp. 106-9.

¹²² Douglas Reid, 'Weddings, Weekdays, Work and Leisure in Urban England 1791-1911: The Decline of Saint Monday revisited', *Past and Present*, 153 (1996), pp. 135-63; Bailey, *'This Rash Act'*, p. 109.

competing steamboat trips that shaped the profile of railway excursions in Hull, as these traditionally took place on often on Mondays and Thursdays.

Importantly, Liverpool and Preston did not need Monday trips as Sunday excursions were available (see page 150), when the masses could participate.

Many workers were only able to go on excursions during the annual Whit holiday, and many railway companies ran many excursion trains at that time. There were however exceptions, for example in 1846 in Leeds there were none advertised or reported on in the press. It was a hot weekend, with temperatures of 72° -76°, but there appeared to be no clear tradition for Leeds people to be able to or wish to take holidays in celebration of Whitsun. As a result of Leeds' employer profile there was no universal shut-down of its industrial base.¹²³ By comparison the evidence reveals that in Manchester in 1846 almost all of excursions (ten out of twelve trips) took place at Whitsun, the most important holiday of the year there, 'the one week in the year when, by mutual consent, almost everyone ceases from labour'.¹²⁴ Manchester people had traditionally enjoyed a mobile leisure experience during Whit week, even before the advent of the railway, with excursions, either on foot or in vehicles.¹²⁵ It is not clear how comprehensive the shut-down was, as a correspondent noted that some Sunday schoolchildren could not join the Whit Monday procession because of their employment in the mills which did not stop working until Tuesday evening.¹²⁶ The *Manchester Times* however claimed that there was little work and very little business carried out during the whole of Whit week.¹²⁷

The railway was not the sole mode of transport for such excursions at this time. There were also Whit week outings in 1846 from Manchester to Dunham Park, when thousands of Sunday school children and other people travelled along the roads or the Bridgewater Canal, using farmers' carts, large waggons, canal boats (47 boats engaged on the Thursday), Swift packets and omnibuses, with an estimated 50,000 people visiting the Park between Tuesday and Saturday (3,000

¹²³ *Leeds Mercury*, 6 June 1846. A few events were recorded at this time - a large gala organised by the Leeds Temperance Society at the Zoological Gardens in Headingley on Whit Tuesday, which attracted large numbers of visitors from the West Riding and a train of teetotallers from Leicester.

¹²⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 June 1846. The weather in Manchester was much hotter than in earlier years, with a spell of fine, dry and warm weather at the end of May, reaching 78° in the shade on Whit Monday and 81° on Whit Tuesday.

¹²⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 June 1840.

¹²⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 June 1846.

¹²⁷ *Manchester Times*, 6 June 1846.

scholars on Wednesday).¹²⁸ It was estimated that the canal boats carried nearly 12,000 people on the Thursday alone. (It was not possible to make this journey by railway in 1846 as the Manchester, South Junction & Altrincham Railway did not open until 1849.¹²⁹)

Strikingly, excursions around Manchester meant that two opposing forces were in motion - country people ventured into the great town and town people ventured out into the countryside. There were also many visitors from surrounding towns, as in the 1840s Manchester was surrounded by a web of population centres, each connected by the railway to the centre: Oldham (43,000), Bury, Rochdale and Halifax), (24,000 to 26,000 each), Bolton, Preston and Chorley (totalling 114,000), Stalybridge, Ashton, Dukinfield and Hyde (80,000), Stockport (50,000), Wigan (26,000) and Warrington (21,000).¹³⁰ As a helpful estimation of the sheer crowds involved in this feast of Whitsun mobility for the masses in 1846, the *Manchester Guardian* summarised the traffic for the week conveyed on lines which terminated in Manchester, including double tickets, day tickets and Sunday scholars, in carriages and in waggons:¹³¹

Table 6 Excursion crowds in Manchester at Whit 1846

<i>Railway company</i>	<i>Sunday to Saturday</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Manchester & Leeds	103,000	(20,000 more than 1845)
Liverpool & Manchester	60,000	(around 17,000 in waggons)(increase of 400% on 1845)
Sheffield & Manchester	101,600	(including 21,458 scholars)
Manchester & Birmingham	85,300	(32,000 more than 1845)
Manchester & Bolton	45,800	(almost 100% increase on 1845)
Total	395,700	(only very slight increase on 1845)

¹²⁸ Dunham Park was a country estate near Altrincham, 10 miles south of Manchester; *Manchester Guardian*, 6 June 1846. *Manchester Times*, 5 June 1846, 12 June 1846. Swift packets were drawn along the canal by trotting horses (David E. Owen, *Canals to Manchester* (Manchester, 1977), p. 15.)

¹²⁹ Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* (Oxford, 1997), p. 308.

¹³⁰ L. Faucher, *Manchester in 1844* (1844, reprint, London, 1969), p. 15; B.R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 24-26.

¹³¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 June 1846.

This indicates that the Whit trip traffic contributed to the mobility of almost 400,000 people in the area, a huge spectacle of mobility, with large numbers of the working classes free to take holiday over a lengthy period at this time.

Finally in relation to works' trips, looking at the sample towns in 1846, there was only evidence in the press of two of these, out of a total of 104 excursions in the six towns examined: a staying excursion from Leeds to Hull and Aldbrough for employees of publishing firm, and a trip for cotton mill workers at the Horrocks, Jacson factory in Preston, to Fleetwood.¹³² The Leeds trip was atypical, because of its small size and because it was a special occasion when the Leeds publisher and stationer was celebrating his son's majority. Thus certainly during this year the employers were not playing a large role in organising trips themselves.

In general however employers played a key role in shaping excursion crowds in this period, by their policies on wages, the level of working hours, holiday periods, acceptance or not of Saint Monday, half days and works' trips, with underlying motivations. Such factors were as important as the Sabbatarians in constructing or preventing opportunities for mass leisure mobility, and the social entrepreneurs identified in Chapter 3 were quick to take advantage of this.

Urban elites

Urban elites might be seen to play a surprising role in shaping the development of railway excursions for the masses in the middle of the nineteenth century, but historians have emphasised the role of social structures as a way of explaining how cultural practices developed in British towns at that time. Morris highlights the way that urban elites overlapped – economic, political, social and cultural – in a particular place, and this was an extremely important feature because these people might control both the press and the local railway network.¹³³ The power that such overlapping elites generated would influence the development of excursion traffic in a location, for example Edward Baines in Leeds and George Hudson in the north east. Baines saw it as a solution to the need for rational recreation, although his strong Sabbatarian views conflicted with the timing of such trips.¹³⁴ While he was incensed at the way that metropolitan prejudice against the manufacturing districts in the early 1840s painted pictures of 'scenes of vice, ignorance, sedition, irreligion, cruelty, and wretchedness' in the north, and campaigned to present data which

¹³² *Leeds Mercury*, 22 August 1846; *Preston Chronicle*, 6 June 1846.

¹³³ Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns', p. 397.

¹³⁴ *York Herald*, 9 February 1856.

showed a more realistic picture of urban life in these areas, he still saw the need to promote excursions as a means of rational recreation. Baines' liberal views only stretched so far, he also argued that the new railway communication could be used to enable military forces to travel quickly to quell disturbances of the peace.¹³⁵ Hudson of course was keen to make money.

Elite members could take a surprising role. Visiting crowds needed refreshment and by 1858 there were, unusually, many free public drinking fountains in Liverpool for example, installed gradually by the philanthropist and temperance enthusiast Charles Melly at his own expense since 1854, and their value to excursionists was recognised in the press.¹³⁶ Melly had been inspired to carry out this work by a visit to Geneva; he acknowledged the benefits of a free supply of drinking water not only to emigrants at the docks but 'to people from the manufacturing and rural districts, who fill the street as excursionists' especially as an antidote to drunkenness when beer was the only other refreshment option, or water from horse troughs. He was a practical reformer, active in the provision of wayside benches and the promotion of public parks and open spaces in Liverpool. His work was recognised in a public testimonial in 1861, but tragically he suffered from depression and eventually committed suicide in 1888. Following his lead, other towns began to carry out similar initiatives, sometimes funded by councils, sometimes by individual benefactors, for example Leeds, Hull, Derby, Chester, Leicester, Sunderland, Aberdeen and Glasgow. This initiative also inspired the foundation of the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association in London in 1859. A report of a meeting of the working men's auxiliary committee of this organisation in 1859 notes that it was the working classes and the aristocracy who gave the most support to their fund-raising efforts, they met with indifference from the middle classes.¹³⁷

A town would be part of its own particular spatial network, aided by the presence of railway linkages, and therefore it is impossible to isolate individual factors which lead to a generalisation of cause and effect. Towns and cities encompassed a range of factors affecting excursion crowds which distinguished them from other towns, for example their economic structure and the level of class conflict. In particular a fast

¹³⁵ Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, p. 53; *Leeds Mercury*, 29 August 1840.

¹³⁶ For example on the Brymbo works trip in 1858 (*Wrexham and Denbighshire Weekly Advertiser*, 18 September 1858)

¹³⁷ *Bradford Observer*, 12 August 1858; *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 16 April, 1859; *Leeds Mercury*, 2 July 1857; Charles P. Melly, *A Paper on Drinking Fountains, read in the Health Department of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences* (Liverpool, 1858); *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 November 1861, 12 November 1888; *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 17 July 1859.

growing urban area might generate concerns about 'the masses' and the worries about excursion crowds, based on historical memories of conflict and class. Many smaller towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire promoted 'individuality and local pride...independent character...thrift and perseverance', which might be seen to support excursion activity, by encouraging savings clubs and by stimulating the desire for group visits to other towns in the area.¹³⁸

Morris refers to 'the dominant agencies of local government, local media, the institutions of education, culture and philanthropy and the elite belonging to the town', and these were precisely the actors who played a part in shaping the excursion profile.¹³⁹ The profile of local middle class leadership might stimulate the growth of voluntary associations such as mechanics' institutes, which then might flourish and propagate in other locations, supported by railway excursions where members visited other cities to encourage mutual understanding.¹⁴⁰ Powerful men used the provincial press to stimulate or inhibit excursion traffic: thus the urban print culture was a significant factor. Paternalist employers and work cultures shaped works' trips. The religious background of urban elites might have a major impact on how far Sunday train services were allowed or campaigned against. The level of sectarianism would have had an impact on the context for the construction of regional identities and the desire to travel en masse between communities. The following case study examines just one member of the urban elite in Manchester, to illustrate the factors at work in the social construction of the urban leisure context and the mass excursion.

Manchester

Briggs has suggested that there were two images of Manchester in the late 1830s and 1840s. First was an older image of Manchester as 'a cradle of economic wealth and of social disorder'. It had been renowned for its social disturbances in 1831-2, generated by restless handloom weavers, and identified with agitation, for example the Anti-Corn Law League was founded there in 1839 and the Chartists generated high levels of support in the town in the late 1830s; Manchester also

¹³⁸ M. Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851* (Manchester, 1957), p. 53.

¹³⁹ Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns', p. 425.

¹⁴⁰ Susan Barton, 'The Mechanics Institutes: Pioneers of Leisure and Excursion Travel', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 67 (1993), 47-58.

became known as the centre of non-conformity.¹⁴¹ Particular events in its history might be seen to have increased class consciousness, such as memories of the horrors of Peterloo, as a result inhibiting cooperation between the factory workers and the middle classes, and increasing concern among the latter about the power of working class crowds, leading to views that rational recreation was important in controlling the masses.¹⁴²

Secondly it was seen as 'a cradle of both wealth and of new and formative social values', regarded as a symbol of the age by the 1840s, with a new and exciting 'urban aristocracy'.¹⁴³ A big commercial centre, it became an incorporated town, a borough, in 1838, led by the Liberals, who influenced policy for the rest of the century.¹⁴⁴ During the 1840s and 1850s the profile of the City Council changed, with a considerable reduction in the proportion of large scale manufacturers and merchants, and an increase of smaller proprietors (the liberal 'shopocracy') and of gentlemen and proprietors.¹⁴⁵ After 1850 'prosperity' came and increasing 'respectability', emphasised by a high profile visit by Queen Victoria in 1851 and city status in 1853.¹⁴⁶ Kidd has reflected that Manchester provided 'a "theatre" for the expression and consolidation of middle class power', lacking aristocratic influences.¹⁴⁷ G.W.Wood, a prominent member of the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society took the lead in establishing the Royal Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and Art in 1823, which played a central role in promoting the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. The Manchester Athenaeum Club for the Advancement and Diffusion of Knowledge was founded 1836, headed by Richard Cobden, and organised a number of excursions, very much middle class affairs.¹⁴⁸ During the 1840s a push for local reform by leading

¹⁴¹ A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 124.

¹⁴² Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns', pp. 400-401. Two newspapers reported on activities in the town, the *Manchester Guardian*, liberal and reformist, but critical of the League, and the *Manchester Times*, a more radical publication (M. Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67* (Aldershot, 1996), p. 70).

¹⁴³ A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 93-4; see also Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*; A.J. Kidd, *Manchester* (3rd edn., Edinburgh, 2002).

¹⁴⁴ Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*, pp. 67-73; A.J. Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁵ A.J. Kidd, 'The Middle Class in Nineteenth Century Manchester' in Alan J. Kidd (ed.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), p.13.

¹⁴⁶ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁴⁷ Kidd, 'The Middle Class in Nineteenth Century Manchester', p.5.

¹⁴⁸ Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*, pp. 74-75, 161; M.E. Rose, 'Culture, Philanthropy and the Manchester Middle Classes' in A.J. Kidd (ed.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 110-111. The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition

figures of the urban elite led to the Manchester Improvement Committee in 1844, the Borough Police Act 1844 and the Sanitary Improvement Act 1845.

Briggs highlighted features of Manchester in the 1830s which affected the influence of powerful elites. These include its large size, which diminished the powers of traditional local leaders and social influences, the structure of its industry, with wealth held by certain people who had to be listened to, its relative newness which reduced traditional bonds, and lastly the level of squalor, which led to social segregation and low life expectancy.¹⁴⁹ It suffered from an economic depression after 1836, the development of the powerloom transformed its employment profile, leading to a reduction of males in the textile workforce from 35% to 25% between 1841 and 1861.¹⁵⁰ The employment of many women and children in factories however had the potential to increase the disposable income of families for spending on excursions, at the expense of male textile workers. Commentators were well aware that in common with most other major towns, there was nowhere for local operatives to spend their leisure time healthily, because of the disappearance of common land.¹⁵¹

Manchester had a powerful middle class elite in the study period, which owned a large number of warehouse, shops and banks, giving them power over land and the labour market. This enabled them to act in unison, for instance from the mid 1840s commercial and public offices began to close at noon on Saturdays in Manchester, allowing a half day for workers, stimulating the market for excursions, while at the same time supporting the Sabbatarians by replacing the need for Sunday excursions. Some railway companies responded by running extra trains on Saturday afternoons. A correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian* in June 1844 however complained that the railways were slow to react to this potential market, and that he had to persuade the Manchester & Leeds to run a cheap weekend trip on their line. The advertisement for this in 1844 appears to pre-date by some five years Simmons' evidence about the initiation of weekend tickets outside London, in 1849.¹⁵²

however was not particularly successful in attracting the working classes until the charge was reduced, despite a number of Sunday school excursions.

¹⁴⁹ A government report in 1842 stated that the average age at death of mechanics, labourers and their families was only 17, for tradesmen and their families it was 20 and professional people 38. (Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp. 89-94, 101).

¹⁵⁰ Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁵¹ Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, p. 41.

¹⁵² *Manchester Guardian*, 15 June 1844, 19 June 1844.

Middle class philanthropists, worried about the potential for agitation in Manchester and the lack of open spaces, were able to use their networks to promote excursions for the masses as a tool for rational recreation. Powerful figures frequently combined railway affairs with cultural and municipal activity. Edward Watkin was a Manchester railway promoter who was involved with a number of civic organisations from his youth. A director of the Manchester Athenaeum, he helped to start the Saturday half holiday movement in Manchester for clerks, extending their leisure time for excursions. He also promoted the need for public parks, three of which eventually opened in Manchester and Salford, following complaints in 1844 that there were no parks or open spaces in the city for workers to spend leisure time, leaving them only the street for open air leisure.¹⁵³ There were however two important pleasure gardens in Manchester – Belle Vue Gardens and Pomona Gardens – and these offered a variety of entertainments and attractions, especially at Whitsun. The new spaces offered by the public parks were a long way from the most densely populated working class areas, and there were rules about opening hours and behaviour which restricted their popularity with the masses.¹⁵⁴

Watkin's views on leisure opportunities for the masses influenced his policies in his railway career. He worked as assistant to Mark Huish at LNWR and then became general manager of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway in 1853, playing a leading role in negotiations with the Great Northern, LNWR and the Midland railways.¹⁵⁵ He had strong views about the working classes and rational recreation, pro-actively supporting this but concerned about Sunday observance. He recognised the conundrum that the masses needed to access new spaces and to gain the benefits of associating with other classes, but they could only do this on their day off on Sundays, and this would involve the railwayman working on the Sabbath. As a result Watkin ran excursions trains on Sundays but as little as

¹⁵³ Reid, 'Playing and Praying', pp. 758, 762-3; David Hodgkins, *The Second Railway King : the life and times of Sir Edward Watkin, 1819-1901* (Cardiff, 2002); David Hodgkins, *Writing the Biography of Edward Watkin* (York, 1999), IRS Working Paper, <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/irs/irshome/papers/watkin.htm> [accessed 7 December 2010]; Sutton, C.W., 'Watkin, Sir Edward William, first baronet (1819–1901)', rev. Philip S. Bagwell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/36762> [accessed 1 Sept 2009]; Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*, pp. 162-3.

¹⁵⁴ Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67*, pp. 162-3; Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, p. 135; Kidd, *Manchester*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁵ Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History from 1603 to the 1990s* (Oxford, 1997), p. 558; C.W. Sutton, 'Watkin, Sir Edward William, first baronet (1819–1901)', rev. Philip S. Bagwell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/36762>, [accessed 1 Sept 2009].

possible.¹⁵⁶ Thus in the 1850s, Watkin typified the dilemma of reforming urban elite members on how to square the circle of promoting rational recreation for the masses to prevent class conflict developing, alongside religious observance, though there is much evidence that the masses did not attend church even when they were not tripping, especially in the northern industrial towns.¹⁵⁷

At the same time however while the middle classes might have been keen to support the working classes in their cultural and artistic self-expression, this did not extend to political self-expression.¹⁵⁸ An account from Manchester in 1844 sheds light on the absence of Chartist railway excursions. In this case it was a canal excursion but it demonstrates the attitudes involved. It reported that when Manchester Chartists tried to hire a boat from the Irwell and Mersey Navigation to take Sunday school scholars along the canal to Barton-upon-Irwell, as they had done the previous year, they were refused, and told that orders were 'not to let the Chartists have a boat on any account'. In addition if anyone else lent them a boat 'the moment it was found it was to be tied up'.¹⁵⁹ An examination of the radical *Northern Star* reveals only one Chartist excursion by railway between 1838 and 1852, a four shilling Sunday trip from London to Brighton in August 1845, when three thousand people took part in three trains, and the trip proceeds were used in support of the Chartist Land Society.¹⁶⁰ However several other Chartist excursions are recorded over the period, using either horse drawn 'vans', carts, or steamboats, on rivers or canals.¹⁶¹ Several reports mentioned the novelty of a Chartist pleasure trip.¹⁶² The capacity of vans and boats was surprisingly large, with reports of trips involving 400 people in several vehicles. From London steamboats were used along the River Thames or vans on the roads, for example to O'Connorville, the Chartist estate in Hertfordshire. Some trips took place in the North East and in Scotland. Many would run on Sundays, recognising the suitability of this day for the working

¹⁵⁶ D. Hodgkins, *Writing the Biography of Edward Watkin* (York, 1999), IRS Working Paper, p. 7, <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/irs/irshome/papers/watkin.htm> [accessed 7 December 2010].

¹⁵⁷ See for example Reid, 'Playing and Praying', pp.788-790; James Obelkevich, 'Religion' in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950 Vol. 3: Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 337-340.

¹⁵⁸ B.E. Maidment, 'Class and Cultural Production in the Industrial City' in A.J. Kidd (ed.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), p. 157.

¹⁵⁹ *Northern Star*, 17 June 1843, 8 June 1844.

¹⁶⁰ *Northern Star*, 19 July 1845, 9 August 1845, 23 August 1845.

¹⁶¹ See the *Northern Star*, 20 August 1842, 17 June 1843, 29 July 1843, 12 August 1843, 26 August 1843, 2 September 1843, 8 June 1844, 22 June 1844, 31 May 1845, 19 July 1845, 9 August 1845, 23 August 1845, 30 August 1845, 11 July 1846, 29 May 1847, 14 August 1847, 9 September 1848, 5 May 1849, 26 May 1849, 28 July 1849, 20 April 1850, 27 April 1850, 25 May 1850, 13 July 1850, 27 July 1850, 14 June 1851, 19 July 1851.

¹⁶² *Northern Star*, 26 August 1843, 19 July 1845.

family, otherwise they tended to take place on Mondays. Many trips were organised as fund-raising activities, sometimes to distribute Chartist material too. Malcolm Chase offers no information about the collective use of the railway for excursions to events or other cultural/social activity by Chartist crowds. Mass walking processions to such events played an important role, as a dramatic demonstration of strength.¹⁶³ At times individuals might have travelled by train to events, but there is conflicting evidence about this, dependant on the political slant of the newspaper.¹⁶⁴ The absence of railway trips reflects the mutual antagonism between Chartists and railway companies, especially as trains had been used to move soldiers during Chartist disturbances in 1842.¹⁶⁵ Saville has given examples of the role that railway companies played in opposing Chartist activity, for example encouraging employees to volunteer as special constables, and accommodating soldiers in station buildings, thus it is not surprising that the use of the railway for Chartist trips did not develop.¹⁶⁶ If it had, the enormity of the crowds taking part and the variety of destinations would have done much to spread the political ideas of the Chartist movement during the 1840s.

The press

Chapter 2 has provided a critical study of the media as a source for research on excursions in this period, but the press was also an important force in shaping their development, especially the provincial press. Usually controlled by members of the urban elite, it played a powerful, progressive and significant role in advertising, reporting and commenting on railway excursions, stimulating and encouraging business and commenting on these new crowds, which might be seen as a potential threat to public order. As Jackson has noted 'the editors of the larger urban newspapers of the North saw themselves as intermediaries between political, economic and social theorists and particularly local readerships'.¹⁶⁷ Print was primarily an urban media, with towns and cities being 'a focus of production,

¹⁶³ Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester 2007), pp.38, 214 for example.

¹⁶⁴ See for example the Camp Meeting at Oldham Edge in 1848 (*Manchester Times*, 25 March 1848). On the occasion of the London demonstration in April 1848, the report in the *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 11 April 1848 indicates that several railway companies brought up 'an immense quantity of persons', but *Liverpool Mercury* of the same date reported railway companies as 'very properly refusing to furnish any facilities for such a purpose.'

¹⁶⁵ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 365.

¹⁶⁶ John Saville, *1848: The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge, 1987), pp.109,115-7, 143.

¹⁶⁷ I. Jackson, *The Provincial Press and the Community* (Manchester,1971), p. 11.

consumption and distribution', and the provincial press had a subtle importance in helping to construct a sense of regional identity and for creating 'a basis for common knowledge for ...the neighbourhood'.¹⁶⁸ The press used railway networks for distribution and thus the large concentration of population in the ensuing press catchment areas enabled excursion advertisers to reach a big audience which was relevant to their services.¹⁶⁹ Newspapers played a hand in highlighting the success of excursions or otherwise to future entrepreneurs and social groups for example and in persuading or dissuading potential excursionists. For example a writer in the *Liverpool Mercury* in May 1855 sought to explain the lack of excursion visitors that year in Liverpool at Whitsun. He was concerned that there was only one LNWR excursion by Mr Marcus to London, and felt that the number of Whit excursionists was a barometer for the 'social condition of the working classes in the manufacturing and surrounding districts'. In his view the main cause was the long and severe winter that year, which had the effect of reducing workers' disposable income. However in emphasising the lack of providers the press might be seen to be encouraging other entrepreneurs to enter the market.¹⁷⁰

There were frequent advertisements on the front pages for both rail and steamboat excursions (generating a substantial source of income for the newspapers), which enabled readers to compare modes, make judgements about value and shape the take-up of trips.¹⁷¹ In supporting the new developments in mass mobility, the press also provided some useful statistical collations, a key feature of Victorian writing. The *Leeds Mercury* expressed excitement in 1846 that 'special pleasure trips from Leeds have become quite the order of the day'. The paper published a table (see following) showing the reduction in fares and mileage travelled for five forthcoming trips. The anonymous writer expressed a typical view by the urban elite at the time, recommending trips not just on economy grounds, but as a tool in the moral reform of the masses: a 'desirable means of recreation to a great mass of persons who would otherwise be debarred from the benefits'. It was suggested that the 'humbler' classes could use them to see scenes and places for their 'magnificence, antiquity, or historical or commercial association'. They were regarded as a source of 'healthful enjoyment' and 'calculated to improve and gratify

¹⁶⁸ Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns', p. 423.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

¹⁷⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 May 1855.

¹⁷¹ Excursion promoters also made heavy use of handbills to distribute information effectively, targeting the masses who might not have access to a shared newspaper or whose standards of literacy would have discouraged the use of the press.

the taste and enlarge the views' of participants'.¹⁷² This table highlights how the new excursions suddenly became affordable for the masses.

*Table 11 Costs of selected cheap railway trips from Leeds in 1846*¹⁷³

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Usual cost of third class ticket</i>	<i>Third class excursion fare</i>	<i>Distance out and back (m)</i>	<i>Usual cost per mile (d)*</i>	<i>Cheap cost per mile(d)*</i>
London	34s	15s	408	1.00	0.44
Scarborough	16s	3s 6d	146	1.32	0.29
Castle Howard	9s	2s 6d	94	1.15	0.32
Sheffield	6s 6d	2s 6d	76	1.03	0.40
Liverpool	21s#	5s 3d	184~	1.37	0.58

* extrapolations from data # Bradshaw indicates a fare of 19s at the time
#mileage adjusted using Bradshaw, as the paper used an incorrect figure of 108 miles here

The provincial press also played a major role in supporting the development of voluntary societies, frequently involved in commissioning trips, for example the *Liverpool Mercury* and the *Leeds Mercury* both promoted mechanics' institutes.¹⁷⁴ However some newspapers were particularly proud of their role in enforcing Sabbatarian practices on the working classes, as recorded for example by the political editor of the *Manchester Times* in 1825.¹⁷⁵

The press often used rational recreation as a theme, and felt able to allay the fears of the public about the crowd, with frequently comments on the nature and behaviour of the excursion crowds, well aware of public concerns about drunkenness and debauchery and the potential for uprising, especially in the 1840s. There were some concerns however about the way that the new mobility might be perceived as a threat. Some papers such as the Tory *Morning Post*, aimed at the upper classes, supported this new leisure activity for the masses, but suggested that critics saw such advances as 'a weakening of their political fulcrum'.¹⁷⁶ In 1851 the *Economist* hailed the railway as the 'Magna Charter' of the motive freedom of the poor, in providing much needed recreation, reporting that the number of people enjoying cheap trips from Manchester had risen from 116,000 in 1848 to 150,000 in

¹⁷² *Leeds Mercury*, 22 August 1846.

¹⁷³ *Leeds Mercury*, 22 August 1846; *Bradshaw's Monthly Railway and Steam Navigation Guide*, 1 March 1846.

¹⁷⁴ Tylecote, *Mechanics Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851*, pp. 58, 61.

¹⁷⁵ Donald Read, *Press and People 1790-1850: Opinion in three English Cities* (Westport, 1975), p. 89.

¹⁷⁶ *Morning Post*, 12 August 1853.

1849 and 202,000 in 1850.¹⁷⁷ A report in the *Era* in 1857 suggested that the excursion train could be responsible for 'lengthening out the lives' of ordinary people by allowing them more time to enjoy activities which previously took a long time. It acknowledged the role of the Saturday half-holiday in encouraging this, and urged employers to offer more works' outings too.¹⁷⁸

The term 'monster train' appeared in the press as early as 1840 and was soon commonly used in relation to excursions in the 1840s, attached as a descriptive label to the new phenomenon, giving a distinctive aura to excursions. *The Standard* decided they were 'all the rage' in 1844, like a 'monster quadrille'.¹⁷⁹ By 1844 the American magazine *Living Age* suggested that 'monster' excursions of three to four thousand people were common in the northern manufacturing districts.¹⁸⁰ A perceptive reporter in the *Bradford Observer* wrote that these 'monster' trains of 'pleasure-seeking denizens' were becoming so common that they were hardly noteworthy, but reflected that they may be of interest at some future time.¹⁸¹ In 1844 the experience of watching two monster trains converging on York, from Newcastle and from Leicester, was compared to a marvel from the Arabian Nights by a reporter.¹⁸²

There were many occasions where the press summarised social benefits, for example a *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* article in 1844.¹⁸³ In general newspapers focused on a number of perceived advantages of this activity, which might be grouped into a number of themes:

1. Reducing drinking opportunities, by taking people away from public houses and racecourses for example. The *Standard* in 1857 even suggested that the drunken artisan had been changed into a 'reflective being' with the advent of excursion trains, by spending drinking money on trips for his family.¹⁸⁴ It was believed that excursions would encourage thrift and savings to displace money potentially spent on drink. A Manchester commentator in 1849

¹⁷⁷ *The Economist*, 1 February 1851.

¹⁷⁸ *Dundee Courier*, 24 June 1857.

¹⁷⁹ *Leicester Chronicle*, 29 August 1840; *The Standard*, 13 August 1844. The 'monster quadrille' was made famous by the French conductor Louis Julien in his 'monster' concerts in the 1840s (John Rosselli, 'Jullien, Louis (1812–1860)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/15164>, [accessed 15 June 2011].)

¹⁸⁰ *Living Age*, 5 October 1844.

¹⁸¹ *Bradford Observer*, 10 October 1844.

¹⁸² *Leicester Chronicle*, 5 October 1844.

¹⁸³ *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 21 September 1844 (excerpts from this appeared in the *Manchester Times* of the same date).

¹⁸⁴ *The Standard*, 26 December 1857.

reported that a publican had told him that cheap Sunday trips (and teetotalism) were ruining his business and those of his colleagues as people were saving their money for excursions.¹⁸⁵

2. Dissipating 'prejudice', especially that supposedly of the rural population, accused by commentators of being 'ignorant and selfish'.¹⁸⁶ This was a common theme, suggesting that rural people were ignorant and could learn from town dwellers by taking excursions to urban areas, that people who have not travelled much have their minds 'contracted and weakened by prejudices and self-sufficiency', had very low morals and indulged in vice and profligacy. As a result it was proposed that railways were the 'great civiliser of society' and would produce 'an assimilation of manners and customs'.¹⁸⁷ Even the Chartist *Northern Star* suggested that 'the petty prejudices and local errors sure to accompany isolation, or a limited field of observation, are dispelled'.¹⁸⁸ Excursions were perceived by the press to assist in the breaking down of class barriers, especially as all classes were known to use the cheaper third class option: 'the iron bond' bringing people together.¹⁸⁹ They were even featured as 'dissolving national antipathies', in the case of cheap trips to France.¹⁹⁰
3. Improving health by access to fresh air and countryside for town dwellers living and working in cramped and unhealthy conditions, supported in Manchester at Whitsun by several afternoons of business closure. The advantages of the 'freshening influence of nature' and the 'dream land' of the seashore were highlighted.¹⁹¹ In 1853 it was argued that the decreasing number of applications to the Manchester Infirmary highlighted the improved physical condition of local people, arising from a number of factors including the popularity of outdoor exercise such as 'cheap trips by rail and omnibus'.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁵ *Manchester Times*, 22 August 1849.

¹⁸⁶ *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850.

¹⁸⁷ *Dundee Courier*, 4 September 1850; *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850.

¹⁸⁸ For example *North Wales Chronicle*, 28 May 1852 (reprinted from the *Liverpool Mail*), *Northern Star*, 29 September 1849. The writer was described as GAF.

¹⁸⁹ *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850.

¹⁹⁰ For example *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850, *North Wales Chronicle*, 28 May 1852 (reprinted from the *Liverpool Mail*).

¹⁹¹ See for example *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850, *Living Age*, 26 October 1844 (reprinted from the *Athenaeum*).

¹⁹² *Manchester Times*, 27 August 1853.

4. Improving morality and behaviour, with the removal of people from the 'evils' of cities: the diminishing attractions of brutal sports in favour of excursions, 'exchanging the haunts of low and vicious indulgences for the railway excursion to some attractive landscape'.¹⁹³ As early as 1841 the *Manchester Guardian* reported that local leaders were keen to keep children and others away from the racecourse at Whitsun.¹⁹⁴ Excursions were often judged as 'innocent' recreation.¹⁹⁵ There were simplistic attempts to correlate the rising number of railway excursions with a decrease in crime: an article in 1853 attributed the fall in the number of prisoners in Manchester to excursion activity, as it reported that there were 12,147 prisoners in 1843 (when the excursion trains started), declining to 7,620 in 1846 and 4,578 in 1850.¹⁹⁶ Commentators also encouraged orderly and 'proper' behaviour by Sunday school visits to country estates.

5. Encouraging educational and intellectual pursuits. In 1851 Charles Knight referred to the excursion train as 'one of the best public instructors', although the *Morning Chronicle* grumbled about this in their review of his guide, on the grounds that such trains caused accidents and got in the way of 'legitimate business traffic'.¹⁹⁷

6. Developing employment potential, for example disseminating knowledge about agricultural improvement, and accessing industrial processes to disseminate technology, in some place celebrated for its 'peculiar manufacture'.¹⁹⁸ Excursions were also reported to improved morale for workers, for example by support for works' trips and Sunday trips supposedly replacing a need for workers to take their traditional Saint Monday away from work.¹⁹⁹

By 1850 the *Standard* was arguing that excursion trains were becoming 'a necessary portion of our domestic and moral economy', and the same year the

¹⁹³ For example *Morning Post*, 13 April 1860, *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850.

¹⁹⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 2 June 1841.

¹⁹⁵ For example Lord Brougham in the debate on the Railway Bill in 1844, in talking about Sunday excursionists (*Morning Chronicle*, 3 August 1844.)

¹⁹⁶ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 17 September 1853 (reprinted from the *Liverpool Journal*).

¹⁹⁷ *Knight's Excursion Companion: Excursions from London 1851* (London, 1851), p.iv; *Morning Chronicle*, 31 October 1851.

¹⁹⁸ For example *Illustrated London News*, 21 September 1850, *Manchester Times*, 25 May 1850.

¹⁹⁹ For example *Bradford Observer*, 27 September 1849, *The Observer*, 16 August 1857.

Illustrated London News also highlighted the fact that while normally anything 'for the million' was used as a disparaging reference, in this case it was 'productive of good'.²⁰⁰

The press were very careful not to link excursion activity with a potential for generating working class crowds for political motives. However, in the *Manchester Times* in 1850, Liberal philanthropist John Passmore Edwards, who had Chartist sympathies, noted the potential of an excursion for 'refining the tastes, improving the habits, and quickening the aspirations of the people', and the latter might be construed as a call to reform. In his final paragraph he hints at this with

the secret of excursion parties is their cheapness, and cheapness is the result of association. I see in the principle of association, as applied merely to the transmission of persons from one part of the world of another, an important instrument to progress, and a fresh triumph of civilisation.²⁰¹

There was occasionally editorial commentary which opposed the railway excursion, apart from the Sabbatarian debate discussed earlier. While supporting the new excursions in general, the *Daily News* in 1849 expressed tremendous anger about trips from London to Norwich for a public execution:

what a moving Pandemonium the locomotive is doomed to drag after it...The squalid inmates of the lowest haunts of lazar infamy in the metropolis, may, thanks to the reduced fares, enjoy tomorrow's spectacle at Norwich. The raffish finery of the swell mob, male and female, will impart a shabby splendour to those pilgrims to the shrine of callous curiosity...The brutal jest, the callous glee of the hanging holidaymakers as they pass along, will resemble a moral Simoom sweeping along the railway.²⁰²

There were major concerns about the safety of excursion trains. Following the report of Captain Galton into railway accidents in 1858, a *Times* editorial compared the railway deaths (276) and injuries (556) to those of the battlefields in Italy. It suggested that excursion trains were in particular danger of collision and portrayed

²⁰⁰ *The Standard*, 17 September 1850; *Illustrated London News*, 21 September 1850.

