Railways, Hotels, and Tourism in Great Britain 1839-1914
Author(s): Jack Simmons
Source: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Apr., 1984), pp. 201-222
Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/260593
Accessed: 12-08-2016 22:57 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
http://about.jstor.org/terms

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Sage Publications, Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Contemporary History*

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Jack Simmons

Railways, Hotels, and Tourism in Great Britain 1839-1914

The original purpose of the development of railways in Britain was for the carriage of heavy freight, above all coal. Though passengers were conveyed in horse-drawn coaches on one or two of them, that was an insignificant part of their business. The Stockton & Darlington Railway, opened in 1825, provided for the regular carriage of passengers too, somewhat more extensively; but it kept its steam locomotives for the coal traffic, leaving the coaches still to be hauled by horses. It was the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, opened in 1830, that first surprised the world (and itself also) by its immediate success in transporting passengers on a really large scale. In the first year of operation, it carried four times as many passengers as could have been conveyed by all the coaches between the two cities, if every place in them had been taken.[1] This was not the experience of one company alone. Over the next twenty years the same was true of nearly all the larger railways in Britain. It was not until 1852 that the receipts from freight traffic in the United Kingdom surpassed those from passengers.

By that time, the railways had driven the horse-drawn coaches off all the principal trunk roads in England, as well as most of those in Wales and Scotland. They did so because their charges were lower, their services quicker and more frequent. The new means of travel was generally — though not universally — admired and approved of, but it raised some difficulties, which the railways had to take into account. One merit of the coach, for many of its passengers, had been that it started out from a well-known inn at the centre of a town, called at others on its way, and arrived at another at its journey's end. Those inns might be good or bad (there was a discordant chorus of opinion on that matter), but they were all centrally placed, convenient both for passengers and their

Journal of Contemporary History (SAGE, London, Beverly Hills and New Delhi), Vol. 19 (1984), 201-222

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

friends meeting them or seeing them off. Railway stations, on the other hand, were almost always sited on the outskirts of towns;[2] and though they were furnished with waiting rooms, and presently with refreshment rooms too, as a rule they were much less comfortable places than the coffee-rooms of even rather indifferent inns. Most passengers spent as little time in them as possible, using the horse-bus services that immediately started running between stations and town centres, to the advantage of the innkeepers, who thus recovered some of the business they had lost from the discontinuance of the long-distance coaches. New inns sprang up adjoining the railway stations. These might be successful enough if they were small; but if they were larger they ran risks. The Queen's Hotel at Alderley, undertaken in 1844, succeeded because it catered for visitors from Manchester to a place that the railway made a celebrated pleasure resort.[3] On the other hand, the Victoria Station Hotel at Colchester, built by the contractor Samuel Morton Peto to serve the needs of railway travellers (the station being a mile from the centre of the town), was a failure. The Colchester inns drew passengers away by buses, and within seven years the hotel had been sold for conversion into a lunatic asylum.[4]

Railway companies were cautious in entering this business on their own account. Hotels might be erected at important junctions, like the Crewe Arms and the Midland Hotel, Derby; but they were paid for by privately-raised capital and were not taken over by the railways for some years.[5] The first hotel in Europe built and controlled by a railway company was in London: a pair of separate units, each occupying one of the pavilions at the entrance to Euston station. Both were opened in 1839. Taken together, they represented an interesting experiment. The western one, called the Victoria, was a 'dormitory': a sleeping place and no more, unlicensed for the sale of wine or beer, managed by a superintendent appointed by the company. The other, the Euston, was let on lease and was envisaged 'more as a respectable club-house than as an ordinary hotel'. Professional caterers were found as lessees: Joseph Déthier, a Belgian, and Z. Vantini, an Italian. Déthier retired in 1844, but with some interruptions Vantini continued until 1861. The original plan was quickly abandoned, the lessees becoming responsible for both units in 1840.[6]

This venture at Euston was not only novel, it was impressive. The capital for it was found by a nominally independent company, but it was a creature of the London & Birmingham (later London &

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

North Western) Railway. The total cost of the buildings was £55,173.[7] That may well have been the largest sum yet spent on a new hotel in Britain. The Queen's at Cheltenham, completed in 1838 — a magnificent building, much larger and grander than the pair at Euston — was reported to have cost no more than £50,000.[8]

The Euston hotel was the first of any kind built in London 'expressly for the purpose, in the fashion of those in America'.[9] It quickly made a good reputation for itself. One writer found it 'palace-like' in 1843, with a 'superb' coffee-room.[10] The novelist Surtees, giving advice to visitors arriving in London in 1851, said 'the less you have to do with hotels the better', but he allowed that the two at Euston were 'large well-conducted houses', if expensive.[11]

Presently other railway companies felt they should emulate this example. Two new purpose-built hotels were opened in London in 1854 within a month of one another, the Great Northern at King's Cross station and the Great Western at Paddington. The Great Northern company began by treating with Déthier (formerly of Euston) and John Jay, the contractor building King's Cross station, who were prepared to find the capital; but they quarrelled, and in the end the company put up the building itself, to the designs of its architect Lewis Cubitt, at a final cost of about £35,000. Déthier then became the lessee, and remained so until his death in 1874.[12]

The hotel at Paddington was a bigger affair, and broke fresh ground. The idea of building it did not come from within the railway itself but from one of the lawyers it dealt with, James St George Burke, who put forward the plan in a letter to the board in November 1850. Paddington station was remote from the centre of London. It was about to be rebuilt on a new site, and it would soon be competing with Euston for the traffic between London and Birmingham. Euston had a well-recognized asset in its hotel. There was much to be said for Paddington acquiring one too. The board welcomed the suggestion and set out with unusual speed to realize it. Within six weeks it had appointed an architect, settled on a site, and determined the main lines the hotel was to follow.[13]

