

During the second half of the eighteenth century transport systems in Britain began to improve markedly. Innovations in construction techniques, notably by J.L. McAdam, led to new surfaces being used on roads and, thanks largely to the work of Thomas Telford, the expansion of the canal network. Steam was used to drive three major categories of vehicles: railway locomotives, ships and traction engines. Railways (i.e. a combination of steam-driven engines and a permanent metalled way) were first established in the early nineteenth century, with the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester line in 1825. Nevertheless, traction engines did become a distinguished product of this time.