²⁰¹ *Manchester Times*, 11 May 1850; A. J. A. Morris, 'Edwards, John Passmore (1823-1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2009 <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/32981> [accessed 4 May 2011].

²⁰² *Daily News*, 20 April 1849. (A Simoom is a hot, dry, dusty desert wind.) A subsequent report (*Daily News*, 30 April 1849) noted that a police presence on this train discouraged the pickpockets from travelling to Norwich.

them as the 'comets of the railway system. Their orbits are irregular, their appearance uncertain, and their aspect equally portentous'. It pointed out that they were usually large and travelling at unusual hours, leading to confusion and collision.²⁰³

There were a few other criticisms: *Leisure Hour* refers to the cheap trips in 1857 taking the Protestant masses away from religious observance, unlike Catholic lower classes for whom church attendance was much higher.²⁰⁴ There was a high level of critical coverage featuring the Sabbatarianism perspective on Sunday excursions, for example Great Western Railway Sunday excursions in 1850.²⁰⁵

In the 1840s, advertisers shared the excitement of the new excursionists, seeing excursions as an emblem of modernity. Tailor and outfitter S.Hyam, of Briggate in Leeds, frequently used poetry in its advertisements, which regularly appeared on the same page as the railway advertisements. The firm featured an excursion theme in its promotion for the first time in 1846, with an emphasis on the cheapness of their clothing and the potential to save the cost of an excursion fare (see over).²⁰⁶

Thus the role of the press in shaping the new railway excursions cannot be overstated, in particular encouraging their readers and opinion formers to support the excursion by making it acceptable. A sustained campaign outlined the benefits of these in relation to moral reform, aligned to the needs of their advertisers, together with general support for Sabbatarian views opposing Sunday trips. Newspapers provided constant reassurance about the behaviour of the large crowds generated and the close relationship between the press and the urban elites engendered a developing role for the voluntary societies who were responsible for expanding the market for trips in this period.

²⁰³ *The Times*, 16 June 1859; 1859 Session 1 (2498) *Report to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade upon the accidents which have occurred on railways during the year 1858*, pp. 15-16.

²⁰⁴ *Leisure Hour*, 1857, p. 334.

²⁰⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 9 October 1850, 10 October 1850; *The Standard*, 10 October 1850; *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 13 October 1850.

²⁰⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, 30 May 1846.

S. VICKERS, Proprietor.

JOYOUS THOUGHTS OF WHITSUNTIDE!

We hear with delight,
 At this season so bright,
 Arrangements are making tremendous:
 We own it is just,
 And we only do trust,
 That each province some thousands will send us.
 A welcome to all
 Will we give when they call,
 With pleasure fulfil each commission:
 For HYAM, 'tis known,
 Is the star of the town,
 And his shop is a CLOTHES EXHIBITION!
 If Garments you would
 Have both useful and good,
 Then honest advice would we tender;
 We would have you excel,
 Save money—do well—
 His clothes boast of cheapness and splendour.
 His popular name
 Throughout England's the same,
 Whilst his Garments enhance this assertion;
 And he will not slip,
 For the Whitsuntide trips,
 Cheap Clothes for your Summer Excursion!!

Now to attempt to give any definite idea of the gigantic Assortment of

READY MADE CLOTHING

KEPT AT

The PANTECHNETHECA, 9, Briggate, Leeds,
 Would be perfectly impossible; suffice it to say, that
 Firstly—Hyam's Clothing is the best and cheapest in the Kingdom!
 Secondly—Hyam's Stock is the largest in England!
 Thirdly—Hyam's Prices are such that they enable every Purchaser to pay Railway Fares—and thus enjoy a RAILWAY TRIP FOR NOTHING!!

S. H Y A M ' S

TAILORING, WOOLLEN DRAPERY, & OUTFITTING ESTABLISHMENT,
9, BRIGATE, LEEDS,

LIST OF PRICES.

READY-MADE GARMENTS. FOURTH QUALITY.	£ s. d.	GARMENTS MADE TO ORDER.	£ s. d.
Dress Coat Black	1 5 0	Tweed Coats, trimmed with Silk made in any Shape, Waterproof ..	0 18 0
Waistcoat	0 6 0		

Leeds Mercury, 30 May 1846

Central government

Railway development in Britain had been largely left to the private sector rather than planned by the state, as was the case with other countries such as France and Belgium, and central government only played a role in constraining activities where there was cause for serious concern, although Gladstone would have been keen to bring the railways into state control, similar to the General Post Office.²⁰⁷ Many members of parliament played roles in the fast developing railway industry in the 1840's, known collectively as the 'railway interest', a very powerful group which included landowners and lawyers who grew rich as a result of railway development. The 'railway interest' was able to influence legislation, particularly in the early days, but growing pressure and legislation from the Board of Trade gradually shaped

²⁰⁷ Jack Simmons, *The Railway in England and Wales, 1830-1914: the System and its Working* (Leicester, 1978), p. 37.

operational and safety issues from the 1840s.²⁰⁸ Despite its relatively light hand on the control of the railways, government moves in the 1840s dramatically shaping the development of excursion trains.

Firstly there was the level of government duty, originally imposed in 1832, at ½d a mile for every four passengers carried, leading to varied strategies by companies to minimise the effects of this; for example in August 1840 the Newcastle & North Shields Board gave permission for a Saturday excursion trip at half price, described as free in one direction, to Tynemouth for pupils of Gateshead Fell National School.²⁰⁹ The Manchester & Leeds Railway was in favour of promoting excursions at this time, but in 1840 Captain Laws, their manager, reported on the problems with passenger duty in relation to a requested cheap trip by 40,000 charity children from Manchester, to 'remove them from the scenes of vice and debauchery' during race week. Approaches to the Treasury to reduce the duty in these circumstances met with a stony response and the company finally decided to reduce the duty payable by selling 10,000 tickets and giving away 30,000.²¹⁰ In 1842 the passenger duty was changed from a mileage system to 5 per cent of gross receipts from passengers, and this was again seen to discourage some companies from offering excursions. Reid has suggested that excursions flourished after passenger duty was reduced in 1842, but throughout the 1840s railway companies complained bitterly about the bureaucratic hoops they had to negotiate to secure remission of duty, constraining their flexibility to promote excursion trains at short notice.²¹¹

The Parliamentary trains brought in by the Railways Act of 1844, the 'earliest and most drastic interference with railway companies in the conduct of their business' were associated with the remittance of passenger duty on third class travel.²¹² This led to a debate between government departments about whether excursion trains should be classed as Parliamentary trains and therefore remitted from duty, and whether this remittance should be extended to classes on excursion trains other than the cheapest.²¹³ Several companies achieved remission from duty of all of their third class traffic, despite their carriages not fulfilling the specification laid down in

²⁰⁸ Herbert Spencer, *Railway Morals and Railway Policy* (London, 1855), p. 23; Geoffrey Alderman, *The Railway Interest* (Leicester, 1973).

²⁰⁹ Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway: its Rise and Development*, p. 373.

²¹⁰ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 274; 1840 (474) *Fifth Report from the Select Committee on Railway Communication*, p. 242.

²¹¹ Reid, *'Iron Roads'*, p. 58.

²¹² C.E. Lee, *Passenger Class Distinctions* (London, 1946), pp. 8-9, 18.

²¹³ Jordan, *Away for the Day*, p. 222; *Northern Star*, 7 June 1851.

the Act.²¹⁴ There was a disagreement between the Railways Department and the Board of Inland Revenue, as the former approved excursions trains as exempt, sometimes even sanctioning open carriages for excursions.²¹⁵ However application had to be made for remission of duty and this had the effect of discouraging companies from responding to demand by putting excursions on at short notice. Companies had to complete a form in advance of running an excursion train, specifying the hour of departure, class of carriages and fares, in order to claim exemption, which caused them some problems, as for example the Lancashire & Yorkshire complained that sometimes an excursion train was organised at less than 24 hours notice.²¹⁶

In 1850 there was a dispute between the Railway Commissioners and the railway companies, when it was reported that passenger duty was remitted on 'all excursion trains' where fares were less than a penny a mile, except with certain companies such as London & North Western Railway, and where proper notice had not been given (there was also a government circular reminding companies that trains need to keep to their starting times to qualify).²¹⁷ Transport policy was inconsistent, as a writer in 1851 compared the tax on railway excursions, which had been remitted, to that on omnibus travel, which was still three halfpence a mile.²¹⁸ Over the next few years there were legal moves between the Board of Inland Revenue and companies, especially the London & South Western Railway, who did not include excursion trains in their returns to government for duty, as they considered them exempt, and the government sought to reclaim the duty payable on these. It appears that by 1852 however, railway companies including LSWR were paying duty on all excursions, presumably because of the threatened legal action by the Inland Revenue.²¹⁹ However in 1855 Captain Galton in his report to the government on the railways indicated that 19,000 excursion trains had been approved for

²¹⁴ Henry Parris, *Government and the Railways in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1965), pp.97-98.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.141, 144.

²¹⁶ 1851 (1332) *Report of the Commissioners of Railways for the year 1850. Appendix No. 78: Cheap Excursion Trains; Morning Post*, 17 October 1850. It is not clear why only 24 hours notice was unavoidable in some cases.

²¹⁷ *Morning Post*, 17 October, 1850. This exemption did not include first class carriages within excursion trains. It is not clear why companies such as LNWR were excluded.

²¹⁸ *Household Words*, 111 (1851) 355-6, anon but probably Ossian MacPherson according to A.Lohrli, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859* (Toronto, 1973), p. 80; see also *Household Words*, 19 July 1851.

²¹⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 15 September 1851; *The Standard*, 30 September 1851, 13 October 1851; *Daily News*, 12 August 1852; *Morning Post*, 27 January 1853.

exemption from duty, mostly from London and 'towns in the manufacturing districts' but that was an underestimate of the total excursions running.²²⁰

Thus a very confusing picture is painted of the status of the excursion train with regard to passenger duty in this period, but nevertheless the system for authorising exemption from duty reduced the flexibility of the railway companies to respond speedily and flexibly to fluctuating market needs.

Central government also played an important part in responding to safety concerns, which received extensive press coverage in the 1840s.²²¹ In 1844 Captain O'Brien of the Board of Trade issued a circular highlighting the dangers of working excursion trains with multiple engines, and recommended a maximum of two engines per train. He also highlighted punctuality, the lack of which caused a number of accidents.²²² As Simmons has pointed out, this circular was generally supportive of the new excursions, expressing a view from the Board of Trade not 'to suppress excursions of this character' and highlighting their 'useful influence' on the community. After a number of well publicised accidents resulting from the unmanageable size of trains, the high speeds and lack of guards, Pasley, the government inspector of railways produced a report, which was more prescriptive than supportive of excursions.²²³ It discussed two alternative means of conveying excursions, either carrying all passengers in one train with a number of locomotives, or divided into several trains following at intervals. As the first option was regarded as having too much potential for fatal accidents, the report made a number of recommendations relating to the second option, which could still give rise to collisions unless it was properly managed. Firstly that no monster trains should be drawn by two or more engines, successive trains to be used with one engine each although a second engine could be used for steep inclines, and intervals to be not less than three minutes, corrected by signal at every station. Secondly he recommended that there should be no goods wagons used to carry passengers. Thirdly there should be not less than one guard per eight carriages and passengers should not be allowed to sit on the roof of first or second class or on the side or end of open third class and fourthly that trains should not be allowed to carry more

²²⁰ 1856 (2114) *Report to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations of the Proceedings of the Department relating to Railways, for the year 1855*, pp. xvii-xviii.

²²¹ P.S. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (London, 1974), p.176.

²²² *The Standard*, 23 October 1844; 1846 (698) (752) *Report of the Officers of Railway Dept 1844-45*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

²²³ 1846 (698) (752) *Report of the Officers of the Railway Department to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade: with appendices I. & II. for the years 1844-45*, pp. 489-490; Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p. 274; *Manchester Times*, 11 December 1846.

passengers than their capacity. These recommendations had important implications for the way that excursions were handled from that time, although some were frequently ignored, such as the use of goods wagons.

While the government played no direct part in the provision of the excursion trains, because of its responsibilities for safety it was obliged to observe their operation closely: each accident was investigated by the Government in great detail, with interviews with railway staff and passengers. From 1854, accident reports were published earlier, with attendant press publicity, thus encouraging public opinion to shape the actions of railway companies as a result.²²⁴ Table 12 overleaf shows how accidents involving excursion trains contributed to total passenger deaths and injuries in the period 1846-1860.²²⁵ It indicates that during the 1850s there were around six accidents a year involving excursion trains, often contributing around 10 per cent to the total number of accidents to passenger trains, with around 20 per cent in 1859. In 1857 and 1860 in particular there were a large number of excursionists injured, almost 40% of the total. There are no systematic data collection of the numbers of excursion passengers in total.

The figure of 19,000 excursion trains approved for 1855 (see page 181) might be examined against the overall traffic data for that year, when 64 million third class passengers were carried, out of a total of 119 million passengers overall. Thus proposing an average of around 500 passengers per excursion train, then this suggests that in 1855, around 9.5 million passengers were travelling in excursion trains, 8% of the total traffic.²²⁶ Significantly Table 13 reveals how passenger deaths and injuries almost always contributed a proportionately greater number of deaths and injuries to the total of these, demonstrating the large numbers of passengers conveyed on these trains and unsafe conditions.²²⁷ The dangers extended over the whole of the period being studied, increasing towards 1860.

²²⁴ Henry Parris, *Government and the Railways in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1965), p.145.

²²⁵ This does not include deaths and injuries of railway workers, of which there were a considerable number.

²²⁶ 1856 (2114) *Report to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations of the Proceedings of the Department relating to Railways, for the year 1855*, pp. xvii-xviii. This figure excluded ordinary cheap third class and Parliamentary trains.

²²⁷ It has proved impossible to find collected data on accidents relating to steamer excursions. The 1839 (273) *Report on Steam-vessel Accidents* attempted to aggregate steamship accidents generally, identifying accidents to 92 vessels over the previous ten years, with 634 deaths (seamen and passengers combined) (p.1). These generally resulted from boiler explosions, collisions, fires and shipwrecks.

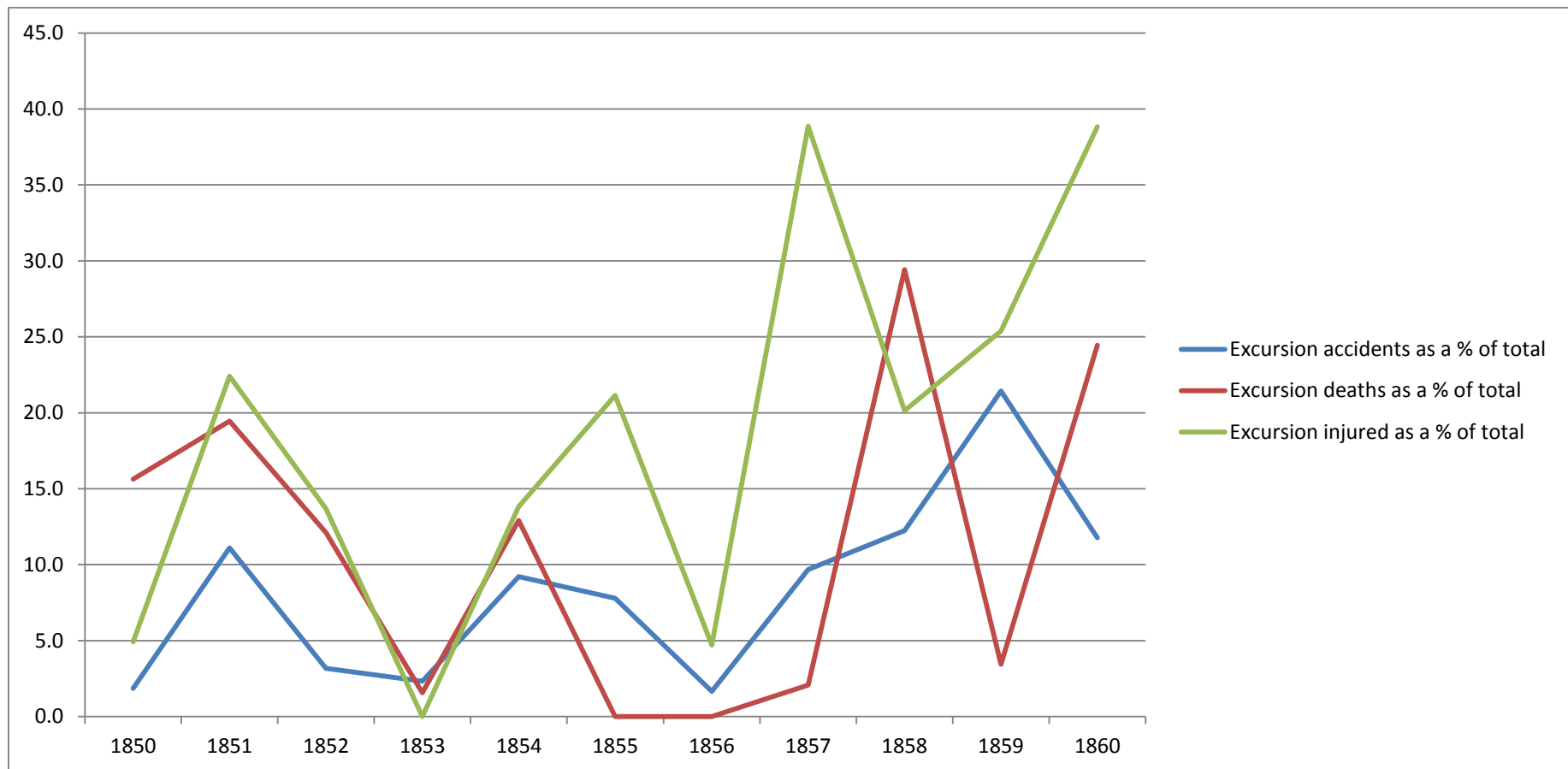
Table 8: Railway accidents, 1846-1860: England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland

	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860
Miles open	3,036	3,945	5,007	5,996	6,621	6,890	7,336	7,686	8,054	8,293	8,703	9,091	9,534	10,001	10,401
Total passengers carried (m)	*51.3	54.8	57.8	63.8	72.9	85.4	89.1	102.2	113.6	118.6	129.3	145.0	139.1	149.7	163.4
No. passengers killed	n/a	30	21	23	32	36	33	64	31	28	27	48	51	29	45
No. passengers injured	n/a	93	135	96	183	375	380	300	347	331	297	646	437	390	497
No. accidents to passenger trains	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	54	54	63	86	76	77	60	62	49	56	68
No. accidents to excursion trains	1	1	0	2	1	6	2	2	7	6	1	6	6	12	8
No. killed on excursion trains	2	0	0	0	5	7	4	1	4	0	0	1	15	1	11
No. injured on excursion trains	0	8	0	3	9	84	52	0	48	70	14	251	88	99	193

Source of data: *Railway Accidents: Return of the Number and Nature of the Accidents and of the Injuries to Life and Limb which have occurred on the Railways in Great Britain and Ireland (1846-1860)*; 1861 (2871) *Railways. Return showing the number of Passengers and amount of Goods, &c. conveyed on all the Railways in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, respectively, during the year ending the 31st December 1860*); B.R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988).

* data relates to 1846/7, from 1847-48 (937) *Railway Commission. Return of the Passenger and Goods Traffic on each Railway in Great Britain and Ireland for the two years ending 30th June 1846, and 30th June 1847.*

Table 9: Excursion accident numbers, passenger deaths and injuries as a percentage of total accident numbers, passenger deaths and injuries, 1850-1860 (using data from Table 12)



In the main, central government played a constraining effect on excursions, but the important and enduring effect of the 1844 Act was to improve the comfort and convenience of services across the board, including excursion trains, for the masses who could not afford first or second class fares. Although these only created a limited number of improved 'Parliamentary' services, the move stimulated the railway companies to focus on the importance of third class travel more generally.²²⁸ The Board of Trade recommended a certain quality of third class accommodation under the Act for Parliamentary accommodation, advising on aspects such as light and ventilation, weather protection, night lamps, seats with backs, sufficient doors and also windows for 'look-outs'. While these were good intentions, the influence of the government was not strong enough to force companies to comply, and the carriages which tended to be used often failed to live up to these standards. On a pleasure trip people might expect a window view, but most windows were very small and high up, with no glass, thus it is not surprising that third class passengers were said to prefer open carriages. Carriages would be packed with excursionists, for example the Great Western carriage had a capacity of 59 passengers, with limited ventilation usually provided by fixed louvred shutters. Lighting was rare, only the Manchester & Birmingham had night lamps, most third class carriages in the 1840s and 1850s were unlit, as gas lamps were not used until the 1860s, and there was no heating.²²⁹ To make matters worse, as this only applied in theory to the Parliamentary traffic, at times excursion traffic might be carried in goods wagons and trucks. Thus the excursion carriages were either open trucks or cold, dark and stuffy carriages, with bare boards to sit on, and these did not improve until after the 1860s.²³⁰

Despite the uncomfortable conditions however, the government legislation had the effect of changing the mentalities of travel at this time, when thousands of ordinary people realised the potential of the new services in enabling them to gain access to new spaces.

²²⁸ T. Gourvish, *Mark Huish and the London & North Western Railway: a Study of Management*, p. 38.

²²⁹ Lee, *Passenger Class Distinctions*, pp. 21-2,33-5; 1845 (419) *Railway Carriages. Lithographed Plans of Carriages sanctioned by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, for the Conveyance of Third Class Passengers; with Returns relative to Railway Carriages.*

²³⁰ Simmons, *The Victorian Railway*, p.77.

Conclusion

This discussion of powerful groups operating in the 1840s and 1850s has demonstrated how they exerted an influential and differentiated effect on the development and organisation of railway excursions in the urban setting, as well as stimulating the market for this activity.

Sabbatarians constrained both the market and the organisation of railway excursions, limiting choices for the masses and potential for growth. Their impact was considerable, supported frequently by the press; without their influence the market would have developed considerably and the railway companies may have been persuaded to make infrastructure changes to support profitable excursions much earlier. Although the Sabbatarian influence was widespread, some differential patterns have been identified. For example the rate of Catholicism seems to have impacted on Sunday excursions, which were quite normal during the study period in towns such as Liverpool and Preston, when compared to many other areas. Furthermore the discussion of the rare Chartist trips on pages 170-171 reveals how these were able to disregard Sabbatarian prohibition in designing Sunday trips specifically for the working classes on their day off.

The policies and practices of employers shaped the opportunities for the masses to take time away from work on an excursion, and the observance or not of Saint Monday was still a surprisingly key issue in the study period when railway companies were designing trips. The analysis of trips in 1846 shows the complexity of excursion characteristics relating to employment practices. In some areas such as Manchester the practice of holiday period shutdown at Whitsun encouraged the large scale organisation of excursions by railway companies during the holiday week for factory workers. However some sectors such as retail workers were disadvantaged in not having sufficient time off for trips. The level of wages affected affordability, offering disposable income to afford a trip with careful saving. In some cases employers offered works' trips, with propagandist and paternalist aims.

Urban elites played a significant role in the growth and shaping of excursions, for example with the part they played in developing voluntary societies such as mechanics' institutes, their ownership and editorial management of the press and their position as railway directors. As employers they shaped the ability of the masses to take trips, and as reformers they advocated rational recreation.

The provincial press were closely linked to the urban elites and the railway companies, supporting voluntary societies and were an important vehicle for

presenting the excursion as an acceptable activity, in the context of moral reform and rational recreation at this time. The press created the image of the 'monster train', clearly demonstrating the scale of the new activity, with their endless reports on the number of passengers, carriages and locomotives used. They helped to shape entrepreneurial activity by presenting advertisements for competing options alongside one another, and by using advertorial reports to bolster paid-for advertisements. Lastly, their positive reporting of the large crowds involved were designed to reassure the public and allay concerns about mobs.

Decisions by central government on taxes and safety inhibited excursion market development at times, but legislation such as the 1844 Railway Act stimulated the railway companies to focus on the importance of third class travel. However the evidence indicates that the levels of discomfort excursion carriages, either open trucks or cold, dark and stuffy carriages, did not improve until after the 1860s.

The aim has been to provide a context to illuminate discussion in subsequent chapters, albeit a very complex context, with many implications for debate on working class mobility and the generation of excursion crowds. The next chapter will examine some rare personal accounts of working class excursion travel in the light of this context.

Chapter 5

Experiencing the railway excursion

*and now what Bedlamitish sounds meet my ear! Singing on every hand, shouting on every hand, swearing on every hand, whistling on every hand, and the mad iron monster at the front rearing away like nothing else.*¹ (Manchester, 1860)

Lancashire handloom weaver Benjamin Brierley painted a vivid picture of his cheap railway trip from Ashton to Worksop in 1860. It is likely that embarking in a crowd on a railway excursion, possibly for the first time, will have been memorable and pleasurable for those who took part in early trips in the 1840s and 1850s. Certainly for the masses, the act of being part of a large excursion crowd, in space shaped by a new kind of technology, while consuming a strange landscape, was remarkable, and will inevitably have shaped their perceptions and behaviour. While in some areas steamboat excursions were still providing an alternative option, for many people the railway train was the only way in which they could escape temporarily to new places and landscapes, and as a result their perceptions of time, space and place would be modified. The sociologist Georg Simmel argued that ‘the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions’ could affect consciousness, and this might reflect perceptions of travelling in the new railway excursion carriages. Wolfgang Schivelbusch compared the experience of the railway journey to that of ‘losing control of one’s senses’ by being shot through the countryside as if in a projectile, but even now little is known about how ordinary people experienced the early railway excursions.²

Simon Blackburn has defined experience as ‘a stream of private events, known only to their possessor’, a directly observed representation of the world. He invokes three personal elements in a reconstruction of experience – the need to remember what has happened, to recognise it and to describe it. However the selective nature

¹ *Manchester Times*, 21 July 1860; C. W. Sutton, ‘Brierley, Benjamin (1825–1896)’, rev. John D. Haigh, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) online edn., Oct 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3405> [accessed 17 March 2009].

² Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York, 1950), p. 410. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, Ca., 1986), p. 54.

of memory and the limited options for the transmission of descriptions of excursions by working class participants constrain this kind of evidence.³ Furthermore the recorded perceptions of the excursionist are mediated; they consist not only of what they saw at the time, but the meaning of this, socially constructed and framed by their past experience, by the editing of his/her personal account and by the experience of the reader.

Experience as an evidential category has been debated by many scholars, for example Joan Scott discussed the use of experience by E.P. Thompson in his *Making of the English Working Class*; Dominick LaCapra has argued that the experiential turn can help historians to fill in the gaps left by subordinate groups in histories, showing how this type of evidence can help us to complement, support and interrogate more traditional sources of evidence, in this case factual press reports, government reports and railway company histories.⁴ But nevertheless there are methodological issues to be addressed. Scott suggests that if one uses an account of a personal experience at face value, then this would disregard questions about the structure of vision and of language, and of context for example.⁵ Indeed her argument might be seen to turn 'experience' into a category that demands analysis and historical contextualisation. Thus she urges us to 'attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produces their experiences.'⁶ She argues that any historical interpretation of an account of an 'experience' is refracted not only through the historical actor's experience but through the vision, life history and understanding of the historian his/herself, through historiographical discourses. According to her, it is impossible to interrogate sufficiently the complexities involved to arrive at an 'authentic' reading of this kind of source; the best that might be achieved is to recognise the impact of aspects such as historical context, vision and language on the personal accounts of excursions. But this is an extreme position and scholars such as LaCapra maintain that

³ "experience" *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Simon Blackburn. Oxford University Press, 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. University of York. 10 June 2012, <http://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 8 June 2012].

⁴ J. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (1991), p.784-5; D.LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory* (Ithaca, NY, 2004), pp. 3-4. As an example Simon Willgoss, in his study of the experiences of travellers crossing the North Sea between England and the Netherlands over the last hundred years, has acknowledged these issues, taking into account passenger factors such as motivation, expectation and focus, as well as looking at the impact of the different stages of the journey itself and external factors. (Simon Willgoss, 'Gateways to Europe: the experience of passengers travelling by rail and sea between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, c.1880-1984' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of York, 2010).)

⁵ J. Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (1991), 773-797.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 779.

'experience' is a useful category of evidence; Walton has also emphasised the important contribution of experience to tourism.⁷ At the very least, where accounts of experience are used as evidence in this study, whether from the excursionist, from company record keepers or from other observers, these must be critically examined and triangulated with others where possible. Despite all the difficulties of using experience as evidence, it is still the closest we can approach an understanding of what happened when people travelled.

This chapter will examine evidence of how trains were used by the working classes on excursions in this early period, developing their leisure mobility. In analysing personal accounts it is possible to identify components of experience, such as emotions, sounds and self-esteem. The rare accounts of excursion experience provide new evidence for these affective aspects not covered in the traditional reporting of an activity. For example it is possible to trace novelty as a component, triggering emotion, a sensual excitement, thus shaping the excursionist's gaze. The research considers the role of the experience of novelty in remapping identities: Berghoff has noted how 'the encounter with the unfamiliar forces the traveller to reflect on his or her home country, to define his or her own place in the world and to erect borderlines between him or herself and the foreign'.⁸ An examination of excursion accounts also helps us to understand how underlying factors, such as gender, shaped experience.

It is extremely challenging to capture evidence of such activity by ordinary people, rather than from the middle and upper classes whose diaries and letters are more often found in archives.⁹ There has been little research on the personal experiences of the masses taking part in excursions because relevant sources have not been available. As Gareth Stedman Jones has pointed out, we can barely see the 'blurred and rather undifferentiated features of the rural and urban masses' in the history of leisure, behind all the groups who feature rather more prominently in research - Methodists, magistrates and employers for example.¹⁰ But this makes the task of using what is available all the more important. This chapter discusses evidence from the rare personal accounts of excursion trips identified in the press,

⁷ John K. Walton, 'Thomas Cook: Image and Reality', in Richard Butler and Roslyn Russell, *Giants of Tourism* (Cambridge, Ma., 2010), p. 83.

⁸ H. Berghoff and B. Korte, 'Britain and the Making of Modern Tourism: an Interdisciplinary Approach', in H. Berghoff and others (eds.), *The Making of Modern Tourism: the Cultural History of the British Experience 1600-2000* (New York, 2002), p. 8.

⁹ For examples see Chapter 1, footnote page 18/19.

¹⁰ G. Stedman Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control: a Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of Leisure', *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (1977), p. 163.

with the aim of illuminating and counterbalancing the easier discussion of reports made from the perspective of observers. It thus provides a contribution to studies of the historical consumption of working class transport. The chapter also examines some personal letters published in the press describing particular difficulties. Most accounts appeared in the northern liberal press, such as the *Preston Chronicle* and *Manchester Times*, presumably because of the prevalence of trips in those areas but also arising from the support which those publications gave to working class activity. There are further examples from national papers such as the *Liberal Daily News*, which was generally supportive of labour reform.¹¹

There are elements of railway trips which appear to remain undescribed in evidence, such as how people dealt with the absence of toilets on their long journeys in locked compartments and open wagons, as these were generally not available until nearer the end of the nineteenth century. Other elements which remain uncovered include the potential for sexual harassment activity in the liminal space of the carriage (see the next chapter for a further discussion on this).

The trips explored in this chapter are mainly day trips by rail, predominantly in the north of England. They are important because they offer a perspective quite different to that of other stakeholders: the railway company board would have been trying to maximise economic benefits, the line manager coping with unprecedented crowds and the newspaper correspondent seeking to paint a rosy picture of events in his own town, to celebrate its aspirational status, or possibly they sought to criticise activity which did not align with the editorial views of the publication. Accounts of experience help to show us why the working classes extended their leisure mobility in great numbers at this time, how the experience impacted on their world view and what was important to them during their journey. They also serve to challenge traditional views of the development of the passenger railway.

Analysis of accounts

The analysis focuses firstly on four detailed press accounts of an excursion experience, examining the components of these, and how the excursion experience was framed by past experience. It then draws out some common themes from these accounts and from further short accounts from the press, with the aim of answering the questions posed in the previous section.

¹¹ *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900*. <http://www.victorianperiodicals.com> [accessed 16 January 2012].

There were a few brief accounts in the press in the 1840s, but longer articles started to appear in the late 1850s, featuring male travellers writing about a trip, often for the first time, and mostly taking a positive attitude to this new experience. There is potential for the future study of ballads and dialect literature in capturing leisure experiences. Their appeal to the working classes in Lancashire and Yorkshire especially, with themes of class and regional identity, was represented by Patrick Joyce as a kind of 'inner voice' of the northern working class, for example work by Edwin Waugh and Ben Brierley.¹² Joyce saw dialect as a 'marker of regional virtues', defining a sense of northern superiority when describing London habits. Although such writings started to appear from the 1840s, these appeared more extensively after 1860, outside the study period.¹³ Thomas Wright, the journeyman engineer, featured material about Saint Monday leisure and Sunday trips in his work, but again this focused on the period after 1860.¹⁴

It is not clear why the periodisation of excursion accounts in the press occurs, as the excursion was quite common by the later 1850s, whereas during the late 1840s it would have been much more novel and hence newsworthy. In the 1850s the experience of a train journey was becoming less novel than the act of seeing a particular sight at a destination. Nevertheless in some cases descriptions of perceptions in and around the carriage are significant.

By 1860, excursion trains had become commonplace, and the characteristics of the crowds which they created were to give rise to an element of snobbery by people caught up in such occasions. *Punch* featured humorous and often cynical accounts of tours undertaken by middle class travellers encountering excursionists around this period.¹⁵ *The Railway Traveller's Handy Book*, published in 1862, advised that excursion trains, while useful for 'the humbler classes and the economically inclined', were 'not best calculated for the ordinary traveller':

The confusion and bustle, the irregular times of departure and arrival, and the boisterous company into which one is thrown, although of very little moment to the person who only has a travelling bag, and who sets off for a few days' jaunt, are ill-calculated for the railway traveller who

¹² Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1991), p.277.

¹³ Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.256-304,

¹⁴ T. Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes by a Journeyman Engineer* (London, 1867), pp. 115-130, 240-241.

¹⁵ See for example *Punch*, 21 August 1852.

has a sober journey to perform, and is burdened with its attendant responsibilities and cares.¹⁶

The emphasis here is of course on the 'traveller', regarded as a higher status than trippers or excursionists, as Walton has noted, and almost always based on class distinctions.¹⁷ Thus the middle class 'traveller', who might be forced to mix with working class excursionists, might be prevented from being 'serious' on such a journey. Furthermore it was assumed that only the higher status traveller could appreciate in sufficient depth what he or she was seeing on their travels. A discussion on the excursionist as a traveller is included in Chapter 7.

Although the current chapter draws upon mostly working class accounts of experiences, a few sources have been used from accompanying middle class travellers, to highlight contrasting class perspectives. There is also valuable evidence in letters to the press, mainly where a passenger felt aggrieved about an issue, from a mixture of classes. These provide a rather more negative element, a counterpoint to the many provincial press reports of excursions which offered a very stylised and flattering account of crowd behaviour and their reception by people at the destination. As the following examples show, these described scenes of rational recreation, good behaviour, excellent relationships between participants and organisers and a safe return home:

¹⁶ Jack Simmons (ed.), *The Railway Traveller's Handy Book of Hints, Suggestions and Advice before the Journey, on the Journey and After the Journey* (1862, reprint, Bath, 1971), p. 44.