The architect the Great Western board chose was P.C. Hardwick. His father Philip Hardwick and he had designed the most striking works at both ends of the London & Birmingham Railway, and they were well-known and respected in London. The site presented one point of special interest. The new Paddington

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

station was obscurely situated below ground level, in a cutting. The company's engineer, Brunel, envisaged for it a truly grand interior, but he could not make the station itself impressive from the outside. The hotel provided an opportunity to remedy this defect. It was to be on street level, high above the tracks, placed transversely across the head of them. Here was an invitation to Hardwick to design a tall, showy building that should assert itself by towering above the little houses nearby (Paddington was still a suburban village) and draw attention to the railway's presence too. He fully seized his opportunity to produce 'the first grandiose and monumental hotel in Britain'.[14] When the tenders came in for erecting the building the lowest was accepted at £43,719; the final cost, furnishing included, was £59,500. That last figure was arrived at by a critical committee of investigation into the company's finances and management, not at all inclined to understate expenditure or to condone any extravagance. It went out of its way to remark that the hotel had 'proved an inducement to the public to select this line for travelling to London'.[15]

The Great Western Hotel was an instant success, and it initiated the idea of erecting other large new hotels, not associated with railways, to replace the ramshackle old coaching inns and the converted terrace houses that had previously sufficed for the purpose. Projectors came forward with plans for them at once, spurred on by a leading article in *The Times* detailing the horrors of the ordinary old-established hotels and contrasting them with the efficiency of those provided by the railways.[16] Several soon appeared: the Westminster Palace, the Langham, and presently, in 1878-89, a series of others, outvying one another in sumptuousness, in the Strand and Northumberland Avenue.[17] The railway companies joined in this competition. Eight more hotels were erected at London terminal stations in 1861-99.[18] The most resplendent of them, the Midland Grand at St Pancras, with some 500 rooms, was declared to have cost £438,000 when the accounts were made up in 1877.[19]

The London railway hotels acquired a generally good reputation, and maintained it: five of the eleven were still awarded stars (sparingly conferred) by Baedeker in 1905.[20] In the sixties and seventies they helped to initiate a change in the social life of London. Dining in public there was scarcely thought of by respectable persons in the early Victorian age, except for men in the chophouses of the City. It was these hotels that first provided public

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

rooms suitable for ladies. In 1860 Lady Glyde, in *The Woman in White*, 'cannot comfortably stop and rest in London . . . because she cannot comfortably go alone to a public hotel where she is a total stranger'.[21] A few years later she could have done so, with only a little courage.[22] The railway hotels afforded 'coffee-rooms for ladies as well as for gentlemen'.[23]

The railway companies showed similar enterprise outside London. The first hotel to be built in Europe as an integral part of the fabric of a station was opened at York in 1841 and came to be highly esteemed.[24] Another was designed by the same architect, G.T. Andrews, at Hull and completed ten years later. The first hotel for the service of passengers crossing the English Channel to the Continent was the Pavilion at Folkestone, opened in a crude form in 1843 and then greatly improved, to become a much-appreciated amenity on that journey, which was often very miserable.[25]

The number of such hotels multiplied slowly at first. Railway companies were criticized in Britain for enlarging the scope of their business to include activities other than the running of railways, and the critics included some of their own shareholders. But from about 1860 onwards the idea began to be looked on more favourably. Most of the hotels they built, subscribed to, or purchased were either at cross-Channel ports — Dover, Harwich, Newhaven, Holyhead — or in large industrial cities. In 1859-60, the Midland decided to buy the hotel adjoining its station at Derby and to provide part of the capital for building one at Leeds.[26] Three railway hotels emerged in Glasgow, and three in Liverpool. They all set new standards, by which other hotels in those cities came to be judged, as they had done in London.[27] These hotels came to provide comfortable quarters for meetings of all kinds, recognized as neutral ground in politics: from that point of view it was an advantage if the hotel was owned by a railway rather than a proprietor in the city itself. (Nine of the twelve principal English railway companies had their headquarters in London.) By 1914, there were railway hotels in every one of the leading cities of Great Britain except Plymouth, Portsmouth, Bristol, Cardiff, and Dundee.

The railway companies also ran a small number of hotels of a quite different kind. The Great Western took a lease of Tregenna Castle, an eighteenth-century house close to St Ives in Cornwall, and opened it as an hotel in 1878. This was one of the first

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

'country-house hotels' in Britain, of a kind that has since grown popular. Splendidly situated and amply comfortable, it proved a success, the railway buying the property outright in 1895. The Midland company did something similar with Heysham Tower, though that was an adjunct to a new port, opened for services to Northern Ireland in 1904. At the turn of the century, some of the Scottish companies evolved a fresh idea, with its own inflection: a series of hotels served by newly-built railways, overlooking the sea, with excellent golf-courses adjoining them. The first was the Cruden Bay, twenty miles from Aberdeen, opened in 1896, followed by another further north at Dornoch (Highland Railway, 1904) and a third on the west coast at Turnberry (Glasgow & South Western Railway, 1906). In 1914 the Caledonian Railway began work (through a separate company) on a fourth, away from the sea, at Gleneagles in Perthshire. The Cruden Bay Hotel was financially a failure, owing chiefly to the shortness of its season;[28] but the hotels at Turnberry and Gleneagles became outstandingly successful.

