



## Tourism and History

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## About the author

## Introduction

The relationships between researchers and teachers in Tourism Studies and History have until recently been intermittent and remote. Tourism Studies, as it has emerged as an academic discipline, has been dominated by economics, and by business and management studies. It has had little time for the humanities, although it has accommodated important perspectives from geography, sociology and anthropology. The important developments in the academic study of travel writing in the past, often with a strong gender dimension, have tended to remain within their own (highly productive) silo, although some contributions from literary historians have made a sustained impact. ([Fussell, 1980](#), [Buzard, 1993](#)) I have discussed the enduring, but eroding, resistance of Tourism Studies to the recognition of History, and of the humanities more generally, in recent publications, which also explore the varieties, ramifications, themes and geographical spread of work in the history of tourism ([Walton, 2009a](#), [2009b](#)).

## Tourism and the Culture of the Historical Profession

Historians, on the other hand, have been very slow to recognise the potential significance of tourism's past for their discipline. They have failed to recognise the global (and globalising) importance of tourism as a transforming set of economic activities as it has emerged as the largest and most pervasive international industry of the new millennium, feeding off and into transport innovation, inter-cultural contact, social transformation and environmental impact, and linking up with traditional historians' concerns such as politics, empires and diplomacy as well as economic development. The enduring preoccupation of British economic historians with the now defunct or moribund industries of the first Industrial Revolution, in the form of cotton, coal, iron and steel, and shipbuilding, or (of much greater current relevance) with the financial services industries, has pre-empted any widespread recognition of the importance of tourism, or the opportunities it presents. Even the economic historians' turn from supply to demand, to consumption and consumerism, has concentrated attention more on retailing and the supply of tangible goods than on the consumption of experiences; and where this has gained ground, the dominant focus has been on entertainment, shows and audiences rather than tourism as a theme in itself. This has been a general pattern: it has not been confined to the British historical profession.

Over the last few years, however, significant changes have been gathering momentum. Isolated works on tourism history go back more than half a century, although three of the pioneering British productions came from a civil servant, a geographer and a poet. ([Pimlott, 1947](#); [Gilbert, 1953](#); [Nicholson, 1955](#)) British professional historians began to take an interest during the 1970s, but the publications that began to appear towards the end of the decade were slow to gain recognition outside a small niche area, and this was also the case with the similarly emerging field of leisure history ([Walvin, 1978](#); [Walton, 1978](#); [Bailey, 1978](#); [Cunningham, 1980](#)). The growing visibility of tourism as a dynamic and economically significant set of phenomena was also sufficient, by this time, to encourage the writing of overviews from outside the historical academy, some of which proved to be of lasting value, such as [Turner and Ash's](#) (1975) coinage

of the 'pleasure periphery'. [Gaviria's](#) (1974) contemporary history of the rapid growth of tourism in Spain under the sponsorship of the Franco regime, relating it to the developing literature on neo-colonialism, was also a landmark publication. Over the following two decades outputs began to multiply with gathering momentum, especially on British themes and on what might be labelled 'destination' rather than 'tourism' history ([Walton, 1983](#); [Ward and Hardy, 1984](#); [Morgan and Pritchard, 1993](#)). But British historians also began to tackle themes in European tourism (a notable example being [John Pemble's 1978](#) *The Mediterranean Passion*), French, Swiss and German historians joined the emergent collective enterprise, and interest began to spread to North America, while in 1996 the historical geographer John Towner pulled together an overview of tourism history across the 'Western world', building on his earlier work on the Grand Tour ([Haug, 1982](#); [Désert, 1983](#); [Chadefaud, 1987](#); [Corbin, 1994](#); [Walton and Smith, 1996](#); [Towner, 1996](#); [Aron, 1999](#); [Koshar, 2000](#); [Tissot, 2000](#)).

The European Grand Tour has, indeed, been one of the few themes in tourism history to receive a regular mention in tourism textbooks, and it has long attracted attention from historians ([Black, 2003](#)). The other consistent ingredient has been the story of Thomas Cook, often represented as the inventor of the package tour and of 'modern' 'mass tourism', and sustained by a series of in-house histories using the company archives ([Pudney, 1953](#); [Swinglehurst, 1974](#); [Brendon, 1991](#)). As in this case, the history of tourism has continued to attract writers from outside the academy, as well as academics based outside the imagined frontiers of 'History', which may have helped to lower its status within university history departments. Why this should apply to tourism rather than war or monarchs, where the same issues apply, must remain an open question ([Blume, 1992](#); [Withey, 1997](#); [Lencek and Bosker, 1998](#); [Bray and Raitz, 2001](#)). After all, writers on (recognisably) tourism history from related disciplines, such as sociology, geography or anthropology, sometimes produce important insights or excellent overviews that provide material assistance to historical understanding ([Shields, 1991](#); [Löfgren, 1999](#)). The paucity of source material (until comparatively recently) in 'respectable' sources such as national government archives, and the limited amount of consolidated, dedicated sources to work through, may also have contributed to the marginal status of the theme, alongside the shortage of trustworthy quantifiable data and the enduring sense that anything connected with leisure and pleasure is by definition frivolous and beneath the notice of the serious historian. The history of tourism has followed a similar trajectory to that of sport, with a time-lag of a few years: a fecund and proliferating sub-discipline has been slow to gain acceptance outside its own imagined boundaries. Dominant voices within the historical profession have remained unwilling to embrace or even accept the legitimacy of histories of tourism, leisure, enjoyment and 'popular culture' ([Walton, 1995](#)), even as the volume of excellent work in these fields continues to expand and connect with 'legitimate' themes such as politics, government and diplomacy ([Chaplin, 2009](#), pp. 9-17; [Endy, 2004](#); [Merrill, 2001](#); Pack, 2006; Hazbun, 2008).