¹⁷ John K. Walton, 'British Tourism between Industrialisation and Globalisation', in H. Berghoff and others (eds.), *The Making of Modern Tourism: the Cultural History of the British Experience 1600-2000* (New York, 2002), pp. 113-5.

nan, t the were larly were Mr. s:— We, g to son's rick hall-ean, Ma-ssian ; W. ding rper-t.N., The hich it is outh-ir E. Lady Esq., wart-ster, over

EXCURSION TRIPS.—Yesterday morning, about eight o'clock, the railway station in Tithebarn-street was the scene of much animation, in consequence of the arrival of some thousands of persons from Preston, Manchester, and other places, who had taken the advantage afforded them, at a cheap rate, of seeing the town of Liverpool, with its noble river, shipping, &c. The trains from Preston brought nearly 3000 persons, principally factory operatives, amongst whom were a large number of persons advanced in years. The trip from Preston is an annual one, and is called the "Poor People's Trip," the funds to defray the expenses of which are collected by subscription, principally, we understand, amongst the teetotallers; and by this means many hundreds of the humbler classes were supplied with their tickets free of expense, whilst others were subject to the mere nominal charge of 8d. each for the trip from Preston and back. The trains from Manchester, which brought as many persons as the Preston trains, were under the management of the Miles Platting Mechanics' Institution, and the excursionists appeared a very respectable class of operatives. The visitors soon spread themselves in parties over the town to view the various attractions, and thousands crossed the river. The principal portion of the Preston excursionists sailed to Rock Ferry, where arrangements had been made for their reception. At seven o'clock last evening the railway station again presented a most lively appearance, owing to the departure of so many thousands of persons, all of whom were well conducted, and evidently happy and delighted with their day's excursion.

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 Ca Me Br fo lo ag we wi to bu m fr af pe in ds M an th ca re sh m
 Liverpool Mercury, 17 August 1852

THE SPECIAL TRAIN TO MATLOCK from this town and neighbourhood, on Monday last, was most extensively patronised—it is said by more than 1,200 persons—who describe the railway arrangements as first-rate, and the enjoyment to the excursionists as all that could have been wished, the day being most delightfully fine, and the scenery most attractive and picturesque, to say nothing of the treat afforded by an inspection of the "Palace of the Peak," kindly allowed by its noble proprietor.

Leicester Chronicle, 16 July 1859

The press even adopted this approach when reporting what to modern eyes appears to be an inappropriate and voyeuristic trip:

TRIP TO HOLMFIRTH.—On Monday morning last, at eight o'clock, a special train, containing upwards of two hundred passengers, started from the York Railway Station for Holmfirth, the scene of the recent awful calamity. The day was beautifully fine. After viewing the dreadful wreck and destruction of property, the travellers returned in the evening to York, where they arrived in perfect safety at half-past eight o'clock.

Yorkshire Gazette, 27 March 1852

The following four accounts are all near contemporaneous, written a few days or weeks after a trip, rather than retrospective: thus recollections should be fairly clear at this stage. This type of account forms a natural 'story', suitable for publication for

a popular readership, as the railway excursion has an inherent beginning, middle and end, and thus it is perhaps surprising that more accounts were not published earlier.¹⁸ Some of the themes highlighted in these accounts will be discussed in more detail later.

The role of anonymity in this evidence might be regarded as problematic, but then this would apply also to valuable evidence in letters to the press, reports and commentary, which tend to be either anonymous or pseudonymous. It is not unusual, Griffin has suggested that anonymity was a key feature of authorship for much of the nineteenth century, arising from a variety of motivations but freeing authors from 'social and political pressures'.¹⁹ He suggests that despite the advantages of being able to use authorial information from outside a text to help construct meaning, there can be an advantage to the reader in viewing a text as a stand-alone, with no background knowledge of the author, focusing attention on the text itself. In the case of the current research the lack of authored evidence, while limiting, does not prevent us making effective use of anonymous accounts, while assessing the social context in which they were written.

a) *An Excursion Train (Daily News, 1855)*²⁰

An anonymous account of a cheap trip from London to Portsmouth on the London & South Western Railway was originally published in *Household Words*. It appears on the surface to be an amusing account of a personal experience. However an exploration of the anonymous writer is revealing: Robert Brough, journalist and poet, was celebrated as a parodist who supported working-class causes and held a 'deep vindictive hatred of wealth and rank and respectability'.²¹ It is actually a semi-fictional satirical piece, and his motivation was to highlight stereotypes and mock prevailing attitudes to excursions at the time.

¹⁸ The four accounts all appear as lengthy newspaper pieces, as a result the quotes are not referenced separately.

¹⁹ Robert J. Griffin (ed.), *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York and Basingstoke, 2003), pp.6-15.

²⁰ *Daily News*, 20 October 1855 (from *Household Words*). The *Daily News* was noted for its occasional use of satirical pieces (C. Mitchell, *Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1847), p. 65).

²¹ The anonymous writer was identified by Lohrli as playwright, journalist and poet Robert Barnabas Brough; A.Lohrli, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 145, 214. C.Dereli, 'Brough, Robert Barnabas (1828–1860)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3577> [accessed 13 March 2009].

Unusually the writer's focus is on the journey itself: 'we are not going to write a guidebook...all we have to do with at present is the excursion train'. He asserts his class perspective by defending the 'dense crowd of pleasure seekers' waiting at the station, as no less unmannerly than those at the opera. This article highlights the wide range of travellers which might be found in an excursion carriage, the effects of mixing classes in close proximity which had not previously occurred. He portrays his fellow excursionists as 'all very common people, doubtless' but they suggests that needed to enjoy themselves and so 'acquaintances were quickly formed'. Typically he notes that all were soon in friendly communication, 'chattering away as busily as though we had been friends for years', and deduces that 'there is some hidden excitant in excursion trains to conversation.' Nancy Green has observed the 'comparative gaze', where the traveller seeks to position their new experiences within the frame of their past experiences, and this writer demonstrates this by recalling the experience of a previous long journey in a first class carriage, where there was hardly any conversation.²² He satirises that travel 'in an open carriage by an excursion train' is 'horribly plebeian' and 'low', especially so because it is so 'disgracefully cheap' – around 2s 6d per hundred miles. This account is valuable in confirming the use of 'vulgar' open carriages for excursions, even in 1855, while at the same time describing the alternative third class carriage adversely, as 'fitted with a stifling low roof, with wooden shutters that keep the light out, and louvre boards that let the draught in'. Even worse the writer says that he has travelled on such a train on a Sunday, mocking Sabbatarians. He suggests that his nearest neighbour, a shoemaker 'he blushed to believe', must be depraved, as not only was he travelling on a Sunday but he was also smoking, which was against the regulations and subject to a 40s fine at the time.²³ A young gentleman in the corner had avoided talking to fellow passengers and was therefore perceived by the writer to be of a higher class – possibly a lawyer's clerk, smoking cigars and drinking brandy and water from a glass rather than a bottle. It was assumed that this young man was embarrassed to be seen in such company. Another gentleman seemed ill at ease, trying unsuccessfully to sleep and frowning. The writer suggests he was a

²² Nancy L. Green, 'The Comparative Gaze: Travelers in France before the Era of Mass Tourism', *French Historical Studies*, 25 (2002), 423-440.

²³ Here the open carriage was an advantage. Generally it was impossible to police smoking on trains at this time, despite numerous complaints, and companies eventually allowed it. See for example *Bury & Norwich Post*, 24 September 1856, Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 454-455; Matthew Hilton has discussed the essential role of smoking in nineteenth century working class culture (see Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in English Popular Culture* (Manchester, 2006), p.48).

businessman saving money by using an excursion fare, rather than seeking pleasure. (On the return journey he was surprised to see the businessman again as he assumed he would have sold his return ticket on to someone wishing to get from Portsmouth to London cheaply). There was also a pale faced boy singing and the writer suggests satirically that the boy should not be singing on a Sunday, but then neither should the birds. The passengers were puzzled by another man, who seemed to be very knowledgeable about the railway – ‘all the mysteries of railway signals, branch lines, sidings, switches, points’ – and who explained that he took excursion trains very regularly, with his wife and child, to get out of the town. The point was well made that the excursion crowd was complex in profile and motivation. This article however adopted a moral conclusion in common with many writers and reformists of the day, by suggesting that the passengers would all have been better fitted for work the following week because of their excursion.

b) A Sketch of my First Visit to London; By a Native of one of the Northern Counties (Preston Chronicle, 1857)²⁴

This anonymous account was written by an excursionist visiting London for the first time, from Preston on a cheap three day trip offered by Mr Marcus in 1857.²⁵ His motivations are twofold: he suggests that his first impressions are likely to be valuable to others because they are ‘vivid and striking’, compared to those from people who know London well. He is also prescriptive, full of advice, describing the many arrangements which helped to make the excursion a positive experience. There had been a savings bank to prepare for the trip, and lectures had been provided to prime excursionists for what they would see in London, especially at the Crystal Palace exhibition of arts and of machinery. A printed programme of ‘objects to be seen and visited’ was drawn up, on the back of which was a rough map of London with bridges, leading streets, places to visit and cab and omnibus fares from stations, thus shaping the experience of the excursionist in advance. One of the people involved with the trip had prepared a list of places to see en route and passengers also had a railway map and timetable. The writer also offers advice on cheap lodgings.

The focus of this account was on both the journey and the destination, with a very detailed description of all the places he visited in London, but the novelty factor

²⁴ *Preston Chronicle*, 1 August 1857.

²⁵ See also Chapters 3 for a further discussion of Marcus’s excursions.

focuses on London itself and its buildings rather than the train journey. His background appears to include much reading about London and its buildings in advance, with references to travel guides and published pictures of buildings. However he was unprepared for the 'unparalleled' impact of the Crystal Palace building, its 'boldness, magnitude, and magnificence', and felt it surpassed his expectations. He had read his Mayhew, and acknowledged at the end of the account that his experience did not include the scenes of misery which he knew were underlying London life.²⁶

From his own perspective it was a significant experience in the writer's life, worthy of a lengthy article in the press, but also a big event, shown by the fact that even though the journey started at 5.30am, 'hundreds of friends were present at the station to see our departure'. Such a trip might be seen to modify perceptions of the participant by his family and friends: in his view the idea of visiting London had traditionally been significant to a person's perceived status, but as so many more people were visiting it now on excursion trains 'there is not such a halo of importance hovering around the London visitor as formerly'. At the same time however 'it is most difficult to persuade a fellow who has been 'at London seeing the Queen', that he is not a person of extraordinary importance.' Thus a subtle change occurred as a result of excursion travel, as ordinary people might perceive that they had enhanced their standing in the community by using the excursion train to visit London, impossible beforehand. An excursion experience might be seen therefore to create an aura of distinctiveness around a person.

There are elements of a class perspective in this account. The writer has secured himself against unnecessary expense by bringing his own refreshments for use en route. He complained about having to use 'bullock-truck' carriages to get to Crystal Palace and disparagingly describes the differential outfits worn by waiters in the various classes of refreshment room at the Palace – while some wore black with white chokers, he had to be content with others in 'fustians or corduroys'.

The 'comparative gaze' is amply demonstrated, with many references to the differences in landscape, parks, housing and buildings, and even conversation, between Lancashire and London. He is constantly positioning his gaze, for example he felt that the machinery on display at the Crystal Palace was inferior to that in the cotton mills of Lancashire, thus not worthy of viewing, and he was also disappointed by the workshop. He was frustrated in his reading of the landscape outside the

²⁶ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: a Cyclopaedia* (London, 1851).

carriage window, complaining that the view was not as remarkable as he might have hoped, as the speed of the train (40 miles an hour) prevented passengers from seeing much, as did the presence of cuttings and tunnels. Moreover he grumbled that 'you are continually whizzing past cottages, farmhouses and little villages or towns...you find a tiresome sameness.' He described the typical architectural features of cottages and houses but objects to not being able to see much of towns, where the approach was via a cutting or on ground level. Thus the changing landscape perspective offered by this new mobility opportunity did not live up to his expectations.

c) *A Vacation of the Million; Being Notes by an Excursion-Trainer (Daily News, 1857)*²⁷

This anonymous account in the *Daily News* in 1857 is by a writer from Clerkenwell in London, who refers to himself as 'but a hewer of wood and drawer of water', reflecting a labouring life.²⁸ He admits that he has some experience in writing articles for the press but is not 'a professional scribe'. His account describes a day trip on the South Western Railway from London to Salisbury.²⁹

The trip appears to have been an impulsive idea, motivated by posters on the walls and the idea of the 'wondrous stones on Salisbury Plain'. His descriptions of the buildings he passed however seem remarkably knowledgeable, thus he must have been very well-read, despite his background. He reinforces the class perspective early on however, by referring to 'we, who cling to the lower spokes of Fortune's ladder', as opposed to the 'upper ten thousand blazing away at the moorcock' at holiday time. In his case the novelty factor relates to his destination, Salisbury and its Plain, rather than the journey. He remarks that it was the first time he had seen inside an ancient cathedral, and in his gaze he seeks to position it positively against Westminster Abbey, which was more familiar to him. There are further examples of positioning his experience in relation to the past when he compares the hedgerows along the road to those which he knows in Regent's Park.

²⁷ *Daily News*, 7 September 1857.

²⁸ A 'hewer of wood and drawer of water', from Joshua ix.21, was often used in nineteenth century literature to refer to 'labourers of the lowest kind' (OED).

²⁹ A commonly used name for the London & South Western Railway.

The account focuses on both the journey and the destination, injecting humour and observations. It sheds light on the use of carriages by suggesting that despite press criticism, excursionists normally favoured open carriages, because of the fresh air and open sunlight, and that these always filled up first, thus to some they were less uncomfortable than the closed carriages. However on this particular trip, the LSWR open carriage became a disadvantage at one point when the train stopped between two high embankments 'where they remained at the mercy of the juvenile population who took stock of the train from the railway bridge'.

He highlights the sociability of this new travel space, commenting that 'there is no place more favourable for forming acquaintances than an excursion train, and before we got well clear of the tiles and chimney pots we were all thick as oats in a bin', and people were getting out their hampers and bottles. This extended to the sharing of desirable objects of consumption: 'my cheroots become public property, and everyone's glass is at my service – the golden age has come again, and we have all things in common', a perception which reflects Edwin Waugh's 'cult of the heart', discussed on page 207-8.

On reaching Salisbury, he and a new companion walk around ten miles to Stonehenge. Despite the solitary nature of this tourist destination they were not immune from what might be regarded as a modern tourist experience, when they were approached by a guide who gave them information about the monument, selling them an expensive postcard. Somewhat surprisingly, after walking a further ten miles back to Salisbury, they were in time to catch their return train.

This account demonstrates that the journey itself, although positive, might be a small part of the total experience of the day, which might include an extended amount of walking compared to modern travel practices.

d) *Our "Cheap Trip" and How We Enjoyed It, by Benjamin Brierley, author of "A Day Out", &c (Manchester Times, 1860)*³⁰

This is the only signed article in this group; hand loom weaver and working-class writer Benjamin Brierley wrote a lyrical piece about his Whit Saturday trip in 1860, recalling what in many respects must have been a very uncomfortable experience. Brierley was well-read from an early age, later helping to set up a Mechanics' Institution in his home town of Failsworth near Manchester, therefore he was

³⁰ *Manchester Times*, 21 July 1860.

prepared for the geography of his trip.³¹ In 1860 he was still working as a silk-warper, but had published his first articles three years previously.

This amusing and poetic piece recalls the emotions of his experience and paints a vivid characterful picture of how the excursion train was used, focusing on the journey and the destination. (Brierley had walked to Ashton for a 6am start on the trip on the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway to Worksop, where he hoped to search for evidence of Robin Hood.³² The cost of his ticket was 1s 6d for the return trip across the Pennines.)

His emotional state suggests that he was apprehensive the night before the trip, with dramatic dreams about dangerous trains. Once again the 'comparative gaze' shapes Brierley's perceptions of space and place: he refers to 'rushing betwixt two worlds that appear to twirling around in counter motion', towards a richer, greener landscape full of promise.

Travel habits were displayed which had been learned from the era before the new railway excursions; at Worksop the excursionists head for Manor Park, where 'our excursion people have scattered themselves over the lawns as they would have done had they been at Dunham' (a canal boat destination for short trips from Manchester). Thus the excursionists were copying their pre-railway behaviour.

Once again this account is useful to help us to deconstruct the components of travelling conditions and habits. On arriving at Ashton station Brierley received several invitations from people to join him in their already swarming carriages, a 'seeming endless line of chattering humanity', but is looking for some particular friends of his. He spots them in what he refers to as a 'tripe stall, or 'hot pea establishment' on wheels'. This was in fact a luggage wagon covered with canvas on poles and fitted out with seats. He was hauled on board and 'safely deposited betwixt two rough, unyielding benches' and 'surrounded by a lot of fellows in whose society I intend to pass a pleasant day', including an artist and a blacksmith (the theme of sociability is taken up on page 207). The 'box' was cold and draughty, instead of Schivelbusch's 'panoramic view' the occupants had to lift up the canvas

³¹ C. W. Sutton, 'Brierley, Benjamin (1825–1896)', rev. John D. Haigh, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) online edn., Oct 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3405> [accessed 17 March 2009].

³² Resonating with the approach of modern tourism development techniques which have adopted literary and mythical figures as a theme around which to build marketing campaigns.

to see the landscape, and they were drenched on the way home, four hours in pouring rain (see page 213 for a discussion on comfort).³³

Sound can be viewed as a positive marker of experience: Brierley's description of the sounds of singing, whistling and swearing and 'the mad iron monster at the front' which enveloped him (see page 189) evokes the conjunction of the personal with technology. He is one of the few writers who refer to the technology of the train, with several worrying details, such as the discomforts of the impact of one carriage against another:

Bang, bang, bang go all the carriages, one after another; each bumping into its neighbour like a battering ram; the bufferless 'tripe stalls' getting the heaviest shocks. Heads are brought into mutual contact without introduction.

Informal singing often appears as a motif in excursion accounts, both individual and group singing. In his account sociability and music were helpful in lifting spirits, a frequent defence against the perception that crowds were dehumanised by the poorly managed trips. It was certainly an important part of Victorian working class culture generally.³⁴

Such accounts offers a multi-dimensional perception of the experience, compared to the flat reports of observers.

Themes arising from accounts

When examining the personal accounts of excursions discussed above together with other shorter accounts, it is possible to draw out a number of themes or components of experience. These are analysed below: novelty, identity, consuming the landscape, sociability and intimacy, and travel space conditions.

Novelty

Novelty was an important component of experience in personal excursion accounts, linked with emotional responses. It might be positioned against familiarity as an important factor in shaping the recollection of experience; where an

³³ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, pp.52-69.

³⁴ See for example James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830:1950* (London, 1978), pp. 97-112.

excursionist experienced an event which was novel to him/her, it would be more striking and more likely to be remembered for long afterwards. Armstrong and Williams projected the steamship as 'an advance in human experience', demonstrating the novel visual impact of steam power at a time when industrial steam power was mainly hidden from public view, and this insight might also be applied to the railway excursion, indicated by the way that crowds lined the sides of the lines and the bridges to view the spectacle of the mass railway excursion.³⁵ At times however novelty was used as a moral weapon, for example the Bishop of London, in opposing Sunday railway excursions in 1835, compared steamboat excursions to those offered on the new railways, arguing that as the former were established and therefore no longer novel, then they were less likely to engender 'excitement' and 'impulses' arising from 'rapid assemblages'.³⁶ Thus there was concern about the role of novelty here in encouraging the mob, a factor with the potential to shape subsequent perceptions.

As railway excursions became more routine during this period, then the component of novelty in a trip was more likely to feature a destination rather than the technology of the journey. The aspect of the trip which represented novelty in Brierley's account was visiting Worksop for the first time, although he also describes the concern his fellow passengers felt at their first experience of crossing over a viaduct. An emotional response aroused by novelty might include a sense of 'wonder'; some people learned to express an appropriate amount of 'wonder' at the novelty of sights and sounds on their excursions whereas others had not learned the 'proper' reaction'.³⁷ In his autobiography, Coventry ribbon weaver Joseph Gutteridge records an excursion trip to the Great Exhibition in 1851, 'the longest journey I had ever undertaken' and reflects on his unbounded delight and pleasure at seeing the Exhibition, '[the treasures] kept my mind in a state of continual excitement for some time'.³⁸ In his case an account of the journey itself does not feature in his published autobiography, despite its novelty, and the excitement about the exhibits arose from his own interests in craftsmanship and physical science.³⁹

³⁵ John Armstrong and D.M. Williams, 'The Steamship as an Agent of Modernisation 1812-1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, XIX (2007), pp. 146,149.

³⁶ Newcastle Railway – Sunday Travelling, *Hansard*, HL Deb., 11 June 1835, vol. 28, cols. 646-54.

³⁷ H.Berghoff and B.Korte, 'Britain and the Making of Modern Tourism: an Interdisciplinary Approach', in H.Berghoff and others (eds.), *The Making of Modern Tourism: the Cultural History of the British Experience 1600-2000* (New York, 2002), p. 11.

³⁸ V.E.Chancellor (ed.), *Master and Artisan in Victorian England* (London, 1969), p. 142.

³⁹ Although the journey might have featured in his original diary and been subsequently edited.

By contrast George Whitehead, a village wheelwright from West Yorkshire, displayed neither comment nor emotion when recording his first and only trip to London the same year in his diary, but then this was the style he adopted throughout his diary keeping.⁴⁰ Here language provides a clue, as the sentence which refers to his visit uses the third person by name, whereas most of his diary entries use the first person. It appears to signal an important personal meaning for his trip.

Identity

It was possible that identities might be re-mapped imaginatively as a result of an excursion experience. For example the London excursionist on page 199 was aware of the distinctiveness around a person who had visited London. In a further example, from a press report in August 1850, a 'rustic', a constable from a village near Mansfield, had been persuaded to take a cheap trip up to Hull, by rail and steamer. Inexperienced in seaports, when the time came to catch the steam packet from New Holland over the river Humber to Hull he was very nervous of entering the ship. He was astonished by what he saw but very happy to be back in Nottinghamshire again, 'getting to England again', and reportedly vowed not to go again.⁴¹ In this case the experience of the traveller had consolidated his sense of identity, with the steamer reinforcing a borderline between the known and the unknown, and mapping his sense of Englishness as an identity. He had not previously seen a seaport or a steam packet, his journey was unhappy and bewildering, and his main concern was that his fire should not be out when he returned to his home. The components of novelty in this experience had a disturbing effect.

Consuming the landscape

Schivelbusch's view of travel space on the railway, while much celebrated as an innovatory approach, offers a particularly middle class perspective. In describing the experience of viewing landscape scenes through the window of an enclosed carriage he is not featuring the typical crowded excursion cattle truck, or the roof

⁴⁰ 'Robert Bell and George Whitehead went to London to see the Great Exhibition &c June 24th and came back July 3rd 1851.' H.Hibbs (ed.), *Victorian Ouseburn: George Whitehead's Journal* (Ouseburn, 1990), p. 52.

⁴¹ *Manchester Times*, 31 August 1850 (from *Leicester Mercury*).

travel experiences described in Chapter 6. He also ignores the use of cart travel in working class mobility. In general his analysis appears to regard the third class traveller as something 'other', almost a zoological specimen, to be disregarded when conceptualising travel space.⁴² Revill has also argued that Schivelbusch's approach reflects an under-analysed sensory experience, focusing on the 'affective, performed and practised' dimensions of travel and mobility', without examining how these perceptions were constructed socially, and their meaning to participants, observers and readers.⁴³ Schivelbusch's focus on the 'panoramic view' fails to reflect the class perspective, the experience of the masses travelling in third class carriages, often with small highly placed windows, or indeed the open wagons which were frequently used on excursion trains, which offered a 360 degree view, similar to that from a cart.

Writers such as Urry and Larsen have discussed how the tourist gaze is shaped by a number of factors, including travel guides for example.⁴⁴ Although Schivelbusch focused on the developing habit of reading on trains because of the boredom and monotony of travel and specifically excluded the lower classes from this, he does not examine the use of printed material which shaped the consumption of his 'panoramic view' through the carriage window.⁴⁵ Excursion agents and publishers realised at an early stage the market for travel guides; the Liverpool & Manchester Railway had generated guide books as soon as it opened; in July 1835 the *'Tourist's Companion: or, the History and Directory of the Scenes and Places on the Route by Railway and Steamer from Leeds and Selby to Hull'*, a neat pocket volume, was advertised by Edward Parsons of Leeds, although at 4s clearly for a middle class market.⁴⁶ In 1846 Joseph Dearden produced a *'Hand-book to the Cheap Trip'*, selling for 3d, to support an excursion from Preston to Liverpool.⁴⁷ A travel guide was being used by two young Leeds workers who were killed in an accident on a Mechanics' Institute excursion from Leeds to Wentworth Park in July

⁴² Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, pp. 60, 75-6. See for example Susan Major, 'Personal mobility patterns in rural West Yorkshire, 1840-1900: exploring the effect of a new railway, using a geographical information system (GIS)' (Unpublished masters dissertation, University of York, 2006).

⁴³ George Revill, 'Perception, reception and representation: Wolfgang Schivelbusch and the cultural history of travel and transport', in Peter Norton, Gijs Mom, Liz Milward and Mathieu Flonneau (eds.), *Mobility in History: Reviews and Reflections: Yearbook of Transport, Travel and Mobility (T2M)* (Neuchâtel, 2011), p. 43.

⁴⁴ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (3rd edn., London, 2011), p.6.

⁴⁵ Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, pp. 65-67.

⁴⁶ *A Guide to the Liverpool & Manchester Railway* (Liverpool, 1830); *Hull Packet*, 17 July 1835.

⁴⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 18 July 1846, 25 July 1846.

1846. They were standing on the seats at the back part of an open third class carriage, observing what appears to have been a 360 degree 'panoramic view' of the scenery using a printed guide, possibly because of a lack of a view from inside the carriage, when a sudden stop made them stumble and fall out of the carriage, with fatal consequences.⁴⁸

Importantly the democratisation of the railway excursion encouraged Abel Heywood of Manchester to produce an extensive range of detailed penny guides in the 1860s, with around eighty towns covered by 1871, from Aberystwyth to York.⁴⁹ Previously although cheap lithography had enabled the production of many more texts and guidebooks to support the new travellers, these had almost all been aimed at a middle/upper class market.

Sociability in travel space

The experience of participating in an excursion featured a distinctive kind of sociability in the new spaces, a sense of enjoying being in a crowd and taking pleasure in the company this generated, reinforced by much chattering and singing. In his description of Edwin Waugh's diary in the mid-nineteenth-century, Patrick Joyce highlights the joys of sociability and intimacy arising from railway excursion crowds, in relating Waugh's account of his trip to Blackpool in September 1849. Waugh was a journeyman printer and later clerk, who was to become famous for his dialect writings featuring Lancashire. Joyce describes from diary entries how Waugh:

woke at five.. walks to Salford Station...to his delight he is slowly joined by a throng of excursioners, working people, especially working girls. Being taken up by the throng of upwards of two thousand people at the station he exclaims, 'I felt that the world was one house, and all men and women in it dear relations'...He finds in his carriage there and back, the company of working women and an old teetotal reedmaker, also a 'modest-looking young man, seemingly of the clerk species'... From

⁴⁸ *Bradford Observer*, 23 July 1846.

⁴⁹ Victoria Cooper and Dave Russell, 'Publishing for Leisure', in David McKitterick (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1830–1914* (Cambridge, 2009), 475-499; *The Bookseller*, 3 August 1871.

nature, from the sea, he derives pleasure, but most of all from the 'one house' of all the men and women of the world.⁵⁰

This account reflects the 'cult of the heart', a key feature of Waugh's approach to life, a belief that mutual respect and generosity can rise above class.⁵¹ Recent neurological work by Zak has suggested that activity such as spending long periods with others in close proximity can release oxytocin in the brain, and engender greater empathy towards others, promoting prosocial behaviours, and it might be argued that this was taking place in these situations.⁵² Waugh was completely taken up with the excitement of the experience, with the sheer scale of the numbers of people involved within close proximity, in new public space at the station, and by the pleasurable social relations reinforced once he entered the travel space of the carriage. On another occasion, Waugh described a visit to Milnrow, near Rochdale in 1850, when he took a seat on a train 'among a lot of hearty workmen and country folk coming back from cheap trips to Wales and the bathing places on the Lancashire coast.'⁵³ Waugh tells how the people around him were 'communicative and comfortable' and how a collier lad started to sing a long 'country ditty'. It was very crowded, latecomers squashed themselves into seats under protest from others who said they were 'too full o'ready'. He adopts a familiar phrase sometimes used in the press in recording that they were like a 'street on wheels', inferring the varied nature of the crowd and elements of proximity and developing relationships.

Sociability appears as a theme in three of the four accounts discussed earlier, and reflects the way that the enclosed space of the carriage forces excursionists into interaction with a variety of strangers, often over a long journey, the idea of connecting to others in a very public way.⁵⁴ Participants may indeed have been forced into sociability by the lack of a view, with the closed space obliging them into intimacy. To some people however there were disadvantages in participating in this new travel space, namely the distinctive effects of an enforced sociability. In 1842 a writer to the press about the railways around Preston spoke of two types of traveller – 'those persons who have no regard to privacy on their journey – to whom the first person they meet is the most welcome companion', and another class 'who go there

⁵⁰ P. Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: the Self and the Social in Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 63.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-62.

⁵² Paul J. Zak and Jorge A. Barraza, *Empathy and Collective Action*, (2009), <http://ssm.com/abstract=1375059> [accessed 18 July 2012].

⁵³ *Manchester Times*, 23 November 1850.

⁵⁴ See for example the account of a Mechanics' Institute trip in *Leeds Mercury*, 27 June 1840.

as a party of their own, and to whom the motley assemblage, inseparable from motley intercourse, is an intolerable annoyance.⁵⁵

The creation of the potential for sociability in the new spaces of the railway excursion can also be seen to reflect similar activity on the steamer trip. As early as 1828 a personal description appeared in the press of a steamer trip to Boulogne and back for 20s entitled 'A cheap trip to France' (thus a phrase commonly used to label railway excursions did not originate with the latter). The confines of the steamer and the experience of being on a joint adventure engendered expressions of sociability in the crowd of some 250 people – mostly male, who formed themselves into groups 'with tongues wagging with a volubility which put all restraint at defiance', with some taking the opportunity to 'lie most confoundedly', thus in this case the writer used the experience of sociability to make character judgements.⁵⁶ While the steamer excursion had offered opportunities for some mobility *within* travel space, the railway excursion confined excursionists to the constricted space of a single carriage or wagon. However it was the railway excursion that enforced sociability, because of its constraints and the sheer scale of the numbers of participants travelling long distances. Some caution is needed before declaring the experience of train travel unique. Accounts of working class road transport travel would need to be explored in order to examine whether the travel space of the railway carriage constructed opportunities which were different in nature to that offered by wagons and carts; for example it was possible to jump out of wagons and carts at will, whereas the space of the railway carriage was constrained by impenetrable boundaries such as locked doors and the absence of accessible windows.

Travel space conditions

A further component of the experience of working class participation in an excursion was the nature of the conditions of travel space, featuring aspects such as dehumanisation, darkness, comfort and a fear for personal safety. Personal accounts evoke a realism which cannot be harvested from clichéd descriptions by press reporters.

⁵⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 23 July 1842.

⁵⁶ *Bell's Life in London & Sporting Chronicle*, 21 Sep 1828. This trip unfortunately ended with a series of mishaps

DEHUMANISATION

An animal theme was used frequently by excursionists in describing the experience of a trip, implying that participants often felt dehumanised in the crowded and confined public space of the carriage. This reflects the views of Chartist Julian Harney, who described the typical West Yorkshire third class carriages in the early forties as 'detestable pig-pens on wheels', uncovered in all weathers with no seating.⁵⁷ Such complaints appeared frequently in the press, alongside other complaints about lengthy delays, both problems caused by the severe overcrowding of trains. A letter writer signing herself 'an old woman' complained of conditions on board the charity railway trip from Preston to Fleetwood in July 1850, when she was overcome by the heat, crowds and delays. She wrote that 'the carriages were only adapted to convey half the number that really did go; and yet there we were, clustered together like so many cattle, some of us nearly exhausted with heat and thirst.'⁵⁸ Other animal comparisons were used; a correspondent complained about a trip from Leeds to Liverpool in August 1852 on the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, when on the return trip the crowd was too large for the train and people were 'bundled into the carriages and packed more like dogs than human beings, with no other alternative but to ride on top or be left behind'.⁵⁹ Observers took up this theme, a reporter described the Great Western Railway excursion trip in September 1850 from Oxford to Southampton as having second class and open carriages or cattle trucks. Only 400 people travelled because of this and they were heard to ask for the 'drovers', whom they thought should be provided. Once in the carriages they started bleating and bellowing.⁶⁰ Thus the experience for excursionists reflected their perceptions of how animals were treated, trapped in very crowded travel space, open to the elements for long periods, often without seats and unable to break out of the boundaries of this space to be treated as human individuals.

There are arguments by those who were affronted by the casual treatment of working class travellers by railway companies; an angry account of an excursion appeared in 1844:

...the bad arrangements for entering the carriages, such as they were; the disgusting manner in which thousands of males and females were indiscriminately packed and crammed into these carriages; the

⁵⁷ A.R Schoyen, *The Chartist Challenge* (London, 1958), p. 105.

⁵⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 27 July 1850.

⁵⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, 28 August 1852.

⁶⁰ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 21 September 1850.

disappointment and unpleasantness caused by the long delays at Liverpool, Manchester and on the road; the keeping of hundreds of people for an hour and more together soaking in the rain; the treatment many of the females received at Liverpool, from those whose duty it was to have assisted them in re-entering the sheep-pens: all, all, was truly disgraceful to even this most *miserable* management...A number of poor men sacrificed the money they had paid for their tickets, rather than allow themselves and wives, to quote their own words, 'to be packed in dirty stinking sheep pens, like lucifer matches in a box'...But then, what matters; they were *only the labouring classes*. They were only those who toil excessively through a weary life, to feed, clothe, and support the *daily* 'pleasure trips' of their *superiors*, the idle, the useless and the cumbersome. Sheep-pens and pig carriages were good enough for *them*. What would the *swinish* multitude have else!⁶¹

This account expresses a negative experience from a class and gender perspective, a rare depiction in the generality or in the press, but typical of the working class viewpoint of the *Northern Star*. It articulates the feelings that the working class deserved a better and more pleasurable leisure experience after their hard labours, and the implication that they had been taken advantage of by profit-seeking railway companies.

For some of the masses on these trips this may have been their first exposure to the kind of industrial conditions and sounds already endured by many of their fellow citizens. For those already used to crowded living conditions, the levels of overcrowding and mismanagement by railway companies must have been severe to merit such comments, and it was only natural that the experience produced feelings of being dehumanised. The travellers felt that they were ignored as individuals, their concerns about lack of air, for example, ignored.

DARKNESS

Brierley referred to darkness in his description of Woodhead Tunnel as 'gray, dun, black as Hades', with a thick and vaporous air, 'the mouth of what might be Pandemonium'.⁶² A colleague compares it to 'penetrating the very marrow of the backbone of Old England' and after ten minutes, upon

⁶¹ *Northern Star*, 3 August 1844.

⁶² *Manchester Times*, 21 July 1860.

emerging from the tunnel, everyone's face is covered in soot. Darkness often occurred as a theme in accounts of excursion experiences, with worries about the unknown, about morality and comparisons with Hell in the new public space of the railway carriage or truck. Tunnels could be especially uncomfortable when people were travelling in open carriages. A self-taught operative in a Leeds woollen mill, J. Bradshawe Walker, wrote a song about the tunnel, which was designed to reassure travellers, by pointing out the 'wondrous things' still there above and the 'hidden store' below, and the eventual 'bright day' reappearing: ⁶³

THE TUNNEL GLEE

Bright day, farewell
'Tis darkness all,
We're out of call;
And who can tell
Of the wondrous things,
On feet, or on wings,
That are overhead—
The living and the dead;
Or what hidden store,
From the floor or before,
Lies darkling around,
Deep, deep in the ground?
High hills above us
We pant for the night.
Away! away!
All hail bright day.

There is a certain irony that this song, written by a working class operative, was used to help middle class excursionists in one of Thomas Cook's first handbooks for a trip to Liverpool from Leicester in 1845, to reassure them that although they had left the open skies behind temporarily, these would return.⁶⁴

⁶³ A. Delgado, *The Annual Outing and other Excursions* (London, 1977), pp. 53-4; for background on Walker see *The Era*, 7 March 1847, *Leeds Mercury*, 7 June 1879.