By 1913, the railway companies owned 112 hotels in the United Kingdom (sixty-six in England and Wales, twenty-five in Scotland, and twenty-one in Ireland), on which they had spent £8,152,560. Much the largest part of that outlay — £5,758,836 — had been incurred by eleven English companies, 41 per cent of that by one of them, the Midland.[29] The true profitability of all this enterprise is impossible to assess in strict accounting terms. The companies were careful to disclose very little information on that matter, which might be useful to their rivals. Some, like those at Cruden Bay and Fishguard, were always unprofitable. But in 1913 the receipts at the Great Western Hotel at Paddington exceeded the expenses by 35.4 per cent;[30] and something similar is probably true of most of the other large establishments in London and the chief provincial cities. The railways had never gone into the hotel business as an investment; they were concerned with it only as a feeder of traffic to themselves. Looked at in that light, their hotels, large and small, seem to have furnished a useful element in their total revenue. If it could now be precisely analysed (though it cannot), it might prove to have been larger than anyone perceived at the time, or has suggested since. When social historians turn their attention to hotels in Britain, they may well conclude that the lead taken by the railways in enlarging their scope and changing their character represented a distinct contribution to Victorian life.[31]

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

The development of railway hotels in Britain — until every large company, and some small companies, had at least one[32] — responded to a number of impulses. The strongest was the principle of competition. We have noted the force of that at Paddington. It was equally plain in Liverpool, where the London & North Western Hotel battled with the Midland's Adelphi for American travellers to and from London, and in Edinburgh: for there the two biggest Scottish companies vied with each other to erect two grand hotels, opened in 1902-3, at opposite ends of Princes Street.

A few of these hotels were undertaken chiefly to meet the needs of businessmen. In the City of London, the South Eastern's at Cannon Street (1866) provided the venue for innumerable company meetings. The London Chatham & Dover, the South Eastern's rival, had to compete with it and did so eleven years later with a good hotel at its innermost station, Holborn Viaduct. But with a few exceptions it can be said that these hotels were built primarily to serve one branch or another of the tourist business. The surviving evidence of that business is discontinuous and insufficient. But the obvious importance of tourism today, for Britain as for many other countries, makes the history of its development particularly well worth investigation; and the railways played an essential, here and there an originating, part in it.

Tourism was not at all a creation of railways. It has been argued that the first tourists in Europe were the bands of pilgrims who made their way to the great shrines in the Middle Ages, at Canterbury in England or Santiago de Compostella in Spain. A tour, of observation or pleasure, established itself by that name in the seventeenth century; the word 'tourist' came into use in England late in the eighteenth century and passed over into France, together with 'tourism'.[33]

The eighteenth-century tour was usually undertaken by a single traveller or a pair or a family party. Travelling in groups was facilitated, after the end of the Napoleonic wars, by a change in transport: the introduction of the steamboat from the 1820s onwards. This was a larger unit than the old sailing packet, and it soon commanded the crossings of the English Channel and the picturesque and popular route up the Rhine. What the steamboat could do, the railway could do still better. The horse-drawn coach had been a unit carrying not more than fifteen people; the train ordinarily offered places for ten times that number and could, with the use of several locomotives, provide for carrying 1000 or more at

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

one time. As early as the 1830s, the railways were running services for the conveyance of large numbers of people to special events of varying kinds: to horse races on the Liverpool & Manchester, to a public execution on the little Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway in Cornwall.[34] This business soon came to be taken much further, with extraordinary results. In August 1840, the Midland Counties Railway offered the people of Nottingham what it called an 'Excursion to Leicester' in a special train 'capable of accommodating 2000 persons'. Sixty-seven carriages hauled by four engines made their way, safely but with extreme deliberation, from one town to the other. The train 'appeared like a moving street, the houses of which were filled with human beings', whose numbers were variously estimated at 2400 and nearly 3000. A fortnight later, a similar train, but even longer, with seventy-three carriages and five engines, staggered back on a return excursion journey from Sheffield to Leeds.[35]

These might be regarded as stunts, but they were spectacular demonstrations of the railways' capabilities — far beyond what any other form of transport could look at; and they sowed ideas in receptive minds. One young visionary living in the neighbourhood of Leicester, Thomas Cook, perceived what this new form of mass transport might do for the cause of temperance reform that lay close to his heart. He organized a special trip to a temperance fête on 5 July 1841, in a train chartered from the Midland Counties company. Five hundred and seventy people went on the excursion, and everything worked perfectly. He then set his mind to further undertakings of the same sort, some of them covering considerable distances and not all connected with the temperance movement. He took great pains over the work, and that was the foundation of all his success. He liked to provide each major excursion with a little manual, pointing out in simple language the sights to be seen in the course of the journey: for example, *The Tourist's Guide: a Handbook of the Trip from Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby to Liverpool and the Coast of North Wales*, which he issued in 1845. Here is a long step forward from the first venture of 1841, and the journey has grown from twenty-four miles, out and back, to 300.[36]

We are at a parting of the ways. Cook was by no means alone in the promotion of railway excursions. Other organizers supplied passengers with similar literature, like Joseph Dearden of Preston, who acknowledged Cook's example.[37] But Cook saw far ahead, as demonstrated by his title, *The Tourist's Guide*. There were other

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

tourist agents. Joseph Crisp of Liverpool, for instance, was prepared to issue combined tickets for a fortnight's visit to Paris in 1845, and went on doing so for some time.[38] But he found one formula, stuck to it — and disappeared from the business before long. Cook was a man of imagination, prepared to seize opportunities in all directions as they arose, trying them out, dropping the failures and persevering with the successes, until he had a knowledge of the whole business and a skill in it that nobody else could match. One of his early successes was in carrying visitors up to the Great Exhibition in 1851, in conjunction with the Midland Railway. But that was a rare opportunity, a windfall. His long-term strategy lay in the direction of tourism rather than excursions, and he was now working it out. 'The Tourist System proper, presenting combinations of tickets for various circuits and districts began in Scotland,' he recalled long afterwards. 'It was in Scotland that I first began to combine tickets for railways, steamboats, and other conveyances under one system, in order that passengers travelling under our arrangements might be well able to calculate the expense and foresee the engagements they would have to enter into.'[39] He made his first venture into Scotland in 1846, built on his initial success to improve his programme and drove a profitable business there for sixteen years.