## Recent Developments in Tourism History

The most sustained and significant developments in tourism history on a broad front have arisen in the early twenty-first century. The geographical coverage of work on tourism history has extended from Europe to the United States, Australasia and Latin America, and international comparative tourism histories have begun to appear ([Dubinsky, 1999](#); [Sterngass, 2001](#); [Shaffer,](#)

[2002](#); [Chambers, 2003](#); [Davidson and Spearritt, 2000](#); [White, 2005](#); [Pastoriza, 2002](#); [Berger, 2006](#); [Cross and Walton, 2005](#)). Alongside the gathering momentum of new publications on a broadening front, several edited collections of essays have pulled ideas together on national and international stages, from classical antiquity to the post-Second World War period. Most of them have been the products of international gatherings of tourism historians, or historians with an interest in tourism ([Baranowski and Furlough, 2001](#); [Berghoff et al., 2002](#); [Tissot, 2003](#); [Walton, 2005a](#); [Gorsuch and Koenker, 2006](#); [Battilani and Strangio, 2007](#); [Grandits and Taylor, 2010](#)).

Meanwhile a professional infrastructure has been laid down, with the foundation in 2003 of the International Commission for the History of Travel and Tourism (ICHTT), which is affiliated to the global International Commission for the Historical Sciences, and has provided a regular forum through conferences and symposia. Dedicated tourism history sessions have been held (for example) at the global economic history conference in Buenos Aires and the International Commission for the Historical Sciences at Sydney in 2005. Another is planned for the Amsterdam conference of ICHS in 2010. An international conference at Blackpool on 'Resorting to the Coast' in 2009, attracted 160 papers from literally all over the world, most of them on historical themes, indicating the development of interest in this aspect of tourism history (and by implication others) in (for example) China, Vietnam and Turkey. Significantly, this involved cross-disciplinary collaboration between the ICHTT and the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Occasional, isolated articles on historical themes related to tourism have long been appearing in historical, geographical and sociological outlets, as well as in *Annals of Tourism Research*, but tourism history has also developed its own dedicated outlets. The pioneer was the Italian journal *Storia del Turismo*, edited by Annunziata Berrino and published from Naples (mainly in Italian) since 2000 by the Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano ([Storia del Turismo, 2000-](#)). The German journal travel and tourism journal *Voyage*, founded soon afterwards and edited by Hasso Spode, has recently produced a special issue dedicated entirely to the history of tourism ([Tourismusgeschichte\(n\), 2009](#)). The foundation of the international *Journal of Tourism History* in the same year, published by Routledge through Taylor and Francis and supported by the ICHTT, marks the coming of age of tourism history as an academic entity ([Journal of Tourism History, 2009-](#)). Running parallel to this are the efforts of Conrad Lashley and colleagues to extend the remit of Hospitality Studies from narrow practical professional concerns to embrace a broad spectrum of the social sciences, including History ([Lashley and Morrison, 2000](#); [Walton, 2003](#)). Tourism history is now a force to be reckoned with. How should its relationship with Tourism Studies and cognate disciplines develop?

## Why Tourism Needs History

The first point to emphasize is that Tourism Studies needs to take proper account of the history of tourism, rather than leaving it to the token reiteration of myths and over-simplified 'facts' in brief introductions. It is significant that a recent publication on tourism studies and the social sciences deals with every social science except History ([Holden, 2005](#)); and there is no similar work on Tourism Studies and the Humanities, although historians can sometimes be found working in the same university faculties as Tourism Studies academics. It is important for a

discipline, especially a hybrid one of relatively recent emergence, to understand its themes and preoccupations over time, to be able to chart trends and variations, and to identify changes in assumptions and patterns of thought, recognising that current versions of 'common sense' are neither universal nor inevitable, but the products of particular historical conjunctures. This is, then, not just a matter of antiquarian interest or the accumulation of 'knowledge' for its own sake, although such motives should never be discounted. Such recognition enables current practitioners to look critically at their own assumptions, at where they have come from in terms of intellectual genealogies, and at whether the circumstances under which they were generated still (or ever did) hold good.

Well-documented historical awareness also provides resources for challenging the myths of history as progress, and the validity of selected exemplary stories that may otherwise become 'truths universally acknowledged' and distort understanding, such as the many that surround Thomas Cook ([Walton, 2010a](#)). Access to critical historical perspectives underpinned by systematic evidence-based research should also give pause for thought about the validity of assumptions and expectations based on growth and gigantism as the only determinants of 'success'. A large number of publications are available on the methodologies and uses of history, and this is not the place to rehearse their arguments ([Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, 1994](#); [Evans, 1997](#); [Tosh, 2008](#)). But there is no doubt that the incorporation of historical concepts, approaches and evidence opens out opportunities for making comparisons over time as well as between places, countries and sectors, and expands the contextual understanding of researchers beyond the mechanistic, the narrow, the path-dependent and the silo. History, with its discursive writing styles and concern for context, depth of field and recovering the texture of diverse cross-currents of experience, also has the power to enrich and (usefully) complicate what might otherwise be narrow and reductive projects and expositions.

