Thomas Cook facts and figures. . .

1. Before becoming an 'excursion manager', Thomas Cook worked as a gardener, a cabinet-maker and a Baptist missionary.

2. In accordance with his beliefs, Thomas Cook and his wife ran a small temperance hotel above his first high street shop in London’s Fleet Street.

3. Thomas Cook’s first excursion on 5 July in 1841 was a trip to a teetotal gathering!

4. In 1865, a week in Paris including second class rail fare, steamboat and full board hotel cost just over £3 (the equivalent of about £350 today).

5. Thomas Cook developed the hotel coupon in 1868 which travellers could use to pay for hotel accommodation and meals instead of using money.

6. In 1869 Thomas hired two steamers and conducted his first trip up the Nile. By the late 19th Century Thomas Cook & Son owned a fleet of Nile steamers and the Nile became known as ‘Cook’s Canal’.

7. Thomas Cook personally conducted the first round-the-world tour in September 1872. The tour took 222 days, covered 29,000 miles and cost around £300 (equivalent to around £30,000 today).

8. The company’s newspaper, the Excursionist, started in 1851. This newspaper, which rebranded as The Traveller’s Gazette in May 1902, continued to be published until 1939.

9. Thomas Cook's monthly European Rail Timetable, published by the company until 2013, was first sold in 1873.

10. Telephone sales were not introduced by the company until 1902; bookings were made in person or by letter.

11. Thomas Cook was the first travel agent to offer pleasure trips by air (in 1919).

12. The company’s first advertisement for airplane flights appeared (at Easter 1919) in The Times, simply offering the opportunity to experience flight. Within a few months, Thomas Cook was offering business or pleasure flights aboard converted war-time planes.

13. The early packages were known as tours – the use of the word holiday did not become common until the 20th century.

14. Famous Thomas Cook customers include Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, Oscar Wilde and Winston Churchill.

15. Thomas Cook Group plc is one of the world’s leading leisure travel groups, with sales of over £7.8 billion and more than 20 million customers. The group is supported by approx. 22,000 employees and operates from 15 countries.