Tourism and day excursions, in aid of temperance or any kind of pleasure, had not necessarily anything to do with each other, except in their dependence on railways. They carried different inflections of social class. The outlay required for a day excursion was modest — though still not negligible: 'To Brighton and Back for 3s. 6d'[40] might consume the whole week's earnings of a workman if he took his family with him. A tour demanded a much larger sum: 21s. for transport alone on the Scottish tour of 1846. In later years, when the cost of accommodation was included, the amount to be laid down in advance rose quickly to £3-£5 a head, or more: something quite beyond the resources of a working man, unless he was exceptionally determined and thrifty. All this is quietly reflected in the words used by Cook and other travel agents. An 'excursion' came to be, normally, an affair of a day, offered at a very low price. A 'trip' meant either a day excursion or a short and cheap visit of a few days to the seaside.[41] A 'tour' was more extended in time and distance, and more expensive; an affair of the middle classes. Some attention has been paid in recent years to the working-class excursionist and the tripper, in relation to the resorts

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

he visited.[42] The tourist has yet to find historians.

Before long, Cook moved into an immensely larger field on the continent of Europe. He organized his first tours to Paris and the Rhine in 1855. In the early sixties he extended his operations, first to Switzerland and then to Italy. The plans were laid with all his accustomed care and precision, following preliminary journeys of inspection by himself: arduous undertakings, which he had to carry through in the least possible time and without the ability to speak any foreign language. He moved his headquarters from Leicester to London in 1865. In the same year he began to issue his hotel coupons[43] (he may perhaps claim to be the originator of the package tour), and in 1866, once more after a long exploratory journey of his own, he sent over his first party to the United States under the guidance of John Mason Cook, his son. His firm now occupied a unique position in the tourist business, well ahead of every rival in Europe. It had become a national institution: relied on and admired as such, and also mocked at by those who disliked what they considered the vulgarities of the travelling it fostered so successfully.[44]

The basis of it all was steam transport — by 1876 Cook's were offering tours 'Round the World, by Steam'[45] — and above all transport by railway. Most British railway companies came to appoint their own travel agents to develop their tourist business. The Midland always dealt chiefly with Cook's, and that virtually prevented its great rival, the London & North Western, from giving its agency to the same firm. Instead, that company employed a Liverpool man, H.R. Marcus, and then in 1868 Henry Gaze of Southampton, whom the London & South Western company had already found efficient.[46] The Manchester Sheffield & Lincolnshire (later the Great Central) Railway engaged John Dawson to act as its agent in 1871. He established a firm that became known as Dean & Dawson, which the railway company bought up in 1904; by 1913 it had four branches in London and twenty in the provinces, as well as two on the continent of Europe, in Paris (where it owned a hotel) and Hamburg.[47]

Considerable changes were initiated or encouraged in some parts of Great Britain by the railways' promotion of tourism. The most conspicuous of them appeared in Scotland. Scotland was already appreciated as a country worth the attention of tourists before railways developed. From 1812 onwards, Scott had made its landscape and history familiar to readers across the world, from

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

America to Russia, to an unprecedented extent. Guidebooks for tourists began to proliferate, notably from about 1820.[48] In the forties and fifties, the railways began to take a hand in the business, in conjunction with the steamers now running in substantial numbers on the Firth of Clyde. The promoters owed much, as we have seen, to the organizing genius of Thomas Cook; almost as much perhaps, though indirectly, to Queen Victoria.

She first went to Scotland with Prince Albert in 1842; they revisited it twice and then in 1848 settled on Balmoral as their remote country retreat. The Queen could not have made it a permanent summer home without the aid of railways. Her very first visit there demonstrated that. All the arrangements had been made for her return from Aberdeen to London by sea, when a dense September fog descended, the voyage was pronounced unsafe, and it was settled that the Queen must drive to Montrose, forty miles away to the south, and take a train on from there over a still unfinished railway. It was a hazardous proceeding, but all went well. If the railways could already convey her for 500 miles in safety, without any prior notice and before the completion of the telegraph, they were evidently going to be reliable as soon as their arrangements were completed. By 1850, there were two through routes available between London and Aberdeen, and the Queen's regular annual migrations, with a night usually spent in the train, began.[49]

The cult of royalty — above all of the Queen herself — rendered Scotland more popular. Her subjects' sentimental attachment to her extended to the places she visited and admired. Railways steadily made the country more accessible: being extended from Perth to Inverness in 1863 and then in 1870-80 to the west coast at Strome Ferry and Oban and the furthest north at Wick and Thurso.

The organization of the Scottish tourist business by the railways began in earnest in 1862, when the Scottish companies gave up their arrangements with Cook and collaborated with the English London & North Western in issuing a Tourist Programme. They also offered 'tourist tickets', easing journeys over complicated routes and valid for travel with intermediate stops for one month.[50] This was an important year for the railway companies. We can see them bringing extra travellers of all kinds into London (both from the provinces and from the continent of Europe) for the second International Exhibition and at the same time setting themselves very deliberately to foster their summer holiday traffic, particularly to Scotland. In 1869, the London & North Western and Caledonian

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Railways instituted a night train, leaving London at eight o'clock for Greenock to connect with a steamer for the western islands. In the first instance this was intended for the grouse season, which began on 12 August and greatly augmented all traffic to Scotland. But the train's other purpose soon emerged: it came to be known by the staff, unofficially but invariably, as the Tourist.[51]

