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The Urban Character of the Early English Seaside Resort 1700-1847

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University of Westminster
School of Architecture and Cities

The Urban Character of the Early English Seaside Resort 1700-1847

‘I continue quite well; in proof of which I have bathed again this morning. It was absolutely necessary that I should have the little fever and indisposition which I had: it has been all the fashion this week in Lyme . . . We are quite settled in our lodgings by this time, as you may suppose, and everything goes on in the usual order. The servants behave very well, and make no difficulties, though nothing certainly can exceed the inconvenience of the offices, except the general dirtiness of the house and furniture, and all its inhabitants.’

Jane Austen, *Letter to her sister Cassandra*
14 September 1804 (Austen 1913)

PhD by Published Work in Tourism
Allan Marshall Brodie

Supervisors: Dr Andrew Smith, Professor Harry Charrington, Dr Maja Jovic
March 2021

Declaration: I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Allan Brodie, March 2021

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Submission Materials – Table of Contents

The following are the accompanying submitted works referred to in this commentary:

pages 4-19

Brodie 2019a ‘Ports and the Origins of the Seaside Resort in England’, Inga Sarma (ed) *Resorts - Cultural - Historical Landscape and Cultural Space*. Riga: Sava Grāmata, 2019, 59-87

pages 20-35

Brodie 2011 ‘Towns of “Health and Mirth” - The First Seaside Resorts 1730-1769’, Peter Borsay and John Walton (eds.), *Resorts and Ports: European Seaside Towns since 1700*. Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2011, 18-32

pages 36-44

Brodie 2012a ‘Liverpool and the origins of the Seaside Resort’, *The Georgian Group Journal*. XX, 2012, 63-76

pages 45-75

Brodie 2012b ‘Scarborough in the 1730s - Spa, Sea and Sex’, *Journal of Tourism History*. 4:2, 2012, 125-153

pages 76-92
English Text 93-110

Brodie 2015 'Pourquoi se baigner dans la mer? L'influence des écrivains médicaux sur les origines des stations balnéaires en Angleterre', Philippe Duhamel, Magali Talandier et Bernard Toulhier (eds), *Le balnéaire*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes 2015, 47-62

pages 111-15
English Text 116-22

Brodie 2012c 'L'architettura grandiose delle località balneari inglesi tra il 1815 e il 1840', Emanuel Dori and Valentina Orioli (ed) *Milano Marittima 100. Paesaggi e architetture per il turismo balneare*. Milano-Torino: Pearson Italia, 2012, 83-8

pages 123-48

Brodie 2013 'The Brown Family Adventure – seaside holidays in Kent in the mid-19th century', *Journal of Tourism History*. 5:1, 2013, 1-24

pages 149-431
particularly 169-181, 221-226, 265-276, 288-292, 314-321, 333-344

Brodie 2018 *The Seafront*. Swindon: Historic England, 2018

pages 432-667
particularly 462-530

Brodie 2019b *Tourism and the changing face of the British Isles*. Swindon: Historic England, 2019

Introduction

The submitted publications and this commentary demonstrate a novel approach to a subject that has not been examined in sufficient detail. At the heart of this work is an attempt to understand the places that became seaside resorts. Seven articles and two books combine to discuss early resorts and how their creation relates to the evolution of tourism. The origins of the English seaside resort have been examined in my detailed studies of individual places; however, realising that many were initially ports, my research extended to examine modern-day ports with no apparent historic resort function (Brodie 2011; Brodie 2012b; Brodie 2019a). This revealed forgotten, or rarely recognised, histories of leisure at Liverpool, Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth and Swansea (Brodie 2012a; Brodie 2019a). Extensive work has also taken place on the medical background to the proliferation of sea bathing in the 18th century to understand how wider ideas about improving patient health, and the emerging science of chemistry led to growing numbers of people using spas and seaside resorts (Brodie 2015; Brodie 2019b, 27-47).

Confining the focus of research in this submission to the period before 1847, the publication date of John Leighton's *London Out of Town* cartoon book, permits a review of the state of the seaside holiday before railways would transform England's leisure landscape (Fig 1). Tensions between small numbers of affluent sea bathers and growing numbers of trippers were becoming obvious in written and visual sources, as well as in architecture. Two articles tackle the contrasting character of the seaside at this date; 'The Brown Family Adventure' uses Leighton's previously unrecognised cartoon book as a core source to understand popular holidays in Kent during the 1840s (Brodie 2013). In contrast, 'L'architettura grandiose', a paper given at a conference in Italy, explores the most elaborate domestic seaside architecture of this period (Brodie 2012c). It describes a number of schemes predominantly in the south-east of England catering for wealthy holidaymakers seeking to be separate from the increasingly busy hearts of seaside resorts.



