The best books on I.K. Brunel and his achievements. The 19th century books are available as facsimile reprints.

**Biographies of I.K. Brunel and his father, Sir Marc Isambard Brunel**


*Beamish was the longest-standing resident engineer on the Thames Tunnel under M.I. Brunel and knew him well.*


*Written for the bi-centenary of Brunel’s birth in 1806. Contains magnificent coloured illustrations.*

*The first biography of I.K. Brunel by his son. Extremely detailed and a standard source for studies on Brunel. Sets out to promote Brunel at the expense of others.*

*Gooch was responsible, under Brunel, for developing the locomotive fleet for the Great Western Railway.*

*Quotes extensively from the many diaries kept by both Brunels during the construction of the Thames Tunnel.*

*Written by Brunel’s granddaughter, it contains a lot of personal family details.*

*Although some of Rolt’s research has been superseded, this is still the most readable of all the biographies and the easiest way in to the subject.*

*Sets out to point out Brunel’s many flaws as a change from the usual ‘Brunel as the greatest’ approach.*

**Railways**

Christopher Awdry, *Brunel’s Broad Gauge Railway* Sparkford. 1992
*An excellent survey of the broad gauge from its inception, produced for the centenary of its abolition.*

*Detailed history of the design and construction of the first GWR station at Bristol*

John Binding, *Brunel’s Royal Albert Bridge* Truro, 1997
*A detailed history of the design and construction of Brunel’s bridge at Saltash

*Describing the development of both Brunel’s original 1838 ‘wooden’ terminus and its 1854 replacement the book contains much original material drawn form archive sources

Tim Bryan, *T. Broad Gauge Railways* Oxford, 2018
*A concise history of Brunel’s broad gauge

*A detailed chronicle of the construction of the original GWR line using much original GWR correspondence

*Contains much information about Brunel’s work at Swindon: the railway works, village and station

*Originally commissioned by the GWR in 1927 MacDermot remains the standard work on the history of the railway

*Sekon a pen name for George Nokes, (founding editor of the Railway Magazine) produced a chronicle of the GWR in 1895 that was critical of Brunel and his innovations

*Despite being long out of print, still an important reference work with detailed information about Brunel bridges, stations and other structures

Archibald Williams, Brunel and After: The Romance of the Great Western Railway. Paddington, 1925
*produced by the GWR publicity department the book toes the ‘company line’ but is nevertheless and interesting read

**The ships**

Ewan Corlett, *The iron ship. The history and significance of Brunel’s Great Britain* Corsham, 2012 (latest ed.)
*Ground-breaking study and reference work of the SS Great Britain.

Helen Doe, *The First Atlantic Liner: Brunel’s Great Western Steamship* Stroud, 2017
*Includes passenger accounts.

*Biography of Brunel’s co-engineer on the Great Eastern project. Provides opposition to L.T.C Rolt’s account, boosting Russell at Brunel’s expense.
*Provides an honest account of the role of Brunel’s ships in the history of the passenger trade.

*Epic account of how the ship came back to Bristol from the Falkland Island.

*Outstanding and full account of the construction, life time and details of Brunel’s first ship, including technical and financial data.

*Contextualizes Brunel’s ships and their construction within 19th C. naval engineering; extensive accounts of Brunel’s relations with the Navy.

*Picks up where Goold-Adams ends: the story of the SS Great Britain’s re-purposing into the modern museum ship at the Great Western Dockyard.

**Regional histories:**


*includes material describing not only the Thames Tunnel and the Great Eastern but Brunel’s work on the Crystal Palace and Hungerford Bridge


*a brief survey of Brunel’s legacy in the Devon resort and his plans for his house at Watcombe

**Other Related books:**

*Well-illustrated story of the Clifton Bridge

*the dramatic story of how the first transatlantic telegraph cable was laid and the role of the SS Great Eastern

*locally produced brief survey of the history of the Clifton Suspension Bridge
Chris Morris, *The Great Brunel*
*Notable for its excellent coloured illustrations of surviving bridges, stations etc.*

Alfred Pugsley (ed). *The works of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.*
*A series of essays written by a group of engineers. The only book to look at Brunel’s works in technical detail, critically examining them in terms of the engineering knowledge of his own time and of the present.*