We can also observe the railways' tourist arrangements in England: in the Lake District, for example, and in Cornwall. Tourists in search of the picturesque had been going to the Lakes since the 1760s. The most popular guidebook written for them, Thomas West's, had run through at least twelve editions between 1778 and 1833. The best guidebook was Wordsworth's, first printed in 1810 and reaching its final form in 1835. When it was proposed to bring a railway into the heart of the district, running along the shore of Windermere, Wordsworth protested. One of the grounds of his opposition was that the railway would injure or destroy the beauty and peace of the country that the visitors were searching for. He went so far as to say that the word 'tourists' of itself 'precludes the notion of a railway'.[52] His protest failed to prevent the railway being built, and it was opened in 1847; but it stopped well short of its projected terminus, never running along by the lake. Wordsworth's spirit ultimately prevailed. Other railways were built up to the fringes of the Lake District in 1849-65. They never penetrated to the heart of it, however, in spite of vigorous efforts extending into the eighties.[53] The tourists travelled by horse-drawn vehicles, or they went on foot, from the outlying railway stations. Their numbers were quite substantial. In the winter, with few tourists or none, the Kendal & Windermere Railway was at once carrying some 1200 passengers a week in 1847-8, but in the summer three times as many: perhaps 160,000 all together in the course of the year.[54] Tourists were not the only 'foreigners' coming into the district. As access to it grew easier with the railways, it attracted new residents and a small number of well-to-do men whose business lay in the Lancashire industrial towns, up to eighty miles away, catered for by quick trains to and from Manchester.[55]

The tourists called for new hotels and got a fair number of them. (One, at Keswick, had a direct entrance from the railway station.) They also wanted furnished houses and lodgings. In the middle of the district the little town of Ambleside grew in population steadily, from 1100 in 1831 to 1600 thirty years later and 2500 in 1911, when

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

it was almost the largest town in England or Wales that lay more than three miles from a railway station.[56] The horse-drawn coaches fed traffic from the railways to it, and it evidently prospered. The Ambleside Turnpike Trust was one of the very few in England that increased its revenue during the railway age.[57]

The effects of all this were, in the long run, considerable. The district was rocky, its climate was wet, and its agriculture had never been highly profitable. It had no large industries. Its economy was stagnant, even declining, in the early nineteenth century. The substantial influx of visitors and new residents, conveyed by the railways, brought benefit to some of those who lived there: an obvious economic benefit, but also — at least in the opinion of certain shrewd observers[58] — a moral benefit besides. It certainly brought change, and not all the change was for the worse.

The same was true of Cornwall. Cornwall was the last English county to be connected to the main railway system, in 1859.[59] Its economy was partly industrial, with copper and tin mining and the quarrying of granite and slate; for the rest, its people made their living chiefly from fisheries and agriculture. The most profitable part of all this activity, by far, was the mining. But in the 1850s that was beginning to decline, and in the 1860s the decline became a collapse. The cost of copper-mining rose, as the ore to be worked lay deeper and deeper below the surface; and at the same time new supplies were opened up, from Australia and Chile and Michigan, undercutting Cornwall's in price. Tin-mining maintained itself for some time, and then from 1873 onwards it ran into similar trouble. Many of the miners emigrated, to the United States[60] and to other parts of the world where their special skills were in demand. Cornwall faced a depression as grave as the Cotton Famine of the 1860s in Lancashire, and much more lasting.

The arrival of the main trunk railway at the beginning of this time of disaster seemed to offer Cornwall some new opportunities. Though it could do nothing for copper or tin, it did help the developing china-clay industry; it carried fish to large towns at a distance, and the early vegetables that were a Cornish speciality. It also aided the growth of tourism, the one new business that offered any hope of replacing, even in part, what the county had lost.

Before the opening of the railway, Cornwall was almost unknown. It was remarked in 1855 that more Englishmen had visited Paris than Truro.[61] The only regular passage of travellers through the county had been made by those who took the mail

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

coaches to Falmouth, for the packet boats to the West Indies and the Mediterranean; and the packets had been removed in 1842 to Southampton, chiefly because it had the railway communication that Falmouth lacked. The journey to Cornwall, by coach or by coastal steamer, was long and tedious, and few people made it.

Though the new railway cut the mail coaches' time down from London by more than half, its services were neither quick nor comfortable. There were no through carriages until 1867. Nor was any effort made to encourage tourists, or holiday-makers of any kind, to use the line. The slow growth of passenger traffic, by comparison with that on the railway system of England and Wales as a whole, is apparent in this table. But so is something else: that the rate of increase remained constant on the Cornwall Railway, whereas in the country at large it fell dramatically in the eighties. That can be explained only by the steady expansion of the Cornish holiday traffic. The resident population of the county declined in these years by about 12 per cent, while that of England and Wales increased by 34 per cent. Local business was not growing much, at a time of severe depression. The numbers of passengers carried by the railway in the mining industry's worst years (1866-69 and 1873-76) fell or remained stagnant, when in the country as a whole they rose. The only cause of new growth in the passenger business was the arrival of more and more people on holiday.

TABLE 1
Passenger Traffic on the Cornwall Railway, 1860-88[62]

	Number of passengers carried (average per year)	Percentage increase on previous period	England and Wales: percentage increase on previous period
1860-9	565,821		
1870-9	693,763	22.6	107.3
1880-8	852,429	22.9	43.6

The railway management was slow to exploit its opportunity here. Sleeping cars were put on between London and Penzance in 1877,[63] but no significant quickening of the service appeared until 1890. Then one improvement followed another, with adequate publicity. The railway brought the phrase 'The Cornish Riviera'

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

into use, intended to proclaim the mildness of the county's winter climate. Between 1888 and 1906 the quickest time for the journey between London and Penzance came down from 8hr. 55min. to 6hr. 35min. The average annual receipts from passengers booked at Penzance in 1904-10 were 57.6 per cent higher than they had been in 1890-96.[64]

So Cornwall became accessible to tourists and popular with them, as it well deserved to be from its own merits — as idiosyncratic as those of Switzerland. Here was a totally new element added to the county's economy at a time when it was in desperate need of strengthening. The addition was due to the railways, and to the Cornish men and women who set themselves to exploit the new opportunities they offered.

