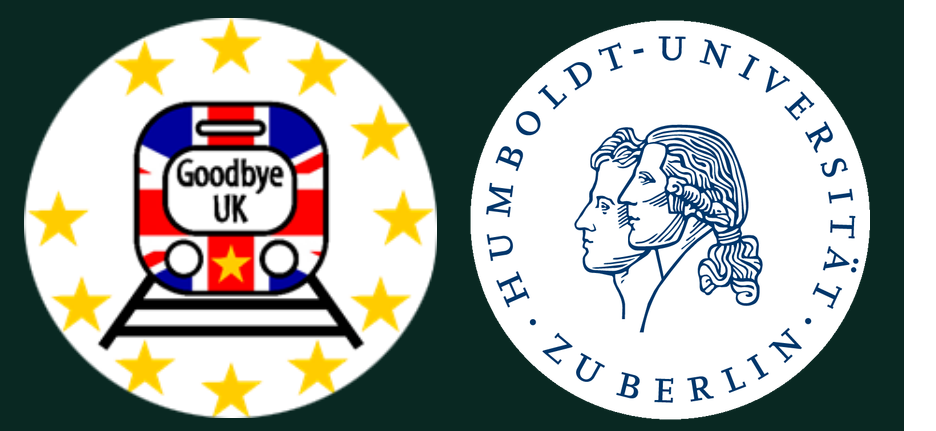


# The Historical Great Western Railway (GWR)

By Ricker So



## Background

- Great Western Railway (GWR) is a British train operating company owned by FirstGroup.
- It operates long-distance intercity services to the south-west of England and South Wales. Particularly, it is a major railway operator in Plymouth and it manages Plymouth station.
- First Great Western changed its name to Great Western Railway (GWR) in order to 'reinstate the ideals of our founder' in September 2015.



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## History of GWR

### 1833

- The Great Western Railway (GWR) was set up in 1833 after a meeting in which the expediency of promoting the construction of a railway from Bristol to London.
- The success of previous railway business like Stockton & Darlington Railway and The Liverpool & Manchester Railway is crucial in persuading the business community in Bristol that a railway linking Bristol with the capital was vital to maintain its importance as a national centre of trade and commerce (Bryan, 2010).
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel, at the age of 27, was appointed engineer of the GWR in March 1833. He was often considered to be too young and relatively inexperienced to manage such an ambitious project. Nonetheless, he did his job well (Bryan, 2010).
- GWR linked London with the west and south-west of England, the Midlands and most of Wales.



### 1847

- GWR operated until the end of 1947 when it was nationalised. It became the Western Region of British Railways under the Transport Act 1947 on 1 January 1948.



### 1996

- Being part of the privatisation of British Rail, Great Western Trains was established in February 1996.

### 1998

- After the acquisition of 100% ownership of the Great Western Trains in March 1998, FirstGroup rebranded the franchise as First Great Western.

### 2015

- First Great Western changed its name to Great Western Railway (GWR) in order to 'reinstate the ideals of our founder' in September 2015.