Fig 1 Front cover of John Leighton's *London Out of Town*. London, 1847

After reviewing briefly the existing literature for the subject area, the distinctive methodological approach adopted in my research is discussed. This combines the use of published and unpublished national and local historical sources with a wide range of other written and visual sources. In addition, my background in architectural history means that buildings and places are employed as a strong form of evidence. This involved understanding resorts in three-dimensions, the character of the places that once existed and recognising the early stages of resort development through studying historic townscapes. Direct engagement on the ground has been at the heart of this research and the evidence gleaned from the built environment is central to all my works.

As I have been studying seaside resorts since 2002, my work is considered in the literature review within the context of architectural and tourism history. *England's Seaside Resorts* (2007) noted how the stages in Richard Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model of tourism development can be mapped to the historical development of seaside resorts (Brodie and Winter 2007, 8, 30; Butler 1980). In

subsequent years, further correspondences between resort evolution and the TALC have been recognised, and for this commentary Butler's model, along with subsequent expansions and critiques of his initial thesis, have been revisited (Butler 2006; Butler 2009). This will demonstrate that as well as being a measure, and sometimes a predictor, of resort development, the TALC is more fundamentally an indicator of confidence in the viability of tourist destinations. Therefore, a typology of resort development and aspects of the early growth of resorts can be mapped to the initial stages of this model.

Following a discussion of my contribution to considering the evolution of resorts, the commentary then examines a theme that I have reviewed in a number of works: 'why did the Georgians visit the seaside'? To what extent did the Georgians see it as a romantic experience, a medical necessity or a sociable pursuit? My research reveals that the Georgian seaside resort was a far from romantic experience, prompting a reconsideration of Alain Corbin's *The Lure of the Sea* (Corbin 1995). This seminal text placed the emerging appreciation of the sea and the seaside resort within Romanticism and the Enlightenment. Instead, my research suggests that a more appropriate way to see the early seaside is in terms of urban history, as well as evolving ideas about health and as a means to satisfy a desire for the company of people with the time and wealth to enjoy leisure.

Therefore, this commentary will begin by highlighting my innovative methodology within the context of the history of tourism and architectural history, and then examine the range of visual, documentary and architectural sources that I have employed in the works in the accompanying submission. It will also consider how my research has cast light on the early stages of resort development and has established a typology of resort origins; both of these can be successfully mapped to Butler's TALC model through a suggested extension to his original thesis. A subsequent section considers the motives behind a visit to the Georgian seaside and reviews themes in my various works, seeking to demonstrate that this was a far from Romantic experience. The Georgian seaside has proved to be a highly urban experience where medical 'necessity' and the desire for sociable company were as significant as any later attribution of romance. Finally, the evidence of new tensions

at the Georgian seaside resort during the second quarter of the 19th century is discussed, contrasting the high-status architectural projects with evidence from John Leighton's previously unconsidered cartoon book of 1847. My research has shown that even prior to the arrival of railways, the genteel Georgian resident and visitor were withdrawing from the increasingly busy hearts of resorts into more sedate, suburban settlements, a phenomenon hitherto thought to date from later in the 19th century.

Where my Research fits in Architectural History and the History of Tourism

Since the 1980s my work has involved recording historic buildings for successive government heritage agencies, initially documenting structures prior to alteration or demolition, and this led to the identification of themes and building types as priorities for research. I recognised the seaside as a neglected subject area, though higher organisational priority was given initially to developing projects and methodologies to record England's endangered institutional buildings. Therefore, in the late 1990s I led a research programme into England's prisons, culminating in a monograph (Brodie, Croom and Davies 2002). Much has been written on the history of prisons, notably by Seán McConville and Neil Davie, while Leslie Fairweather as an architect has predominantly looked at modern prison design (McConville 1981; McConville 1994; Davie 2016; Fairweather and McConville 2000). Michael Ignatieff and Robin Evans considered the architectural history of prisons up to the 1840s, rather than the entire story of the existing prison estate (Ignatieff 1978; Evans 1982). For obvious security reasons, these works lacked significant direct engagement with operational buildings. However, working for a government heritage agency led the Prison Service to admit my research team into every English prison, permitting recording of the buildings for the first time, including by photography (Historic England Archive 2021). The success of the project was founded on comprehensive background research combined with a broad architectural survey and in-depth analyses of key sites to create a detailed picture of the prison estate. A similar combination of approaches has been employed in my research into seaside resorts.

Investigative work and research conducted prior to studying the seaside has left a legacy in my recent work; some historical and architectural sources have been re-examined in the context of the history of tourism. In 2014 I returned to penal history from the perspective of thanatourism for an article about the early investigative and inquisitive tourism of prisons (Brodie 2014). Some tourist diaries include references to excursions to prisons, hospitals and military sites and, to supplement these, John Howard's indictment of the state of prisons was re-examined as a source for tourism history (Howard 1777) (Fig 2). A similar revisiting exercise showed the existence of a

form of professional tourism during the Middle Ages. Having researched Old Sarum Cathedral in the 12th century, this work was reconsidered to demonstrate that artists and ideas moved easily from one ecclesiastical site to another. Similarly, the presence of motifs from West Country 14th-century churches in Prague Cathedral showed that a youthful Peter Parler probably travelled extensively to employ such details (Brodie 2019b, 18-19).



Fig 2 Bust of John Howard above the main gate of HMP Shrewsbury

By the 1990s it was obvious that there was a lack of research on, and official recognition for, the heritage of seaside resorts. Both the prisons and the seaside projects wrestled with important, previously under-recorded architectural subjects. The majority of these buildings could not be considered to be of the finest architectural quality; prisons were inevitably largely utilitarian in character, while buildings in seaside resorts were often simple in form and embellished with cheap, easily replaced superficial fascia. However, both represent important parts of English

society and history, and both might be seen as reflections of the lives of ordinary people, rather than being the products of the wealthy elite.

There has been relatively little written on seaside architecture, but resorts and the holiday business have been the subject of works by distinguished social and economic historians. In 1939 the geographer Edmund Gilbert published an important paper on the growth of spas and seaside resorts as geographical types and discussed their morphology (Gilbert 1939). In 1947 JAR Pimlott's groundbreaking *The Englishman's Holiday* was published (Pimlott 1947). His work may have arisen from concern about the implications of the 1938 *Holidays with Pay Act* (1938 c.70), fearing that the right to paid leave would create seasonal crises in transport and in resort accommodation. HG Stokes and Christopher Marsden published popular histories of the seaside, also in 1947, and twenty years later Anthony Hern adopted a similar approach (Stokes 1947; Marsden 1947; Hern 1967).

The foremost historian of the seaside is John Walton, whose doctoral thesis on Blackpool became the basis for a number of books and articles providing the most detailed examination of any English resort (Walton 1974; Walton 1998). This work was the starting point for his 1983 social history of the seaside resort up to 1914, and in 2000 he completed the story with a book about the British seaside in the 20th century (Walton 1983; Walton 2000). His works exploit a wide range of historical sources, including census returns and local authority records, to establish the changing social scene in resorts. What is absent in Walton's works is direct engagement with the historic environment, and this is a must recurring theme in other important historical works such as James Walvin's 1978 book on the social history of the seaside holiday (Walvin 1978). This has a chapter that coincides with this submission's period, but its content is broadly similar to Pimlott's work. Peter Borsay has written extensively on leisure culture in the 18th and 19th centuries, predominantly at spas, but has also shown an interest in seaside resorts, particularly Tenby (Borsay 2011). His publications reveals his mastery of social, political, urban and cultural history, but he does not employ extensively architecture and places as evidence. Alistair Durie published a series of books on Scotland's tourist history, which includes useful material about the early years of its seaside (Durie 2003; Durie

2012; Durie 2017). Although Scots formed part of Scarborough's clientele as early as the 1730s, the development of homegrown seaside destinations dates from later than in England, though it is clear that these followed the pattern witnessed down south.

As well as publications offering national perspectives, important works focused on counties also lack significant engagement with buildings. Approximately the first third of John Travis' book on Devon's seaside resorts overlaps with my submission period and subject area (Travis 1993). It provides a detailed history of Devon's emergence as a sea bathing destination and, as a county with two distinct coastlines, different stories emerge. However, an inserted section of eight old prints and photographs testifies to its limited engagement with the historic environment. John Whyman made a significant contribution to the study of the Kentish seaside during the Georgian period (Whyman 1981). Documentary material that he assembled during the course of his thesis led to a series of articles and two sourcebooks on the Kentish seaside, one of which covers the same period as this submission (Whyman 1985). Rachael Johnson in her thesis on Kent's spas and seaside resorts revisited a lot of the material that Whyman had gathered, but extended it to the county's spas. She stated that her aim was not 'to offer a traditional narrative of resort development, nor is its primary focus a conventional comparison of physical environment and built facilities' (Johnson 2013, 7). Instead, she sought to focus on the visitor experience, though whether this can, or should, be detached from the character of the places, is debatable.

My research on the history of seaside resorts has been combined with work on their architectural history. Combining these disciplines has not been undertaken by many authors and those accounts that have are largely limited to the elaborate works of the second half of the 19th century and the modernism of the 1930s. The focus is often the high-profile entertainment businesses, with piers being the most commonly covered subject of thematic works. Lynn Pearson published a study of the development of larger entertainment venues from 1870 to 1914, while Bruce Peter examined modernism in British pleasure architecture between 1925 and 1940, and inevitably, much of this subject matter is at the seaside (Pearson 1991; Peter 2007). A collection of essays entitled *Modernism on Sea*, published in 2009, tackles the wider

issue of design, including architecture at seaside resorts and Fred Gray's *Designing the Seaside* of 2006, takes a similar broad approach (Fegel and Harris 2009; Gray 2006). Kathryn Ferry, 'a historian interested in architecture, design and seaside culture' has written a number of books about the seaside, and predominantly focuses on the later periods, when visual sources are stronger and more appealing (Ferry 2021). Steven Braggs and Dianne Harris described the inter-war holiday and often rely on buildings to tell its story, though these cannot be classified as works of architectural history (Braggs and Harris 2000).

Local history works feature buildings more prominently. In 1929 Harold Clunn published a study of seven south coast resorts in what he characterised as historical sketches (Clunn 1929). That description does his work a disservice, as he provides informative discussions about each resort, highlighting important characters, events and buildings. The various works about Brighton by Sue Berry, formerly Sue Farrant, feature buildings prominently (Farrant 1980, Farrant and Farrant 1980; Berry 2005; Berry 2009; Berry 2015), but most works of local history are either picture books or simply use buildings as illustrations, rather than being at the heart of the story. In contrast, my works on seaside resorts employ buildings and the character of the places as the central focus and by understanding their evolution, I have contributed a distinctive strand to seaside resort research.

Visual, Documentary and Architectural Sources for Early Seaside Resorts

The 18th century was a period before there was a wealth of official sources and systematic published information about resorts. To overcome this, my research explored early guidebooks, directories and town histories, along with published and unpublished travel journals, as well as less conventional 'historical' sources such as poems and cartoons. Some fortunate discoveries were made in unexpected places. The earliest depiction of a bathing machine with a rear canopy was rediscovered in the Society of Antiquaries of London and published for the first time (Fig 3). Previously described in a single-page note in 1858, this was mentioned by Whyman, though he does not appear to have located the drawing (Notes and Queries 1858; Whyman 1981, I, 152-3). It was discovered inserted into the 1736 *History of the Isle of Thanet* donated by the antiquary Joseph Ames, the joint publisher of the work (Lewis 1736). An 1800 guidebook described Brighton's theatre as 'better than many other provincial playhouses' yet 'indifferently attended' (Anon 1800, 23). In the British Library, a collection of playbills for performances includes uncatalogued architectural sketches; one is a plan of the horseshoe-shaped theatre with boxes around the auditorium, with presumably a gallery above (Burney Collection Brighton Playbills 1804-6, 937 f. 1).

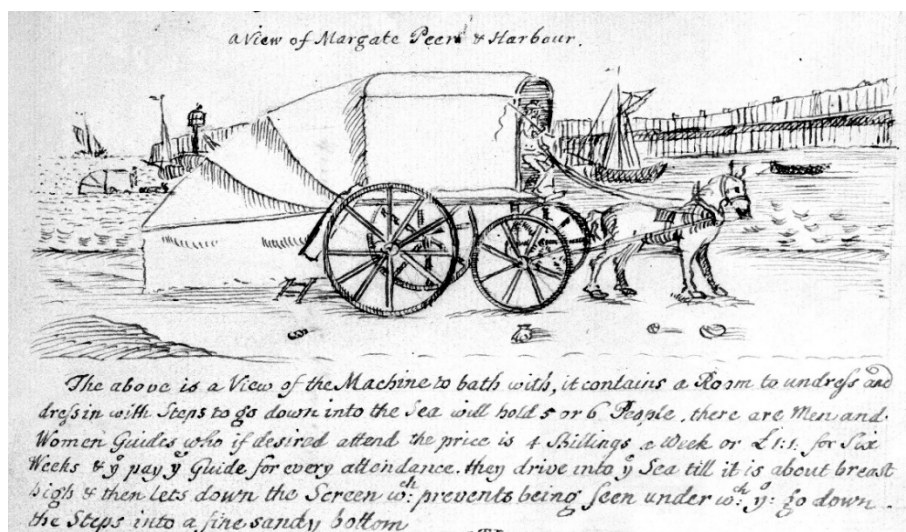


Fig 3 Earliest depiction of a bathing machine with a rear canopy, rediscovered in the Society of Antiquaries in London [DP017642]

Maps, prints and paintings have also been used to record the early development of the seaside. While studying Scarborough in the 1730s, published and unpublished diaries, contemporary letters, three miscellanies of poetry and a range of scientific texts were consulted (Brodie 2012b). John Settingington's apparently well-known 'View of the Antient Town, Castle, Harbour, and Spaw of Scarborough' of 1735 was a key source. The frequently reproduced left-hand side features the earliest depiction of sea bathing; the remainder of this panoramic engraving is usually ignored, but it contains a vivid depiction of the busy port, an important reminder of the town's origins (Figs 4 and 5). Due to my architectural history background, I knew the diary of a Swedish industrial spy of the 1750s. It includes two illustrations of Scarborough's beach with bathing machines and a description of sea bathing that Reinhold Rütger Angerstein found novel and noteworthy (Berg and Berg 2001, 228) (Fig 6).

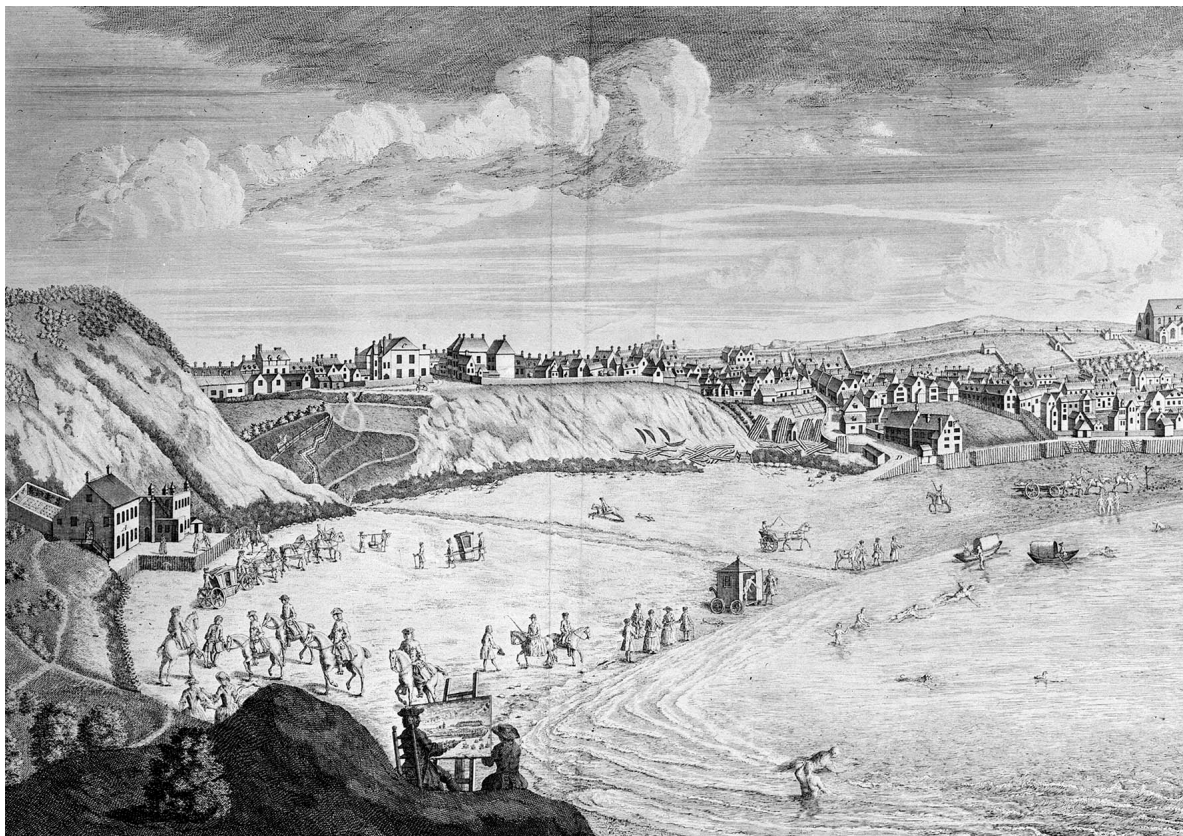


Fig 4 Detail from left-hand side of John Settingington's 1735 engraving of Scarborough [CC80/00145]



Fig 5 Detail from right-hand side of John Settingington's 1735 engraving of Scarborough [CC80/00145]

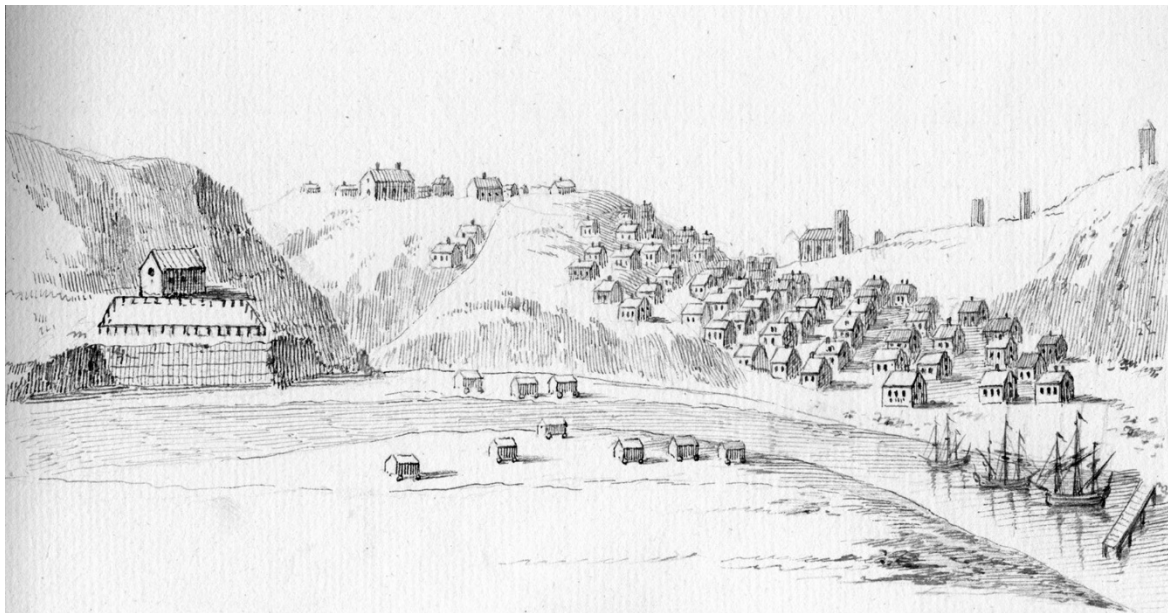


Fig 6 RR Angerstein's view of Scarborough in 1754

The most distinctive approach in my research has been to combine written and visual sources with investigating resorts and recording buildings on the ground. A background in architectural history has honed skills to assess townscapes and to use buildings to recognise important historical factors in the development of settlements. Extensive fieldwork has been undertaken during the past two decades involving detailed examination of England's largest seaside resorts and visits to every coastal town with a resort function. This led to more than 40,000 photographs being taken at over 200 settlements. Fieldwork has been extended into Scotland, Ireland and Wales and there were opportunities to examine seaside resorts in most European countries with coastlines.

This body of work was not created from the discipline of developing a hypothesis and seeking evidence to support it; instead it arises from the inventorial tradition of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME). Tasked since 1908 with recording England's historic monuments, by the 1980s it was realised that much of this heritage would have disappeared by the time the survey was complete. This approach was replaced by thematic inventory work, initially by building types in areas, such as rural houses in Lancashire and textile mills in Yorkshire (RCHME 1985; Goodall and Giles 1992). These were followed by national surveys, including farmsteads, hospitals, workhouses, shops and the heritage of the motor car (Sargent 2001, 71-2). These last three works adopted broadly the same approach of thorough research with recording as is found in my research (Morrison 1999; Morrison 2003; Morrison and Minnis 2012). Like my research on prisons and the seaside, Kathryn Morrison identified poorly understood and under-appreciated subject areas. Through recording, she described the key phases of development, architectural types and historical factors to structure the resulting monographs.

Unlike Morrison's works, the seaside proved to be a subject requiring a range of examinations. This began with a broad thematic survey of the seaside resort, published in 2007, followed by detailed studies of Margate, Weymouth, Blackpool and Weston-super-Mare and culminating in an historical geography of the seafront in 2018 (Brodie and Winter 2007; Barker et al 2007; Brodie et al 2008; Brodie and Whitfield 2014; Brodie et al 2019, Brodie 2018). As Morrison's works considered a

building type rather than settlements, she did not have to research extensively the type of material employed in local histories. However, my studies of individual resorts, part of Historic England's Informed Conservation series, integrate detailed historical research and architectural investigation, with a final discussion of issues facing seaside resorts today (Fig 7). They are also designed to promote the heritage of seaside resorts and suggest ways that a resort's colourful past can contribute to their future success by influencing local conservation agendas.