So the railways did much to assist the growth of tourism in Victorian Britain, and especially in some of the least prosperous parts of the country.[65] But how much? That question is impossible to answer. Parliament had no occasion to discuss the business; the government did not take any part in it; there were then no Tourist Boards nor any compilation of the statistics of tourism. With one exception. Certain records were kept of travellers crossing the English Channel. The South Eastern & Chatham Railway prepared a comprehensive one in 1922, which gives the numbers of passengers embarking and disembarking year by year from 1850 onwards at the chief continental ports from Le Havre eastwards to the Hook of Holland.[66] The figures from 1860 onwards seem to be complete. Those for Ostend, Calais, Boulogne, and Dieppe are summarized in Table 2. Two things stand out here. The number of these travellers increased steadily decade by decade, without interruption; and the increase was extremely rapid after 1900,[67] with the year 1913 — as in many branches of transport in Britain — well ahead of its predecessors.[68]

This record is limited in its usefulness, however. It makes no distinction between travellers departing and arriving, or between their nationalities. (How could it? Passports were not required by any government in western Europe before 1914.) So we do not know what proportion of these people were British, travelling abroad whether on business or on holiday, how many were foreigners visiting Britain.[69] It is a more serious deficiency that, being limited to the ports of France and Belgium, the record has

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

TABLE 2
Cross-Channel Passengers, 1860-1913

	Average number embarking and disembarking per year	Percentage increase
1860-9	309,942	
1870-9	387,922	25.2
1880-9	484,940	25.0
1890-9	589,968	21.7
1900-9	913,510	54.8
1910-13	1,205,110	31.9

nothing useful to tell us of the number of American travellers arriving in Britain, the great majority of whom came in through Southampton, Liverpool, and Glasgow. Other railway companies kept records of their own traffic and they give us a little additional help. The Great Eastern's business from Harwich to Belgium and Holland, for example, showed a steady and striking increase: from 9350 passengers, in and out, during 1866, to 95,000 in 1893 and 130,000 only four years later.[70] The Board of Trade compiled a record for the 1890s, but its figures are difficult to interpret.[71] Other sources of information that might be expected to be useful prove unsatisfactory. The decennial censuses were always taken in the spring, when few tourists were on the move. The records of the police cannot help, since in Victorian Britain no traveller was required to register with them. Very few visitors' books from hotels seem to have been preserved, and their destruction is much to be regretted.[72]

It is impossible to trace the growth of the travel agents' business. Thomas Cook & Son remained a family firm; its accounts were kept entirely confidential, and they do not seem to have been preserved.[73] But there was one piece of information that could not stay secret. At Thomas Cook's death in 1892 he left a very modest estate indeed; when his son died only seven years later, having entirely controlled the business for twenty years and extended it into all parts of the world, his fortune approached £700,000.

The railway companies' records themselves are disappointing too, in what they have to tell us about the tourist traffic. The annual returns they made to parliament did not require them to

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

distinguish this branch of their business in any way from the rest. Not one of them judged it worthwhile to establish a committee concerned especially with tourism in any of its aspects. The chairmen seldom took occasion to mention it in the reviews of their companies' work that they gave twice a year to the shareholders. There is, however, one department of their organization that reflected the growth of tourism, for it was developed largely with a view to increasing that traffic. It is something new in Britain, looking forward into the future, towards our own time; and it may fittingly conclude this survey.

The railways did little to advertise themselves, except in very plain handbills and in notices inserted in the press concerning new or improved facilities,[74] until the closing years of the nineteenth century. They then began (largely under American influence) to appreciate the value of publicity in wider terms. In the opening years of the twentieth century, most of them became convinced that it was worth serious attention. The general standard of the railways' publicity was low, and they were much criticized for the hideous chaos of advertisements they permitted around their stations.[75] Several companies, recognizing that the business now required some expertise, set up their own publicity departments: the Great Central for instance in 1902, the London & North Western seven years later.[76] The Great Western began to develop its advertising seriously in 1904, with the institution of a series of booklets (some presently grew into substantial books) on the places of interest served by the system. One of the first was *Historic Sites and Scenes of England*, written specially for American visitors.[77] The London & North Western opened an office in Paris, on the Boulevard des Italiens, as early as 1899.[78] Later it had an agent for the Riviera, with an office in Cannes. Not every railway manager cared for this expenditure. Herbert Walker of the London & South Western, who grew to be the biggest man of them all, had no natural feeling for public relations whatever. But being the man he was, he was open to persuasion; and in 1913 he added a publicity department to his own office, which immediately put out an attractive and intelligent programme of tours in northern France.[79]

These were beginnings, scarcely more than hints of change; responses to a growth in business that the railway companies had developed almost unconsciously, to meet demands that were pressed on them by customers of all social classes, demands for an improvement, extension, and multiplication of services. For all the

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

efforts they had made, however, neither the companies nor the country at large appreciated the full importance of what was happening. Still less did they perceive its potential development in the future. By 1914, that was beginning to become a little clearer. When the smoke of the first world war had lifted, it appeared much more plainly. The Tourist System, as Thomas Cook called it, became recognizably a tourist trade, part of a tourist industry. It called on the service of all forms of transport, by land, water, and air. The railways' proportionate share in it shrank, and shrank much further after 1950. Nevertheless it was they, with the opportunities and facilities they offered, that had laid the foundation of the business in the Victorian age.

Notes

1. W.T. Jackman, *Transportation in Modern England* (1962 ed.), 527.

2. Glasgow and Birmingham were the first large cities in Britain to acquire stations near their centres, in 1842-52.

3. The hotel was still noted as 'very good' in *Murray's Handbook to Shropshire, Cheshire and Lancashire* (1870), 84.

4. D.J. Gordon in *Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain*, v (1968), 57; G.H. Martin, *The Story of Colchester* (1959), 92-93.

5. G. Biddle, *Victorian Stations* (1973), 139-140; J.B. Radford, *Derby Works and Midland Locomotives* (1971), 14.

6. All this information comes from the minutes and reports (thin and incomplete) of the London & Birmingham Railway Hotel Company, 1839-57, and then of the London & North Western Railway Hotel Committee from 1860 onwards: Public Record Office, Kew, London (henceforward PRO), RAIL 384/98, 410/455.