⁶⁴ A middle class outing, as only second and first class tickets were sold: P. Brendon, *Thomas Cook: 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London, 1991), pp. 36-7; *Leicester Chronicle* 5 July 1845, 2 August 1845.

Carriages were not necessarily lit, a newspaper account in 1858 referred to the absence of lighting in crowded third class carriages on the Lancaster, Preston & Carlisle lines, whereas first and second class carriages were lit. This gave rise to moral concerns: a writer describes the experience of a lady on a cheap trip to Leeds, where there was the 'huddling together [of] a mixed company of males and females in.. carriages, all in darkness, to remain in this shameful, comfortless state till one o'clock in the morning', because of delays.⁶⁵

The experience of darkness in the newly encountered space of the tunnel gave rise to confusing advice about how to behave. A correspondent to the *Daily News* in October 1853 referred to a previous complaint about the 'absurd principle of passengers keeping their places in railway carriages in the case of accidents' where it had been advocated that passengers would be better off getting out. He reflects on an excursion trip which he had undertaken, where the train came to a stop in the middle of a tunnel, and in his view it would have been very dangerous for passengers to have tried to find their way out safely. He highlights the suggestibility of large crowds, where 'how soon a crowd of people lose their presence of mind and fly into the greatest danger', and felt that if people were encouraged to leave their seats they would do this every time there was a stoppage.⁶⁶ This reflects Le Bon's analysis of suggested crowd characteristics such contagion, suggestibility and impetuosity, in this case erupting from a fear of darkness.⁶⁷

COMFORT

Excursions were often uncomfortable experiences, arising from a number of factors, such as dirty wagons, the use of open carriages, seating arrangements, the lack of refreshments and the sheer crowds accommodated in a confined space. Such discomforts might however be compared to the steamer excursion, where problems arose from a different cause. For example, a steamer excursion from Preston to the Isle of Man and Dublin in July 1844, with 400 to 500 passengers, suffered from gale force winds: 'nearly every soul on board was sea sick...glasses were broken, furniture upset, and great numbers, powerless to help themselves, were stretched out at full length, moaning and retching on the dining table, forms,

⁶⁵ *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 26 Sep 1858 (from the *Preston Guardian*).

⁶⁶ *Daily News*, 13 October 1853.

⁶⁷ Gustav Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1896, reprint, Kitchener, Ontario, 2001), pp. 10-12.

sofas and chairs, of the state room where they were tossed and rolled about with every motion of the vessel'.⁶⁸

There are many descriptions of uncomfortable conditions on railway excursions from letter writers in this early period, but there appeared to be few incentives for railway companies to consider the comfort of their passengers, to make technological changes and improve facilities, as demand was so high for excursions but at the same time companies had not yet decided whether such activity was entirely profitable. For example the Preston & Longridge Railway used stone-wagons for their excursion trains in 1842 (this line led to some quarries) and there were complaints that the sand and dirt was not removed from these before they were used on Sundays.⁶⁹

In 1849 a writer to the *Daily News* who signed himself 'one of the million' complained of appalling conditions and company policy on a Sunday trip from London to Dover in May. Although he and a friend were in a third class covered carriage on the way down, for the return trip these were locked, even though empty, and they were forced to use 'sheep cars' (this may have been similar to the train illustrated in the frontispiece). The journey of 80 miles, after 7pm, left them 'begrimed and half suffocated by the soot, steam and smoke' to which they were exposed as a result. Fortunately a torrential rainstorm did not occur until after their arrival back in London.⁷⁰ Open carriages were frequently used, with varying opinions about the level of comfort afforded.⁷¹ It had been reported that the London & South Western Railway Company had stopped using open carriages for excursion trains in 1855, but it may be that these were still used later for excursion traffic. The North Eastern Railway was certainly using them in 1856, with travellers complaining of conditions on an excursion train from York to Newcastle, a journey of 85 miles on a wet night.⁷²

A writer in 1852 compared conditions in English travel space with that on the Continent and in America:

All railways are more or less infected with this vice [squalid economy]. They vie with each other in subjecting second and third class passengers to insult and discomfort. An English second class carriage would not be endured on the Continent or in America...in England you

⁶⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 20 July 1844. Some of those who travelled as far as Dublin on this excursion took the opportunity to visit the political leader Daniel O'Connell in prison there.

⁶⁹ *Preston Chronicle*, 23 July 1842.

⁷⁰ *Daily News*, 1 June 1849.

⁷¹ See frontispiece illustration for a representation of South Eastern Railway open carriages.

⁷² *Bradford Observer*, 17 May 1855; *York Herald*, 27 September 1856.

have to sit on wooden boards, guiltless of paint, with railway labourers, or criminals going to gaol, for your *vis-à-vis*.⁷³

He goes on to paint a vivid picture of travel space:

the recent device of turning its interior an advertising van... why, for two or three hundred miles, should his eyes be compelled to rest upon Eureka Shirts and Moses' Mart, and all the polychromatic typography, which announces paletots and pothouses?...A second or third class carriage, conveying 120 persons in the month of July, with barred windows, and plastered over with pictorial shirts, siphonias, and tea shops, deserves a place in one of the circles of the *Inferno*.⁷⁴

It appears from these comments that it was not only the barred windows of a congested third class carriage but surprisingly the prevalence of numerous pictorial advertisements that offended him, a relatively minor component when compared to the other discomforts outlined in this chapter.

Refreshments were sometimes noted and these were important to the excursionist on a long and tiring journey, where they might have no other means of procuring food cheaply. An account from Preston at Whitsun 1849 described the 'vast quantities of the 'good things' of this life which the excursionists had provided themselves with; among which there must have been some of a savory and saucy nature, from the dropping of the gravy, &c, which oozed from the baskets as they passed along.'⁷⁵ Brough's account shows how numerous strategies were employed to conceal these; he describes how some passengers brought out beer, and gin and water as refreshments, and an old lady ate some bread and butter which she had smuggled in a basket under her shawl, despite the strict prohibition of luggage.⁷⁶

The level of comfort in excursion trains was closely linked to a sense of personal safety, and this will be considered in the next section.

FEAR FOR PERSONAL SAFETY

Accidents to excursion trains were widely publicised for several days afterwards in the regional and national press, but this did not appear to discourage the public from participating in such trips. In accounts of experiences there were many recorded instances of tragic circumstances on crowded trips, where dangerous

⁷³ *Morning Chronicle*, 3 August 1852.

⁷⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, 3 August 1852.

⁷⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 June 1849.

⁷⁶ *Daily News*, 20 October 1855.

practices led to injury and death. Chapter 4 has provided evidence that the excursion train was more accident prone than normal traffic, and that the dangers extended over the whole of the period being studied, getting worse towards 1860. A passenger who signed himself 'one of the maimed', described a cheap Sunday trip to Blackpool from Manchester in July 1849. He reported that there were scenes of great confusion because of the 'hurry and bustle' to secure seats. The train was late returning, and at Preston further carriages were attached, some of which became detached again and were re-attached. As a result the train travelled at four miles an hour to Bolton before becoming detached again with a jerk, at which point the passengers sustained injuries by heads being crashed together – 'black eyes, bruised faces and bloody noses'. The train thus arrived very late back in Manchester, causing great problems with onward travel. The writer suggests that the old stock carriages which had been used to make up the numbers were not fit for purpose.⁷⁷

A trip in August 1850 from Scarborough, Bridlington and Driffield to Hull ran into problems because it was completely overloaded on its return journey, with 48 carriages, 'literally crammed so full that porters could scarcely enter them to collect the tickets'.⁷⁸ It set off back from Hull at 9.30pm, at around 10 miles an hour and the engine finally broke down two miles north of Bridlington, at around 1am. A replacement engine was telegraphed for and eventually arrived at 4.30am. The passengers had been confined to their carriages until 3am at which time they were given the choice of walking along the line to Bridlington or waiting for the engine to arrive. Those from Scarborough (2,500 excursionists) did not get back there until 6am. It was reported that 870 passengers had joined the trip at Driffield: 'On the arrival of the train a desperate rush was made, and a scramble for places ensued, many females being rather indelicately thrown down. The carriages were literally packed, and many were glad to gain a place even on top of the carriages.'⁷⁹ Thus the mixed public space of the railway carriage might cause particular problems for women, for whom traditional rules of behaviour constrained their response to conditions.

A further problem might arise with the width of carriages, in 1852 a press correspondent noted that South Eastern carriages were too wide for the line, especially as 'when men are boxed up 120 strong, in a single carriage, they will, if

⁷⁷ *Manchester Times*, 25 July 1849.

⁷⁸ *Hull Packet*, 9 August 1850.

⁷⁹ *Hull Packet*, 9 August 1850. There are many more examples, such as *Hull Packet*, 12 Sep 1851.

they can, put their heads out of the window', putting them in danger of decapitation by lineside fixtures.⁸⁰

Although railway excursion travel was dangerous at times, there are comparable examples of the danger of steamer excursions. A correspondent in the *Liverpool Mercury* described his alarming experiences with the *Snowdon* steamer on an August excursion from Liverpool to Rhyl in 1846, which ran aground at one point. The shore boats were not seaworthy, the steamer was not safely equipped and it was claimed that large quantities of liquor were drunk by the sailors aboard.⁸¹

Surprisingly it does appear that most people actively enjoyed their excursion experiences, and were ready to accept all the potential problems and discomforts in order to achieve a level of exciting and memorable leisure mobility.

Conclusion

Despite the disadvantages outlined in the introduction to this chapter, it is possible to use an analysis of experience and its social construction to reveal for the first time aspects of the railway excursion which have been hidden in previous histories of the passenger railway. It shows how a particular subordinate group in history, the working class passenger, *used* the train. Personal accounts of travel demonstrate components of experience, such as sounds and feelings, which are missing from traditional reports by railway companies and press reporters. From these accounts it is surprising that so many people did take part, in view of the discomfort and dangers involved and at times the terrible risks. However the incentive for the urban and rural masses of being able to remove themselves temporarily from their everyday lives, at a cost that was affordable, appears to have outweighed the negative considerations, and this new phenomenon had a striking impact on mass leisure mobility. It seems to have been a very pleasurable activity for those taking part, supported by the chattering, singing and sharing of company, seen as a very positive contribution to the excursion experience.

Novelty played an important role in persuading the working classes to take part, and the evidence shows that this is reflected in both the journey and the destination. It also had a surprising role as a moral weapon, used by some seeking to stop Sunday railway excursions, showing how its power might be harnessed at the time.

⁸⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, 3 August 1852.

⁸¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 August 1846.

The accounts also uncover underlying processes in which identities might be remapped, simply because a person had been away on a trip for the day.

Participants' perceptions of the landscape were at times shaped by the publication of excursion guides and more informal preparation for excursions. Importantly however Schivelbusch's 'panoramic view' is revealed to be a middle class construction, in contrast to the typical view from travel space experienced by the working class excursionists at this time.

The theme of sociability arises frequently in accounts, emerging from the way that the railway carriage created a new kind of confined interior space, much larger than traditional carts and coaches, a democratised space in which people from many varied backgrounds would talk to each other in a very public way over a matter of hours, inspired by the liminal nature of their experience. This confirms Richter's observations on the experiential effects of the new confined public spaces of the American carriage on the passenger and their travelling companions, with her reference to 'the intimacy of strangeness', when complete strangers would begin to confide in their neighbours because of the liminal nature of the transaction. The crucial difference however was the ability of American railway staff to monitor behaviour in the carriage, whereas this was not possible in British compartments in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸² Richter's concept of sociability was founded on the 'ownership' of a seat on the railway journey, whereas the travel space experienced in the current study might be much more fluid in the face of unseated passengers standing in overcrowded trucks, or constantly moving along benches to accommodate further passengers. For some people sociable company inside the carriage could be either an incentive or a disincentive. The evidence revealed here indicates how chattering, singing and enjoying mutual company were important elements of a new kind of sociability in the new spaces. (This space also led on occasion to a kind of defensive behaviour in which access to a carriage might be contested using various strategies and this and other examples of behaviour in the carriage will be discussed in Chapter 6.)

The personal accounts reveal components of travel space conditions which again are mostly hidden in traditional histories. The experience of participating in an excursion crowd was frequently described as almost dehumanising – there are many references to being treated like animals. People were sometimes crushed and possessions lost or damaged in the press of numbers, where individuals had to

⁸² Amy G. Richter, *Home on the rails: women, the railroad, and the rise of public domesticity* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina and London, 2005), pp. 26-7.

surrender to the crowd. Dehumanisation was perhaps a natural result of exposure to the kind of industrial conditions and sounds already endured by many of the urban masses and the levels of severe overcrowding and mismanagement.

Darkness and fear were an important concern in accounts of experiences, with worries about the unknown, about morality and comparisons with Hell. However as Rosalind Williams has highlighted, the new experience of the darkness of the enclosed tunnel might be frightful for the middle and upper classes, but the working classes might be more familiar with it as a result of their working conditions, and although Brierley painted a vivid picture of the darkness, he appeared to be philosophical about it, rather than terrified.⁸³

The level (or absence) of comfort was frequently referred to in accounts of experiences, but this was surprisingly compensated for many people by the sociability of the carriage, together with other pleasures such as eating, drinking and singing. Open carriages caused particular problems in wet weather, although there were varied opinions about the advantages of fresh air, compared to the stifling conditions of a covered carriage with limited views and ventilation.

Delays and mismanagement often caused crowd problems, which impacted on levels of comfort, and many railway companies seemed to have no strategies for handling the new demands, they were unprepared for the sheer numbers of travellers and unwilling to devote more staffing or rolling stock resources.⁸⁴ Although the experience was generally pleasurable, there were dark notes; excursionists feared for their lives on many occasions as a result of bad practice in the management of these crowded trains, and despite government recommendations, aimed specifically at excursion trains, there were frequent examples of accidents. Complaints about overcrowding also appeared to be constant.

The accounts of experiences help to demonstrate attitudes and motivations reflecting the very varied range of class participation in early excursions. Accounts highlight class perspectives, emphasising the high level of participation by 'the lower orders', but at the same time demonstrating a novel mixing of classes in these outings. This in turn allowed participants to review their thoughts and feelings about other classes. There is evidence that among certain groups, such as those who perceived themselves to be well-seasoned middle class regular railway users, a level of snobbery developed in relation to 'trippers', in which the perceived

⁸³ Rosalind Williams, *Notes on the Underground* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1992), pp. 63, 66.

⁸⁴ This will be discussed further in Chapter 7 on crowd behaviour.

characteristics of excursion crowds were placed at a lower level than the 'traveller'. At the same time an experienced excursionist might be perceived to have nudged their status up a notch or two within their class, as a result of an exciting trip. It is suggested that the increasing number of cheap trips to London changed people's perceptions of the importance of visiting the capital as a marker of status, possibly moving it downwards.

There is surprisingly little mention of the technology in excursion accounts, apart from when problems with brakes and overloaded trains gave rise to collisions. Reporters seemed to be positive about this new technology, recognising its tremendous power both economically and in transforming mobility opportunities for the masses, but they rarely paint a picture of the locomotive engine and the spectacle generated by the trains, preferring to focus instead on clichéd descriptions of the number and behaviour of excursionists and quantity of carriages. It is only in rare personal descriptions that a sense of the technology employed is highlighted, as in the case of Benjamin Brierley.

Two factors in the operation of the excursion characterise the nature of this special space: the sheer number of participants involved and the unpreparedness and unwillingness of railway companies to provide sufficient staff and appropriate rolling stock in this period to properly service this activity. Further examples of these factors are discussed in other chapters, based on alternative types of evidence, but it is clear that experiences of travel space on excursion trains are peculiar to their operation at this time.

The next two chapters will look at behaviour in travel space and destination space, using sources such as government reports, press reports, personal accounts and court cases.

Chapter 6

Behaviour in travel space

These cattle waggons had been fitted up with seats nailed across them, without backs, and with a light roof, which supported a stout linen sheet, attached by ropes to their sides. During the progress of the train, the excursionists cut the ropes...clambered up the sides of the waggon, in disobedience to the injunctions of the guard, and indulged in all sorts of gambols and tricks upon each other. One, more daring than the rest, ventured even to sit astride on the roof of the waggon, in spite of the remonstrances of the guard of the train, and some of his fellow passengers; and in that position he stooped his head as he passed under the bridges...at length, as the train approached a bridge 100 yards from the Cockerbar Station, and 6 miles to the south of Preston, he turned his back on the engine, and, not seeing the bridge in time to stoop out of its way, he received a cut across the back of his head, which caused his brains to protrude.¹ (Accident on Whit excursion to Liverpool on the East Lancashire Railway, 1857)

The personal experiences of early railway excursionists examined in the previous chapter have demonstrated that discomfort and danger proved insufficient disincentives against travel when balanced against the potential for new levels of personal mobility for the masses and the subsequent democratisation of tourism, at least at the level of the day trip. However there is a large amount of third party evidence from a variety of sources about the behaviour of the travelling masses in the mid-nineteenth-century. In the contemporary press for example there are descriptions of crowds who appeared to be ‘behaving badly’, although these are heavily outnumbered by the kind of traditional reporting about behaviour referred to in Chapter 2. Only rarely was incendiary language used in relation to the crowd, for example ‘a few very large mobs’ on pleasure trips referred to by a railway shareholder in Sheffield in 1849.² Evidence from government reports such as the

¹ 1857 Session 2 (2288) *Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, upon certain Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the months of March, April, May, June, and July, 1857. (Part third.),* p. 27.

² *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 14 July 1849.

above excerpt describes crowd behaviour on an excursion train in 1857, taken from an inspector's report on a fatal accident. Such third party evidence from observers and inspectors poses a number of questions, for example how did such behaviour arise, was it representative of a general mode of conduct and what was the role of the railway companies and the new public spaces in shaping behaviour. It is only rarely that such evidence can be triangulated with personal accounts: thus much of the discussion in this chapter relies on 'reported behaviour'.

Travel space was constrained by the relationship of the physical size and design of the elements of the technological system (railway carriages and stations for example) to the unpredicted market growth for railway excursions for the masses. The nature of the large crowds involved in a railway excursion and the often confined spaces into which they were herded, in the carriages and wagons as well as around the station, inevitably led to behavioural issues. In examining crowd behaviour, this chapter draws upon Canetti's analysis of crowd characteristics in the twentieth century, with the aim of understanding how nineteenth-century excursion crowds might feature inherent qualities leading to certain kinds of behaviour.³ According to Canetti, being part of a dense crowd involves *surrendering* to it; this process removes the normal fear one has of being touched by strangers, and the usual reaction to avoid physical contact where possible. Further, crowds form around '*the blackest spot*', where crowd members are most densely packed, and develop from there with two possible patterns. At its most natural the crowd manifests as an '*open crowd*', which does not recognise boundaries, with the urge to attack these physical boundaries, implying a certain *destructiveness*. This crowd can disintegrate very quickly as soon as it stops growing. By contrast the '*closed crowd*' forms within boundaries and can be regarded as more permanent, in that it fills and controls a constrained space and gains its permanence from its boundaries. The following analysis will draw on these theoretical considerations on different manifestations of the crowd and their driving forces to analyse how behaviour was formed and how this might be interpreted.

The chapter examines press accounts and government reports. These written accounts of such events were primarily recorded by onlookers rather than participants, then syndicated to a wide range of regional and national press, occasionally achieving iconic status in modern day narratives of transport history. Other accounts were buried in obscure newspaper reports and accident reports and unnoticed by historians. Searchable online resources now enable this material to be

³ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (London, 1962), pp. 15-21, 32-39.

located and analysed as important evidence at a tipping point for mass leisure mobilities.

The chapter examines two domains of travel space, firstly the crowded carriage, both inside and outside, and secondly the railway station, which might be at the beginning or end of the excursion journey.

The crowded carriage

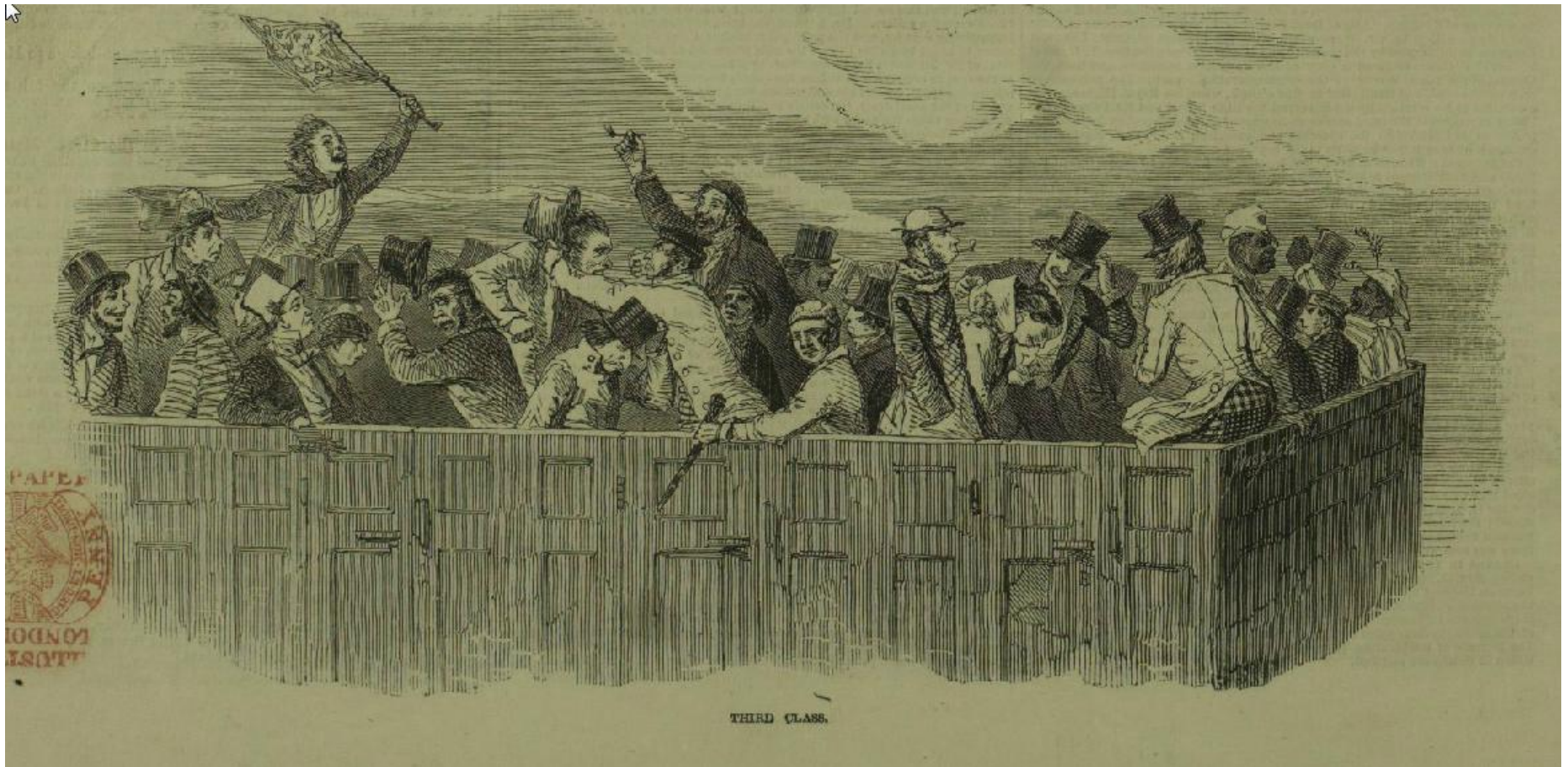
Behaviour in the crowded carriage of the excursion train was influenced by the physical structure of the carriage, together with other factors such as the type of group being carried, the efficiency of organisation of the trip and staffing rules, with ensuing repercussions for the health and safety of passengers.

Travel space inside the train, in the carriage, underwent some crucial change during the period under consideration, as a result of the growing crowds of working class excursionists. Schivelbusch has claimed that after the 1840s the British masses no longer travelled in open freight wagons. However a fresh examination of sources provides evidence that these were often used for excursion trains throughout the 1850s.⁴ Travel space for the excursionist could be very simple and bleak compared to the traditional railway carriage. The illustration overleaf from 1847 demonstrates the basic nature of third class travel space at times, with an mingling of excited classes crammed together, some people standing, some sitting, some perched dangerously on the edge of the wagon. There are no women in this illustration (it was a race excursion), and their presence might have shaped behaviour in favour of a more civilised conduct. While the 1844 Railway Act had specified that Parliamentary trains must be covered to escape passenger duty, there was nothing to stop a company using other types of carriage for an excursion, as long as it still offered at least one Parliamentary train a day. The disadvantage would have been that they would have then incurred the passenger duty on all the excursion receipts, not just first and second class receipts where these were generated. A report on the passenger duty in 1876 suggests that following the 1844 Act, it became at times the norm for excursion trains to be given entire exemption from duty by the Board of Trade, despite a lack of conformity to the standards laid

⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 72. See for example *Daily News*, 20 October 1855, 7 September 1857, *Bradford Observer*, 17 May 1855, *York Herald*, 27 September 1856, *Leicester Chronicle*, 9 June 1860. See also C. Hamilton Ellis, *Railway Carriages in the British Isles: from 1830 to 1914* (London, 1865), p. 40.

'Epsom Races—1847: Third class'

Illustrated London News, 22 May 1847.



down in the Act, as a result of the discretionary powers given to them, and Parris has indicated that sometimes the government approved exemption of duty on open carriages (see also Chapter 4).⁵

Behaviour inside the crowded excursion carriage or wagon often related to the type of group being carried, as there was likely to be a difference in behaviour between those trips organised by an employer or social group such as a mechanics' institute or Sunday school, with associated pressures to conform, arising from power structures enforced in organisation by for example a mill owner, and those which were more of a free for all, such as excursions where all tickets were sold to the general public for trips to large towns, race meetings and prize fights. These paternalist influences reflect those which shaped behaviour on the steamboat excursions; for example a report from the Factory Inspectors in 1845 refers to a large Liverpool cotton mill organising a July Sunday School anniversary annual steamboat excursion across the river, which only allowed children to participate if they showed good general conduct and were 'in the habit of attending some place of instruction, or of public worship on the Sunday'.⁶

Sometimes behaviour was shaped by the way that staff carried out their duties, and Revill has discussed the way that railway workers might interpret the rules of the company in a particular way.⁷ Railway staff were sometimes represented as colluding with their passengers in misbehaviour in travel space, appearing to have placed profitable sales ahead of safety in the management of ensuing crowds. Accident reporters took this view in reporting on a tragedy in August 1858, at the time 'the worst railway accident that has ever occurred in this country', when 14 passengers were killed and 220 others injured, many seriously. Couplings had broken on an excursion train returning from Worcester to Wolverhampton on the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton Railway, leading to part of the train sliding back down a gradient and hitting a following train. The inspector reported that one of the guards had allowed excursion passengers to join him in his brake van, smoking and drinking with them and even to work the brake with him. Staff appear to have exceeded their authority in allowing large number of people on the trip. Although the

⁵ 1876 (312) *Report from the Select Committee on Railway Passenger Duty*, p.11; Henry Parris, *Government and the Railways in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1965), pp.141, 144.

⁶ 1846 (681) *Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, for the half-year ending 31st October, 1845*, p.12.

⁷ George Revill, 'Perception, Reception and Representation: Wolfgang Schivelbusch and the Cultural History of Travel and Transport' in Peter Norton, Gijs Mom, Liz Milward and Mathieu Flonneau (eds.), *Mobility in History: Reviews and Reflections: Yearbook of Transport, Travel and Mobility (T2M)*, (Neuchâtel, 2011), pp. 31–48.

handbills had ordered that only teachers and children of the Sunday schools be allowed to go, this was clearly not the case, with an equal number of adults and children in the 1,500 passengers booked.⁸

Sometimes behaviour might be constructed by a particularly well-organised and planned excursion, which succeeded in managing the crowds effectively. There are two remarkably similar accounts of trips from the North West to London in the summer of 1857 which refer to well-managed crowds organised along military lines.⁹ Both accounts refer to the crowds being organised into 'companies' of thirty people aligned to their carriage number, each headed by a 'captain', with 'party-coloured ribbons' to be worn in buttonholes to identify 'sections'. One of the accounts describes a trip organised by the Rev W. Quekett, Rector of Warrington, from that town, the other a trip from Preston commissioned from LNWR excursion agent Mr. H.R. Marcus. It may well be that these were in fact the same excursion, as many of the details coincide, however significantly the successful organisation of the crowd was not left to the railway company or to its staff. The writer comments on the tight control of the excursionists when the train halted, with guards and porters preventing them from alighting, apart from a brief ten minute stop for refreshments at Wolverton. Carriages were used for this excursion, with windows which enabled the traveller to view the changing landscape, although on arrival at Fenchurch Street station in London, they were hurried across London Bridge and ushered into some 'bullock-truck sort of carriages' to take them to Crystal Palace. It appears from the lack of comment that behaviour was good, presumably because of the level of organisation.

Roof travel

A striking feature of passenger behaviour in the travel space of the crowded carriage, which has attracted little comment in research, was the prevalence of roof travel. Significantly in the 1840s it was quite common for these new passengers to break out of the enclosed space of the carriage and clamber over the sides and roofs, a characteristic of train travel still occurring in places in modern day India,

⁸ 1859 Session 1 (2498) *Report to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade upon the Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the year 1858*, p. 110.

⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 13 July 1857; *Preston Chronicle*, 1 August 1857; *Bradford Observer*, 9 July 1857 (from *Preston Guardian*).

despite prohibition.¹⁰ Roof travel was exceedingly dangerous. An accident report in 1858 pointed out that some bridges were only three feet higher than the top of the carriages, thus regardless of behaviour it was unsafe for anyone to travel on top of a carriage. The report recommended that existing outside seats on top of some of the carriages should be removed and that just two guards on a train was not sufficient to work the brakes and keep control of a large train of excursionists.¹¹

Roof travel might arise out of excitement and anti-authoritarian attitudes on the part of the young men who were typically involved in this behaviour. It exhibits Canetti's crowd characteristics of the *open* crowd, unwilling to be constrained by physical limitations and boundaries.¹² In the 1840s and 1850s it was often generated by the design of the carriage, which limited the views available from the interior. In looking at the behaviour of working class men in Hamilton, Scotland in the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century, Craig Heron refers to 'the spirit of hedonistic, transgressive playfulness that filled their lives, and the anti-authoritarian posture of outlaws'. This reflects the way that young men were recorded as behaving on excursion trains, stimulated by the construction of the carriage or wagon and the sociability of the experience.¹³ It could be argued that it was a way in which these young men were able to claim 'superior' space for themselves. Lee has illustrated how third class covered carriages in 1845 had only tiny windows high up in the sides, with little or no ventilation, therefore a wish to climb on top might be seen as understandable.¹⁴ Excursionists were bursting out of the enclosed space to show off their prowess up above. Some early observers seemed to accept roof travel behaviour; in his practical treatise on railways in 1839, Lecount recognised that people 'may chuse to ride on the roof of the carriage' and recommended therefore that netting be hooked between each carriage, to catch people from falling under the wheels.¹⁵ It is not clear why this practice appeared to

¹⁰ See for example *The Times of India*. http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-10-23/delhi/30313088_1_passenger-trains-express-ghaziabad-station [accessed 10 June 2012].

¹¹ 1857-58 (2405) *Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department, upon certain Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the month of May, 1858. (Part third.)* pp. 41-2. NB the term 'break' rather than 'brake' was used throughout the nineteenth century. See also 1860 (2600) *Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway upon certain Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the months of July, August, September, October, and November, 1859. (Part fifth.)* pp. 65-6 for a further example.

¹² Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, pp.16-17. See also example on page 221.

¹³ Craig Heron, 'The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-class Hamilton, 1890-1946', *Canadian Historical Review*, 86 (2005), p. 411.

¹⁴ Charles Edward Lee, *Passenger Class Distinctions* (London, 1946), pp. 24-31.

¹⁵ Peter Lecount, *A Practical Treatise on Railways* (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 141.

be acceptable, but possibly it was perceived to reflect the practice of stagecoach passengers riding on top of their vehicle, as a cheaper option.¹⁶

Another major factor shaping roof travel was the mismanagement of excursions by railway companies, when passengers climbed to the roof because of severe overcrowding and overheating, a regular problem. A report of an early trip in 1843 involving teetotalers from Glasgow refers to their 'clustering outside [the carriages] like bees', because the crowd was too great to fit inside.¹⁷ A press account of an inquest before a jury, following a fatal accident in September 1844, also demonstrates this issue. It occurred on the North Midland line when 5,500 people took part in a Monday trip from Sheffield to Hull in 170 carriages in three separate trains.¹⁸ It appears that tickets had been sold by a promoter, Mr Thomas Wiley, a spirit merchant, who after selling 4,111 third class and 249 second class tickets, acceded to a request from the Sheffield station superintendent to cease sales as there was not enough accommodation for passengers.¹⁹ On their return some of the passengers climbed on the carriage roof while the train was travelling slowly, despite advice to the contrary by the railway attendants. A coupling chain on the first train broke, causing it to stop, and a second train collided with it at low speed. The jolt was enough to throw passengers off the roofs and one young man, a table knife cutler, was killed. His colleagues gave evidence that they had been placed in an open cattle truck, and then moved into a carriage where they could neither sit nor stand comfortably because of the crowds. They were then tempted on to the top of an adjacent second class carriage because of the empty seat at the top. It was reported that railway officials told passengers riding on top of the carriages several times to get down, but excursionists insisted on staying on top, giving 'saucy answers'. It is not clear here whether the seat was intended for the guard rather than passengers, but there is certainly evidence of passengers being allowed to sit in great numbers on the roofs of carriages in 1836, with the Newcastle & Carlisle Railway (see overleaf).²⁰ Lee describes how Grand Junction Railway first and

¹⁶ For examples of roof travel on excursions see *Yorkshire Gazette*, 2 September 1848, *Preston Chronicle*, 25 May 1849, *Leicester Chronicle*, 6 June 1857.

¹⁷ A. Jordan and E. Jordan, *Away for the Day: the Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991), p. 17.

¹⁸ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 7 September 1844; *Morning Chronicle*, 7 September 1844 (from the *Sheffield Iris*).

¹⁹ The capacity of the carriages was 40.

²⁰ See Gareth Rees, *Early Railway Prints: a Social History of the Railways from 1825 to 1850* (Oxford, 1980), p.62. Lecount describes the placing of two double seats on top of a first carriage in his recommended design in 1839 (Peter Lecount, *A Practical Treatise on Railways* (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 124)



*The River Wall at Wylam Scars Newcastle & Carlisle Railway, 1836, by J.W. Carmichael. (Gareth Rees, *Early Railway Prints: a Social History of the Railways from 1825 to 1850* (Oxford, 1980))*

second class carriages had roof seats in 1837 for passengers preferring to travel outside.²¹

Thus the crowd was demolishing boundaries as a result of pressure from ‘the blackest spot’, where the power and density of the crowd was focused. There were also comments creating stereotypical behaviour of excursionists; North Midland Superintendent Peter Clarke complained that ‘he never saw people so unruly as those from Sheffield’, but argued that he had allowed greater sales of tickets because of representations made to him, and it was reported that a ‘strong body of police’ were involved at Sheffield to keep order. Clarke agreed he should not have used cattle trucks but was following the practice of other lines. The account records evidence before the jury, constructed from statements made either by railway managers and staff, by other passengers or by the coroner. The press observer was shamed by the comments made, and their aspersions on the local community: additional editorial remarks regretted that ‘our townsmen’ should have acquired this reputation, but expressed the view that this should encourage the company to limit their ticket sales and local people to change their conduct, in the hope of displaying more ‘self respect and propriety of behaviour’. The coroner expressed the view that

²¹ Charles Edward Lee, *Passenger Class Distinctions* (London, 1946), p.13.

while excursions should be encouraged as they promoted advantages to the public and profit to the railway company, he recommended that the selling of tickets should match the accommodation available, and that passengers should not be permitted to ride on top of the carriages.²²

Clearly on occasion the railway company was at fault, responsible for forming a crowd without need, causing danger for excursionists. In an accident report by Inspector of Railways Captain Tyler in 1857, concerning a trip from Blackburn to Liverpool and Southport, the East Lancashire Railway had borrowed eight cattle wagons from the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway to provide accommodation for extra passengers (the estimated crowd had swelled from 1,000 to 2,500).²³ The dangerous consequences were described at the beginning of this chapter. The accident report makes the point that 'of all passengers, excursionists are the most difficult to control' and recommended that risks due to their imprudence and misconduct be lessened by railway companies providing safer carriages, who must share some blame otherwise.²⁴

Roof travel sometimes occurred with the collusion of staff. A report of an accident in May 1858 suggested that a guard travelling on the roof, to work his brake, gave a bad example to the passengers, influencing their behaviour, and the accident inspector recommended that these brakes be altered to work from inside the trains. Although railway company employees often tried unsuccessfully to persuade excursionists back into the carriage, such staff sometimes conspired with the public in placing them in dangerous situations when large crowds were being accommodated, as in the case of Newcastle Races in June 1844. When a cheap trip was organised to the meeting by the North of England and the Newcastle & Darlington Junction Railway, it was noted that at Hartlepool there were so many people waiting for the train that 'they were compelled...to go outside, and were, therefore, placed on the top of the different carriages; so that they were exposed 'to the pelting of the pitiless storm.'²⁵ Crowds not only formed by themselves by gathering voluntarily, but were shaped by external forces which encouraged dangerous behaviour.

²² *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 7 September 1844.

²³ 1857 Session 2 (2288) *Reports of the Inspecting Officers of the Railway Department to the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, upon certain Accidents which have occurred on Railways during the months of March, April, May, June, and July, 1857. (Part third.)*, p. 27

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁵ *York Herald*, 29 June 1844.

Thus there were several perspectives in viewing excursion crowd behaviour: the railway company, the journalist, the accident inspector and the passenger. Each had particular concerns which shaped the construction of behaviour and their views and judgement of it. In addition to the playfulness and anti-authoritarian behaviour of young men it was the operational practices leading to crowded accommodation and the design of the carriages which shaped passenger behaviour and the tragic aftermath in travel space.

Gender in the excursion carriage

Women have traditionally been hidden in the history of leisure, as studies have focused on developments in male culture, for example in racing, football, working men's clubs and brass bands, and in the Victorian period it was assumed that women's leisure opportunities were focused on the home rather than public space.²⁶ Gender relations might be seen to shape the behaviour of crowds in the excursion carriage, especially as it might involve the mixing of classes, adding an extra element to the construction of behaviour. Amy Richter has highlighted how 'the presence of "respectable" women on American trains heightened the need to create social order', and argued that it was gender that was the most important factor in shaping American public life in travel space, rather than race or class.²⁷ Barbara Welke has described the ladies' cars used in 1840s American railroads, which might be used also by their male escorts, but whose conduct would be closely monitored 'to ensure that women were not exposed to smoking or rough conduct or language'.²⁸ The travel space of the British excursion carriage could not be policed in the same way, as each carriage formed an enclosed space, inaccessible from other carriages and only reachable from the platform.²⁹ Bailey examined gender and behaviour in the railway carriage, although his perspective here tended to focus on the 'aloofness' of the first class traveller rather than the 'easy congeniality' of the third class, but he discusses the elements of intimacy and liminality raised in

²⁶ Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: c 1780 - c1880* (New York, 1980), p. 129.

²⁷ Amy G. Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (London, 2005), p. 88.

²⁸ Barbara Y. Welke, *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 254.

²⁹ Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), p. 334; Jack Simmons and Gordon Biddle, *The Oxford Companion to British Railway History* (Oxford, 1997), p. 566, *Railway Chronicle*, 22 November 1845; *The Observer*, 11 November 1861; *The Spectator*, 16 July 1864; *Saturday Review*, 23 July 1864.

Chapter 5.³⁰ Ladies' carriages were made available at times, though generally only in first class, although it appears that the Midland Railway offered a ladies' carriage on their 'penny-a-mile' service in 1846.³¹ There is however a rare example of a 'ladies cheap trip' to Blackpool from Salford Station in 1855, offered by Mr Stanley, agent for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway.³² Generally however ladies' carriages seemed to be a source of much concern to women, who feared being closeted away without access to help from the guard or male travellers.

Women in British excursion trains were generally not protected from offensive behaviour arising out of the close proximity of men and women in this new space, and Shani D'Cruze has looked at the ways in which sexual violence against women in the nineteenth century has been represented by court and press narratives which construct a particular role for men and women.³³ Cunningham noted the role of leisure in promoting 'sexual encounters' and this can also be observed in the enclosed public space of the excursion carriage.³⁴ Gender and class were a major force in shaping behaviour on excursions but only rarely do primary sources reveal glimpses of gendered travel practices in this period. Evidence appears when certain forms of conduct were transgressed, as in a court case against an elderly surgeon, who was accused of indecently assaulting a 14 year old girl. On completing a post in service she had become separated from her family escort in a crowded South Eastern excursion train in May 1851. Standing near the surgeon she reported that he started to assault her; although she objected to his behaviour she was unable to prevent him by complaining either to her aunts, some distance away in the carriage, or to nearby strangers, as she was too ashamed.³⁵

Bailey suggested that anonymity in the railway carriage presented opportunities for welcome and unwelcome erotic behaviour, and there were several cases reported where men assumed that the presence of women in a confined shared space made them 'fair game'.³⁶ In 1850, a Wesleyan teacher, a warehouseman,

³⁰ Peter Bailey, 'Adventures in Space: Victorian Railway Erotics, or Taking Alienation for a Ride', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9 (2004), 1-21.

³¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 17 June 1846.

³² *Manchester Times*, 1 September 1855.

³³ Shani D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women* (London, 1998).

³⁴ Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: c 1780 - c1880*, p. 131.

³⁵ *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 14 September 1851. He was seated next to her standing position and kept trying to put his hand up her petticoats. The case was adjourned after evidence from a number of people.

³⁶ See also Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: c 1780 - c1880*, pp. 130-1; Bailey, 'Adventures in Space: Victorian Railway Erotics, or Taking Alienation for a Ride', pp.9-17.

was accused with his colleague of annoying female passengers from Catholic schools when sharing a carriage with them on a May trip to Fleetwood by the Wesleyan Sunday School and the Catholic schools, resulting in a court case at Bolton. Despite many requests from the railway servants the two men had refused to move and eventually they were both forcibly put off the train at Preston and left to walk 22 miles home in the rain.³⁷ In October 1855 a court case described how a man had amused himself by kissing females as they passed through a tunnel on a Bristol trip and when a fellow passenger remonstrated with him he assaulted him.³⁸ A similar case at Southwark in 1859 arose from arguments about insulting behaviour by two men against a woman in a tunnel on a Brighton trip, leading to an assault.³⁹ In 1859 a man was found guilty of assaulting a woman in a tunnel on their return from a cheap trip to Liverpool from Huddersfield, when the lack of lights in the carriage compounded the dangers, and the bench declared that it was important to put down assaults of this kind in cheap trips.⁴⁰ Thus gendered behaviour in the enclosed travel space of the excursion caused particular problems for women, arising from frequent darkness in closed space and the absence of observation which might encourage conformity of conduct.

Such misbehaviour on cheap trips was not confined to the crowded railway carriage as a mode of transport. An 1846 report of a court case concerned behaviour on a steamship excursion, when a man on the *Waverley* trip to Grimsby was convicted of assault. After talking 'bestly language in the presence of females', he had struck someone who remonstrated with him about his improper conduct.⁴¹ Again, during a rail/steamer trip from Kirkintilloch to Arrochar in 1856, a 'large number of excursionists conducted themselves in a most disorderly manner, quarrelling and fighting with each other on board the steamer, both in going and returning.' As a result a young woman was alarmed, became seriously unwell as a result, and died later that day.⁴²

A significant development in travel space was reported however in 1851, when observers were amazed that a group consisting only of female members of a labouring family were able to take a trip from Huddersfield to London for the Great Exhibition, 'unaccompanied'.⁴³ It may well be of course that this group felt more

³⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 July 1850.

³⁸ *Bristol Mercury*, 6 October 1855.

³⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 27 April 1859.

⁴⁰ *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1 October 1859.

⁴¹ *Hull Packet*, 17 July 1846.

⁴² *Morning Chronicle*, 3 September 1856.

⁴³ *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 14 June 1851.

secure as an all female group and possible Canetti's argument of people surrendering to the crowd, losing their fear of being touched, enabled this group to feel comfortable within space filled by crowded masses. Thus despite the risks of offensive behaviour by men inflicted on women in travel space, arising from the constrained and often dark conditions of the carriage or wagon, it is arguable that the combination of the attraction of destinations such as the Great Exhibition, together with cheap mobility for the masses, opened the doors to female emancipation, certainly in allowing women to take unaccompanied leisure trips.

Taking possession of travel space

There are instances of behavioural strategies being developed by passengers to protect their travel space inside the carriage and to defend themselves against the crowd. The aim was to make their own conditions more comfortable or to ensure that the space was restricted to passengers who they believed to be of their own social group, such as the family, or work colleagues. For example excursion agent Stanley commented in 1853 that delays were caused to trips to North Wales from Manchester because some passengers had refused to let further excursionists into their carriages, when in his opinion these had not been full.⁴⁴ On a works trip from Brymbo near Wrexham to Liverpool in 1858, three burly workers succeeded in protecting their carriage space from further entrants.⁴⁵

Such behaviour added to the potentially explosive situation inside the crowded carriage, with each group feeling the need to mark out and define their space. In some cases it might be conceptualised as a kind of tribal behaviour. Tribalism has been defined as the behaviour of 'any group of people that perceives itself as a distinct group, and which is so perceived by the outside world... The group might be a race...can just as well be a religious sect, a political group, or an occupational group. The essential characteristic of a tribe is that it should follow a double standard of morality - one kind of behaviour for in-group relations, another for out-group.' Such tribes will perceive other groups as hostile, they will 'sequester resources' and refuse to 'concede to the common good' in their behaviour.⁴⁶ This was particularly prevalent with religious groupings, and in some cases abusive behaviour against other groups was involved. In 1855 a Lancashire court case

⁴⁴ *Manchester Times*, 10 August 1853.

⁴⁵ *Wrexham and Denbighshire Weekly Advertiser*, 18 September 1858.

⁴⁶ Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: the New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), p. 565, discussing the work of Garrett Hardin.

arose from a cheap trip to Liverpool by two groups of children, one from the Church of England Sunday schools and the other from the Dissenters.⁴⁷ This was a Monday trip designed to take scholars away from the dangers of Darwen fair on that day. After heated discussions between the different Sunday school managers about the need for clearly delineated space, they travelled out in separate trains because of their reputation for rivalry, but on the return journey a group of Church people had to use the Dissenters' train. A Church of England clergyman took over a first class carriage on this with a few people but then refused to allow a woman to enter, seeking to defend his tribal space, striking her over the head and mouth to stop her; she succeeded in her case for assault, with damages of 10s. Thus the presence of varying religious groups in the carriage might lead to serious consequences and the concept of 'taking possession' of this travel space was regarded by some as of great importance. This case appears in evidence as a result of the ensuing assault, but it might be assumed that it reflected common tribal practices between denominational groups.

There is only rare evidence that excursionists attempted to use their mass to take possession of the travel space of the carriage when they were unhappy about conditions. While the lack of communication between carriages prevented railway companies from policing gender relations inside travel space, this enclosed space gave the balance of power to the railway companies in policing traffic movement generally, enabling them to control the possession of a carriage by simply detaching it. It would have been more effective for a disgruntled crowd to use its mass to stand on the lines or block the station space, preventing all trains from moving or other passengers embarking or disembarking. A Mr Scott and Mr Redfern organised an excursion by rail and steam in 1843 from Leeds and West Yorkshire, to Manchester, Liverpool and North Wales, liaising with relevant railway and steamship companies. Unfortunately on their arrival at Manchester one of the speculators went missing with the proceeds and the excursionists were asked to pay the fare again from Manchester to Liverpool as well as the steamer journey. The party tried to take group action: 'the pleasure-seekers took possession of the carriages, and refused to pay anything, the locomotive was detached, and the party left on the line, without any means of progressing a single yard', but after three hours the group had to give in.⁴⁸ A further example of attempted group pressure occurred on a Great Northern

⁴⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 28 July 1855, 15 September 1855; *Morning Chronicle*, 31 July 1855; *Blackburn Standard*, 29 August 1855, 12 September 1855. The court case was heard at Darwen and later at Blackburn.

⁴⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 September 1843.

Railway trip from York to the Great Exhibition in 1851. The ticket conditions had allowed for a return within 21 days. However a complainant to the press arrived at King's Cross one morning (after 19 days had elapsed) with other excursionists to catch the 7am excursion train, but they were prevented from getting a seat because of the large crowds. Further trains were promised but not delivered. Around 11am a placard was hoisted announcing that no more excursions trains would leave until at least 9.30pm. At this the crowd tried to use its power to gain entry to an ordinary train, but policemen prevented this. As a result the writer paid a further £1 9s for a fresh ticket on an ordinary train but despite later letters to the company he received no compensation.⁴⁹

Thus those attempting to take possession of travel space against the will of company staff were usually unsuccessful, as the power relations were unequal, with the railway company's ability to detach carriages if necessary and render them stationary. It appears that excursion crowds were unable to find ways of harnessing their behaviour effectively in space controlled by railway company management. In addition there was no consumer organisation to represent their complaints, as general consumerism developed in the later nineteenth century, they could only use individual letters to the newspapers.⁵⁰

Drink in the carriage

A contributory factor to behaviour in travel space might be the presence or absence of drink and drunkenness. There was much debate about drink and the working classes at this time, especially following the creation of unregulated beershops with cheap beer in working class areas after 1830, which eventually led to a growing temperance movement. Social drinking was of great importance in working class popular culture, however the demands of industrialisation were incompatible with levels of drunkenness which had been acceptable in the past, and

⁴⁹ *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 14 September 1851.

⁵⁰ Redfern discussed the lack of a consumer movement generally in the early twentieth century (Percy Redfern, *The Consumer's Place in Society* (Manchester, 1920)). See also John K. Walton, 'Towns and Consumerism', in Martin Daunton (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Volume 3 1840–1950* (Cambridge, 2000), 715-744, and Matthew Hilton, *Prosperity for All: Consumer Activism in an Era of Globalisation* (New York, 2009), p. 5. There is some evidence of a Railway Passengers Association existing in 1852, relating to commercial travellers, and again in the 1870s, mainly opposing passenger duty, on behalf of commercial travellers (*The Standard*, 28 December 1852; *The Observer*, 5 March 1876; *Manchester Guardian*, 23 December 1876; *Morning Post*, 26 December 1876; *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 20 April, 1882).

this became a major social problem.⁵¹ Although the middle classes condemned the drinking habits of the working classes, some people defended them, saying that drink for the masses was 'a right, a custom and a necessity'.⁵² There were however differential class perspective on drunkenness during the nineteenth century, with the working man penalised for drunken behaviour which might be ignored when observed of the middle and upper classes.⁵³ While it might be assumed that there was a level of drunkenness on excursions, encouraging unconstrained rowdy behaviour, after twenty years of excursions a commentator in the *Saturday Review* in 1859 suggested that 'railway excursionists are noisy, vulgar, and disagreeable to come across but seldom drunk'. There is evidence that railway companies had somehow forced the poor excursionist towards sobriety, because his family were with him and also because of the level of respect and fear shown by him to railway officials, making 'travellers behave well and remain sober'.⁵⁴

There were however some reported examples of excursion crowds featuring an unruly and disreputable drunken element, taking advantage of the cheap ride. A case in September 1856 referred to a trip on the Lancashire & Yorkshire line from Sowerby Bridge to Blackpool, when on the return journey two men were found drunk on the floor of their carriage, which had been kept locked as usual on special trains; they accused railway staff of joining them in a drinking session and the case was dismissed.⁵⁵ On the same line Railway Superintendent Normington described the very well patronised Sowerby Bridge Annual Temperance Society excursion to Liverpool, which used three or four crowded trains in the late 1850s. On their return 'a large number of the passengers were found laid in the bottom of the carriages helplessly drunk, and had to be taken away from the station on platform trucks'.⁵⁶ Such occasions are a good example of what might be perceived as a 'respectable' working class trip might be misleading, as it might feature disreputable behaviour, especially as tickets might be sold to the general public, Drunken episodes could escalate crowd behaviour: an excursion train leaving from Edinburgh was the scene

⁵¹ Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London, 1971), p. 62.

⁵² F.M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain 1830-1900* (London, 1988), pp. 310-311; Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: c 1780 - c1880*, p. 73; James Walvin, *Leisure and Society 1830-1950* (London, 1978), p. 37.

⁵³ James Walvin, *Leisure and Society: 1830-1950* (London, 1978), pp. 37-38. Chapter 7 will also demonstrate how the working class excursionist was discriminated against in Sale of Beer legislation.

⁵⁴ *Saturday Review*, 29 October 1859.

⁵⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, 16 September 1856.

⁵⁶ T. Normington, *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway* (London, 1898), p. 61. In 1846 there were press complaints about levels of drunkenness on Bradford Temperance trips (*Bradford & Wakefield Observer*, 27 August 1846).

of a riot in 1858, when a drunken man tried to jump onto a carriage and was stopped by a porter and the station master, who had to call for police help when he assaulted them. A crowd of around 400 other people at the station then joined in against the station master and the police in a serious disturbance; some men were later found guilty of assault against the police.⁵⁷

Occasionally the press would deliberately counterpoint reports of the scenes of drunken excursionists with excursionists who were seen to be rather more well-behaved. A report of excursions on the Dundee & Perth Railway in 1847 contrasted the 'inebriety' of some of the operatives on their arrival at their destination with the 'decorous' behaviour of a procession of children from the charity and ragged schools, each carrying a tin bowl with some bread and meat, on a cheap trip.⁵⁸

In the main however the effects of drink on behaviour in the crowded carriage was very much a function of the type of group being carried and the views of the observer. There were views that the excursionist was not drunk in general and evidence indicates that this was rarely a problem with excursions. It might be concluded that the developing excursions gave the working classes an alternative outlet for enjoyment, which because it might be shared with the family rather with workmates reduced the incentive to drink heavily. In contrast to general working class culture, drink does not seem to have been influential in shaping travel space behaviour.

Behaviour in the travel space of the station

Evidence sourced for this chapter indicates that behaviour at the station was shaped by a number of factors, the inherent characteristics of the crowd, the physical attributes of station space, and the way that railway companies handled the excursion.

The characteristics of the crowd

Canetti's analysis of crowd characteristics helps to shed light on aspects of crowd behaviour at the station and how this can be understood. When analysing excursion reports it becomes abundantly clear that the excursionists' behaviour

⁵⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, 26 June 1858.

⁵⁸ *The Standard*, 4 September 1847 (reprinted from *Perthshire Courier*).

reflected Canetti's concept of 'surrendering to the crowd'.⁵⁹ It was especially noticeable at stations. On Whit Sunday May 1845, when there were cheap trips between Sheffield & Rotherham for Rotherham Fair, the railway company underestimated demand and huge crowds were left in Rotherham when the last train had left in the evening.⁶⁰ Some had to find accommodation, others, including the old and the young, had to walk six miles home at a late hour, some gathered around the station in the hope of another train. The press correspondent expressed great concerns about the 'tremendous pressure' of the crowd around the station doors, the 'dangerous confusion' and the way that as soon as an extra carriage was provided, there was 'a general rush and scramble to get into it while still moving', suggesting that his informant would see the need to insure his life if he took another trip. Again in August 1845 a report described a cheap trip for the poor by the Preston Temperance Excursion Committee from Preston to Fleetwood, when 'thousands have availed themselves ... to escape for a day at least from the pent-up alleys and the noise and tumult of the town, into the pure fresh air of the country, and the invigorating breeze of the sea shore'. The reporter complains of the 'press of numbers' and being 'nearly elbowed to death in the crowd', and was thus fighting the crowd as an outsider rather than flowing with it and surrendering to it.⁶¹ Thus for reporters unused to this kind of incident it was a terrifying and potentially deadly experience in travel space. It may well be that many reporters were not used to the close mingling which might reflect the kind of conditions experienced by the poor in their housing and streets.

Canetti has outlined the quality of potential destructiveness in a crowd, associated with a loss of personal inhibition and attacks on boundaries. Such behaviour clearly characterised some of the excursion crowds of the early nineteenth century, although evidence is scarce, possibly because the railway companies and the urban elite owners of the press were keen to represent excursion activity in a good light. Walton has identified stages in crowd behaviour at seaside resorts towards the end of the nineteenth century, but his focus is on the foreshore and the town, rather than the station space,⁶² Studies of football spectator disorder around the same period have argued about the merits of constructing

⁵⁹ Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 17 May 1845.

⁶¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 9 Aug 1845

⁶² John. K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: a Social History 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), pp. 187-215.

rough/respectable axes when looking at social components of football crowds.⁶³ In 1838, when the newly opened London & Southampton Railway (LSR) organised trips for Derby Day at Epsom from Nine Elms Station in London, the excursion crowd, eager to depart, stormed the railway station by force.⁶⁴ The high level of demand, stimulated by the efficiency of linking transport modes – steamboats and LSR omnibuses – which brought hopeful rail passengers to a single transport node at Nine Elms Station, led to great crowds massing as early as 6am. The railway filled its carriages, running trips to Epsom continuously, carrying an estimated 3,000-4,000 passengers. However by 10am there was still a large crowd of impatient racegoers, including ‘many respectably dressed ladies’. The crowd’s destructive force lifted the station door off its hinges, despite the presence of railway police control, and the crowd rushed into the main hall. An account suggests that ‘the shrieks of the women were dreadful’ until they were removed from danger, but several of the men jumped over the counters and entered a waiting train. Unfortunately the railway company foiled their activities by detaching the carriages containing passengers who had paid and leaving the interlopers at the station. At this point the railway police force had to be supplemented by the Lambeth and Vauxhall police division, headed by an inspector, to clear the area, but apparently ‘no great mischief was done’. Notices were then displayed to say that no more trains would run that morning but some passengers then reverted to travelling by cab to the race. This was spectacularly described in the press as a ‘tumult’ involving a ‘mob’, later becoming an iconic narrative from the early days of excursions, possibly reflecting the drama of the event.⁶⁵ However it demonstrates how mixed crowds including presumably ‘respectable’ men and women can suddenly take on a life force of their own, leading to destructiveness.

A further example makes it even more obvious that delays and lock-outs by a railway company, here on a trip from Southampton to London for the Great Exhibition in September 1851 evoked serious problems and destructiveness.⁶⁶ A crowd of 3,000 passengers had arrived at 6am but were kept out of the station until the train came at 7am. When the doors finally opened the rush was so great that ‘the windows of the station were broken, several persons were injured, and a great

⁶³ For example Patrick Murphy et al, ‘Football Spectator Violence and Disorder before the First World War: a Reply to R.W. Lewis’, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 15 (1998), 141-162.

⁶⁴ *Hampshire Advertiser*, 2 June 1838, 9 June 1838; Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁵ See for example Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London, 2006), p. 430; Arthur and Elizabeth Jordan, *Away for the Day: The Railway Excursion in Britain, 1830 to the Present Day* (Kettering, 1991), p. 80.

⁶⁶ *Daily News*, 9 September 1851.

number of hats, shawls, bonnets, caps and shoes were lost. Numbers of women fainted or were taken ill, and children were nearly crushed to death.' An account tells how many local tradesmen had paid for their servants to take this trip and 'a large posse of 'maids of all work' ... dressed respectably, each with a little basket of provisions for the day, were, with the crowd, congregated early before the station.' Many of these had their clothes torn in the rush and were frightened, and it was reported that it was impossible for the railway staff to retain control of the situation, for example third class passengers ended up in first class compartments, without paying. Such evidence shows that even the respectable working classes could become a mob under certain conditions, often triggered by the organisations managing the excursion and by the space in which they were confined.

Thus in these examples the crowd exhibited typical characteristics, but these were further shaped by the physical constraints of the station space.

The effect of station space in shaping crowd behaviour

Schivelbusch has portrayed the nineteenth-century railway station as a gateway between two kinds of travel space - the city and the railway, creating a liminal space between the two, in his view a way of cushioning the shock between the city space and the industrialised space of the railway technological system.⁶⁷ However while he discusses the role of the waiting room as a public space which was used as a holding area until the trains arrived, in the case of British excursions, the stations were often completely closed to the new travellers until the staff were ready, causing huge problems outside the station doors. Railway space was typically crowded by the very nature of large numbers of people funnelling into a departure, and excursion crowds were created inside and outside the constrained travel space of the railway station both at the point of origin and at the destination, by the practices of the railway company.

The locking of the doors at stations, when railway companies were expecting excursions to embark, created a point where a large crowd was generated, in Canetti's words the 'blackest spot'.⁶⁸ In 1846 a correspondent complained in the

⁶⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, Ca, 1986), pp. 174-7.

⁶⁸ Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, p.16.

Manchester Guardian that he had hopes of a trip to Alderley with his wife, three children and servant. Arriving early they suffered a long wait with hundreds of others in the hot sun as the door was closed until shortly before the trip was due to depart. After getting their tickets they could not find a seat in second or third class and the company promised more carriages. Open carriages were placed on the line but the train went off without them. A crowd of 'most respectable ladies and gentlemen' amassed at the superintendent's office to find out what was going on but no-one would come out until a gentleman used a piece of wood to break the window at the booking office, again illustrating destructiveness. At this a young man looked out and told them his job was just to take the money and that 'we could go where we chose'. Disappointingly they were refused a refund on their tickets.⁶⁹ Thus the shaping of 'unruly' behaviour by the qualities of travel space included the 'respectable' element of the excursion crowd too. In another example a correspondent to the *Wrexham Advertiser* in 1859 complained of the practice at Birkenhead Station of closing the station door when excursionists were due to arrive. Several thousand had to wait on a steep hill, pressing down towards the three foot wide door. When it finally opened, the crush at this 'blackest spot' was great, with at least one woman fainting under the feet of the mass of people. In a reaction, railway officials expressed a sense of panic by beating the crowd over their heads with sticks.⁷⁰ It may be that they used this approach to prevent further trampling of vulnerable passengers underfoot, or alternatively they perceived this large mass of people as encroaching without order on the travel space of their station.

The design of the station space – the booking office and the platforms – frequently prevented an orderly progression. A reporter described the crowds of passengers getting on excursion trains at the London Bridge terminus on the London Brighton & South Coast Railway for a special military musical fete at Crystal Palace in 1854.⁷¹ Although there was a separate entrance at the station for excursionists who had already bought tickets, this entrance took them into:

the same over-crowded room, in which, from a dozen pigeon holes, there was a ceaseless cry for tickets...and a gradually increasing crush and pressure, which it required all the tact and management of the officials to contend with...then came the headlong rush for the trains.

⁶⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 6 June 1846.

⁷⁰ *Wrexham Advertiser*, 30 July 1859.

⁷¹ *The Observer*, 30 October 1854.

Luckily the railway company had anticipated ...and laid on extra trains, and of extra length, which the moment they were drawn upon the platform were filled and moved off at intervals of around ten minutes. Unfortunately however, there were generally about three times as many assembled on the platform as the train would accommodate, and the rush and the scrambling, and struggling that took place among the excited crowd may be imagined. All distinction of classes, and we may add, of castes, was lost in the scramble, and soldiers and sailors, ladies of title in silks and satins, and working people with babies, baskets, and bundles, looking as hot and thirsty as if they had meditated a halt at the refreshment room at the foot of the staircase, before entering the palace, were all mixed up together and glad to get a seat in any carriage and in any company.

Thus the demand for this new mass mobility completely overwhelmed the constraints of the physical space available. There were attempts at organising functional space for excursion crowds, by using a special door for excursionists, but this was ineffective as it led to the same crowded area as the normal doors. Platform space could not accommodate these large numbers either, despite the availability of extra long trains to siphon off the travellers, thus the ensuing behaviour was seen to be a complete scramble and struggle, shaped from a melting pot of class, gender and age groups which might not have been in close quarters together previously.

Effects of mismanagement of station space on behaviour

It was not only the compact space of the railway station which led to crowds breaking out, but the inadequate handling of excursion crowds by the railway companies. The management of the excursion needs to be set in the context of the level of normal railway traffic, which in the 1840s was developing at a fast rate. Nineteenth-century novelist Wilkie Collins referred to passenger mobs and traveller's riots in his novel *No Name*, set in the 1840s. He presented a satirical diatribe on the failure of railway companies to manage crowds at railway stations, using York as an example, even when these were not necessarily complicated by excursion trains, using incendiary language such as 'mobs' and 'riot'⁷²:

⁷² W. Collins, *The Works of Wilkie Collins: Vol 12: No Name* (London, 1862), p. 268.

He reached the platform a few minutes after the train had arrived. That entire incapability of devising administrative measures for the management of large crowds, which is one of the characteristics of Englishmen in authority, is nowhere more strikingly exemplified than at York. Three different lines of railway assemble three passenger mobs, from morning to night, under one roof; and leave them to raise a travellers' riot, with all the assistance which the bewildered servants of the company can render to increase the confusion...Dozens of different people were trying to attain dozens of different objects, in dozens of different directions, all starting from the same common point and all equally deprived of the means of information.

This demonstrates how station space was particularly difficult to manage, because even in normal conditions a busy station servicing several companies might have to handle large groups of travellers needing guidance, information and help with luggage. The addition of an excursion crowd, lacking experience of the station and its practices, could tip the balance into complete chaos.

As we have already seen in many examples of overselling excursions, the railway companies seemed unable to predict accurately the level of potential demand for a new excursion service. This may of course have arisen from their ineffective management structures previously described in Chapter 3, and a constant growing demand, but it might be argued that the use of a myriad of ticket sellers/excursion agents caused such problems.

One of the major shortcomings in handling crowds was understaffing. An observer commented in 1858, 'one peculiarity of railway management being that there are only the same number of officials employed when two thousand people are about to take their departure as there are when there are only two dozen to be stowed away.'⁷³ A press report in 1857 described the lack of staffing at London Bridge Station for excursions on South Eastern Railway on Sunday morning trips to Margate and Ramsgate. When the excursionists had bought their tickets they were then subjected to having their packages and parcels searched, because these were charged extra, but there was only around 15 minutes to do this. There were only two members of staff, a porter to weigh the packages and a clerk to register these, for a crowd of two to three hundred people. The clerk was soon besieged by an angry crowd who were fearful of missing their train, leading to a 'disgraceful scene of riot

⁷³ *Wrexham and Denbighshire Weekly Advertiser*, 18 September 1858.

and confusion'. Apparently 'men's coats were torn off their backs, women's bonnets smashed, and a few crinolined..females...came out of it flattened like pancakes, and bruised like oats...'⁷⁴ Thus the railway managers' lack of foresight led directly to behavioural problems with the crowd. Too few people to help often led to tremendous problems, with people waiting, becoming impatient and bursting out of the space allocated to them.

However there are rare examples of careful planning by railway companies. Detailed accounts of these are hard to find, presumably under the principle that a good system disappears from view, it is only the bad systems which are newsworthy, because they inspire anger and dissatisfaction. On the Manchester & Leeds Railway the *Manchester Times* estimated 12,000 scholars in a total of 140,000 people conveyed on the line during Whit week 1846. This railway seems to have taken steps to manage crowds rather more safely than other companies, as Sunday school carriages were attached to regular trains to prevent accidents. Furthermore the press commended its management of crowds at Victoria Station for the Jubilee conference of the Methodist New Connection, with a new line of rails for cheap trip trains and a surprising well organised reception of these:

Whenever a cheap train arrived at the station, the passengers got out at the right hand side of the carriages, and passed through a line of officers, stationed there for their guide and protection, to a separate gate on the off side of the station. Through this gate they also entered when about to return; and if it happened that the train was not in readiness, they had an opportunity of resting themselves on seats fitted up for their use. A band of music was also placed on a temporary platform and they played various airs for the waiting travellers. Ginger beer was also served out to those whose throats were parched with the terrible heat.⁷⁵

Crowd management was facilitated at times by the way that Sunday schoolchildren were marshalled. On a Sunday school trip from Sheffield to Hull in September 1844, members of the public, who had been able to buy tickets, arrived early and besieged the station, later occupying some of the carriages, but the strict discipline of the children and their managers apparently prevented further confusion when they arrived and a report also suggested that the railway companies handled the situation well.⁷⁶ In this case the power relations exercised

⁷⁴ *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 13 September 1857.

⁷⁵ *Manchester Times*, 6 June 1846.

⁷⁶ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 7 September 1844.

by the Sunday school managers over their charges led to conformity and an effective use of space by maintaining a careful order, presumably in procession. In this case the spatial boundaries argued by Canetti were not breached, because of these constraints on the children and the management by the railway company, leading to reports of good behaviour.

An anecdote about French excursions in press accounts from 1850 highlights two points of difference between the French and British systems in managing the pressures of excursion crowds in station space. Paris was experiencing a high demand for excursion trains at that time, with cheap trips to Dieppe. A large crowd of people had gathered to buy tickets for an excursion to Dieppe (presumably from Paris) and as the crowd was impatient at not being processed fast enough, a 'clever fellow' started to issue 'regulation numbers' rather than tickets, to be presented some minutes before the departure of each train, at 50 cents a time, achieving a total of around 700 francs on these transactions. It is not clear if he was a member of staff offering a level of flexibility unheard of in Britain at that time, or a hoaxer, from this report, but when the train was due to depart, these people, around 1,200 in number, demanded their places and on being refused by staff the angry crowd 'broke open the doors and rushed to the train'. As a result the officials called in the infantry to force them out of the wagons, a response which does not appear to have been used by British railway companies against excursion crowds.⁷⁷ The mismanagement by the railway company forced the crowd into bad behaviour in this instance, driving them to burst the boundaries of station space and enter the train on their own initiative. The military response indicated the seriousness with which the railway company treated these transgressions.

Conclusion

The excursion was at this time an unusual opportunity for the classes to mix together in close and sometimes dangerous proximity, as illustrated by some of the foregoing examples. This chapter has examined reports of excursion crowd behaviour in travel space: in the carriage and at the station, drawing upon Canetti's crowd characteristics. New evidence has shown how patterns of behaviour of the new excursion crowds in travel space were judged and reported on by

⁷⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 20 July 1850; *Blackburn Standard*, 17 July 1850; *Morning Chronicle*, 25 July 1850.

commentators from the press, by railway workers and by accident inspectors, and constructed by a variety of factors.

Behaviour in travel space was influenced by the type of group carried and by the way that railway staff carried out their duties. In the absence of first person accounts it was represented by observers in their reports, which were influenced by their own perspectives. Roof travel was a surprisingly common feature, especially in the early days, illustrating the urges of an open crowd to attack and break out of physical boundaries, with excursionists, especially young men, climbing on top of the carriage in a spirit of playfulness, but also influenced by the lack of window space and ventilation. This was even regarded as acceptable in the early days, and to some extent supported by the collusion of railway staff, even though this practice was exceedingly dangerous.

It has proved difficult to find evidence of gendered travel practices, but there are examples of offensive behaviour by men inflicted on women in travel space, arising from the constrained and often dark conditions of the carriage or wagon, leading to the inability of observers to control conduct.

The presence or absence of drink and drunkenness was explored as a contributory factor to behaviour, but this depended on the type of group being carried and the views of the observer. There is some evidence that drunkenness was not a particular feature of the railway excursion, for a number of reasons such as the presence of family members and a level of control by railway officials.

A number of Canetti's crowd characteristics could be seen in station space, such as the concept of surrendering to the crowd, and the 'blackest spot' at the station doors. The design of station space prevented an orderly progression and demand for this new mass mobility completely overwhelmed the constraints of the physical space available. As a result of delays and mismanagement there was a destructive urge to attack physical boundaries, associated with a loss of personal inhibition.

Railway companies were not equipped for unusual and unpredictable demand, which might arise from using a variety of uncoordinated ticket sellers and consequently did not provide enough staff to control behaviour. There are however examples of careful planning by excursion organisers and by some railway companies, which shaped good behaviour, together with the influence of power relations, for example on Sunday school trips.

The research demonstrates that Schivelbusch's views of the station waiting room did not reflect the reality of a holding space available to excursionists, which shaped

subsequent behaviour. However in general it was the policies and actions of the railway company, its officials and agents, which forced the crowd into bad behaviour.

The railway excursion was remarkable in claiming new travel space for the masses and the next chapter explores how destination space was contested as a result.

Chapter 7

Contesting destination space

The North Staffordshire Railway Company thought proper to make up their then dividends by advertising in flaming handbills a series of cheap excursions along their line to the Ruyard Lake, a regatta to be held on Easter Monday, with sport of all kinds, music, steamboats, firing of guns, &c. Miss Bostock and several of the neighbouring landowners expostulated, but without avail. The regatta took place, and with an invasion of 6,000 people of all kinds from the manufacturing districts the jury might imagine how little the privacy and comfort of the plaintiff could be consulted. The vast crowd came, the quiet reservoir became a scene of tumult, amid the hissing of the steamboats the firing of guns, and the shouts of people. Miss Bostock's park was unreservedly trespassed upon, crowds scaled the walls and fences of the park, broke down the trees, and, last though not least, openly insulted, by obscene and abusive language, Miss Bostock and her friends.¹ (Court report in press, August 1851)

While the previous chapter examined reports of behaviour in the travel space of the crowded carriage and at the railway station, this chapter explores how excursion crowd behaviour in the new public spaces of the destination was reported. It questions the ease with which excursion crowds attempted to occupy new leisure space, as in the practices revealed in the above excerpt. Reports of excursionists behaving badly also shed light on the construction and perception of excursion crowds (see page 278 for a further analysis of this event).

In the twenty-first century we may take leisure destination space for granted, but it has been shaped by historic contestation. Walton, in his review of research on British tourism, underlined the contribution of spatial politics and the subsequent tensions in the development of resorts, urging historians to analyse the role of

¹ *Morning Chronicle*, 19 August 1851.

space as well as social systems in the cultural study of mass tourism.² A number of other writers have focused on the role of space in cultural history and the interrelatedness of social and spatial systems.³ Harvey showed that although we take space for granted as a single objective element, in fact space has many different meanings and is shaped by human practices, as well as shaping practices.⁴ Pooley has also drawn attention to unequal access to desirable space in urban history and the way that this changed over time.⁵

There were a number of factors involved in shaping public urban space for working people in the Victorian period: the movement away from rough urban street culture, the development of police forces, and the pressures on previously open spaces for new houses for the middle classes, leading to moves by rational recreationalists to create new public parks.⁶ These might still be controlled by powerful groups such as local politicians and traders, for example Gurney described the way that public space for the masses was challenged in Manchester at the end of the nineteenth century at Boggart Hole Clough, when crowds of working people were prevented from listening to socialist speakers in public parks.⁷ Similarly in some cases organisers took care in very early trips to construct behaviour patterns in destination space, by ensuring that passengers formed a procession when they left the train, as in the case of the 1840 return visit of Leicester Mechanics' Institute to Nottingham.⁸

Excursions offered a wide variety of new public spaces at destinations, often in attractive settings. The influx of large numbers of excursionists exerted a powerful force, for example seaside resorts rapidly changed their nature and character once excursions started pouring thousands of cheap day trippers on to their shores. Walton has demonstrated the effects of many thousands of new excursion visitors arriving in Blackpool from industrial towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire in the 1840s

² John K. Walton, 'British Tourism between Industrialisation and Globalisation', in Hartmut Berghoff (ed.) *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (Houndmills, 2002), pp. 118,126.

³ D. Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', *New Left Review* 196 (1992), p. 80.

⁴ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford,1990), pp. 203-4, 211, 212. Harvey places less emphasis on the role of space in shaping human practices.

⁵ Colin J. Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground: Urban Form, Residential Structure and the Social Construction of Space' in M.J. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 435.

⁶ Neil MacMaster, 'The Battle for Mousehold Heath 1857-1884: 'Popular Politics' and the Victorian Public Park', *Past & Present*, 127 (1990), pp. 117-154.

⁷ Peter Gurney, 'The Politics of Public Space in Manchester, 1896-1919', *Manchester Regional History Review* (1997), 12-23.

⁸ *Derby Mercury*, 5 August 1840.

and 1850s, especially at Whitsun. Here it was local authority which by the mid 1850s played an important role in shaping excursionist behaviour, using by-laws controlling bathing, cabs, boats and donkeys,⁹

It might be possible to adopt the theme of working class 'respectability' to classify the range of destinations featuring in railway excursions during this period.¹⁰ Without the use of personal narratives and comparative reports about elements such as behaviour, clothing and activity, it is impossible to assess the components of rough versus respectable participation in many cases. Those excursions which might be represented as rough rather than respectable included trips to hangings and to the races for example, although the latter would include a range of class participation. The trip arranged to see the results of the Holmfirth flood in 1852 might be viewed in two ways, either a less respectable outing by people looking for enjoyment in viewing a freak situation, or possibly a more respectable trip for people wishing to assess the extent of the damage with a view to providing support for those made destitute.¹¹ Trips to seaside resorts might also feature a mixture of groups of rowdy excursionists together with families and couples seeking a pleasant day or few days away. Excursions to country estates, pleasure gardens, exhibitions, historic locations and natural features might be included at the more respectable end of the spectrum. Temperance trips might be regarded as respectable but the evidence on page 237 indicates that these might not be a single role performance.

Other destinations might include London and other large towns and cities, exhibitions and other events, and military musters and encampments. There were trips to structures such as the Britannia Tubular Bridge, which attracted the masses because they represented a spectacle of technological innovation, symbolising a new modernity. In discussing the 'technological sublime', David Nye has shown how experiencing such a man-made object 'disrupts ordinary perception and astonishes the senses, forcing the observer to grapple mentally with its immensity and power'.¹² In this case the Britannia Bridge was almost the Disneyland of its day, providing the excursionist with a spectacle, a 'novel sensation', which disturbed his/her everyday

⁹ John K. Walton, 'The Social Development of Blackpool, 1788-1914' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 1974), pp.243-244,269, 379-388 ; John K. Walton, *Blackpool* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp.23-43.

¹⁰ Peter Bailey, "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?": Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*,12 (1979), 336-353.

¹¹ See Chapter 5, page 195.

¹² David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1999), pp. 15, 60, 72.

view of the landscape. In addition it enabled the viewer to celebrate the inventor, a particular feature of the nineteenth century sublime.

Most of these destinations had not been visited in great numbers by the masses until excursions made them possible, although a few, such as Blackpool, had seen the working classes arriving on foot or by carts for many years previously.¹³ Upon arriving at the destination space, the masses on occasion had to contest this, as a result of their large numbers, often surprisingly successfully. At times this generated what Rose has defined as 'outbreaks' of collective behaviour, or 'episodes', unlike routine behaviour, and therefore generating news. While this has the advantage of making such episodes visible to the historian, there is also the disadvantage that reports were written from a particular viewpoint, often negative, to support the aims of the publication; later extracts from newspaper reports will demonstrate this.¹⁴ Such a contestation of space functions in two dimensions: that experienced in real time by the participants, and that reported on later by observers and commentators. These accounts of behaviour are constructed by a variety of expectations, judgements, relationships and moral values, and examples will be analysed later in the chapter.

Views and perceptions of the new excursion crowds by the destination populace and by reporters feature rarely in press coverage of the period, beyond stylised narratives covering a few facts and reports of good behaviour. Each publication had a political stance, and as we have already seen, the views and forces of Sabbatarians, commercial interests and railway stockholders impacted on the comments and reports represented in these publications. Correspondence columns can sometimes be useful but these would have been selected, edited and/or censored as with all reporting, according to editorial preference.

This chapter uses rare accounts from a range of press sources, with the aim of showing the issues and forces involved in excursion crowds accessing new space at the destination. It is divided into three sections: firstly it examines a number of elements which impact on the contestation of such space, secondly it looks at how some of the powerful hegemonies discussed in Chapter 4 played a major role in shaping the ability of the masses to occupy this space. Lastly it looks at how space was contested in two dimensions, each from a different perspective, with examples

¹³ John K. Walton, 'The World's first Working-class Seaside Resort? Blackpool revisited, 1840-1974', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 88 (1992), p. 8.

¹⁴ J.D. Rose, *Outbreaks: The Sociology of Collective Behaviour* (New York, 1982), pp. 2-5.

of how destination behaviour was presented by supporters and by parties who felt threatened by the encroachment of the masses into new space.

Elements shaping the contestation of space

Using evidence from the press it is possible to identify a number of underlying elements which shaped the manner in which the new excursionists were able to negotiate with their hosts in occupying space. Some of these elements generated a negative response, whereas others had surprisingly little effect on the reception of the new visitors by their hosts.

Perceptions of strangeness

The excursionist was often characterised as a stranger in contesting destination space, with all its connotations of 'otherness'. For example a report of a cheap trip, by 3,200 people on the Manchester & Leeds Railway from Hebden Bridge to Hull in 1844, noted:

Our town has again and again...been thronged with wondering and delighted strangers, in search of cheap and rational enjoyment; and to use the expression of the dramatist, "the cry is still they come!"¹⁵

For the residents, these excursionists were people who had not been observed before, they were unfamiliar with the locality, and easily identified as non-resident. Georg Simmel in his sociological *Excursus on the Stranger*, while focusing on the arrival of strangers semi-permanently within a group, rather than tourism, offers some useful insights. He describes the tension involved when 'the consciousness of having only something very general in common...gives special emphasis to what is not directly in common'. The strangeness of new arrivals is not due to something individual, but to their origin, and strangers arriving at a destination were viewed by their hosts as a particular type of group with 'foreign' characteristics.¹⁶ It is easy to see how a small community where residents knew each other intimately might describe the visitors as strangers, but reports about 'strangers' also feature in the case of large towns, where residents would not necessarily know all their fellow

¹⁵ Numerous excursion trip crowds to Hull from West Yorkshire and Lancashire, described in the *Hull Packet*, 30 August 1844.

¹⁶ Antony J. Blasi et al (eds.), *Georg Simmel: Sociology: Inquiries into the Construction of Social Forms, Volume 1* (Leiden, 2009), pp. 601, 604.

residents by face. There, excursion crowds were recognised as visitors from another place, possibly by type of clothing, by accents or by behaviour, or because they were accumulated into a large gathering. 'Stranger' was commonly used as a neutral description for visitors to a place of touristic interest during the nineteenth century, for instance there are 'Stranger's Guides' to towns published in the 1840s. Grundy's *Stranger's Guide to Hampton Court Palace and Gardens* was only 3d for example, and therefore aimed at a mass market.¹⁷

The reporting of 'strangers' arriving lasted for the whole period between 1840 and 1860, and is particularly noticeable in Yorkshire. Initially the response to the crowds was surprise, as this was an unexpected and unexplained mystery. For example in 1840 an excursion crowd of 1,250 Leeds operatives arrived in Hull flocking in 'such numbers, that the inhabitants were quite at a loss to tell what such an influx of strangers portended', and their later departure was watched by a 'great number of spectators, assembled to witness the novel sight'.¹⁸ In August 1848 the streets of York were said to be 'completely inundated with a vast concourse of strangers' on excursion trips from Huddersfield and neighbourhood, arriving on cheap pleasure trains.¹⁹ At Whitsun 1855 excursion trains brought many people from the West Riding of Yorkshire to York and a local reporter notes that 'a citizen could not fail to be struck with the crowds of strange faces continually passing before him'. The grounds of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society were thrown open to 'the million', to be 'besieged, possessed, and praised', in a setting 'usually appropriated by our more patrician citizens'.²⁰ The general outlook of the local commentator on these massed strangers seemed to be that of a novelty, allied to a pleasure in educating their minds, and helping them to avoid moral temptations, rather than any sense that they were blocking normal thoroughfares.

Stereotyping is used by members of what sociologists would refer to as an in-group, in referring to other people who belong to out-groups, because of an inability to recognise variability amongst members of unfamiliar groups, compared to those in their own groups.²¹ Katherine Grenier has referred to 'racial and gendered

¹⁷ For example: John Grundy, *The Stranger's Guide to Hampton Court Palace and Gardens* (London, 1847), *The Stranger's Guide through Gloucester* (Gloucester, 1848).

¹⁸ *Hull Packet*, 14 August 1840.

¹⁹ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 12 August 1848.

²⁰ *York Herald*, 2 June 1855.

²¹ M. Killen, H. McGlothlin and Jennie Lee-Kim, 'Between Individuals and Culture: Individuals' Evaluation of Exclusion from Social Groups', in Heidi Keller, Ype H. Poortinga and Axel Schölmerich (eds.), *Between Culture and Biology: Perspectives on Ontogenetic Development* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 169.

constructions of ‘the Other’, such as the Highlander in the context of the development of tourism in Scotland.²² Such stereotyping can also be found in accounts about excursionists attending the Great Exhibition, when a writer used racial stereotypes in his analysis of the crowd, to imply that the good behaviour could not be ascribed to one race and that a discordancy of race did not automatically give rise to rule violations. He refers to ‘the Anglo-Saxon element’, the ‘eager Hiberno-Celt’, the ‘peppery Cymbrian’, the ‘earnest and thoughtful Scot’, the ‘vivacious Frenchman’, the ‘phlegmatic German’, and ‘the proud and reserved Spaniard’, who subsided into ‘one great amalgam of sobriety and decorum’.²³ It was felt that it was perfectly acceptable to represent visitors from another region or country by an artificial stereotypical characteristic, which emphasised their difference.

A racial element was introduced into accounts of an incident at the Great Exhibition of 1851, when a large crowd of teetotal excursionists, 20,000 out of 68,000 visitors that day, attended on an August Tuesday, following temperance demonstrations in London. The Chartist *Northern Star* claimed that it was apparently ‘the largest “teetotal army” which the cause of temperance has ever yet collected together in this country,’ and that these were working class families with ‘orderly habits’.²⁴ However it was reported that a large group of them sang a *Welsh song* which ‘produced a sensation entirely novel in this place’ and apparently excited and disturbed the listeners so much that one made ‘a violent attack on three women’ and knocked them down. As a result singing was then prohibited. This suggests a perception of ‘otherness’, and a concern about behaviour which is somehow different to the norm. The press reporters treated the occasion with some amusement, commenting on the fact that the fountains stopped functioning as the teetotallers entered, preventing them from taking their usual beverage.²⁵

In a few cases the evidence suggests that the element of ‘strangeness’ might relate to strange accents and clothing, but most reports of strangers do not specify the characteristics used to make this judgment, beyond the attribute of a crowd or mass of people. In 1850, however, at a time when people might have felt they were

²² Katherine H. Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland, 1770-1914: Creating Caledonia* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 3-5.

²³ *The Observer*, 12 October 1851.

²⁴ Others suggested there were in fact only around 6,000 teetotallers (*Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 10 August 1851).

²⁵ *Ipswich Journal*, 9 August 1851, *Northern Star*, 9 August 1851, *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 10 August 1851.

used to large crowds of working class visitors to London, a new phenomenon arrived, an extra layer of 'strangeness'. The London correspondent of the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* described a 'Gallic cheap trip' to London, with 'hundreds of 'forreners' in monstrous moustaches, enormous hats, mysterious blouses, and incomprehensible continuations'. The *Morning Post* reported that there were 1,400 Parisians on this trip, brought to London by the South Eastern Railway, and commented on the lengthy cavalcade and unusual appearance 'the majority being of the working class, *en blouse*, and wearing beards, attracted much curiosity'.²⁶ Again this novel experience was perceived by local people as a spectacle, as opposed to an unwelcome invasion, and therefore allowed to occupy space.

The stranger was occasionally however perceived in the context of criminality. Some commentators at popular destinations remarked on the effects of cheap mobility on increasing crime:

...the opportunities afforded to adventurers of all classes by the improvement in our means of locomotion. Excursion trips, cheap trains...have the effect of bringing strangers together to an extent unknown and impossible in former times. People bent on pleasure are likely to be recklessly social; the intercourse of a railway carriage serves admirably for purposes of introduction.²⁷

The implication was that adventurers were able to use the opportunities of take advantage of friendships developed among 'strangers' en route to use at the destination, thus painting the excursion crowd in a negative light. However Sir Richard Mayne, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, was reported in 1854 as claiming in evidence to government that the advent of cheap excursion trains had reduced crime levels in London (presumably by transferring this to destinations elsewhere).²⁸

There does not seem to have been generally a negative response to the potential nuisance value of excursion crowds of strangers, and none of the reports from the hosting towns complain of the crowd levels in this respect. The press were very

²⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 15 August 1850; *Morning Post*, 5 August 1850. 'Continuations' were a form of trouser (*OED*).

²⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, 27 January 1854, 25 August 1858. Crime reduction was a common theme. An article in 1853 attributed the fall in the number of prisoners in Manchester to excursion activity, as it reported that there were 12,147 prisoners in 1843 (when the excursion trains started), declining to 7,620 in 1846 and 4,578 in 1850 (*Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 17 September 1853 (reprinted from the *Liverpool Journal*)).

²⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 27 January 1854.

surprised that the unusually large excursion crowds which the Great Exhibition of 1851 generated could be remarkably well-behaved. A report wonders at the way that 100,000 people at the Exhibition 'can remain in crushing contiguity to each other during nine hours...without a single violation of the rules', in daily 'monster meetings'.²⁹

Most frequently the commentators were looking for a collective noun to describe the excursion crowd and its behaviour and possibly used the term strangers to signal a novel and unfamiliar grouping arriving from 'somewhere outside', perceived as a different species. Thus the conception of the excursionist as stranger did not seem to hinder the visitors' ability to occupy new spaces. It may well be that the 'strangers' were seen as a welcome economic opportunity for spending with local traders and there is certainly evidence that some commentators recognised this aspect, even if the visitors were working class, coming only for the day. The value of excursion tourism to Hull was calculated in August 1844, with a report estimating that around 20,000 pleasure seekers had visited Hull on cheap trips over the previous 23 days, each spending around two shillings there and worth a total of £2,000, as well as profits to the railway company.³⁰ Sometimes however hosts were perceived to be taking advantage in this respect, in 1849 there were complaints that during a cheap trip by Sunday schoolchildren from Lancaster to Windermere local people demanded payment in advance from the children for a glass of water, a response described as 'the grasping propensities of the inhabitants of Bowness'.³¹

Rules of behaviour

There were subtle codes of behaviour which were not always apparent to the excursion crowds and which were sometimes transgressed in the eyes of the destination hosts, putting the crowds at a disadvantage. For example some observers were horrified at the invasion of religious spaces by excursionists, who did not appear to know how to behave in an interior space regarded as sacrosanct: a cheap trip by Leeds Sunday School Union (Dissenters) to Ripon in July 1849 had apparently been given permission by the Dean to visit the Cathedral 'to do just what they liked'. Consequently there were complaints in the press that they 'sang and played and ate their dinner, in the nave of the cathedral'.³² Thus the visitors used

²⁹ *The Observer*, 12 October 1851.

³⁰ *Hull Packet*, 30 August 1844.

³¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 21 July 1849.

³² *John Bull*, 4 August 1849.

this space as a leisure space, whereas to the hosts it had quite different qualities and practices.

Some rules of behaviour were devised as a protective mechanism to 'defend' excursionists against unwelcome advances from local residents when entering destination space, and this might be seen in an example from a competing mode of transport. A party of 400 children from Swinton went on a boat trip on the Worsley Canal to the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester in 1857, landing at Knott Mill (later to be Deansgate Station, in the city centre).³³ The report describes how the children had been briefed the day before, with almost a catechism about rules of behaviour, as to the kindness of the guardians in paying for the trip and how they should be obedient and not be led astray by the attentions of the children in the area they were visiting. The writer describes how the minute the trippers landed they were surrounded by a 'swarm of nondescripts, all in rags and tatters'. One of the participants recalls the experience as like 'sailing through ink' because the local faces were so blackened. It was reported that many 'bribes' were offered to the visitors to move out of their prescribed ranks but they resisted. It was noted:

on one side upwards of 400 strong, hearty, blooming girls and boys, intelligent, neat, clean, and comfortably clad; and on the other side, ignorance, wretchedness and misery, from the puny infant to the decrepit grey head, bowed down with age.

This must have been a very visual reminder of the contrast between certain urban and rural working class groups in Lancashire, with behaviour shaped by circumstance.

Marking territory

In contesting destination space the excursionists were sometimes seen as *invaders*, and this arose from concerns that these new arrivals were 'outsiders', who were planning to 'mark' or control space in some way, disrupting activity and introducing a break from order and normality. It might also be seen potentially as an expression of power relations, although their power arose from their mass rather than their class. On occasion local communities sometimes viewed large excursion crowds in this way, especially if crowd behaviour was reported to be poor.

³³ *Manchester Times*, 21 March 1857.

The power of these leisure crowds to use a destination space to mark their presence and excite and concern observers and commentators was illustrated by many newspapers, and could achieve either a positive or negative effect. On a trip in July 1846 of 180 boys from Herriot's Hospital in Edinburgh to Berwick on the North British Railway 'the visitors excited a great sensation among the inhabitants, and were everywhere followed by a large and admiring crowd'. They marched around Tweedmouth in an 'interesting procession'.³⁴ Marching through a new space became a spectacle to be marvelled at, as the press repeatedly reported that resident crowds followed them and cheered. Such noisy appropriation of space did not please everyone. In July 1849, 600 people arrived in Grimsby on a works' trip from Sheffield on the new Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire line. They visited Grimsby Church and 'wishing to make the natives aware of their arrival, "banged the bells about as though they had taken the town by storm, and a new order of things was about to be adopted". Although the 'burgesses' were amused, not so the old clerk, who complained that 'these 'sparks of the anvil' should have become 'cocks of his middin', in such an abrupt and unceremonious a manner'.³⁵ Thus excursionists here were seen to be marking their destination space, to the offence of some local residents.

At times, excursionists might be seen to evoke new ways of behaving, when the conservation of social tone was an important consideration for some destinations. The views of a hotel in Hornsea in the East Riding of Yorkshire in 1859 can be interpreted as trying to protect itself from an invasion by its attempts to distance itself in its advertising as a place 'without the bustle and annoyance occasioned by crowds of excursionists so frequently conveyed by Railways to other Watering Places'.³⁶

Fear of disease

Cholera epidemics in the early and mid-nineteenth century generated much debate about causation.³⁷ Contagionists held that the disease spread from person to person or through microbes in contaminated water, whereas the miasma theorists

³⁴ *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 July 1846. This was reported as 'Heriot's Hospital'.

³⁵ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 28 July 1849.

³⁶ *Hull Packet*, 5 August 1859.

³⁷ R.J. Morris, *Cholera 1832: The Social Response to an Epidemic* (London, 1976), pp. 95-96, 172-183, 201-202; Virginia Berridge, 'Health and medicine', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.) *Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950: Vol 3 Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 171-242.

believed that cholera was spread by 'emanations' or vapours in the air arising from filth in streets and houses. While the former had dominated debate until 1800, during the nineteenth century the miasmists began to prevail, leading to pressures for sanitary reform. Contagionists had previously tended to belong to the 'ruling classes', whereas miasmists were often lower status physicians, but also commercial men anxious about the implications of the quarantine measures adopted by the contagionists. In 1849 a Manchester writer suggested that 'publicans of one large town... spread exaggerated reports about cholera in Liverpool, with a view to deterring passengers from visiting that town', as the business was damaging their trade.³⁸

Certainly there is evidence that fear of cholera was at times used as a weapon, when local residents might take steps to prevent excursionists from occupying destination space. Two reports in 1854 highlighted this, with varying stances reflecting both sides of the debate on the causes of this disease. While the role of 'contagion' in the spread of cholera was much argued publicly, by this time it was generally acknowledged that the causes of cholera arose from poor drainage and unhygienic sewerage practices rather than straightforward direct infection.³⁹ The *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* reported that a severe outbreak of cholera had occurred at Cleethorpes, an east coast resort near Grimsby, much visited by Yorkshire operatives and their families on excursions. Two large trips arrived, from Sheffield and Beverley, but four of the visitors died during the night.⁴⁰ The report tells of great consternation in the town, and as a result the town leaders and railway companies made great attempts to assist the excursionists to return to their home towns as soon as possible, mobilising vehicles and issuing free railway tickets. Over the next few days between 40 and 50 people developed cholera and 15 died, thus the threat was a very real one, rather than a pretext. The Sheffield reporter attributed the outbreak to poor drainage and sanitary practices in Cleethorpes and thus the evacuation of excursionists appeared to be carried out to protect them from developing the disease in the local area. Therefore although there were great

³⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1849.

³⁹ Reinhard S. Speck, 'Cholera', in Kenneth F. Kiple (ed.), *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 643-649; William E. C. Nourse, *A Short and Plain History of Cholera: its Causes and Prevention* (London, 1857), pp. 12-16. See for example reports on cholera deaths in the *Daily News*, 2 August 1854, which emphasise sewerage arrangements. A report in the *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 17 September 1853, about cholera in Newcastle, suggests that medical officers attributed impure water supplies as a cause.

⁴⁰ *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 2 September 1854.

concerns about this disease, they did not seem to be about excursionists as active carriers.

However when an excursion trip from Yorkshire to Poulton-le-Sands, north of Preston, led to three fatalities among the excursionists, on that occasion the *Lancaster Gazette* reporter did attribute the outbreak to the excursionists, but admitted that sewerage at Poulton needed improvements and that shellfish refuse was left to rot on the streets for manure. A later Board of Health meeting attributed the outbreak to an ill-managed cesspool.⁴¹ The local press took the view that this was a severe blow to the local economy, as the report complained that 'Poulton is now almost destitute of Yorkshire visitors'.

It appears that the spread of potentially fatal diseases involving excursion travellers may have been of great concern to people at the destinations, either because it impacted upon the reputation of the resort, or because they believed the excursionists were carriers. Access was sometimes prevented, thus contested space was temporarily defended by residents.

Powerful hegemonies shaping the contestation of space

Harvey argued for the role of powerful hegemonies when looking at dimensions of space and mobilities; a group that could control space gained social power. He showed how such groups use their resources to appropriate, produce and dominate spatial practices. For example groups such as Sabbatarians, the aristocracy and the press all played a part, by using the law, money and voting powers, to shape how destination space was contested by the masses. (Other groups, such as the urban elites in railway companies, helped to shape what Harvey called the distancing of space, by making it easier for the masses to access destination space as a result of reducing transaction costs.) These spatial practices had underlying class motives, for example Sabbatarian actions tended to focus on the working classes rather than the upper classes, who were able to continue their Sunday leisure activities unimpeded behind the closed doors of their country houses and carriages.⁴² At times however with some groups, such as the aristocracy, leading players

⁴¹ *Lancaster Gazette*, 9 September 1854, 16 September 1854, 23 September 1854. Poulton-le-Sands was later absorbed into Morecambe.

⁴² Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 218-239.

encouraged class conciliation, supporting the occupation of new space, albeit under the aristocracy's own terms.

Sabbatarians

The Sabbatarians were able to use their powers to dominate space by controlling the availability of Sunday excursions and also by limiting access to leisure spaces such as parks. Spatial practices involve experiences, perceptions and representations of space, and the Sabbatarians influenced destination space by representing Sunday behaviour as acceptable or unacceptable in their eyes, in the street in the church and in other public spaces. Even at the seaside, which could be defined as a democratic space, dependent on foreshore ownership, as the beach and the sea have few limits, Sabbatarian influences could prevail, castigating excursion crowds as disturbing hordes.⁴³ The arrival of an excursion train at a small seaside resort was often viewed as an invasion.

The occupation of destination space by Sunday excursion trippers led to criticism of their loud and joyful behaviour by Sabbatarians, who felt that Sundays should be quiet and dutiful. A correspondent to the *Manchester Times* in July 1849 on a visit to Fleetwood from Manchester noted the daily arrival of thousands of working class visitors on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.⁴⁴ He was particularly concerned about Sunday trips:

for the last four Sabbaths nearly two thousand people, from different parts of the country, have each day been turned loose on the shore, sandhills and streets of this place, to the great annoyance of the quiet, orderly, and religious portion of the community...thousands of people...assemble at the railway station amidst levity, noise, and confusion; they pursue their journey with laughter and merriment...they are followed by numbers of the lower class, who offer them shelter and boiling water 'for a penny a head'...after their rambling around the town, sailing and bathing, with little regard to decency, begin.

He felt that excursion parties were a magnet for the local poor, who were easily influenced by these new visitors and their behaviour. He complained that local people were not attending church and Sunday school so much, because 'the

⁴³ Stephen Ward, *Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities 1850-2000* (London, 1998), p. 31.

⁴⁴ *Manchester Times*, 28 July 1849.

working and poorer classes...are all watching the arrival and movements of the strangers, or engaged in turning their visit to advantage'. The writer felt that as the trippers only visited once in the season, then a Saturday would be better, and used the example of a Saturday trip from the Paley works, which was apparently very well-behaved and organised, to support his Sabbatarian motives. A correspondent to the *Ipswich Journal* in August 1851 complained about crowd problems arising from the Eastern Counties/Eastern Union Railway running cheap excursion trains on Sundays from London to Ipswich. He complained of disturbances on the Sabbath, with crowds of local people waiting for these trains to arrive, sometimes fighting and drunk and hoping to take money off the excursionists.⁴⁵ This view constructs an occupation of leisure space which is only acceptable if it is orderly and does not deflect from a perceived view of a religious good life by taking place on a Sunday. Sunday excursionists descending on the small Welsh town of Llangollen in August 1858 were attacked by powerful Sabbatarian groups, who made sure that their voices were heard in attacking this 'invasion' in the press.⁴⁶ A report of a Sunday school trip from Sheffield to Worksop Manor Park in September 1849 compared their excellent behaviour to that of a previous day school trip from Sheffield, which had resulted in some broken trees and shrubs, with poor behaviour blamed on lack of supervision by the managers. The commentator suggested that if this happened again then 'the noble owner of the estate will feel compelled, however reluctantly, to close the park gates to our new-made neighbours of large and populous towns, such as Sheffield, Manchester etc.' It appears that there were underlying religious tensions behind such reports, as in September 1851 the closure of the park on Sundays was announced, following reported 'depredations' and Sabbatarian pressures from the town against 'a large influx of strangers (brought by the railway every Sunday), who do not seem to have any regard for that sacred day'.⁴⁷

THE SALE OF BEER ACT 1854

Sabbatarian pressures succeeded in introducing legislation during the 1850s which resulted in the working class excursionist becoming subject to a particular class-based distinction in contesting space, when their status as 'real' travellers

⁴⁵ *Ipswich Journal*, 16 August 1851.

⁴⁶ *Wrexham & Denbighshire Advertiser*, 28 August 1858.

⁴⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 6 September 1849; *Derby Mercury*, 24 September 1851.

came into question following the Sale of Beer Act 1854.⁴⁸ Key groups (in particular magistrates, the police and publicans) responded to the arrival of excursion crowds into the destination space of the public house with particularly nuanced views, covering shades of interpretation, dependent on the perspective of the observer. The Act was an emphatic example of class discrimination which applied to the public house frequented by the working man, rather than to the hotel visited by the rich. It restricted the sale of beer in public houses on Sundays and public holidays in England and Wales to the hours between 1pm and 2.30pm and between 6pm and 10pm, which meant that someone arriving after 10pm, after a long journey, would not be able to get a drink. Whereas the ordinary man might have thought he had reached the height of sophistication in travelling hundreds of miles to the metropolis, powerful groups were once again winning the contest over leisure space, by keeping the working classes out, relegating the excursionist to a lower grade of participant in the consumption of leisure, as an exemption from the 10pm limit only covered 'bona fide travellers'.⁴⁹

Magistrates played a key role in ruling on this contestation, and their decisions were dependent on the level of liberalism in their outlook. The term 'bona fide' had been added to the previous legal terminology in an attempt to encourage magistrates to be careful whom they acknowledged as a 'real' traveller, implying that a mere excursionist was not a *genuine* traveller. Viewing an excursionist as not a 'bona fide traveller' would prevent him/her from accessing welcome refreshment at his destination. By contrast steamboat excursionists had their refreshments on board, although they were unlikely to be travelling late at night.⁵⁰ The new legislation proved challenging, as excursionists were likely to arrive in towns in desperate need of a drink at this time. There were, for example, particular problems in public houses around the terminus of the South Western Railway at Waterloo and the Eastern Counties at Shoreditch, leading to riots among angry excursionists when the Act came into force on Sunday 13 August 1854.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Sale of Beer, &c Act*, 17 & 18 Vict. Cap.79, also known as the Wilson-Patten Act; Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London, 1971), pp.328-329.

⁴⁹ Bona fide means genuine (OED).

⁵⁰ *Morning Post*, 13 July 1855, 20 July 1855; *The Standard*, 20 July 1855; 1854-55 (407) *First Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*, para.1535, p.113.

⁵¹ *Morning Post*, 14 August 1854, 9 October 1854; *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 16 December 1854; *Morning Post*, 11 July 1855; Brian Harrison, 'The Sunday Trading Riots of 1855', *Historical Journal* 8 (1965) 219-245; *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 2 September 1854; *Essex Standard*, 26 July 1854; Joseph Livesey, *A letter to J. Wilson Patten, Esq., M.P. on the Drinking System, the late Sunday Bill, and the Maine Law* (Preston, 1855); *Morning Post*, 13 July 1855.

In the case of the magistrates it appeared therefore that because the excursionist was perceived to be in a large group, likely to be working class, and had arrived very *speedily*, then all these factors counted against him in the response to his status in contesting destination space as a *real* traveller. Magistrates tied themselves in knots to interpret this exemption when the police hauled in publicans who were serving excursionists after 10 pm on Sundays. Sometimes magistrates were favourable. In the report of a case at Southwark in October 1854, a publican stated that he asked to see excursion tickets before admitting excursionists and that in his view most had come up 'a hundred miles from town' therefore he regarded them as 'bona fide' travellers. The report noted that the police had said 'the persons in the house looked like country people... but it was difficult...to discover who were travellers and who were not'. The magistrate decided they were travellers. The terminology of the 'traveller' was hotly debated and there was much diversity of opinion by magistrates.⁵² Most interpretations discriminated against the person on a cheap trip, as the example of a Select Committee witness shows, who made clear that 'bona fide' meant 'more than pleasure'. Trips for pleasure for the masses were often not regarded as 'proper', although of course the middle and upper classes had been doing this for years without discrimination.⁵³ Edward Yardley, a Thames magistrate, seems to deny any value to the cheap trip, when he said to the Committee: 'I cannot bring my mind to the conviction that excursionists are travellers because they are going for an 'excursion or a promenade''.⁵⁴ Such debates clearly show how difficult it was to reach an agreement about the importance of this new kind of mobility, to appropriate it into an existing social structure. A London magistrate found it impossible to define the term 'traveller' and felt disposed to award it a liberal (but gender-biased) interpretation: 'a man who went for recreation or business to such a distance that he required refreshment'.⁵⁵ In his view however the addition of 'bona fide' to travellers excluded the excursionist, as it implied something more than pleasure. Some magistrates said the legislation *included* all excursionists, some said it *excluded* all excursionists, some suggested it depended on the distance travelled.

The police were also engaged by the issue, for example they were reported to have said that 'passengers who arrive in London by railway are not travellers within

⁵² 1854-55 (407) *First Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*; 1854-55 (427) (427-1) *Second Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*.

⁵³ 1854-55 (407) *First Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*, para.833 p.61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, para.1153 p.87.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, paras.825-6, pp.59-60.

the meaning of the act.' There were numerous difficulties involved in proving status as a working class traveller, both to the publicans and to the police when they became involved, because this depended on their word and showing a relevant ticket, which they might have given up.⁵⁶

Publicans' defence organisations had conceded constraints on their operation, by agreeing to the restrictions without contesting them, to ensure that they could maintain their profitable business.⁵⁷ Thus although they had been keen to recognise the excursionist as a traveller and allow him/her into his destination space, at the same time benefitting substantially from a profitable and growing market, their concerns about their legal obligations constrained their ability to act until the law changed.

By December 1854 there was a growing campaign focusing on the oppressive effect of the new legislation on excursionists and their rights to space, led by unhappy publicans who had seceded from the original trade organisations, and their champion, the Liberal MP, Henry Berkeley, an 'arch-enemy of Evangelicalism'.⁵⁸ A Select Committee was appointed to investigate, chaired by Berkeley and packed with his supporters.⁵⁹ Berkeley recognised the need to shape destination space to suit the needs of the working classes, painting a rosy picture of their need to occupy new space at their destinations, both inside and outside the public house, claiming that Sunday trippers from his area (Bristol) frequently attended church during their excursions. He welcomed the new opportunities for the masses to visit the seaside and expand their minds.⁶⁰ Berkeley quickly used a brief recommendation from his Select Committee to push through a repealing Act in 1855, which extended the Sunday closing time to 11pm and removed the term 'bona fide' from traveller exemption. This still meant of course that a term was used without a functional legal definition.⁶¹ The speedy means by which the Act was repealed owed much to public

⁵⁶ *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 2 September 1854.

⁵⁷ Brian Harrison, 'The Sunday Trading Riots of 1855', *Historical Journal* 8 (1965), p. 220.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 235.

⁵⁹ 1854-55 (407) *First Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*; 1854-55 (427) (427-I) *Second Report from the Select Committee on Sale of Beer, &c. Act*.

⁶⁰ *Sale of Beer, &c., Act*, *Hansard*, HC Deb., 26 June 1855, vol.139, cols.182-206; C. Kent, 'Berkeley, (Francis) Henry Fitzhardinge (1794–1870)', rev. Matthew Lee, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004)

<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/2207> [accessed 19 April 2010]

⁶¹ *Sale of Beer Act, 1855*, 18 & 19 Vict. c18; *Manchester Guardian*, 30 July 1855, *The Standard*, 15 August 1855.

concern about Sunday trading riots in 1855 however, as well as Berkeley's clever manoeuvres.⁶²

The impact of Sabbatarians, the police, publicans and magistrates on the ability of the working class excursionist to occupy destination space was therefore surprisingly significant in this period.⁶³

The press

The press was a powerful player in shaping perceptions of the arrival of excursionists in destination space, representing this as an acceptable form of behaviour. Reporting on excursions often appeared in the provincial press under 'Local Intelligence', with information secured from local reporters based in towns and villages surrounding the newspaper base. Their perspective tended therefore to highlight the wonders of their localities, and they were normally very proud to report that large numbers of people had visited their area. Very rarely were they negative about a trip, unless events developed out of control. Pride in and loyalty to one's own locality was a value typically held in rural areas and was also to spread throughout the Victorian era into the towns and cities, reinforced by the new groupings such as clubs, bands and sporting teams, even developing a form of tribalism.⁶⁴ The language used by these local reporters emphasised the nature of the occasion and the attractiveness of their own neighbourhood. Occasionally it was the spectacle which impressed, despite a seeming inconvenience to local residents and businesses: in Rhyl in 1857, a trip of working people, mainly miners and colliers, arrived from Wrexham, and a reporter described the excursion crowd on Rhyl's single main street: 'into this street the whole of the excursionists poured until it was almost filled from the top to the bottom - one dense, solid black mass of pleasure-seeking human beings'.⁶⁵

Walton referred to the 'tripper' in his overview of British tourism, describing the term as a product of the railway age, referring to working class tourists with a limited

⁶² Brian Harrison, 'The Sunday Trading Riots of 1855', *Historical Journal* 8 (1965), pp. 235-6.

⁶³ Further work would need to be carried to look at press coverage after 1860, to assess how far the new legislation changed these tensions.

⁶⁴ James Walvin, *Victorian Values* (London, 1987), p.109.

⁶⁵ *Wrexham Advertiser*, 11 July 1857. This description appears to differentiate between those working in coal mines and those in other types of mining, such as lead.

amount of time to visit one place cheaply.⁶⁶ The evidence in this study suggests that this new description started to be used regularly in the early 1850s in the provincial press in relation to railway excursions. For example, in 1852 some 8,000 to 10,000 people were visiting York in 'vast assemblages' at Whitsun, making use of excursion fares, and it was reported that these included 800 'trippers' from Todmorden.⁶⁷ However the term had been used in the press at least as early as 1813 in relation to general holidaymakers, with a reference to 'trippers to the seaside for a week' at Margate.⁶⁸ In 1851 the poet and journalist Eliza Cook cemented the term by writing an article on *The Cheap Tripper* for her *Journal*, describing

a new character that has sprung up within the last few years in the manufacturing districts. The Tripper is the growth of railways and monster trains. Before they were, he was not.⁶⁹

This suggests the perceived importance of this new phenomenon, with the commentator, adopting a rather declamatory tone, announcing the appearance of a new 'tribe' of leisure tourist.

However the press could represent excursion crowds in much more negative tones to suit their agenda. In his study of English sea-bathing, Travis showed how this activity had been carried out over many years by ordinary working people, usually naked and unsegregated, thus it could not necessarily be said that the working classes were following the lead of the upper and middle classes,⁷⁰ The press might therefore be attacking practices which were quite traditional in some areas, supported by the middle and upper classes seeking to take over the public spaces of the foreshore in the face of the large numbers of working class visitors enjoying themselves there. Walton describes the 'Padjammers' visiting Blackpool on

⁶⁶ John K. Walton, 'British Tourism between Industrialisation and Globalisation' in Hartmut Berghoff (ed.), *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (Houndmills, 2002), pp. 113-115.

⁶⁷ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 5 June 1852. The population of York at that time was only around 41,000 (C.H. Feinstein, *York 1831-1981: 150 Years of Scientific Endeavour and Social Change* (York, 1981)), p.113.

⁶⁸ John Ashton, *Modern Street Ballads* (London, 1888), p. 80 refers to its use in *Drakard's Paper*, 3 October 1813.

⁶⁹ *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 19 July 1851. The term 'cheap trip' was used in the press as early as 1828, with reference to a cheap trip to France (*Bell's Life in London & Sporting Chronicle*, 21 September 1828). A letter to the *Bradford Observer*, 12 September 1850, is signed 'an unfortunate cheap tripper'. The term was also used in a report in the *Lancaster Gazette*, 16 August 1851. The term 'cheap trip' was used in the press as early as 1828, with reference to a cheap trip to France (*Bell's Life in London & Sporting Chronicle*, 21 September 1828.)

⁷⁰ John Travis, 'Continuity and Change in English Sea-Bathing, 1730-1900: A Case of Swimming against the tide', in Stephen Fisher (ed.), *Recreation and the Sea* (Exeter, 1997), pp.14-19.

carts, bathing naked and drinking hard, but spending very little thus not benefiting the local traders.⁷¹ With the new railway crowds the problem was made worse by the nuisance of hawkers following them around. The press could be critical of excursion crowd behaviour at seaside resorts.⁷² In 1856 a report on an excursion crowd painted a riotous picture of an invading excursion crowd, arriving in Weston-super-Mare from Bristol. It suggested that the local population had been much disturbed, although frustratingly this report appears to be uncorroborated by other evidence:

A horde of savages making an excursion on a civilised settlement is the only figure we can imagine as fitting to express the general feeling held by our townspeople in regard to them. A mass of boys and girls, and young men and women, comprising the lowest dregs of the more disreputable neighbourhoods of Bristol, who swarmed every avenue and invaded every nook; the songs of the birds were hushed by the oaths of blasphemy, the ears of innocence shocked by the accents of obscenity; the air was polluted with the smoke of the noxious pipe, puffed forth by almost infant lips; gardens were robbed; drunken boys were to be seen staggering through every thoroughfare, fights were of frequent occurrence in the streets of the town, and scenes of lewdness met the eye of day. It was of course out of the question to expect our two policemen, aided by three special constables, to be able to watch over the movements of some 5,000 or 6,000 persons, roving at will over town and suburbs.⁷³

This report is surprisingly vehement in its account of how the visitors were perceived by their hosts, contrasting the 'horde of savages' who were 'the lowest dregs' arriving at our 'civilised settlement'. The large number of visitors involved, 5,000 - 6,000 people, would inevitably have overrun a small community of around 9,000 people at that time, and therefore it is perhaps understandable that local residents were shocked by this event.⁷⁴ The sheer mass of this urban crowd arriving in great numbers and the underlying rivalry between the 'civilised' watering place of

⁷¹ John K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester, 1983), p. 11; John K. Walton, *Blackpool* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp.22-24.

⁷² Walton, *English Seaside Resort: A Social History, 1750-1914*, pp.195-196.

⁷³ *Bristol Mercury*, 7 June 1856 (taken from the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette*). It has not proved possible to find further evidence about this incident, the report of which is surprising as it features a very negative view of Bristolians in their own newspaper. It may reflect underlying Sabbatarian motives from Weston-super-Mare.

⁷⁴ Data from <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk> [accessed 8 February 2012]

Weston-super-Mare and the 'disreputable neighbourhoods' of Bristol contributed to a projection by the press of this type of activity as completely unacceptable. It is not clear of course how far the underlying values of the commentator shaped the press perception of this behaviour. It may well have been written in a bid to defend Weston from future invasions by trippers.

A comment piece in the *Times* in May 1849 attempted to dampen down enthusiasm for developing mass mobility over the English Channel, discouraging the idea that the masses might wish to appropriate new destination spaces. It expressed great alarm that parties of excursionists were about to extend their spatial horizons to visit Paris, with concerns that 'the quality of these migratory hordes will deteriorate' with further excursions.⁷⁵ The writer suggested that the cheapness of the excursion would militate against participants conducting themselves on the streets of Paris 'with becoming decency and propriety', being part of a 'bacchanalian excursion party' in the face of the 'mocking and fiery spirit of the Parisian mob'. He criticised the excursion agents as mere speculators and said that these parties were not official 'deputations': therefore if there was misbehaviour on either side they could expect no special consideration. Thus by implication the behaviour of excursion masses could not be trusted because they were not from the upper classes. The working class excursionists in groups should not therefore be allowed access to overseas destination space, as the writer makes an assumption that behaviour would be poor and reflect badly on the 'British reputation'. In this manner the press attacked the entrepreneurial spirit of excursion agents who held the key to excursionists' access this space for leisure, although there is no suggestion that this would apply to workers emigrating for work purposes.

Such press criticism attempted to exercise a powerful restraint on the working classes extending their ambitions to travel overseas, and it might be argued that their comments influenced excursion organisers to shape their trips with constraints not imposed on middle and upper class travellers. For example in 1860 a Working Men's Excursion to Paris was proposed, which eventually took place in May 1861. Excursion trains carried 1,700 people from Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, York, Bristol and Bath as well as London, coordinating with trains and steamers between London, Folkestone, Boulogne and Paris). The projectors took great pains to emphasise that this trip had no political motives, implying that the

⁷⁵ *The Times*, 18 May 1849. This trip was not particularly cheap, Marcus offered third class carriages at Whitsun, Manchester to Paris return, for £2.15s (*Manchester Guardian*, 23 May 1849).

working class traveller could not be trusted to refrain from attempting to unbalance the social order, but was said to be planned to encourage fellow feeling between English and French workmen and to share manufacturing techniques.⁷⁶ Such attitudes possibly arose partly from the history of this excursion, which had originally been proposed by a Frenchman, Klotz Rowsell, who had written to the French Emperor suggesting that he organise a 'Volunteer's excursion' to Paris. Understandably this had not mustered support from either the British or the French, in view of its military connotations.⁷⁷

The aristocracy

Destination spaces took a variety of forms, for example cities, historic buildings, the seaside and countryside. They often featured landed estates and country houses, shaped and controlled by different kinds of power, whether endowed by landownership, pressure group or media commentator, and these will be analysed here.

The changing pattern of aristocratic control over destination space reflects Harvey's ideas about how space might be dominated by powerful groups.⁷⁸ The aristocracy sold land to railway companies for lines, and the pattern of their land-holding at some seaside resorts influenced the development of such resorts and access by the masses. Aristocratic space proved to be very popular with excursionists in the mid-nineteenth century, for example the country estate, with behaviour controlled by aristocratic power. Mandler has described the opening of the country house as a 'cultural and political gesture'.⁷⁹ Tinniswood has noted that country house visiting had been popular as early as the second half of the eighteenth century, recording that Horace Walpole complained in 1783 that he was 'tormented all day and every day' by people coming to see his house in London, with records showing around 300 people visiting each summer.⁸⁰ But Tinniswood affirms that until the mid-nineteenth century it was the gentry and professional

⁷⁶ *Morning Chronicle* 15 December 1860, 7 May 1861, 27 May 1861; *The Standard*, 18 May 1861; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 2 June 1861.

⁷⁷ *Ipswich Journal*, 10 November 1860.

⁷⁸ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 222, 226.

⁷⁹ Peter Mandler, *The Rise and Fall of the Stately Home* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp.71-106.

⁸⁰ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting* (London, 1998), pp.91-92, 99.

classes who were involved in the 'relaxed pastime of country house visiting' as 'polite tourists', aspiring to get closer to the aristocracy.

The democratisation of country house visiting was achieved by the railway, for example when the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock & Midland Junction Railway opened its line from Ambergate north of Derby in June 1849 it only extended as far as Rowsley, which usefully was three miles from the great house at Chatsworth.⁸¹ With the arrival of working class masses however at these country estates, large crowds were reported without causing particular concerns from landowners. In 1847 when Leeds Mechanics' Institution paid a visit to Castle Howard with colleagues from other Yorkshire MIs and members of the public, there were thousands visiting the estate and the 'noble owner' threw open the doors of his house to the multitude, albeit 30 people at a time.⁸² Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford in Lancashire hosted several visits to his estate by cheap trip participants on the newly opened East Lancashire Railway between Liverpool and Preston, in 1850, 1851 and 1852. Large crowds ranging from several hundred to several thousand working class teetotallers from Liverpool and Preston travelled to a Temperance Fete in his grounds. Perceptions of acceptable behaviour in this destination space were reported in the press, highlighting the good conduct and enjoyable time, and the way that the local villagers joined in with the activities, with the National Anthem being sung at the end.⁸³ The owner of this aristocratic space adopted a somewhat paternalist approach to encouraging the middle and working classes to mingle. The excursions had temperance themes, and processions were formed, shaping order, thus the masses were able to access this attractive space, but on Hesketh's terms, and he retained control over his space. Similarly following a Sunday School excursion to Kirklees Park in West Yorkshire in May 1849, the children were collected into an obligatory procession to thank the owners 'for their kindness' during the visit.⁸⁴

Some aristocrats recognised that the working classes were not necessarily to be perceived as a threat against their attractive spaces. At Chatsworth there had always been a spirit of allowing all to visit. The Duchess of Devonshire describes a notice from 1844, which actually dates back at least as early as 1831, when it was noted by J C Loudon in his account of a gardening tour of the country:

⁸¹ Although it later opened throughout. See discussion in Mandler, *The Rise and Fall of the Stately Home*, pp.73-85 about the era of mass visiting.

⁸² *Leeds Mercury*, 12 June 1847.

⁸³ *Preston Chronicle*, 22 June 1850, 10 August 1850; *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 August 1851; *Preston Chronicle*, 5 June 1852.

⁸⁴ *Bradford Observer*, 31 May 1849.

The Duke of Devonshire allows all persons whatever to see Chatsworth, the house as well as the grounds, every day in the year, from ten in the morning till five...The humblest individual is not only shown the whole, but the duke has expressly ordered the waterworks to be played for every one without exception.⁸⁵

Unusually in this instance there is an emphasis on a possible mix of classes, 'the humblest individual', although Chatsworth's location would have made it difficult for anyone without suitable transport to visit. Loudon praised the Duke's approach and made the usual positive claims about behaviour:

this is acting in the true spirit of great wealth and enlightened liberality...in the spirit of wisdom... We have never heard of any injury being done to any object at Chatsworth; every party or person always being accompanied by an attendant.⁸⁶

It has been suggested that the new railway led to 80,000 people visiting Chatsworth each summer during this period and it may well be that Head Gardener Joseph Paxton's energy and drive, his rise from humble beginnings, mentored by the Duke of Devonshire, may have encouraged them both to seek to allow many more ordinary people to see the estate. The first mass excursion of 400 people from Derby took place in June 1849, but the fare at 3s 6d second class return appears quite expensive for a journey of around 11 miles each way, although it would have included admittance to the house and grounds (the Duke had expressly instructed his staff not to accept tips from the visitors) and also enabled people to see Haddon Hall and Matlock Bath if they wished.⁸⁷ A further 'pleasure trip and temperance gathering' was described from Sheffield in July 1849 and although omnibuses and other vehicles were available to meet the trains, allowed by Paxton to take the shorter route through the park, these were soon filled, but many people were happy to walk the three miles to the house. Around 4,000 to 5,000 people arrived in one day, 'the great park and grounds in front of the house being one complete mass of people all arrayed in their holiday attire'.⁸⁸ This suggests that at times working class

⁸⁵ *The Gardener's Magazine*, August 1831; Deborah V.F. Devonshire, *The House: a Portrait of Chatsworth* (London, 1982), p. 86.

⁸⁶ *The Gardener's Magazine*, August 1831.

⁸⁷ *Derby Mercury*, 27 June 1849; 4 July 1849; *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 16 June 1849; the Duchess also refers to an account in a scrapbook in the library at Chatsworth; (Devonshire, *The House: a Portrait of Chatsworth*, pp. 86-88.)

⁸⁸ *Derby Mercury*, 27 June 1849; 4 July 1849.

excursion crowds succeeded in negotiating access to new attractive destination space, supported by aristocratic power and the approbation of the press.

In some cases it appears that the aristocracy welcomed approval and admiration of their magnificent works by as many people as possible, and this might have influenced their views on the behaviour of their visitors. Mandler concluded that the aristocracy agreed to open their houses to the masses as a 'tacit compromise' to leave them 'unmolested' following concerns about Reform and Chartism.⁸⁹ Tinniswood argues that the aristocracy were under pressure from the middle classes to host visits from organised excursions, as a form of noblesse oblige, a way of acting in keeping with their status, but in the case of Chatsworth it seems that the Duke and Paxton were genuinely keen to ensure that the masses were able to appreciate the spectacular works undertaken there, of which they were very proud. In 1854 Paxton claimed that the working class visitors to Chatsworth were always quiet and orderly, referring to one occasion when a group started to eat a picnic in the grounds rather than the Park, which was not allowed, and their own fellow group members admonished them.⁹⁰ There are other examples, in 1852 Lord Londesborough welcomed 600 excursionists from neighbouring towns to his country house and it was reported that he 'appeared to take a lively interest in the recreation of his numerous visitors', despite a reputation for being highly strung and unwilling even to see his servants.⁹¹

There are examples of the aristocracy taking a pro-active approach to offering excursionists access to new public spaces. The Earl of Yarborough (who was also Chairman of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway) hosted excursion visits to his Lincolnshire estate, Brocklesbury Park in 1849, to raise funds for the Lincoln Penitent Female Society, when 10,000 people arrived, and also hosted large scale temperance excursions to nearby Thornton Abbey, for example 25,000 people one August Monday in 1849.⁹² In 1856 Lord Lyttelton published a letter in the press urging employers to consider his country estate at Hagley as a suitable venue for works' trips, with no restriction on numbers or frequency, apart from

⁸⁹ Mandler, *The Rise and Fall of the Stately Home*, p.82.

⁹⁰ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting* (London, 1998), p. 153; 1854 (367) *Report from the Select Committee on Public Houses*, para.3110.

⁹¹ *Yorkshire Gazette*, 6 November 1852; Bell, Alan, 'Denison, Albert, first Baron Londesborough (1805–1860)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/7485>, [accessed 8 June 2011]

⁹² *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 23 June 1849, 11 August 1849; 10 August 1850.

'simple rules' to be followed.⁹³ These examples show how huge excursion crowds in aristocratic space could be regarded as acceptable rather than threatening, and although large numbers of the working classes were involved, such events projected an atmosphere of respectability, enhancing the reputation of large groups of operatives.

There is however some evidence of the aristocracy feeling threatened by the masses accessing their space. Cheap trips to the grounds and gardens of Alton Towers in Staffordshire attracted over 4,000 visitors from Manchester on a September Monday in 1850. The reported plucking of flowers from the garden, accompanied by 'gross misconduct' and 'violence' by some drunken individuals, led to the head gardener closing these to visitors.⁹⁴

The Stanleys, who lived at Alderley in Cheshire, objected to the invasion of their estate by excursionists on the new line (the Alderley station on the Manchester & Birmingham Railway (MBR) had opened in May 1842).⁹⁵ Lady Stanley seemed to grudgingly accept large parties of Sunday school boys, possibly because their teachers seemed appropriately appreciative of 'the indulgence', but she expressed a concern about opportunities for political debate when predicting that there would be 'no polemical discussions amongst them', despite the family's Liberal views. However there is unusually evidence that the Stanleys appeared to be more concerned about the 'Cottontots', the prosperous inhabitants living to the south of Manchester. Waddington, Deputy Chairman of the MBR, came personally to persuade the Stanleys that they should allow the 'Cottontot grandees' to visit on days when the masses were not allowed, ie 'private days'. It was argued by Lord Stanley to his daughter-in-law that these would be 'respectable people', but Lady Stanley remarked that they were particularly offensive: 'you would be discomforted...if ...lying reading or sketching or thinking...all of a sudden an uproarious party of Cottontots came upon you'.⁹⁶ Thus nuances of class were involved in accepting invasions by excursionists. Lady Stanley recognised that the Cottontots had a power which ordinary people lacked: she amusingly found the 'Cottontot grandees' more annoying than the operatives 'as one can neither hand

⁹³ *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 19 April 1856.

⁹⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 28 September 1850.

⁹⁵ M. J. S. Stanley, *Ladies of Alderley: being the letters between Maria Josepha, Lady Stanley of Alderley and her daughter-in-law Henrietta Maria Stanley during the years 1841-1850* (London, 1938), pp. 62-3, 72-4.

⁹⁶ Stanley, *Ladies of Alderley*, pp. 72-4; C.F. Carter, *Manchester and its Region* (Manchester, 1962), p. 56.

cuff nor great dog them if they are intrusive or offensive'. By implication this owner felt able to use powers of restraint against the masses who were perceived to be misbehaving in destination space. But Lady Stanley was fighting a losing battle and by 1844, the Edge had been laid out with walks and seats. However the masses suffered some privations in accessing this beauty spot, on a cheap trip from Manchester to Alderley in 1844, when around 3,000 people descended on this small village, it was reported that the MBR directors had entirely overlooked the 'commissariat department', and there was a complete lack of food and refreshments unless passengers had brought these with them.⁹⁷

In general it can be stated that leading members of the aristocracy were keen to encourage the masses to use the ample leisure space of their country estates, taking advantage of the new mobility. Some even adopted a pro-active approach to encouraging this, and it led to a mixing of classes which had not previously occurred in such space, with many examples of reported good behaviour. However at times there were tensions, as outlined above.

The contestation of space at the destination: two dimensions

One of the most useful features of press evidence is that occasionally it can reveal accounts of the contestation of space from two perspectives or dimensions, either because of the political slant of the publication, or because the press carried accounts of court cases, political debate, shareholders meetings or official accident reports.

Most press accounts of railway excursions in the mid-nineteenth century used a familiar formula of stock phrases in their narratives, which emphasised the good behaviour of the crowds, the beneficial moral effects on the masses and finally a safe return home without the merest accident. This style of language appears to have resulted from a conspiracy between provincial newspaper editors in collusion with their colleagues among urban elites to present a positive picture of their towns and cities, reflecting the characteristics identified by Roberts of demonstrating intense localism while confronting the need for social reform.⁹⁸ It was seen to be essential that they portrayed, as far as possible, a well-ordered impression to

⁹⁷ *Manchester Times*, 14 Sep 1844; *Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1844.

⁹⁸ F. David Roberts, 'Still More Early Victorian Newspaper Editors', *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 5 (1972), pp. 21-23.

outsiders, to avoid a reputation for rioting which might have a negative impact on their local economies. The *Manchester Guardian* for example although initially radical, later came to represent the manufacturing and commercial interests of the city, while still supporting local improvements such as public parks and rational recreation, and therefore tended to be positive about excursions.⁹⁹

While press reporting and commentary practices adopted a particular tone in covering excursions, it is clear that these might not represent underlying 'realities'. It is possible to find evidence from different perspectives of how space was contested by the new excursions. For example in 1850 it was reported in some newspapers that what was intended to be a small party of well-behaved Dissenting Sunday school teachers on an excursion visit to Exeter Cathedral turned into a large crowd of 3,000 Dissenters rampaging around the Cathedral. There were complaints in the Conservative and Church of England supporting press that these excursionists clambered into the Bishop's throne, took possession of the pulpit, drank from a bottle of water in the piscina, and tried on the canon's vestments. In contrast the liberal *Manchester Times* did not mention this behaviour in its report, merely that the clerical dignitaries had extended special courtesy to them, suggesting that the reported outrage might be more due to an anti-Dissenter press perspective which embellished the story.¹⁰⁰ A further example of a reported invasion occurred in the Scottish Borders in 1851, when around 900 operatives on a trip from the Stephenson engine works of Newcastle to Kelso, were reported to have become drunk later on. The observer complained that some were staggering about *without hats or coats*, a 'complete riot developed' and 'the railway station was almost taken possession of by the drunken rabble'. Eventually two men were taken into custody. The account appeared in the *Bristol Temperance Herald*, and thus has a particular perspective critical of drink rather than excursions generally.¹⁰¹ The criticism of the taking off of hats and coats reflected a key feature of behaviour which was no longer 'respectable', as it indicated a state of undress.

⁹⁹ G.A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society: from Caxton to Northcliffe* (London, 1978), pp. 190-1.

¹⁰⁰ *Morning Post*, 26 August 1850 (taken from *Wolmer's (Exeter) Gazette*); *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 29 August 1850 (all Conservative); *Manchester Times*, 28 August 1850 (taken from *Western Times*) (Liberal).

¹⁰¹ *Bristol Temperance Herald*, 1851 p.156 (from *Kelso Mail*). The name of the works was misspelt Stevenson in the press report.

The following examples will also show how the contestation of space might be painted in differing lights.

Rudyard Lake, Staffordshire

This chapter's introductory extract, from a court report in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1851, lifts the curtain tantalisingly on a rather more realistic scenario about excursion crowds. Presented from the point of view of the complainant, Miss Bostock, against the North Staffordshire Railway, it clearly demonstrates some of the potentially problematic aspects of the generation of large leisure crowds. Furthermore it shows how it was possible for ordinary working people to gain control over a significant amount of new space as a result of their fresh mobility, something they desperately needed because of the lack of open space available to those living and working in many industrialised towns and cities in the 1840s.¹⁰² Correspondingly the middle and upper classes sometimes felt threatened by the new excursions and the loosening of their control over space. In the Bostock case crowd behaviour was reported in a number of ways, as will be seen in the following discussion. Some representations of events were used to construct a discursive weapon in an attempt to defend this loss of control over space.¹⁰³

In the Rudyard instance we have an account from the landowner as participant, the other accounts come from press observers. In this court action Miss Bostock's representative has deliberately chosen striking words to paint a picture of what might be perceived as a provocative action against her by the excursion crowd: 'invasion', 'a scene of tumult', the 'firing of guns' (a celebratory artillery salute) and the 'hissing of steamboats'. The nineteenth century historian Le Bon talked about the power of crowds to destroy society with their immense strength, and this court action sought to subliminally stoke up such concerns amongst the upper classes during the mid-nineteenth century, following the riots and demonstrations in 1842 and 1848 which had spread across the country.¹⁰⁴ The language used in court to describe the publicity for this excursion as 'flaming handbills' suggests that the event might be seen by some observers as a type of uprising or riot. There was clearly an underlying element of class tension in this narrative, for the court report

¹⁰² J. Walvin, *Leisure and Society 1830-1950* (London, 1978), p. 3.

¹⁰³ P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London, 1987), pp. 27-28.

¹⁰⁴ Gustav Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1896, reprint, Kitchener, Ontario, 2001), p. 9.

emphasised Miss Bostock's status as a 'lady of rank and family', living on the country estate, Cliffe Park, adjoining Ruyard Lake, in comparison to the excursionists, who were 'people of all kinds from the manufacturing districts' .

Closely linked to the disapproving perception of the crowds and the deliberate attempt to stigmatise them as rioters are the efforts of social elites to protect their appropriated spaces against these crowds. Miss Bostock as a telling example took this action to try to stop the North Staffordshire Railway (who had taken over the Trent and Mersey Canal company) from running cheap trips to the lake, which the company owned, for regattas, which they had advertised for Easter Monday and Whit Monday in 1851, shortly after their station had opened there. The basis for her court action in defending her space was that the lake was only meant to be used as a 'reservoir', rather than for leisure, and that in addition people had trespassed from the lake onto her property.¹⁰⁵ By contrast, in their contemporary accounts of the event, the regional press used the kind of positive language which was more usual in their support for rational recreation initiatives. The *Manchester Guardian* painted a pastoral idyll, describing how numerous long excursion trains filled with holidaymakers 'poured forth from large manufacturing towns to this centre of rural festivity', some carriages even carrying race-boats on their roofs. Passengers came from Manchester, Stockport, Macclesfield, Staffordshire, Stone, Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Potteries. The reporter suggested that it was a rare occasion which brought together a number of working class artisan groups for pleasure, expressed almost as tribal groups: 'the silk workers and dyers of Leek and those of Macclesfield, with the cotton spinners and weavers of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the potters, colliers and pitmen of Staffordshire'.¹⁰⁶ It is surprising that there were no reported conflicts either between upper class residents and the crowds nor between such different visitor groups, as tensions between the former were clearly reported and the latter would all have had their own cultures and practices. The *Manchester Times* suggested that at least 10,000 people were present, with company both 'gentle and simple' but 'not the slightest accident or contretemps occurred to mar the pleasures of the day'.¹⁰⁷ Further national press accounts were also very positive, such as *The Era*, which reported on the 'praiseworthy arrangements' resulting in 'things going off in apple-pie order' and *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, which mentioned 'highly respectable'

¹⁰⁵ *Daily News*, 12 February 1856.

¹⁰⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1851.

¹⁰⁷ *Manchester Times*, 23 April 1851.

regatta festivities.¹⁰⁸ In general therefore the press appeared to be supporting the masses rather than the gentry in focusing on the benefits of this enterprise.

Rudyard Lake demonstrates how the railway companies themselves helped to tip the balance in the contestation of space at the destination by putting profits ahead of legal threats. Although Miss Bostock instigated a series of hearings against the railway over the next five years, leading to the grant of a perpetual injunction in 1856 to stop the lake being used for regattas, the hiring of boats or other public amusements, the North Staffordshire Railway ignored the injunction (Miss Bostock was still complaining in 1860). The railway supported the masses, presumably encouraged by the healthy profits involved, continuing to run excursions to the lake, for example in conjunction with the London & North Western Railway at Whitsun 1864 from Manchester.¹⁰⁹

This case study shows how excursion masses were able to occupy contested space with the collusion of a determined railway company and support of the press. At the same time it demonstrates how excursion activity can be presented from more than one perspective, creating a multi-dimensional viewpoint.

Hampton Court Palace, Middlesex

Hampton Court Palace opened to the masses in 1838, and was praised by radical writer William Howitt in 1840, who also noted the impact of steam, in that many ordinary people were able to take cheap trips there on the newly opened London & Southampton Railway, whose station was at Kingston, not too far from the Palace.¹¹⁰ (A Saint Monday trip to Hampton Court by van was the subject of 'Bill

¹⁰⁸ *The Era*, 27 April 1851, *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 27 April 1851.

¹⁰⁹ Finally in 1903, long after Miss Bostock's death in 1875, NSR were able to buy Cliffe Parke to develop it as a holiday resort, although they were unable to overturn the injunction officially until 1904 (*Liverpool Mercury*, 22 February 1856; *Manchester Guardian*, 10 May 1864, 24 November 1903, 11 March 1904, 16 March 1904.) The Chairman of NSR, John Lewis Ricardo, had also been a chairman of the Trent and Mersey Canal and was a director of LNWR (H. Pollins, 'The Jews' Role in the Early British Railways', *Jewish Social Studies*, 15 (1953), 53-62); National Archive RAIL 532/16 North Staffordshire Railway Traffic Committee Minutes 1860.

¹¹⁰ A station at Hampton Court itself was eventually opened by the renamed London & South Western Railway in 1849, although a Palace historian claimed that the new station made little difference to the attendance figures, which averaged around 200,000 visitors a year between 1850 and 1870, in his view because of the other attractions available at that time (R.V.J. Butt, *The Directory of Railway Stations: details every Public and Private Passenger Station, Halt, Platform and Stopping Place, Past and Present* (Sparkford, 1995), pp. 113, 134); E.P.A. Law, *The History of Hampton Court Palace: Volume 3* (London, 1891), p.362.

Banks' Day Out', written by Thomas Wright, the journeyman engineer in 1868¹¹¹). This attraction provides a further example of opposing views on behaviour when contesting space. Howitt depicted the occupation of new destination space by the masses as 'the very people have taken possession of the rest'.¹¹² He recorded that 'the average number of visitors on Sunday or Monday is now two thousand five hundred, and the amount of them for the month of August was thirty-two thousand!' His comments and those of his critics, about the reported behaviour of the excursionists, became a cause célèbre in 1840, with typically opposing views. Howitt asked himself 'and how have these swarms of Londoners of all classes behaved?' Apart from a few scratches on the stairs he avowed there had been 'not the slightest exhibition of ...the English love of demolition' and that he had never seen a 'more orderly or well-pleased throng of people'. His reference to demolition appears to be a side sweep at powerful groups who sought to pull down old buildings, and presents a view that it was the elites in these groups who were more damaging to the landscape than the working classes. (It also reflects the phrase later used by W.H. Wills when he satirically referred to 'the destructive propensities of the English mob' and how the million visitors of all classes to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 had disproved this, as no damage was done.¹¹³) Howitt noted that on Whit Monday there were thousands of poor people with decorous behaviour, some travelling in spring vans as an alternative to the cheap railway trips.¹¹⁴ He made striking claims about the importance of this new mobility, influenced by his political and social reform background, in introducing the masses to culture, confirming the advantages of education for the masses, and demonstrating the benefits of rational recreation for the million.¹¹⁵

On the other hand an anonymous reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* was offended by Howitt's favourable views of the visitors and suggested that 'demolition' is 'perpetually going on'. He claimed to have 'repeatedly seen offenders...fined for the damage which in wanton acts of mischief they had committed...flowers gathered and stolen'. He claimed that the people involved 'have not ceased to be the most intolerable nuisance that any town was infested with...ladies cannot walk out

¹¹¹ Thomas Wright, 'Bill Banks' Day Out', in Andrew Halliday (ed.), *The Savage Club Papers* (London, 1868), pp. 214-230.

¹¹² Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting* (London, 1998), p. 139; William Howitt, *Visits to Remarkable Places* (London, 1840), pp. 235-6.

¹¹³ *Household Words*, 16 1857, p.349-350. (Anon but by W.H. Wills according to Anne Lohrli, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal 1850-1859* (Toronto, 1973), p.246.)

¹¹⁴ William Howitt, *Visits to Remarkable Places* (London, 1840), p. 237.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-9.

unprotected', and hinted at the filthiness of conduct by using an Italian word *immondezza*.¹¹⁶ This illustrates how there were often two points of view about behaviour, depending on the background of the observer, and an apparent view that there were some public spaces that were suitable for the working classes and others from which they should be excluded.

It becomes apparent that in contesting this space, observers had different views. The supposed behaviour of excursionists at Hampton Court Palace blew up again in *The Times* in 1852. Initially a leader article had criticised religious opposition to the proposed opening of the Crystal Palace on Sunday afternoons, suggesting that the poor were not attending church anyway so keeping Crystal Palace open would not make them go to church. This highlighted the class impact, as Sunday was the only day when the working classes had leisure time, unlike the middle and upper classes, and the lack of nearby green fields as an alternative. A few days later an anonymous correspondent responded to the article, highlighting contentious views about the behaviour of the masses in these new spaces, complaining that Sabbatarian minister Reverend Daniel Wilson of Islington had suggested of the visitors to Hampton Court Palace (which had already been open unofficially on Sundays for quite some time) that 'people come intoxicated, and the scenes in these gardens on the afternoon of the Lord's day are beyond description...creating a hell upon earth'. The correspondent wrote that this was all untrue and suggested people check with the police as he had not seen any drunkenness. His claims were subsequently supported by the Palace Chapel organist, Dr Selle, who agreed that despite his being at the palace every Sunday for seven years and seeing the conduct of the masses there, it was 'orderly, quiet and respectful' and he had never seen anyone drunk. This seems to be an authoritative source about behaviour, as he was a regular eye-witness in a respected position. Wilson wrote himself claiming to have talked again to the persons from whom he got his information and reiterating it. He then reveals his underlying motives and class prejudice, by saying 'there is a marked difference between the respectability and good conduct of those who visit the Palace on weekdays compared to Sundays'. Finally a German correspondent wrote that as a regular Sunday visitor he had never seen any 'badly behaved or drunken person ...often struck with the good and quiet behaviour of the multitude, of whom many were humble and ...respectable persons'. He claimed that this contradicted 'the assertion, that the poorer classes did not know how to behave

¹¹⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1840, p. 455.

themselves.¹¹⁷ The Palace historian, writing in 1891, noted that Wilson had no personal experience of the matter, that he was using Sabbatarian 'sweeping, second-hand imputations' and when asked for his evidence he 'evaded the issue, reiterated his assertions, and took refuge in vague generalities'.¹¹⁸

In falling back on unsubstantiated and general claims of 'bad behaviour', the prejudices of religious groups such as Sabbatarians and other commentators such as reformers and journalists could distort accounts of excursionists' behaviour. In general however there is no reason to believe that the working classes did not behave themselves in their new mobility.

Bangor, North Wales

The reporting of the excursionist as invader or occupier of space could be viewed from a number of perspectives, as illustrated by rare accounts of a 'disturbance' at Bangor in North Wales in September 1854. A large group of Birkenhead workmen had enjoyed a Saturday railway excursion to Bangor, paid for by their employer, Brassey, Peto & Co, at the Canada Works, built to construct components for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.¹¹⁹ The first press report, in the *Liverpool Mercury*, merely stated that the trip had taken place, noting that 800 workmen were involved, and highlighted the beneficence of the manager, George Harrison, Brassey's brother-in-law, in awarding each man his day's wages for the trip, as well as the costs. The second report appeared in the *North Wales Chronicle* (also syndicated to a range of other papers in the country) and features the characteristics of an invasion, for example the driving out of the hosts from their own spaces. It described disreputable disturbances in Bangor as a result of the trip and thundered that cheap trips were 'injurious to watering places' as they brought a 'rabble' which drove out respectable people from their neighbourhood. It suggested that 1,100 people were involved:¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ *The Times*, 30 October 1852, 2 November 1852, 5 November 1852, 20 November 1852, 22 November 1852;

¹¹⁸ E.P.A. Law, *The History of Hampton Court Palace: Volume 3* (London, 1891), p. 365. It appears that the Sabbatarians could not claim that the Palace staff did not enjoy a day's rest, as it was closed on Fridays, nor that people could not attend church, as the Palace did not open until the afternoon on Sundays.

¹¹⁹
¹²⁰ *North Wales Chronicle*, 16 September 1854; *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 September 1854; David Brooke, 'Brassey, Thomas (1805–1870)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*,

Large numbers of them were in a state of intoxication, and made an irruption into the Britannia Bridge Refreshment Rooms, taking and destroying everything in their way. Then they set to, fighting all the way along the Menai Bridge Road, and entered Bangor in a most riotous and disorderly manner. Some of them went into the inns and seized upon the porter and spirits, and others began again fighting. The whole city, from the Station to the Market Place, was scandalised, and the tradespeople were obliged to close their shops, such a scene of riot and confusion occurring. The ruffians who so disgraced themselves were not content with inflicting violence on each other but beat and ill-treated women and children. The police at length interfered, and three of the fellows were captured and kept in the lock-ups till Monday, when they were brought before the Magistrates and fined. We hope we shall have no more excursionists of this description, or decent people will be afraid to come amongst us and reside here.¹²¹

A police report in the *Chronicle* the same day covered the conviction of three men for drunken and disorderly conduct, and added a further perspective. It described a riotous and disorderly scene near the Market Place, when the men were fighting: 'hundreds of people were congregated, and the women were shouting 'murder' from the windows of the upper room.' At the court hearing it was reported that one of the Brassey foremen spoke up for the men and expressed his regret and suggested that these were the black sheep of a very large flock of a thousand men.¹²² The significance of these reports of an incident involving a perceived 'invasion' can be placed in context when a further account appeared from an alternative viewpoint, two weeks later. The *North Wales Chronicle* published a letter from the organising committee of this trip, aggrieved by the reporting of this behaviour and concerned that it might affect future trips. It stated that most men were not intoxicated, and that the Refreshment Rooms was the only place available to eat and therefore most had picnics elsewhere. They later assembled on the 'green sward' to dance to a band, after which they marched back to Bangor headed by a band, keeping together to avoid missing the return train. The committee denied any fighting at this point, but accepted that on their return to Bangor not more than five or six were fighting, witnessed by their manager. The primary concern of the writers was however that

Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006
<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/3289> [accessed 10 March 2011].

¹²¹ *North Wales Chronicle*, 16 September 1854.

¹²² *North Wales Chronicle*, 16 September 1854.

such reports were likely to 'inflict a serious injury on all large bodies of working men'. The editor of the *Chronicle* could not resist a response published with this letter, claiming that it was 'impudent and untrue', referring to the excursionists as 'blackguards' and 'ruffians' with a contempt for 'sobriety and good order' and suggesting that the writers were trying to bully the press.¹²³

The two accounts reflect opposing dimensions, with the use of words such as 'rabble' for example by the press to paint a picture of ill-behaved visitors trying to claim space in a 'respectable' watering place by supposedly taking and destroying. The press describes its own residents as respectable and decent, whereas the excursionists were seen as riotous, disorderly, drunk and fighting. On the other hand, the visitors controlled their use of the new space by marching back to the station in a procession headed by a band. Even so this was seen as a provocative move by the local press, who accused the organising committee of bullying them when it tried to defend the actions of the men. There was a clash here between the perspective of the residents which wanted to retain an orderly image amid fears of invasion, and the concerns of the working classes that in large crowds they were misrepresented as featuring violent disorder, and maligned in their attempts to occupy space. While it is difficult to make a judgement about the truth of the statements in this case, the balance of press reporting about behaviour was negative, with a report by their observer and an account of court proceedings (both of which were critical), matched against a response from the men themselves, which although awarded a fair amount of press space, was followed by a rebuff from the editor. Thus the way that behaviour in destination space was *represented* was likely to be adverse as a result of editorial perspectives.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown new perspectives on how the urban masses in railway excursion crowds in the mid-nineteenth century appropriated new spaces for themselves. Class was of underlying importance in the construction and uptake of leisure opportunities, with the middle and upper classes seeking to 'award' these to the masses, but only on their own terms. Thus beyond the commonly held views about the benefits of rational recreation during this period, as these monster excursions developed, they demonstrated the power of the crowd to invade and

¹²³ *North Wales Chronicle*, 30 September 1854.

take charge of new leisure space in a way which challenged traditional class boundaries, religious power structures and (class-based) perceptions of 'good tourists'.

The chapter has examined a number of underlying themes which impact on the contestation of such space. For example local residents often labelled excursionists as 'strangers' to mark them out from others. It appears that excursion crowds were surprisingly rarely given a hostile reception, even though they arrived in vast numbers and were portrayed as 'strangers'. It may well be that positive views on such strangers were constructed by press accounts which saw the benefits to a local economy of thousands of people arriving from outside with money to spend.

Subtle codes of behaviour relating to local custom were sometimes transgressed by excursionists, and these might be linked to the 'marking of territory', disrupting the normal practices of the host community. This might be seen negatively and attract disapproval from local residents, but it might also be seen in a positive light, for example where mass processions were seen as a spectacle, to be viewed admiringly.

At times, fear of disease might be seen to play a part in preventing excursion crowds from accessing space. This reflected genuine concern about the spread of cholera in the 1850s, and can be seen to be justified to protect the excursionist from potential fatalities, although host communities were aware that cholera was not caused by contagion.

Powerful hegemonies played a major role in shaping the ability of the masses to occupy destination space. In general Sabbatarians contested this occupation, as it frequently occurred on a Sunday. They often used the press to declaim this, in effect preventing the working classes from entering destination space on the same terms as the middle classes. Where local residents viewed the arrival of excursionists as an invasion, this was often influenced by Sabbatarian motives. Their perspective shaped the debate around the excursionist as traveller in the new Sale of Beer legislation, and provided eloquent evidence of one of the firmly embedded perceptions during this period, the class division between the 'excursionist' and the 'traveller', leading the former to be less privileged partly as a result of legislation.

The press constructed a perception of excursion crowds as a new 'tribe', devising the term 'trippers', which appears in commentary in the 1850s. This does not seem to have reflected on them negatively, signalling their behaviour at destination space, although it carried class-based connotations. Examples of press reports however show the power of commentators to construct adverse profiles of visitors for underlying reasons. Some press commentators used their power to constrain the working classes from accessing overseas destination space, by encouraging organisers to limit the motivations of this activity to those which were acceptable and non-threatening to the middle and upper classes.

The aristocracy, possibly because they were more distant in the social order from the working class compared to the middle class, often actively encouraged the masses to visit their leisure space, sometimes using them as an acclaiming and deferential audience. Reports of bad behaviour on country estates were quite rare.

Thus tensions generated by some of these powerful forces were able to constrain the public space available to working people for leisure, but in the case of the aristocracy and their country estates, powerful groups could expand this space.

Lastly the chapter analyses examples of two perceived dimensions on the contestation of space, using Ruddyard Lake, Hampton Court Palace and Bangor as case studies, with nuanced reporting from different perspectives on behaviour, shaped again by underlying motives involving class and religion. Here excursion crowds sometimes gained so much power that they could occupy contested space even in the face of opposition from the middle classes and from Sabbatarians.

Thus perceptions in reports of excursion crowds were often constructed as a result of class perspectives and tensions, religious motives and views on alcohol consumption. Those accounts which do appear help to address a number of important questions, for example how the hosts viewed the excursionists as something 'other', as outsiders to their community and how they responded to what might be seen as a mass invasion of their 'territory'. But the abundance of positive reporting and the weakness of the evidence for negative perspectives makes it very likely that excursion crowds were in general well-behaved.

In describing and commenting on excursion crowd masses in accessing new destination space, this evidence and its analysis provides some tantalising glimpses of a changing society.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In examining early railway excursion crowds this research has offered significant new perspectives on the travelling masses in the mid-nineteenth century, foregrounding the working-class traveller. The use of newly searchable online newspaper collections has enabled the study to complement and extend the scanty historiography on the shaping and consumption of early railway travel for the working-classes. It challenges clichéd narratives about their leisure mobility, such as the dominance of Thomas Cook in the literature, and counteracts prevailing perspectives, such as the disregard of Schivelbusch for the third class traveller.

Drawing upon themes from cultural and business history, the research set out to address a number of questions about the social construction of excursion crowds at this time, the nature of the new experiences created for participants, and the shaping of crowd behaviour in the newly created public travel and destination spaces.

How were the new excursion crowds socially constructed?

In exploring the shaping of excursion crowds, the study has demonstrated how the only other scholarly study of railway excursions at this time, by Reid, who looked at Birmingham in 1846, cannot be extrapolated directly to other locations, because of complex differentiating factors when comparing Birmingham excursions with other northern towns and cities. Some of these factors have been seen to lead to surprising results, such as the prevalence of Catholicism which 'allowed' the Sunday excursion in North West Lancashire in the 1840s.

During the twenty year period, 1840-1860, the new excursion phenomenon gradually developed to a maturity, highlighted by the contrasting approaches in press reporting. In the early 1840s, excursion activity was represented as a spectacular event, whereas by 1860 the press were compiling routine aggregations of activity. Conversely however, there were surprisingly few infrastructural improvements during the period by the most important group involved, the railway companies. The new excursion crowds took their shape from the technological system of the passenger railway, but railway companies appeared to make few

efforts to improve their excursion rolling stock and station facilities to meet the needs of huge crowds at this time.

The power and influence of railway companies, excursion agents, voluntary societies and church groups helped to construct and shape the profile of these new travelling crowds, affecting availability, timing, affordability, destination and seasonality. Evidence on fares and wages for example suggests that the new trips were made affordable for the working classes, especially in northern industrial towns. The study has challenged Urry and Larsen's reference to a tendency for day excursions to be more popular in the south in the nineteenth century and trips where the working-classes could stay overnight being more popular in the north, using many examples to disprove this.¹

The trips were encouraged by prevailing rational recreationalists, whose views were projected in meetings and in the press. The railway company was regarded as 'public property' at this time, thus the public felt able to make demands which did not constrain other businesses. However in limiting Sunday excursions to before and after divine service, or more often not at all on Sundays, railway companies exercised the kind of trade-off or compromise referred to by Bijker.² A large market for Sunday travel was untapped, with enormous implications for a loss of lucrative traffic. For the masses living in the northern industrial towns this was their day off work, available for affordable leisure opportunities which were unlikely to be displaced by Church attendance on Sundays, as this was poor. Those companies which did run Sunday excursions at this time found them profitable, for example the Lancashire & Yorkshire and the Great Western.

The development of excursion traffic needed effective management to harness the elements involved — rolling stock, ticketing and station facilities, publicity and staff — and sadly this was frequently lacking in this period, as companies attempted to organise trips involving thousands of people with normal staffing levels. In addition as excursion traffic had to wait for regular traffic on the line to clear, this led to long delays in journeys. However key personalities such as Mark Huish (London & North Western Railway) and Henry Blackmore (Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway) were important as 'champions' in shaping the new crowds, as they used energy, enthusiasm and their power base to drive forward strategic initiatives in the face of opposition, mustering resources. After these managers left the companies, the

¹ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (3rd edn., London, 2011), pp. 40-41.

² Introduction to Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (eds.), *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change* (London, 1994), p. 3.

study suggests that excursion traffic declined, with opponents successfully preventing further development.

The research has found that a company's business strategies for excursions were shaped by a combination of factors which have not been addressed in railway history, such as their stance on Sunday services, competition from steamboats, which affected pricing, and perceptions about profit, although there was little sign of the use of the real economic costs in planning the use of rolling stock and staff for excursions. Railway companies were however encouraged in the public eye by press commentary about the economic benefits to a receiving business community of the potential spending power of excursionists. The power of cooperative networking was an effective tool for railway companies to develop this business, using for example the social capital of members of the urban elites who were directors of such companies, and managers who networked extensively with relevant groups in their areas, such as Huish and Blackmore. In some cases railway companies worked with voluntary societies and church groups to develop trips, in others with publishers to provide marketing guides. There is little evidence that the Railway Clearing House was particularly effective in promoting networking on this issue however. The rare discussion about excursion traffic at RCH meetings seems to have been about responding to certain large scale events rather than about developing pro-active strategies. This may perhaps have been because they failed to recognise the contribution of third class passenger and excursion business to profitability.

This research has provided important new insights into the relative importance of certain excursion agents at this time, confirming Walton's views on the pervasive influence of the Thomas Cook archive in the history of working class leisure. It has placed Cook firmly in the background of excursion development, as in the main irrelevant to the working-classes, despite his prime position in most published histories. It has demonstrated how for example Henry Marcus of Liverpool played a key role in extending working-class mobility, an important figure in his day but forgotten later. His ability to think in terms of the system of railway working, by offering trips from both ends of the LNWR line to and from London, demonstrated his skills as an entrepreneur, and his activity created a mass market for excursions, by operating both widely in the north of England and the London area. On the other hand Thomas Cook's sole trip in a survey of six towns in 1846, from Leeds, compared to over a hundred others offered from the towns examined, could be regarded as irrelevant to the masses, as in common with most of his trips it was

marketed to a middle class audience. There is great value in bringing to the foreground excursion agents such as Henry Marcus, who was perceived at the time as a great mover of the working-classes. Even though individual agents operated for relatively short periods of time, there was a range of agents operating throughout the nineteenth century, therefore this does not lessen their importance to the working-classes during the period being studied.

Adopting an innovative approach, the study has argued for the positioning of railway companies, excursion agents, voluntary and church groups as social entrepreneurs in this activity, with a varying relationship between social goals and enterprise goals in offering excursions for the masses. They demonstrated the attributes of such actors, such as a willingness to do things differently and new ways to create value using resources, facing risk and uncertainty. The study has revealed complex motivations for these social goals, such as fund-raising, public relations, missionary approaches and the breaking down of barriers between communities.

The research has demonstrated an important use of branding during an earlier period than previously suggested in this discipline. Agents such as Marcus recognised the value of branding their services consistently with a name. He linked his name specifically to the working-classes in his advertising, thus positioning himself in what he recognised to be a huge and growing market for railway excursions at this time. His methods hinted at modern approaches to brand management, as he frequently sought to protect his brand by defending any accusations of ticket mismanagement which might affect his reputation. The use of his personal branding enabled his customers to make easy judgements in selecting a trip, relying on the quality of his reputation and the range and flexibility of his services. In his case his effective branding led to his downfall, as in acting as an agent for the railway company, in an unequal power relationship, their branding suffered at the expense of his in the projection of excursions trips.

This study has highlighted the important role of voluntary societies such as mechanics' institutes and temperance societies in innovating, stimulating demand and commissioning trips in this period, supported in their entrepreneurial drive by the press and urban elites, who colluded with them in encouraging such trips in the name of rational recreation. Such trips acted as a spectacular travelling advertisement through the countryside for their aims. In the case of other groups such as Sunday schools, the excursion was presented as a performance emphasising power relations, with processions, singing, flags and motifs, to mark their space in communities of origin and destination. While it might be thought that

'the poor' would be excluded from the railway excursion, there are examples of trips devised for them, for example by the Preston temperance movement and by the work revealed for the first time of a little known philanthropist, Reverend Joseph Brown, who used entrepreneurial drive and cooperative networking to act as a projector of trips for the poor in East London over a period of twenty years.

Excursions were also shaped by other social and economic groups and forces encouraging and inhibiting market development. It was the dominance of the Sabbatarians throughout much of the country which shaped mass leisure patterns, preventing companies from offering what would have been a profitable service. The working-classes were limited to excursions at holiday times and on 'Saint Monday', where their working practices allowed, whereas during the excursion season from May to September there would have been around twenty Sunday opportunities for trips each year, likely to attract large numbers. It could be argued that if the Sabbatarians had not prevented Sunday excursions, then the railway companies would have seen a even higher level of business growth from these. Historians have considered for a long time that railway companies lacked innovation in their activity, but at this time the influence of Sabbatarianism can be seen to have had a profound effect on Sunday excursion services, despite a large ready market. It can be argued that this greatly hindered the development of excursions and their infrastructure during the study period. While Simmons has shown how in later years this force declined, the current research makes the case that in the 1840s and 1850s, without the Sabbatarians, railway companies would have been much more confident about the potential profitability of excursions, and would almost certainly have invested earlier in suitable rolling stock and infrastructure to meet the needs of large crowds.³

Other powerful groups and forces, such as employers, the press, urban elites, and central government had a major impact. Such groups were brought together by the shared meanings they adopted about the excursion, and their combination provided a very complex context for the shaping of the new excursion crowds in new spaces, with many implications for the debate on working class mobility. The complex variation in the profile of trips across a range of towns and cities in northern England shows how the social construction of the new excursion crowds was multifaceted and such insights feature rarely in transport history. For the first time this study has demonstrated the differentiated complex factors in a locality, qualifying Reid's conclusions about Birmingham, and showing that these could not be extrapolated directly to other towns. In taking data from other towns in the north

³ Jack Simmons, *The Victorian Railway* (London, 1991), p. 285.

of England during the same year as Reid, 1846, the research has looked at factors including religion, geography, steamboat competition, employment structure and the differential availability of resources. It demonstrates that in Liverpool and Preston in 1846 there were cheap day excursions to suit the needs of the working-classes, when they were free to take them, mainly on Sundays, in initiatives led by the rail and steamer companies, rather than by the powerful middle class groups identified by Reid. They were able to do this because of the presence of a Catholic population whose outlook on Sunday observance was fairly relaxed, whereas other towns were prevented from running Sunday excursions by the Sabbatarian influences of Anglican and non-conformist power elites. From Liverpool and Preston, trips to the nearby coastline would be cheap, short distance day journeys, suitable for workers with little spare time for enjoyment. In an alternative approach, in 1846 railway companies in Manchester offered the working classes cheap trips at one particular time of year — Whitsun — because of an almost universal shutdown in the city, thus operatives had a brief opening for a leisure outing away from work, and because the companies saw the business benefits of high volume cheap fare trips at this time. This was enhanced by competition between a range of railway companies providing trips in several directions (whereas in Liverpool there was only single railway company, LNWR, operating at that time, which chose not to meet the competition of Sunday steamer trips). The reporting of large crowds on these day trips from Manchester indicates large scale participation by the masses, in the absence of specific evidence about affordability. In three towns, Hull, Birmingham and Leeds, there were several trips on Mondays but no Sunday trips, leading to an assumption that in these towns it was the better paid workers, with the option to be free on Mondays, that benefited from these opportunities. The role of middle class groups in Leeds and Birmingham in organising these trips adds weight to this argument.

What was the nature of the new experiences created for participants?

The study has responded to calls by Divall and others for work on the consumption of railway travel, providing valuable evidence about how the railway was used by the working classes at this time, shedding light on travel habits and practices, a subject which has not attracted much research to date. In doing so the research has demonstrated some alternative results to the projections of Schivelbusch, which have shaped academic discussion for the last thirty years.

Schivelbusch used the middle class traveller in representing the railway journey, neglecting the third class traveller as another species. Where he focused on the panoramic view from the window of a tidy compartment, many working class travellers were hanging on to the roof of a crowded carriage, endangering their lives, or enduring hours of travel in an open wagon in heavy rain. Although transport histories proclaim the end of open carriages with the introduction of the Parliamentary train in 1844, the study has found that open carriages and goods wagons were frequently used for excursions throughout the period, extending even as late as 1872. This study has also argued that Schivelbusch's view of the liminal space of the waiting room at the station is a middle class construction, as when large excursion crowds were expected at the station, the doors would be locked, leading to a dangerous chain of events. Station space was designed for small groups of middle class travellers to pass through in an orderly manner. This was often not suitable for the crowds on excursions and it was rare that railway companies made special changes to the physical space during this period to meet the needs of excursionists.

The study has shown how important features of the experience of excursion travel space were constructed by two factors, peculiar to the operation of excursion trains at this time. These were the sheer number of participants involved and the unpreparedness and unwillingness of railway companies to provide sufficient staff, appropriate rolling stock and station infrastructure in this period to properly service this activity. Several of Canetti's concepts of crowd characteristics have been applied to support an understanding of the formation of these excursion crowds, with a mixed profile of classes, massing within relatively confined physical areas created by the system. Open and closed crowds could be observed in the new public spaces of the carriage and the station, and reporters can be seen to exhibit concern about the idea of surrendering to the crowd. Further, Canetti's concept of the 'blackest spot' helps us to understand what happened at stations, with dangerous developments, such as when the closure of station doors led to hundreds of excursionists being prevented from accessing the platforms. His argument for destructiveness as a crowd characteristic further explained what happened at the station, where the dissatisfaction arising from the poor management of excursion trains led to travellers seeking to break open the physical boundaries of doors and windows imposed by the management.

An analysis of personal accounts provides a counterbalance to the traditional reporting of this activity in the press, revealing for example components of

experience such as emotions, sounds, self-esteem, novelty and identity. It also uncovers underlying factors such as gender, for example the problems faced by women in crowded excursion carriages in tunnels. The novelty of the railway excursion was linked to emotional response, and shaped a personal reaction both to the journey and the destination, such as the generation of a sense of wonder and the viewing of it as a spectacle. At times however novelty was represented as a surprising moral weapon by those violently opposed to Sunday excursions, by representing the railway excursion as new, a disjuncture which was ripe for enforcing new constraints. Surprisingly there is little evidence of the technology of the excursion being represented in accounts.

The remapping of personal identity by the excursion has been shown, using examples where the self-esteem of the traveller has been represented. The reputation and class status of an ordinary person might be seen to be enhanced as a result of taking a trip to London and other distant destinations. There was a very varied range of class participation in early excursions, and accounts of experience demonstrate the complexity of class issues and attitudes, but there was clear potential for other classes to acquire a first hand, close up experience of the working-class family, something which they may not have had the opportunity to encounter previously. Concepts of respectability were highlighted in those accounts which criticised drinking, poor behaviour and the taking off of hats and coats, which represented a loss of respectability. There was a class debate on whether the excursionist was really a 'traveller', with concerns that the growing number of excursionists would impact on the privileges afforded to the middle and upper classes, such as access to alcohol late at night. The working-class traveller was ignored by railway companies and the Railway Clearing House for a long time, and it took the new excursion agents to grasp the potential of this group of travellers, although they were still at times treated as animals in open trucks by the railway companies, because of their failure to invest in appropriate rolling stock to meet the demands of the large numbers.

Experience might be seen to be moulded by the way that the excursionists consumed the landscape as they travelled through it. While it might have been assumed by some observers that working-class travellers would lack an appreciation of the buildings and landscapes they encountered on an excursion, there was evidence of developments which shaped participants' perceptions of the landscape, including the publication of early excursion guides and maps, and more

informal preparation for excursions, such as lectures, maps and timetables, although it was not until the 1860s that Heywood's penny maps were introduced.

A further factor shaping experience was the vital element of sociability, which many people valued. The newly created confined interior spaces offered opportunities for the mingling of classes in new ways, inspired by the liminal nature of their experience, which was neither in private domestic space, nor in the traditional public space of work, or church or in the street for example. Singing was also found to play a very important part, lifting spirits and supporting sociability. As the mixing of classes was new, there were accounts which featured participants in reviewing their thoughts and feelings about other classes, for example that of Edwin Waugh, who was inspired by his 'cult of the heart' to declare that 'the world was one house' as a result of experiencing his trip.⁴

This new evidence also reveals the importance of conditions which are missing from traditional reports by railway companies and the press, such as darkness, with worries about the unknown, about morality and comparisons with Hell, in the new travel spaces. The dehumanising effect of participating in densely packed excursion crowds, often in open wagons, was frequently described, with perceived treatment as animals, a somewhat different experience to Schivelbusch's panoramic view experienced by the middle class traveller. The animal references were used by both participants and observers. Possibly for many people from smaller towns and rural areas it was their first taste of the conditions endured by many as a result of the industrialisation of urban spaces.

There were frequent complaints about the level (or absence) of comfort. The use of open carriages, supposedly to have disappeared after the 1840s, was frequent for many years after, although there were varying points of view as to whether it was preferable to travel in an open wagon, subject to weather concerns and jeering from spectators, or be cramped into a tight dark compartment with many others.

There was much evidence of a fear for personal safety, for understandable reasons. Railway companies were frequently unprepared and unskilled in crowd management and unwilling to devote sufficient staffing or rolling stock resources. The analysis of accident data confirms that a disproportionate number of accidents in this period concerned excursion trains. However despite the ensuing discomforts and danger, the masses clearly welcomed the incentive to travel away temporarily

⁴ P.Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: the Self and the Social in Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 63.

from their everyday lives into new spaces, at a cost that was affordable, by taking up these opportunities in their thousands and by celebrating the crowds which they generated. Steamboat excursions had already demonstrated this on a much smaller scale for those in coastal areas, and such trips often shared the dangers and discomfort of the railway excursion, but for most people it was the railway that afforded them excursion mobility.

How were perceptions of the crowd shaped by the newly created public spaces, in travel space and at the destination?

The research has complemented work by Walton and Cross on working class leisure crowds and the later development of seaside resorts. The emergence of excursion crowds caused great shocks at first to observers in the 1840s, although by the 1860s excursion activity had matured to a normalised activity. The crowds had the potential to be represented as a threat during the early period in particular, when the presence of a large working-class crowd often reflected protest and Chartist unrest, but this research had shown that they were represented in the press as unusually well-ordered, reassuring society, and at times celebrated as an interesting and positive spectacle. It appears however that while the behaviour of excursion crowds was reassuring, railway companies did not appear to be willing to allow Chartist groups to commission excursion trips. It may be that the groups themselves were averse to this, as they saw the railway as an agent of the state because of their involvement with the military, but if Chartist railway trips had occurred in the 1840s, they could have been represented as a tremendous travelling advertisement for Chartist aims, in the same way that the temperance movement was able to use this potential, and this might have changed the course of history.

Railway excursions did involve the 'respectable' elements of the working classes, as a certain amount of saving was needed, and it brought them together with elements of the middle classes, the lower middle strata covering a range of occupations such as clerks, traders and merchants, often the first time they had joined up at leisure. Importantly however it claimed new travel space for the working-classes, which showcased their attributes and behaviour, leading to judgements being made by fellow travellers and observers about levels of respectability based on factors such as clothing, behaviour and alcohol use.

The research has shown how a variety of factors shaped the way that the behaviour of the new excursion crowds in travel space was reported. These included the unpredicted level of pent-up demand for this innovation, the paternalistic influence of powerful groups and forces involved in organising trips, the use of open carriages, the impact of class, religion, gender and drink, the physical constraints of the station, the platform and the carriage, and importantly the policies and actions of the railway company, its officials and agents. The better organised excursions seemed to have been planned by outsiders rather than the railway company itself. Railway companies were unable (or unwilling) to accurately predict the level of potential demand for a new excursion service, thus the trains and stations were understaffed and unmanaged crowd scenes frequently occurred at stations, with consequent dangers for participants.

The bounded space of the crowded carriage was new, generating new behaviour, in which young men claimed 'superior' space for themselves on the roof of the carriage in a spirit of playfulness, with frequent accidents. Often this occurred with the collusion of railway staff. Tribalism, sometimes arising from religious differences, was also seen to add to a potentially explosive atmosphere inside the carriage, leading to a contestation of inside space, similar to that occurring at the destination. Female excursionists risked offensive behaviour in the constrained space, especially in tunnels, as they could not be protected by the public gaze. Drink played a contributory role in accounts of perceived behaviour, not surprisingly as drunkenness and the working classes was an important topic much debated at the time. There were arguments that it was less likely that the behaviour of these new excursionists could be attributable to drink, and that these passengers were usually sober, for a number of reasons. At times excursionists attempted to take possession of travel space, usually unsuccessfully because of the unequal balance of power with the railway company.

New destination spaces, after the outward journey, were also shaped by the behaviour of the new crowds, their reception by hosts, and by the reporting of their behaviour, revealing some underlying tensions, encouragement or discouragement by observers and commentators, and long standing class prejudices. The formation of excursion crowds, within and around all these spaces, had important implications for the perception of the masses in vast mobile groups, not viewed before in this way by other classes.

The research shows how this new leisure mobility led to a contestation of destination space by the masses, not just at the seaside but in other settings. At

times the excursionist was perceived as an outsider, invading territorial space, challenging traditional class boundaries and religious power structures. The working class excursionist could be perceived as a 'good tourist' or 'bad tourist', depending on the views of commentators, pressure groups, and class perspectives. Excursionists were often reported as 'strangers', and these perceptions were sometimes shaped by class perspectives, but this did not appear to generate negative responses. However there were times when excursionists transgressed codes of behaviour, and when they sought to 'mark their territory' they might be reported as 'invaders'. In addition occasional concerns about disease might prevent them from occupying destination space, such as the fear of cholera.

Powerful hegemonies shaped this contestation, in particular the Sabbatarians, whose reports of behaviour in destination space were shown to be distorted to achieve their own objectives. The debates around whether the excursionist could be regarded as a 'traveller', leading the former to be less privileged by legislation, were shaped by a number of interest groups as well as Sabbatarians, such as police, publicans and magistrates. The press played a very powerful role, recognising the importance of the new railway excursion phenomenon and generally supporting it, but emphasising the class perspective by introducing the term 'tripper' into the language in the 1850s, indicating an inferior relationship to the middle and upper class 'traveller'. There were examples of negative reporting and commentary which sought to influence the ability of the excursionists to access new destination space.

The aristocracy were particularly involved in the contestation of destination space, as trips to country estates attracted a mingling of classes. Many aristocrats colluded with the new excursions, some positively inviting these, as they did not appear to feel threatened by them. At times they appeared to be looking for the acclamation and approval of the working classes for works carried out on their estates.

Newspaper evidence was particularly fruitful at times in presenting conflicting reports from opposing perspectives on the contestation of destination space by the new excursionists. Examples from Ruddy Lake, Hampton Court Palace and Bangor in North Wales show how these reports might be constructed by particular power groups, and shaped by class and religion. At times however the excursion crowd was able to gain enough power to occupy contested space in the face of opposition from such groups.

Review of methodology and options for future research

Newly available online newspaper resources have proved an invaluable tool in searching for and accessing a range of evidence on working class travel, to answer the research questions posed in the introduction. They offer the benefits of considering individual reports and rare accounts within the context of a wider collection. While this approach locates material hidden from traditional 'railway news', it does however limit the investigator to those newspapers which have been digitised, a small proportion of the overall press at the time. In addition while it can act as a counter-balance to evidence from company records, there are drawbacks associated with the mediation of this evidence by reporters and editors. Where other evidence has been available, such as relevant diaries, letters and government publications, including accident reports, this has also been used.

There are a number of avenues for further research. For example a closer examination of railway company archives would be merited for evidence on excursion policy decision-making. Further detailed exploration of Railway Clearing House records might reveal decisions made at a range of meetings about relationships with excursion agents, buried deep in the files and difficult to locate. A longer term press analysis of agent activity across the country during the nineteenth century may reveal factors shaping the success or failure of this enterprise, together with a deeper exploration of the use of branding. Little is known about how these working-class travellers kept themselves supplied with food during their long excursion journeys, and this might be explored further in diaries.

The research has only found rare evidence on the way that aspects such as gender and race were represented in the railway excursion. The portrayal of women reflected concerns about the close proximity of men and women in the enclosed new mobile spaces, and about their social interaction, at times in darkness. These settings led men at times to presume sexual availability, giving rise to claims of sexual assault. It also signalled issues around respectability, a key theme in portraying the working-classes in this period, thus gender is a topic worth developing. There is also potential for investigating how the railway excursion was used to lure young female excursionists against their will into prostitution in large city destinations. Another aspect is race and ethnicity, on occasion a racial element was introduced into descriptions of excursion travellers, particularly as groups of people were able to extend their mobility across long distances, sometimes overseas. This was usually represented in stereotypical phrases used in accounts,

and further research might investigate diaries and letters in particular for a deeper exploration of the impact of the excursion on racial perceptions.

There are other groups which would also merit further research on their impact on the railway excursion, which have only been touched on in this study. Local government, whose role in the later development of seaside resorts was explored by Walton, would merit investigation concerning the way that destination space was allowed to be shaped and contested by the excursionists. The traders and service suppliers in local business communities were vociferous about the economic benefits and drawbacks of the new excursion phenomenon, and again this would be worth exploring further. During the 1850s and 1860s some railway travellers developed strategies for taking advantage of the potential of low cost excursions, becoming adept at excursion ticket fraud, and it would be of interest to explore which social groups were involved.

The research has introduced little known people such as Joseph Brown and Charles Melly into the history of working class transport. It has also shown how perceptions about class and behaviour by both participants and observers were seen to be modified as a result of the new excursions. The brief press report in 1851, observing a small group of working class females travelling unaccompanied on a cheap trip from Huddersfield to visit the Great Exhibition in London, might be seen as particularly significant.⁵ The nature of these observations, highlighting practices which would be considered by modern eyes as quite unremarkable, but which were regarded as astonishing at the time, viewed with contemporary perspectives of class and gender, demonstrates how the railway excursion was beginning to change society.

⁵ *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 14 June 1851.

List of abbreviations

LBSCR	London, Brighton & South Coast Railway
LNWR	London & North Western Railway
LSWR	London & South Western Railway
LSR	London & Southampton Railway
LYR	Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway
MBR	Manchester & Birmingham Railway
MI	Mechanics' institute
RCH	Railway Clearing House
YNM	York & North Midland Railway

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Dundee Courier

The Economist

Eliza Cook's Journal

The Era

Essex Standard

The Examiner

Freeman's Journal

The Gardener's Magazine

Gentleman's Magazine

Glasgow Herald

Hampshire Advertiser
Hampshire Telegraph
Household Words
Huddersfield Chronicle
Hull Packet
Illustrated London News
Ipswich Journal
Jackson's Oxford Journal
John Bull
The Lady's Newspaper
Lancaster Gazette
The Leader
Leeds Mercury
Leicester Chronicle
Leisure Hour
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