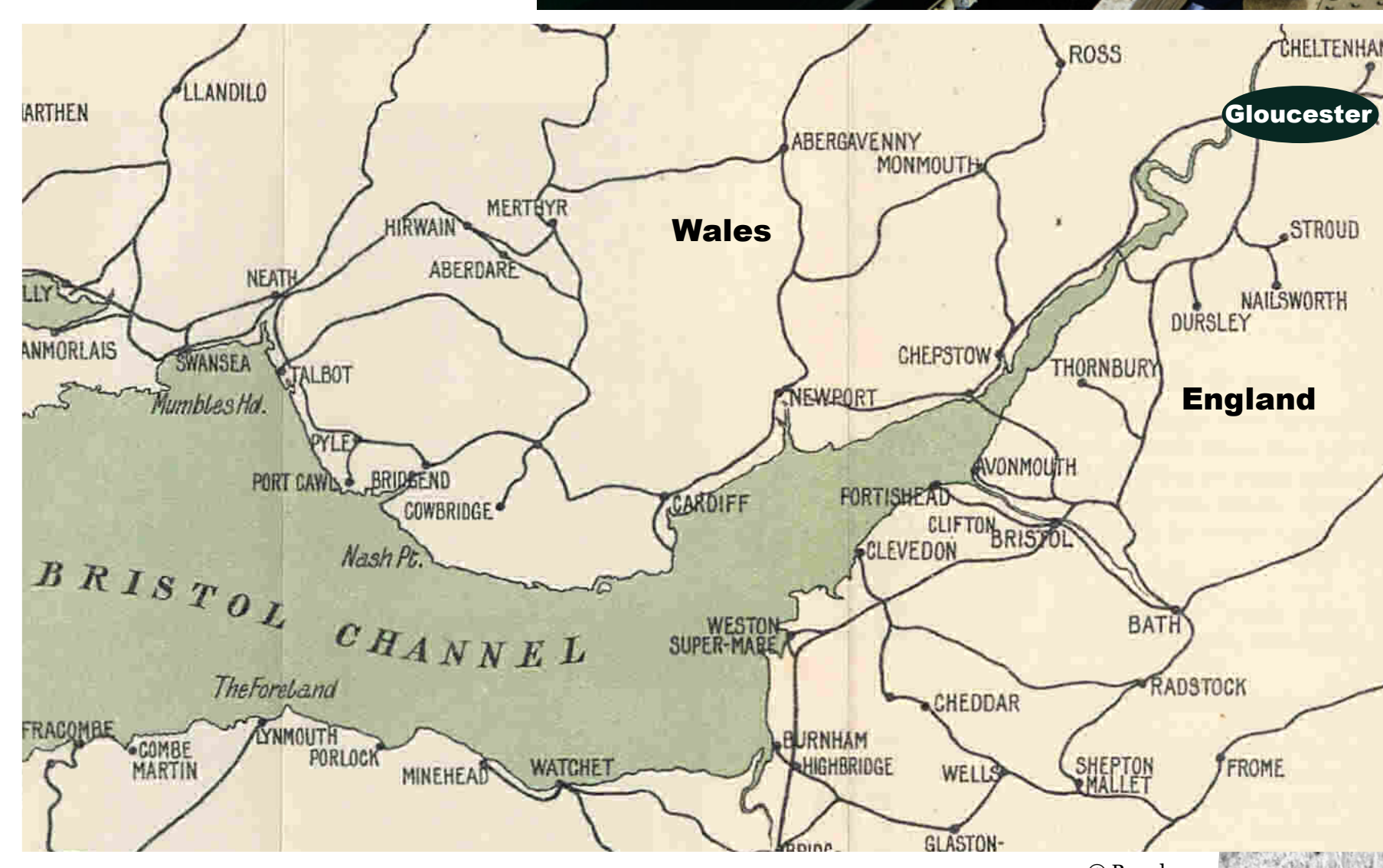


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## GWR's Achievement

### 1886

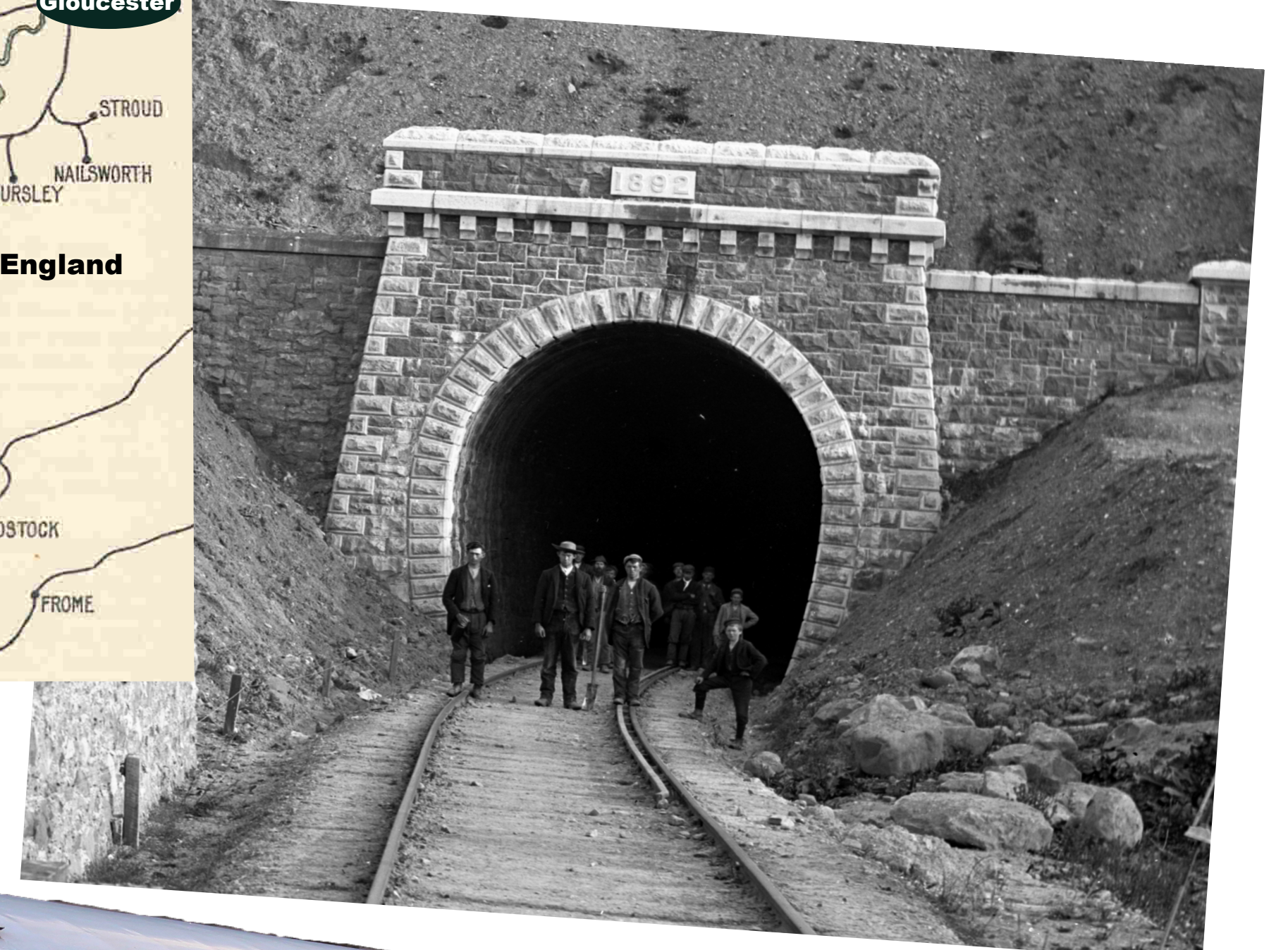
- The completion of the construction of the 4-mile Severn Tunnel under the Bristol Channel (as shown by the red line on the map) allowed the GWR to reduce journey times significantly for both passenger and coal trains to and from South Wales (Bryan, 2010). The journey was shortened by 25 miles by cutting out the detour through Gloucester.



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### 1903

- The opening of the Bristol & South Wales Direct Railway linked the Severn Tunnel directly with the existing Bristol – London main line. It enhanced the connection between South Wales and South England.



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