7. This figure was given at the proprietors' meeting on 1 September 1840: PRO, RAIL 384/98.

8. J.M. Wilson, *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* (c. 1867), i, 409.

9. P. Cunningham, *London As It Is* (ed. of c. 1865), xxxviii.

10. *Barclay Fox's Journal*, ed. R.L. Brett (1979), 361.

11. R.S. Surtees, *Town and Country Papers*, ed. E.D. Cuming (1929), 236-237. Officers of the railway company themselves considered its charges 'excessive' in 1858: G.P. Neele, *Railway Reminiscences* (1904), 61.

12. PRO, RAIL 236/16 (18 December 1850), 236/70, 236–249; J. Wrottesley, *The Great Northern Railway* (1979-81), i, 81. Déthier was succeeded by X. Meyer, who had been a cook at the hotel and promoted in 1870 to manage the company's hotel in Leeds. He established himself effectively. His wife succeeded him on his death in 1892: ibid., ii. 125, iii. 57; PRO, RAIL 236/192, 3, 31; 236/193, 137-138.

13. PRO, RAIL 250/4, 248, 259, 269, 298-299, 310.

14. H.-R. Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1954), 211.

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

15. PRO, RAIL 250/4, 420; *Report of a Special Committee on Great Western Affairs* (1856), 13.

16. *Prospectus of the Metropolitan Hotel Company* (1855): British Library, London, 1881 b. 23; *The Times*, 3 November 1855.

17. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London,* i (3rd ed., 1973), 372, 380.

18. In order of opening, at London Bridge, Victoria, Charing Cross, Cannon Street, St. Pancras, Holborn Viaduct, Liverpool Street and Marylebone. Those at London Bridge and Victoria were put up independently of the railway company, the London Brighton & South Coast.

19. J. Simmons, *St. Pancras Station* (1968), 58, 61.

20. *London and its Environs* (14th ed., 1905), 10-13.

21. Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, ed. H.P. Sucksmith (1975), 324.

22. See F. Sheppard, *London 1808-70* (1971), 354.

23. Cunningham, xxxviii.

24. See for example R.S. Surtees, *Plain or Ringlets?* (1951 ed.), 300; J. Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens* (Everyman ed.), ii. 335.

25. The financing of the hotel is obscure, though the South Eastern Railway (which owned the port) played the chief part in it. See C.H. Bishop, *Folkestone* (1973), 86. Dickens delighted in the hotel and wrote of it in 'Out of Town': *Reprinted Pieces* (1868).

26. Half-yearly reports, June 1859, June 1860.

27. In Manchester, however, the pioneer of modern hotels was the Queen's (1845), which was not built by a railway company; Manchester had no railway hotel until the Midland was opened in 1898.

28. Sir M. Barclay-Harvey, *The Great North of Scotland Railway* (2nd ed. 1949), 113. Passengers were conveyed from the station to the hotel (a distance of 3/4 mile) by an electric tramway.

29. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1914-16, lx, 792-795; PRO, RAIL 266/109.

30. Ibid.

31. The evidence for the hotels' operations that survives in the companies' records is fragmentary and very imperfect. Some long runs of the minutes of their Hotels Committees are to be found: e.g. for the Midland (1884-1923) in PRO, RAIL 491/269-73; for the London & North Western (1860-1922) in 410/455-69, 418/261; for the Great Eastern (1881-1922), 227/188-93. There are a few records relating to individual hotels, for Tregenna Castle for instance in PRO, RAIL 253/24-6, 84. The hotels in Scotland can be studied at the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh. The cash books, ledgers and journals for the hotels of the Great North of Scotland Company for 1898-1913 are there, in BR/GNS/23/49-56. Accounts for the North British Company's hotels in Edinburgh and Glasgow over the years 1905-16 are in BR/NB/HOT/4/19-42 and 23/1-6. A student of wine-drinking and the wine trade will find some rewarding material here.

32. The Furness and the North Staffordshire, for instance. The Hunstanton & West Norfolk Railway opened one at Hunstanton in 1876 (PRO, RAIL 321/1). The company was amalgamated with the Great Eastern in 1890.

33. John Byng was using the word 'tourist' in 1788 (*The Torrington Diaries*, ed. C.B. Andrews, 1934-38, i, 339). The first example of 'tourism' given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is of 1811. The French seem to have taken over both these words from the English. P. Robert, *Dictionnaire . . . de la langue française* (1978) notes them as used in 1816 and 1841.

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

34. R.H.G. Thomas, *The Liverpool & Manchester Railway* (1980), 198; E.T. MacDermot, *History of the Great Western Railway* (1964 ed.), i, 353.

35. C.E. Stretton, *History of the Midland Railway* (1901), 44-45; *The Times*, 26 August, 9 September 1840.

36. See J. Simmons, 'Thomas Cook of Leicester', *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Soc.*, xlix (1973-74), 18-32, and the general histories of Cook's firm: W.F. Rae, *The Business of Travel* (1891); J. Pudney, *The Thomas Cook Story* (1953); and E. Swinglehurst, *The Romantic Journey* (1974), and *Cook's Tours* (1982). A copy of the *Tourist's Guide* is in the archives of Thomas Cook Ltd., Berkeley Street, London.

37. See bills and handbooks in Lancashire Record Office, Preston: DD Pr 35.

38. Advertized, for example, in *Leeds Mercury*, 5 July 1845 (Supplement), and in *Liverpool Mail* and *Journal*, 12 July. For an account of one of Crisp's enterprises, see J(ohn) B(ell), *The English Party's Excursion to Paris in Easter Week, 1849* (1850): copy in Lancashire Record Office.

39. *Temperance Jubilee Celebrations . . . 1886. Arranged and compiled by Thomas Cook*, 54.

