Now that services account for such a dominant part of economic activity, it has become apparent that achieving high levels of productivity in the economy requires high levels of productivity in services. This book offers a major reassessment of the United Kingdom’s comparative productivity performance over the last 150 years. Whereas, in the mid-nineteenth century, Britain had higher productivity than the United States and Germany, by 1990 both countries had overtaken Britain. The key to achieving high productivity was the ‘industrialisation’ of market services, which involved both the serving of business and the provision of mass-market consumer services in a more businesslike fashion. Comparative productivity varied with the uneven spread of industrialised service sector provision across sectors. Stephen Broadberry provides a quantitative overview of these trends, together with a qualitative account of developments within individual sectors, including shipping, railways, road and air transport, telecommunications, wholesale and retail distribution, banking, and finance.

**Stephen Broadberry** is Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick. His recent books include *The Productivity Race: British Manufacturing in International Perspective, 1850–1990* (1997) and, as editor with Mark Harrison, *The Economics of World War I* (2005).
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*British Performance in International Perspective*

Stephen Broadberry
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Preface

One way or another, I have been engaged in writing this book ever since I completed the manuscript of *The Productivity Race: British Manufacturing in International Perspective, 1850–1990*, and in many ways this book can be thought of as the second volume of a sectoral study of Britain’s productivity performance. It has been a long journey, and I have incurred many debts along the way. I thank all the patient listeners at seminar and conference presentations, and all those who offered constructive criticisms. In particular, I wish to thank without in any way implicating Gerben Bakker, Martin Campbell-Kelly, Nick Crafts, Charles Feinstein, Alex Field, Rainer Fremdling, Sayantan Ghosal, Les Hannah, Angus Maddison, Andrew Marrison, Bob Millward, Mary O’Mahony, Albrecht Ritschl and Peter Wardley. The chapters in part III have benefited from the reactions of undergraduate students at Warwick taking the third-year module on ‘The British Economy in the Twentieth Century’.

Parts of the book draw upon joint work with Carsten Burhop, Nick Crafts, Rainer Fremdling, Sayantan Ghosal, Douglas Irwin, Andrew Marrison and Mary O’Mahony. Other parts use unpublished material kindly made available by Charles Feinstein and Andrew Hilditch, and by Mary O’Mahony.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to my wife, Mary O’Mahony, and to the forbearance of our children, Laura and Edward, to whom the book is dedicated.