## Bringing History into Tourism Studies

These claims can be supported convincingly by examining what historical research can bring to the well-established trope of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) ([Butler, 2005](#)). This approach, based on the idea of the product cycle, should be inherently an historical concept, addressing as it does the assumed evolution over time of tourist destinations from 'discovery' to 'consolidation', 'stagnation', over-development, and decline or 'rejuvenation'. But most TALC-based analyses focus overwhelmingly on the recent past and on the later stages of the 'cycle', presenting the earlier stages schematically and with little attention to the interaction of variables in the processes (note the plural) at work, or the individuality of particular experiences within wider grammars of development. The work of [Gale and Botterill \(2005\)](#) on the North Wales resort of Rhyl has provided a useful corrective, with its emphasis on the careful analysis and triangulation of a range of recent sources; but there is no substitute for the examination of a range of processes from a variety of perspectives over a longer period. A further problem with TALC is a tendency to work backwards from a predetermined perception of a current situation, which tends to foreshorten processes and to concentrate the attention on destinations that appear to have gone through all the stages of the cycle, setting aside the many cases in which development is partial or limited, and a state of sustainable equilibrium, often relatively environmentally friendly, can be achieved without arriving at a crisis of over-development, stagnation or the need to rejuvenate. A thorough historical approach would complicate the processes,

increase the range of variables and deepen the analysis of their interaction. In many cases it would also challenge the highly schematic assumptions behind the original approach.

The incorporation of historical approaches and contextual understanding into Tourism Studies would ideally form part of a wider 'cultural turn' embracing the humanities as well as a wider range of social sciences, and incorporating qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies in more systematic ways. This is a tall order, but the first signs of change are appearing. Tourism Studies is not the only policy-oriented discipline to have remained inhospitable to History, of course: even the well-established sub-discipline of business history has struggled to penetrate the inner workings of business schools, and its pattern of citations has only a limited (though not insignificant) level of interaction with the 'mainstream' economics, business and management studies literature, despite the high status accorded to journals such as *Business History*. Historians remain corrosively sceptical about the principle as well as the practices of ranking outputs through journal citation indices, and very worried about its implications for diversity, originality and interdisciplinary developments, and this divergence of values and attitudes will also get in the way of building bridges ([Di Vaio and Weisdorf, 2009](#); [Walton, 2010b](#); [Lee, 2007](#); [Gingras, 2008](#); [Clark and Rowlinson, 2004](#)). Here we find strong evidence of contrasting assumptions between disciplines, of course; but if historical approaches to the analysis of issues in tourism are to be incorporated into the discipline, the mutual suspicions will have to be overcome or at least suspended.

## How Tourism Can Use History: the Imagined Past and its Ambiguities

Over and above these arguments, there are various ways in which Tourism Studies, and indeed the businesses of tourism, can make use of academic history. Most obvious is the appropriation of historical research in the development of the kind of heritage tourism that requires a genuine, grounded appreciation of the legacies of the past, in the form of associations with events and stories, the built environment and the 'cultural landscape' of custom and past practices that live on, however hybridised and reinvented, in the marketable present. [Peter Borsay's \(2000\)](#) work on Bath is an excellent example of a historical analysis of the development, successive mutations, protection, negotiation, reiterated reinvention and marketing of images and visions of an enduring past. There is an important difference between the pastiche and invention of the Disney version of 'heritage' and the representation and re-presentation of 'real people, real places and real things'; however such endeavours may be compromised and negotiated through problems of health and safety, practicality, availability and conservation needs, leading to (for example) the display and especially the use of replicas rather than originals ([Cross and Walton, 2005](#), Chapters 5-6; [Wallace, 1989](#); [Moore, 2000](#)). Tourists do not necessarily require an informed understanding of the detailed historical associations of a location in order to appreciate the atmosphere and patina of a site whose core is authentically historic, however 'staged' that 'authenticity' may be on the ground, whether by an overarching organisation or by a congeries of actors working independently alongside each other in a 'historic' urban centre that lives by tourism even as it celebrates the surviving traces of its 'quaint' or 'interesting' industrial or commercial past ([MacCannell, 1976](#); [Bann, 1990](#), pp. 125-6). The presentation for tourist purposes of historical survivals from a more distant past raises even more complex issues of choice, selection, presentation and re-creation, and makes even more demands on

historical scholarship and the historical imagination in tension with the commercial need to present attractive structures and a compelling story ([Berger, 2006](#)). The ability to communicate an understanding of historical processes, and to incorporate this into redevelopment and regeneration projects so as to refresh the offer without destroying its essential appeal, requires the recruitment of historical expertise and ethics in support of a discerning, evocative and educative tourism aimed at well-informed and up-market visiting publics.

Corporate interests have long been alert to the value of ownership of their history, in the sense of controlling and orchestrating the display and communication of artefacts and archives, and the power it provides for public relations and advertising purposes. Thomas Cook's use of a unique archive, to promote a strong view of the firm's founder as innovator and pioneer in the classic Victorian tradition of the self-made man and heroic entrepreneur and present a romantic image of the firm's history, is a case in point, although the value of [Brendon's \(1991\)](#) history of the firm as a piece of scholarly research in its own right should not be understated. Business uses of corporate 'heritage' to attract tourists (and school parties) have not always been as (relatively) reputable, as (for example) [Rowlinson's \(2002\)](#) study of the attitudes to history displayed at Cadbury World has demonstrated very effectively ([Delahaye et al. 2009](#)).

In spite of attempts to argue the contrary from relativist and 'post-modern' perspectives, it is clear that public museums, even as they tread the difficult line between 'education' and 'entertainment' and strive to meet the expectations of their visitors without distorting their presentation and interpretation, offer a very different kind of product; and historical understanding, by various routes, can empower customers to engage actively and critically with what they see, to make choices and to draw informed conclusions ([Moore, 2000](#)). The open-air industrial museum is a useful case in point: ventures such as Beamish in County Durham and the Ironbridge Gorge museum in Shropshire have been criticised for lack of authenticity in bringing houses, businesses and artefacts together from a variety of sites as if they formed a unified settlement, for airbrushing social conflict out of the picture, for giving insufficient attention to gender issues, and for incorporating what they show into conventional, dominant historical narratives; but they have emerged from such critiques with resilience, and the value of their own collections and archives for serious historical research helps to underpin an underlying integrity ([Cross and Walton, 2005](#), Chapter 6; [West, 1988](#)). This is not to suggest that the situation is always clear-cut: on North Yorkshire's Captain Cook heritage trail in the early twenty-first century, for example, it was the official birthplace site museum at Marton (Middlesbrough) that presented an imagined version of the interior of the vanished cottage where the explorer was born, the schoolroom museum at nearby Great Ayton that offered the visitor a complete but imagined reconstruction of Cook's childhood schoolroom, and 'Captain Cook's House', overseen by the Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society, that represented itself as the place where Cook lived as an apprentice, when the evidence for this was extremely scanty ([Walton, 2009c](#)). But even this is better than complete fabrication or propaganda.

## The History and Heritage of Tourism

Tourism, as an industry of long standing, also has its own histories, heritage and industrial archaeology, and its sites of historical memory and significance deserve to stand alongside those more conventional Industrial Revolution locations, such as Ironbridge, Saltaire,

Blaenavon and New Lanark (to name four of Britain's eight), or Essen (Germany), or Pulacayo (Bolivia), that are already inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and participate in the tensions between tourist exploitation, historical authenticity, and in some cases (such as Liverpool's waterfront) urban regeneration and contemporary architectural interventions, that are characteristic of such places ([ICOMOS, 2009](#); [Barber, 2002](#)). As the importance of the 'heritage of the recent past' and of 'cultural landscapes' are increasingly being recognised, so the history of tourist sites *as* tourist sites, the architecture and practices of persisting past pleasure environments, becomes a marketable proposition and a legitimate object of preservationist intervention ([Gibson and Pendlebury, 2009](#)). Hence, for example, the promotion of UNESCO World Heritage Site status for those parts of Blackpool that express its status as the world's first working-class seaside resort, and the parallel celebration in the early twenty-first century of Blackpool's popular entertainment heritage. These and related initiatives depend on informed understandings of Blackpool's past, while remaining clear-eyed about the changes and replacements that have taken place in the fabric of all the sites in question, and recognising the need for sustained negotiation between preservation, celebration, imagination and necessary innovation as historical interests collide with the well-funded energies of regeneration ([Walton and Wood, 2008, 2009](#)). A related development is the campaign to save Margate's Dreamland cinema and amusement park, and to establish a working museum of amusement park rides on the Dreamland site, appealing (as all such initiatives must) to a potentially powerful combination of history and nostalgia, to the re-creation of happy memories of past pleasures, in marked contrast with that darker side of historically-fuelled tourism that finds expression in slave castles and concentration camp museums ([Dreamland Trust, 2009](#); [Lennon and Foley, 2000](#)).

## Broadening the Curriculum

Tourism and history are thus, in many cases, necessary and potentially mutually supportive companions, although often in complex and therefore interesting ways. The temptation to over-simplify should always be resisted in interpreting and communicating processes: respect for consumers of 'the past' should always be encouraged, and the development of assorted historical enthusiasms and hobbies, especially the kind of historical genealogy that goes beyond family trees to look carefully at context, makes this requirement all the more pressing ([Samuel, 1994](#); [Carter, 2008](#); [Gelber, 1999](#)). But over and above these ambiguous relationships between history, 'heritage' and tourism, there are more direct and obvious uses for tourism history. As it continues to develop, and to multiply examples of past processes through the case-studies from which historians like to build (enabling as they do richness of texture and depth of field), it provides a quarry of examples from which current practitioners can learn and perhaps avoid repeating earlier mistakes. More basically still, some knowledge of historical development, historians' thought-processes, and even dates and events enables the avoidance of embarrassing errors in the presentation of descriptive or promotional material, and especially of committing unwanted anachronisms. A surprising amount of tourism activity will be found to rely on the presentation of historical material, and the cultural capital that accrues from familiarity with relevant historical issues, biographies and debates will enhance this dimension of working with tourism. So what this adds up to, of course, is a call for a broadening of the Tourism Studies curriculum to take account of what history in particular, but the humanities in general, have to

offer, going beyond the narrowly practical and economic, and perhaps adding additional spice to the learning process.

## Why History Needs Tourism

This is not to suggest that this particular historian sees the relationship between history and tourism as one-way traffic: far from it. History as a discipline would benefit enormously from taking tourism seriously, in terms of recognising its economic, social, cultural and environmental importance, and the ways in which themes in tourism history link up with the political, diplomatic and imperial agenda of the 'mainstream'. Tourism and class, tourism and gender, tourism and orientalism, tourism, race and ethnicity, are all themes of obviously immense importance. History's survival in the academy, in the long run, probably depends on its adapting and contributing to the development of 'new' subjects, and Tourism Studies and its constellation of related areas are obviously central to this. Broadening the 'official' agenda of academic history, and bringing tourism history in from the cold, would help to address the persisting ingrained snobbery of the core of the discipline, while providing a greater measure of legitimacy for its social and cultural branches, especially those that deal with popular culture. But this is another set of arguments, for a different audience; and to be effective it requires that those branches of the subject should themselves sustain their commitment to the pursuit of objectivity, the scrupulous examination of appropriate evidence, and what the great British social historian Edward Thompson once called the discipline of historical context ([Walton, 2008](#); [Perkin, 2002](#); [Wilson, 1993](#); [Thompson, 1972](#)). If History is to present credible claims to act as a beneficial and liberating influence on other disciplines, it will need to practise what it preaches.

## Tourism, Railways, History and Heritage: an Exemplary Study

An extended illustration of some of the ways in which historical understanding might enhance the development of tourism provision and policy will help to support the general argument presented above. What follows, focusing on the particular and distinctive case of railway preservation as tourism provision, is intended to demonstrate some of the relationships between tourism and history that need to be taken into account when trying to understand the development and nature of tourism businesses and industries. The railway preservation movement in Britain not only has a history of its own, and comes out of a particular historical conjuncture; it also offers a particularly interesting example of the complex relationships between history, heritage, tourism and the pursuit of 'authenticity'. An examination of the history of railway preservation (and revival) in itself, its current practices and constraints, and the difficult relationships between the roles of the 'heritage railway' as open-air working museum, stage for the acting out of roles, operator of scheduled passenger (and occasionally freight, as on County Durham's Weardale Railway) services, and commercial enterprise using a mix of salaried and volunteer labour, raises an array of issues and apparent contradiction that merit extended discussion ([Carter, 2008](#)).

Preserved railways in Britain have been prominent among the most successful, and distinctive, aspects of the development of industrial heritage tourism since the late 1960s. They have

benefited from a remarkable level of sustained financial support and practical commitment from a large number of volunteers, whose depth of enthusiasm has sometimes been hard for outsiders to comprehend. One of the many urban legends about Margaret Thatcher's political career was that she could not understand why Britain's main-line railways required a high level of subsidy, when the privately-run preserved steam lines were able to keep afloat with few apparent problems: it did not occur to her that most of their workforce was unpaid.

Railway preservation is not unique to Britain: it is prevalent in Germany, strong in parts of France and North America, and has outposts in Spain and elsewhere. But nowhere else have 'heritage' railways become so numerous, or so successful in attracting volunteers, passengers and support from external funding bodies. Ian Carter, who is a key source for what follows and whose books constitute essential reading for anyone who wishes to take this further, has charted their growth convincingly from early ventures in the preservation and revival of Welsh narrow gauge lines ([Harvie, 2002](#)) and of some of the early closures among British Railways branch lines in the 1950s. By 1965 there were 25 standard-gauge preserved 'heritage' lines; by 2003 the figure stood at 130, having shown a continuous upward trend since 1975. This image of progress hides a considerable amount of 'churn' as small preservation ventures have come and gone; and the industry (for such it is) is dominated by a few large concerns (the Severn Valley, the North Yorkshire Moors, Sussex's Bluebell, the West Somerset) with relatively long routes and diverse rolling stock. It also hides downward fluctuations and recoveries in the passenger numbers and receipts for individual lines, and an array of future problems to which we shall return. And relations between individual companies have not always been harmonious, as Carter has demonstrated through his political history of contending companies in North Wales ([Carter, 2008](#), pp. 115-16 and *passim*).

## The Roots of Railway Preservation and 'Heritage Railways' in Britain

As Ian Carter rightly argues, this movement grew out of a particular historical conjuncture. Freeman and others have pointed to the strong and sustained impact the railways had on Victorian culture (and, it might be added, tourism); and interest in railways has always had a strong historical component, no doubt reinforced by growing awareness of, and pride in, Britain's status as the originator of railways and the radiating point for their global spread ([Freeman, 1992](#); [Carter, 2001](#)). But the preservation movement emerged from a uniquely high peak of popular railway enthusiasm, especially among boys and young men, during the generation after the Second World War, fuelled by a very effective commercial press (especially the almost eponymous firm of Ian Allan) which developed the enthusiast market, and a proliferation of clubs for 'trainspotters' and the more up-market category of 'railway enthusiasts' ([Dickinson, 2007](#)). The sheer scale of the railway system, and the variety of its locomotives, trains, services, stations and paraphernalia, inherited not only from the 'Big Four' companies that were produced by the forced amalgamations of 1923 but also from their multifarious forebears ([Simmons, 1986](#)), provided sustenance for the craze, which was also fed by the new locomotive movements that were facilitated by the nationalised system from 1948 onwards. Within a few years, however, this seemingly permanent source of pleasure and interest came under threat through the switch to diesel traction signalled by the Modernisation Plan of 1955 and the contraction of the system

in face (mainly) of road competition, culminating in the closures of the mid to late 1960s that were promoted by the Beeching Report ([Gourvish, 1986](#); [Thomas, 1976](#); [White, 1986](#)). This environment of threat and decline nurtured a romantic determination to save what could be saved, and a tremendous volume of financial resources and goodwill was made available for the expensive and time-consuming tasks of preservation and restoration, some of which were very demanding in terms of skills and expertise. Significantly, much of this was supplied by current and former railway workers themselves, taking 'busmen's holidays' in support of this idealised supplement to an everyday working environment in which they took pride and a sense of responsibility. The movement was helped by the coincidence in time between the scrapping of steam locomotives and the contraction and transformation of railway freight services: one of the biggest scrapyards operators, at Barry in South Wales, preferred to concentrate on the easier task of scrapping wagons, leaving an extensive pool of slowly decaying locomotives which became available for purchase for preservation projects ([Dickinson, 2007](#); [Whittaker, 1995](#)).

It is clear that this important branch of the heritage tourism industry cannot be understood in its present form without a grasp of its own history, and those of the businesses that it celebrates and commemorates. Its enthusiast participants have a very strong and well-informed sense of the past they celebrate and try to re-create, nurtured by book and video nostalgia publishing industries (from Oakwood Press and David and Charles to Silver Link), an astonishing proliferation of websites offering precise data and scholarly detail on rolling stock, liveries and past practices (often aimed at the numerous railway modelling community), and histories of almost every company and route that ever existed. They have been helped by the wider development of open-air industrial museums, such as Beamish in County Durham (some of which incorporate small railway and electric tramway operations of their own), as part of the rise of that particular branch of the 'heritage industry', which reached a peak during the 1980s and about which the eminent Ruskin scholar and cultural historian Robert Hewison wrote a famous polemic ([Hewison, 1987](#); [Cross and Walton, 2005](#); [Harvie, 2002](#)). The National Railway Museum, especially since its establishment in York, has been willing to lend exhibits in working order to appropriate 'heritage' railways, and a whole supporting industry offering certificated repairs and even new construction has sprung up even as most of the 'main-line' manufacturers were driven to the wall by the policies of the Thatcher and Major governments ([Gourvish, 2008](#)).

Curiously, perhaps, the popularity and success of 'heritage' railways has coincided with deeply ambivalent attitudes towards their progenitors and their distinctive enthusiast culture. There is a deep reservoir of affection and nostalgia towards old trains, especially steam trains, even among those who never saw them in routine action on the main railway system. The enduring success, and adaptability to new media, of the children's *Thomas the Tank Engine* series plays an obvious part here, and the role of the steam locomotive in the *Harry Potter* novels has given the theme a new lease of life for teenagers and young adults. 'Heritage' railways have been nimble in taking advantage of this. At the same time, 'trainspotter' has become a term of denigration and abuse, although the concept seems to have become effectively divorced from the 'heritage' railways sector ([Carter, 2008](#); [Whittaker, 1995](#)). The establishment of preserved railways was also marked by obstruction and often hostility on the part of British Railways, which was unwilling to sell trackbeds or make withdrawn locomotives available, in its managerial concern to modernise its image and divest itself of an unwanted past. This ambivalence towards survivals from an industrial past is part of a widespread pattern in modern British culture: it applies,

for example, to the seaside holiday and its paraphernalia (Walton, 2000). Tourism professionals need to be aware of it.

## Enthusiasts and the Problems of 'Authenticity'

For many of the promoters of preserved and revived railways, generating tourism traffic was almost a necessary evil: what they really wanted was to run, and experience, the trains. They succeeded in attracting rich and influential patrons and supporters, such as (in the early stages) the flamboyant Conservative MP Sir Gerald Nabarro, and until the early 1990s Robert Adley, the Conservative MP for Christchurch, a member of various parliamentary transport and tourism committees ([Nabarro, 1971](#)). There is, indeed, a populist, militaristic conservative tone to many of the preservation movement's activities, though it has never been strong enough to deter (for example) active trade unionists and socialists such as the historian and transport campaigner Paul Salveson. The naming of locomotives in preservation continues a tendency to celebrate stately homes, regiments and other aspects of aristocracy that was already apparent before the Second World War ([Walton, 2005b](#)). Wartime week-ends and similar commemorations are common, and attractive, features of special promotions. The important thing is that they positively attract some constituencies while not excluding others.

The staging of authenticity in these settings is enduringly, and increasingly, difficult, however. There is bound to be an artificial element to the operation of isolated, often self-contained lines without the satisfying scale, complexity and element of unpredictability that the full steam railway system had provided ([Whittaker, 1995](#); [Dickinson, 2007](#)). Purists can argue over details of presentation and livery, but commercial considerations (like the requirements of film-makers regarding the livery of the 'Harry Potter' locomotive) trump authenticity when necessary, and they have had to accept the impossibility of matching the distribution of preserved locomotives to the lines on which they ran, especially as the availability of types has been distorted by the importance of the pool of survivors at Barry. 'Wartime Week-ends' sometimes have to be run using post-war locomotives and other rolling stock. The need to attract large volumes of non-enthusiast customers has led to the proliferation of Thomas week-ends, Santa Specials, murder mystery trains (paying direct or indirect homage to Agatha Christie and the Orient Express) and other 'inauthentic' money-spinners. Then there are vexed questions, common to the presentation of all 'heritage' sites: what period do you adopt when restoring a station, and do you pick a particular year, or provide a palimpsest? What is particularly interesting is that conflicts over such issues never seem to have escalated to the point of damaging the core relationships between preservation, presentation and tourist revenue that are at the heart of these, ultimately, tourism businesses.

But the enthusiasts themselves have been flexible, not least in pursuing their enthusiasms. They have repatriated examples of 'lost' British locomotive classes from distant overseas sidings, and restored them to working order with numbers that extend the original British series. More ambitious still have been the recent projects to provide representatives of classes that were completely lost to scrapping, most famously the *Tornado* A1 Pacific project, which has attracted a great deal of favourable publicity. Several others are now in the pipeline. The adoption of new technologies and materials, whether to re-create a locomotive as it might have been modernised during a longer career, or to make construction less expensive, or (as at Beamish) to create a 'replica' that meets Health and Safety standards, is a further potential (and sometimes

actual) source of conflict. And, of course, the extensive 'heritage diesel' enthusiast group has to be fitted in alongside the steam fans. Fortunately for the railways in their endless search for volunteers, for every requirement there seems to be an enthusiast ([Gelber, 1999](#)).

## The Future of Heritage Railways?

Can this continue? How do you find workers for all roles, given the bias towards locomotives and the footplate? One of the prime causes for the rapid decline of the steam railway was the difficulty of recruiting to the really dirty jobs such as engine cleaners, ash-shovellers and carriage cleaners ([Dickinson, 2007](#)). How do you sustain enthusiasm, and a sufficient number of skilled people, into the generation that follows the last original train-spotters? How do you keep up with the increasingly expensive demands of Health and Safety, and with the high cost of necessarily customised repairs in the absence of the economies of scale of the original workshops? What is the future for 'heritage' railways? ([Carter, 2008](#), Chapter 10).

Tourism planners and promoters will need to keep these issues in mind, whether they run 'heritage' railways, provide financial support for them, administer and respond to their lottery and other charitable bids, or wish to support such railways among the assets and attractions of their resorts, as at (for example) Whitby, Swanage or Minehead, or in various National Parks. At every level and in every respect, the relationships between tourism and history are crucial to effective decision making, conflict resolution and executive action. This is a particular illustration of a general truth.

## Tourism and History: Looking Forwards

The prospects for tourism history are lively and encouraging. Historical evidence on a broad front is now being taken seriously into consideration, not only where traces, survivals and associations from the past are part of the tourism offer, but also where destinations are refreshing and regenerating themselves. This can be seen along the English coastline, for example, where the Coastal Communities Alliance is producing a regeneration handbook which gives due weight to the contribution of an understanding of historical processes to the construction of current policies, including historical approaches to planning, environment and entertainment as well as architecture, public art and the built environment ([Lincolnshire Coastal Action Zone, 2006](#); [Gray, 2006](#); [Brodie and Winter, 2007](#)). Such innovations (looking backward in order to move forward more satisfyingly and convincingly) do not command universal assent, especially when the 'heritage of the recent past' is at issue, and this process is generating its own historical processes of conflict and debate, of thesis, antithesis and shifting synthesis, as it moves along ([Walton and Wood, 2009](#)). Debates over the future of Prora, the Baltic resort built by the Nazis' Strength through Joy (KdF) organisation on the eve of the Second World War, provide an extreme example of the sort of conflicts that can emerge ([Baranowski, 2004](#); [Semmens, 2005](#)). But an awareness of the value and utility of history, like the humanities in general, should continue to become more deeply embedded in tourism practice. This in turn will help to make the case for expanding the role of historical understanding in Tourism Studies, albeit from small origins, as the discipline moves outwards from the practical, instrumental and narrowly busi-

ness-oriented to realize the global importance of the phenomena it studies by extending its field of engagement to develop fuller understandings of background, context and influences. Such a development is, of course, greatly to be encouraged.

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## Glossary

**Annals of Tourism Research:** Journal published by Elsevier a “social sciences journal focusing upon the academic perspectives of tourism. While striving for a balance of theory and application, Annals is ultimately dedicated to developing theoretical constructs. Its strategies are to invite and encourage offerings from various disciplines; to serve as a forum through which these may interact; and thus to expand frontiers of knowledge in and contribute to the literature on tourism social science.” <http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.authors/689/description#description>

**Authenticity:** Introduced by MacCannell (1973) as a research programme in tourism social sciences, it relates to the sociology of motivations. It tends to relate to the products of tourism such as cuisine or festivals and whether they are carried out traditionally and by the correct custom by locals.

Ning Wang in J Jafari (2003). *Encyclopaedia of Tourism*. Taylor & Francis

MacCannell, D. (1973) “Staged Authenticity: arrangements of social space in tourist settings” *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (3): 589-603

**Business History:** Journal published by Routledge through Taylor & Francis. The journal “is an international journal concerned with the long-run evolution and contemporary operation of business systems and enterprises. Its primary purpose is to make available the findings of advanced research, empirical and conceptual, into matters of global significance, such as corporate organization and growth, multinational enterprise, business efficiency, entrepreneurship, technological change, finance, marketing, human resource management, professionalization and business culture.” <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/00076791.asp>

**Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change at Leeds Metropolitan University:** “Through academic research, collaborative projects, consultancy, conferences, publications, professional development and postgraduate programmes, we aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of tourism as a global phenomenon at different social and political scales. We are interested in the theoretical and political issues related to tourism / tourist culture, tourism development, and the mobilisation of cultural resources by, and for, the tourism sector.” <http://www.tourism-culture.com/>

**Coastal Communities Alliance:** A network of over 40 local authorities and coastal organisations in the UK “who seek to promote best practice in coastal regeneration and to inform policy and funding by providing local evidence and local solutions for the distinctive socio-economic problems of coastal towns.” <http://www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/>

**Grand Tour:** Emerging from the tradition in Europe from the early modern period in which the sons of the upper classes were sent abroad on a Grand Tour as a means of completing his education, the Grand Tour saw other parts of society and many of the upper classes toured around Europe in search of cultural heritage. Over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thousands of Britons, Germans, French and Russians travelled around the

Continent, principally to France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany in search of culture and the arts. Inspired by the aesthetic principles of the picturesque and Edmund Burke's concept of the sublime, wealthy Britons moved between the mountainous regions and the major places of cultural importance as ascribed by the many guidebooks published in the period.

**Heritage:** The word heritage refers to inheritance, thus in terms of national heritage this could mean landscape, natural resources, built environment etc. This is also linked to cultural heritage which refers to the inherited physical and intangible features of a society, nation or group of people.

**Industrial Heritage Tourism:** Industrial heritage include the "material remains of industry, such as sites, buildings and architecture, plants, machinery and equipment. Industrial heritage also refers to housing, industrial settlements, industrial landscapes, products and processes and documentation of the industrial society." Thus industrial heritage tourism sees "the development of touristic activities and industries on man-made sites, buildings and landscapes that originated with industrial processes of earlier periods"

Philip Feifan Xie. "Developing industrial heritage tourism: A case study of the proposed jeep museum in Toledo, Ohio." *Tourism Management* 27: 6 (December 2006), pp 1321-1330

Edwards & Llurdes. "Mines and quarries: Industrial heritage tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 23 (1996), pp. 341-363.

**Industrial Revolution:** Usually linked to the industrial and mechanical innovation of the 18th and 19th centuries, first in Britain and then in the rest of Europe, particularly referring to the method of production or mechanisation of a process of production in an industry, for example mass production. The industrial revolution saw the shift from a agricultural economy to an industrialised one in Britain. This trend is also linked with mass urbanisation as the population moved into cities to work in the new industries.

Mathias, Peter (2001). *The First Industrial Nation: The Economic History of Britain 1700-1914*. Routledge

**International Commission for the History of Travel and Tourism (ICHTT):** Affiliated to the International Commission for the Historical Sciences and founded at the "Tourisms: Identities, Environments, Conflicts and Histories" Conference (University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK, 21-23 June 2001).

"The Commission represents all scholars interested in the history of travel and tourism, promotes research in these rich and rapidly-expanding fields of interest, and is working on creating an effective network and profitable exchange of information, ideas and research projects between historians of different countries." <http://www.ichtt.org/public/ichtt/aboutus.htm>

**International Commission for the Historical Sciences:** Also known as le Comité International des Sciences Historiques (CISH) was founded in Geneva on May 15, 1926. The organisation unites and organises intellectuals in the historical sciences from around the world. <http://www.cish.org/index.htm>

**Journal of Tourism History:** Journal published by Routledge through Taylor & Francis, founded in 2009, the *Journal of Tourism History* is supported by the International Commission for the History of Travel and Tourism.

**Mass Tourism:** Refers to the steady stream of tourists to holiday destinations that has been developing since the 1960s. This is linked to the cheaper transport and affluence in industrialised countries.

Jeremy Boissevain, in J Jafari (2003). *Encyclopaedia of Tourism*. Taylor & Francis

**National Railway Museum:** Located in York, UK the museum is the largest railway museum in the world.

**Open Air Industrial Museum:** A museum that recreates a historic buildings, a town or section of a town in order for the visitor to move around and experience travelling through a historical setting. Volunteers and employees in costume from the historical period demonstrate and guide visitors around. They are also known as 'living museums' for this reason.

**Post-modern:** Linked strongly to critical theory. In terms of tourism, the growth of mass tourism is linked to postmodernism as tourists travel on known and well trodden paths with little knowledge or understanding on the regions and places they visit.

Dean MacCannell in J Jafari (2003). *Encyclopaedia of Tourism*. Taylor & Francis

**Railway Preservation:** Usually linked to railway heritage. Railway preservation looks at conserve the railway equipment and technology, including locomotives, carriages, track and stations no longer used.

**Storia del Turismo:** Italian journal edited Annunziata Berrino and published from Naples (mainly in Italian) since 2000 by the Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano.

**Thomas Cook:** In 1841 Thomas Cook arranged an excursion from Leicester to Loughborough (UK) on the newly extended Midland Counties Railway on the first advertised privately chartered trip. Cook continued these excursions, including organised trips to the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. In the mid-1850s he started to take groups abroad, first to Europe and then further afield in the 1860s. Thomas Cook and Son was set up as a travel agency, set up branches across the world and produced guidebooks. The company was sold in the 1920s but continues as a travel agency to this day.

**Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC):** Created by Richard Butler TALC is based on the product cycle concept, sales starting off slowly, rapid growth, stability followed by decline. Visitors to a area will start off small, limited by access, facilities and knowledge, as facilities increase as will visitor numbers, then with marketing and further facilities the number of visitors will grow rapidly and then eventually decline as carrying capacity is reached.

[http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=XHTxrqnn9sMC&dq=richard+butler+tourism+area+life+cycle&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=d4iGS-v2KYTu0wSpvunJCw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBkQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=&f=true](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=XHTxrqnn9sMC&dq=richard+butler+tourism+area+life+cycle&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=d4iGS-v2KYTu0wSpvunJCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBkQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=&f=true)

**UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** UNESCO is a specialised agency of the United Nations and covers education, science, culture and communication. "Its aim is to build peace in the world through knowledge, social progress, exchange and mutual understanding among peoples." <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/introducing-unesco/>

**Voyage:** German travel and tourism journal founded and edited by Hasso Spode.

**Volunteers:** Persons working on behalf of others or for a cause without payment for time and services.