40. The title Charles Rossiter gave to his careful painting of the scene in an excursion train in 1859 (now in the Birmingham City Art Gallery).

41. The 'tripper' was known by that name before railways; but the word comes into common use to describe a seaside visitor after 1850 (see *Oxford English Dictionary*).

42. The pioneer in this study was J.A.R. Pimlott, in *The Englishman's Holiday* (1947). E.W. Gilbert's *Brighton* (1954) was the first satisfying general study of an English seaside resort. J.K. Walton has taken the investigation much further in *The Blackpool Landlady* (1978) and *The English Seaside Resort: a Social History 1750-1914* (1982).

43. Swinglehurst, *Cook's Tours*, 72.

44. Trollope sneered at it mildly, for example. See his reference to Switzerland, the Tyrol and Italy as 'redolent of Mr. Cook' in *The Eustace Diamonds*, chap. xxiii (1873), and to 'Cookites and Hookites' in *The Prime Minister*, chap. lxvii (1876).

45. *Programme of a new System of Tours . . . arranged by Thomas Cook & Son* (1876): advertisement on back cover. Copy in British Library, 10347 cc. 2 (14).

46. Neele, *Railway Reminiscences*, 30, 140-141.

47. G. Dow, *Great Central* (1959-65), iii, 41-45. Papers relating to the firm's business from 1899 onwards are in PRO, RAIL 226/123.

48. See J.P. Anderson, *The Book of British Topography* (1881), 363.

49. After the Prince Consort's death in 1861, the Queen customarily went to Balmoral twice a year, in May and September. Neele devotes three invaluable chapters to the Queen's journeys, most of which he superintended himself from 1862 to 1895: *Railway Reminiscences*, 447-531.

50. Ibid., 72. In this business a quiet agency was at work, unseen by the public: the Railway Clearing House, which almost from its start in 1842 set itself to apportion the receipts from through traffic from one company's lines to another. Here was one of the essential foundations on which the issue of tourist tickets rested. See P.S. Bagwell, *The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy* (1968), 51-52, 60-61.

51. Neele, 171. The building-up of traffic by this train, and the corresponding one on the East Coast route, is graphically illustrated in W.M. Acworth, *The Railways of Scotland* (1890), 61-64.

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

52. This was in 1844. *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*, ed. E. de Selincourt (1926), 148.

53. These efforts and the conservationist opposition to them are summarized by J.K. Walton in *Windermere in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. O.M. Westall (1976), 27-28.

54. Ibid., 23.

55. Ibid., 42.

56. The largest was Painswick in Gloucestershire, with only 100 people more.

57. L.A. Williams, *Road Transport in Cumbria in the Nineteenth Century* (1975), 162.

58. Harriet Martineau, for example. See her *Complete Guide to the English Lakes* (?1855), 141, 144.

59. I have discussed the development of railways in the county and its effects in 'The Railway in Victorian Cornwall', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, new series, ix, part i (1982), 11-29.

60. See A.L. Rowse, *The Cornish in America* (1969).

61. *Cornwall: its Mines and Miners* (1855), 1.

62. The figures in columns 1 and 2 are derived from PRO, RAIL 1110/85-7; those in column 3 from the table in J. Simmons, *The Railway in England and Wales, 1830-1914*, i (1976), 276. No separate figures for the traffice of the Cornwall Railway are available after 1888, when the company was amalgamated with the Great Western.

63. They were replaced in 1881 by others of a forward-looking design, which were easily the best running on any British railway for some years: H. Ellis, *Railway Carriages in the British Isles* (1965), 137-138.

64. PRO, RAIL 253/356.

65. Exactly the same is true of Ireland, which lies outside the scope of this article. A perusal of the 1871 edition of *Murray's Handbook for Ireland*, xlviii-lx, will show this clearly.

66. PRO, RAIL 633/425.

67. The period 1900-09 includes two exhibitions (in Paris in 1900 and London in 1908), which generated a good deal of extra traffic.

68. Excursion traffic, on day trips inside England, seems to have grown in the same years at a comparable rate. On the London Brighton & South Coast Railway the number of excursion passengers carried rose by two-thirds: PRO, RAIL 414/537, 162.

69. Not all these passengers were travelling to or from England; but as the passenger business of these ports arose almost wholly from the cross-Channel services, the simplification may be accepted.

70. C.J. Allen, *The Great Eastern Railway* (1975 ed.), 194.

71. They are given in L.J. Lickorish and A.G. Kershaw, *The Travel Trade* (1958), 37. They show an annual average of 510,878 for the 'total passenger movement to Europe' in 1891-1900. This is not compatible with the 589,968 given in the table for 1890-99, since that figure relates to passengers both embarking and disembarking.

72. The information to be extracted from a stray one from Ambleside shows their value: Williams, *Road Transport in Cumbria*, 160.

73. The firm's records today are rich in its printed advertising literature, but they seem to include few documents of any importance relating to its economic history.

74. For a good sample of them see M. Robbins, *The Railway Age* (1962), 54.

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

75. C. Barman, *The Man who Built London Transport: A Biography of Frank Pick* (1979), 29.

76. G. Dow, *Great Central* (1959-65), iii, 32; *Railway Year Book*, 1910, 13.

77. There is a collection of these publications in PRO, RAIL 268.

78. *Railway Magazine*, iv (1899), 562-568.

79. C.F. Klapper, *Sir Herbert Walker's Southern Railway* (1973), 55. Walker's unawareness of the importance of publicity is deftly indicated in Sir J. Elliot, *On and Off the Rails* (1982), 16-19.

Jack Simmons
is retired Professor of History at the University of Leicester. He is the author of *The Railway in England and Wales 1830-1914*, vol. i (1978), vol. ii of which is in the course of publication.

This content downloaded from 141.218.1.105 on Fri, 12 Aug 2016 22:57:05 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms