

# STEAM

Museum of the Great Western Railway

## Railway Revolution Virtual Session

### Teacher's Notes

This discovery sessions focuses on Brunel and Gooch and the meeting they held in Swindon, in 1834 about the proposed railway through the Swindon area. Pupils are encouraged to become characters either for or against the railway.

Following this we then talk about the impact of the railways, including railway time, holidays and the postal service.

### **Ideas to develop prior to the session**

Pupils should choose a character and make up their own short speech airing their views.

### **Ideas for characters:**

**Isambard Kingdom Brunel:** *chief engineer of the Great Western Railway. Railway is planned and he is working on designs for bridges & tunnels. He wants The GWR to be the best in the world. The GWR would link London in SE with Bristol in SW and then with ships across the ocean to USA.*

**Daniel Gooch:** *Brunel's Assistant. He wants to build Railway Works in Swindon. A factory to build new locomotives for the GWR. This will provide jobs and expansion for Swindon.*

### **Other characters**

*Farmers*

*Shop owners*

*Publican/Hotel owner*

*Coal mine owners*

*Coal miners*

*People looking for work (navvies to build the railway)*

*Engine driver/Guard*

*Dairy farmer*

*Wealthy person living in countryside near Swindon Borough Council*

*Business man*

*Estate worker*

*Canal bargee*

*Vicar*

*Blacksmith*

*Doctor*

*Member of Parliament*

*People who live close to where railway will be*

*People whose land will be taken up by railway*

*Police constable*

*Coach/horse owner*

*Groom*

*People who don't like change*

**Reasons for could include:**

*More Jobs*

*Development of an area*

*Better wages promised from GWR*

*Other benefits offered, including houses, healthcare and education for GWR workers*

*Faster travel*

*Heavy goods can be transported easier (coal, stone, livestock)*

*People can travel more*

*Fresh food can be moved more quickly to wider range of markets*

*Landowners whose land to be disrupted offered payment to sell their land to railway company*

*More customers for local shops/hotels/pubs*

*Locomotives use coal so more coal need from mines*

**Reasons against could include:**

*Fears that cows grazing nearby would be scared and not produce milk*

*Hens nearby wouldn't lay eggs*

*Animals would be suffocated by smoke from passing trains*

*Farms and buildings would be burned by sparks from trains.*

*The noise and speed would be frightening for passengers*

*Fields and farms would be divided up as railway went through the land*

*Wealthy people in the big mansions didn't want to be able to see the train line from their home.*

*School teacher worried the nearby line would cause bad behaviour*

*Worry that more criminals would travel to other areas*

*People wouldn't need horses any more*

It would be good to have slightly more characters for the railway, or some that could be persuaded to change their mind as the meeting goes on!