Fig 7 Informed Conservation volumes on individual seaside resorts

Recognising the Early Stages of Resort Development

Extensive programmes of fieldwork made it possible to piece together the form and character of pre-resort towns and to document how these settlements began to respond to arriving tourists. This early stage of low-level change is occasionally mentioned in contemporary sources. Anthony Relhan described in 1761 how Brighton's property owners were reacting to the emerging tourism market: 'The town improves daily, as the inhabitants encouraged by the late great resort of company, seem disposed to expend the whole of what they acquire in the erecting of new buildings, or making the old ones convenient' (Relhan 1761, 15). In 1791 Edward Clarke could see the improvements beginning at Weymouth. While he felt that the town was 'a little, narrow, dirty place, ill-paved and irregularly built', he observed that 'the new street, called the Esplanade, is well situated, and facing the sea, has a handsome appearance' (Clarke 1793, 39-40).

Evidence for these initial phases of adaptation for tourism can be seen in surviving buildings. Initially, this may have only been a building at a time, by enlarging, raising, refronting or replacing a house in response to a new demand for lodgings. The Lanes at Brighton is the pre-tourism settlement, an area densely packed with narrow streets and some surviving timber-framed and pebble-walled houses (Brodie and Winter 2007, 68-71). These were the buildings that Relhan observed, and some have been re-fronted and provided with Georgian sash windows (Fig 8). In the Old Town at Margate a few vernacular houses have survived, including a number that were modernised in the 18th century. Mediaeval jetties were disguised by underbuilding and sash windows were inserted to make them more fashionable and give them greater appeal to visitors (Barker et al 2007, 7-8, 11-12) (Fig 9). Some new buildings were also being constructed; in All Saints Street in Hastings, new, substantial Georgian brick houses stand tall alongside mediaeval buildings (Fig 10).



Fig 8 Church Street, Brighton



Fig 9 Refronted timber-framed house in Duke Street, Margate [AA050566]



Fig 10 All Saints Street, Hastings

Relhan witnessed in 1761 the earliest phase of Brighton’s adaptation for tourism, a process accomplished within the footprint of the historic town, but Clarke, describing Weymouth three decades later, noted the town’s initial expansion beyond the original settlement. These appear to illustrate transitions in Butler’s Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), from the initial discovery stage to the second growth and development stage, and at Weymouth possibly to the third success stage (Butler 1980) (Fig 11).

Dozens of authors have revisited, and revised Butler’s model, interpreting and interrogating it for particular circumstances (for instance Agarwal 1997 and essays in Butler 2006). However, my historical research recognises an additional, fundamental way of considering Butler’s stages, namely in terms of reflecting increasing levels of confidence in the financial viability of resorts, with entrepreneurs willing over time to invest larger sums of money in more speculative projects. Therefore, the parallel with this typology of the Georgian seaside resort can be made, its stages reflecting greater risk and reward as the market for a seaside holiday spread around the coast and down through the social ranks of England’s population.

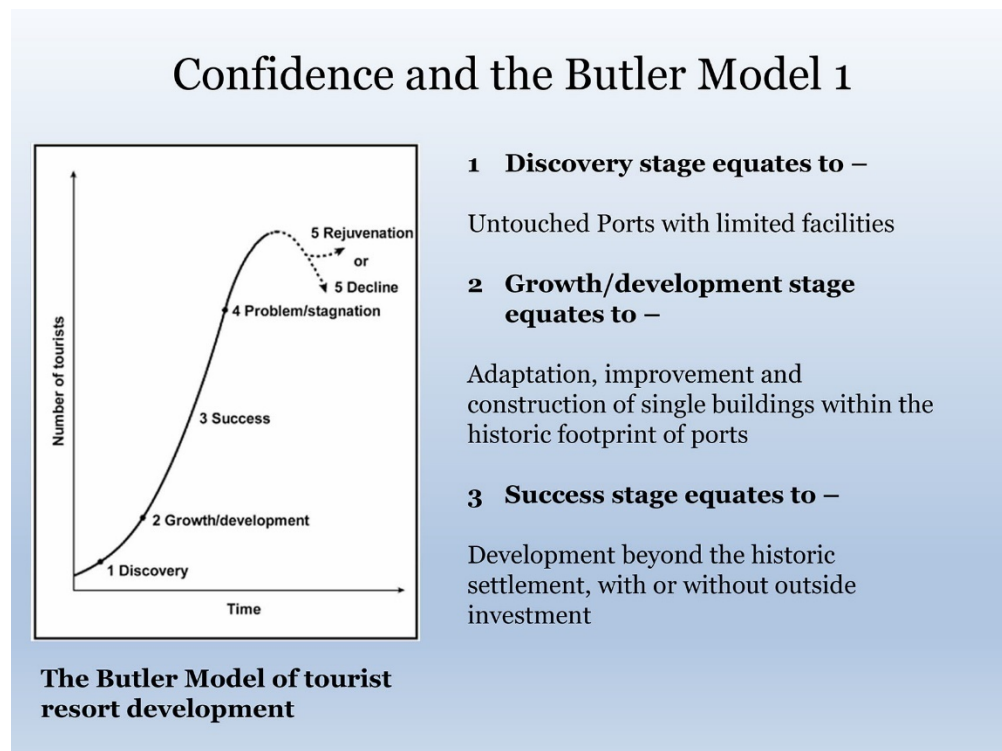


Fig 11 Early Phases of Resort Development and the Butler TALC

At Margate a precise date can be provided for this second transition when external investment begins to appear. By 1769 the vitality and certainty of the economics of the seaside holiday was sufficiently strong for investors to undertake ambitious new developments beyond the town's original footprint. Cecil Square was laid out by 'Mr Cecil, an eminent attorney in Norfolk-street, in the Strand', Sir John Shaw, Sir Edward Hales and several other gentlemen; this marked a turning point in the story of the seaside as it was a major speculative venture based on capital from outside Margate (Anon 1770s; Anon 1809, 14) (Figs 12 and 13).



Fig 12 Cecil Square, Margate [AA049298]



Fig 13 Cecil Square, Margate [AA049251]

Studying the long 18th century, before official figures and statistics are available, often relies more on impression than hard evidence. Sheela Agarwal examining Torbay's development provided broad time bands for Butler's initial phases, but for Consolidation, Stagnation and Post-stagnation in the late 20th century she could offer a tighter timeframe (Agarwal 1997, 69-71). Therefore, this Margate example is rare, and possibly unprecedented, as it is possible to affix a precise date in the Georgian period to a transition as modelled in Butler's TALC. It also works in Bruce Prideaux's Resort Development Spectrum, marking the shift from local tourism investment to regional activity, though the presence of London investors might indicate that Margate was a precocious example of national tourism activity (Prideaux 2000). This provides a good example of my work combining observation, recording and documentary research to understand an important early stage in resort development.

A Typology of Resort Origins

My research has established a typology of seaside resort origins that can also be linked to the initial stages of Butler's TALC model (Brodie 2019a, 80-1). The earliest seaside resorts were ports as these offered pre-existing accommodation, rudimentary entertainment facilities, a clientele and basic transport infrastructure in terms of regular coaching services. Ports, inevitably, also had access to the sea and even aristocratic visitors were content initially to bathe in (or near) a harbour, as readily as from a sandy beach. An early guidebook to Weymouth recorded that the beach was 'where the inhabitants deposited all the rubbish of the town' (Anon 1797?, 15). However, by the 1770s it was being used for sea bathing, though the bathhouse was on the quayside, while a later floating bath for the Royal Family was moored near the harbour mouth (Brodie et al 2008, 12-16).

Realising that early resorts were once ports prompted a consideration of whether any ports that did not become seaside resorts may have once had a sea bathing culture. Since the publication of Nicholas Blundell's diary, his use of the sea for health and leisure as early as 1708 was noted; this is six years after the diary began, suggesting sea bathing was only emerging slowly as a noteworthy activity (Tyrrer 1968-72, I, 181, 225; Walton 1974, 234). The significance of references to sea bathing at Liverpool in 1721 has been underappreciated (Tyrrer 1968-72, III, 52). Using Blundell's diary, contemporary maps and a 1728 engraving, it has been possible to demonstrate that a small, isolated structure on the left-hand side of that panoramic view was an early bathhouse, the likely location for sea bathing (Fig 14). It has also been possible to posit that as early 1721 a primitive form of bathing machine was available there to aid sea bathing (Brodie 2012a, 68-9). This prompted further investigation into coastal ports in search of other lost, or obscured, histories of sea bathing. Contemporary maps and visual and written sources prove that Southampton, Portsmouth, Dover, Swansea and Plymouth had more or less active sea bathing cultures in the mid-to late 18th century (Brodie 2012a, 73-4; Brodie 2019a, 67-70) (Fig 15).

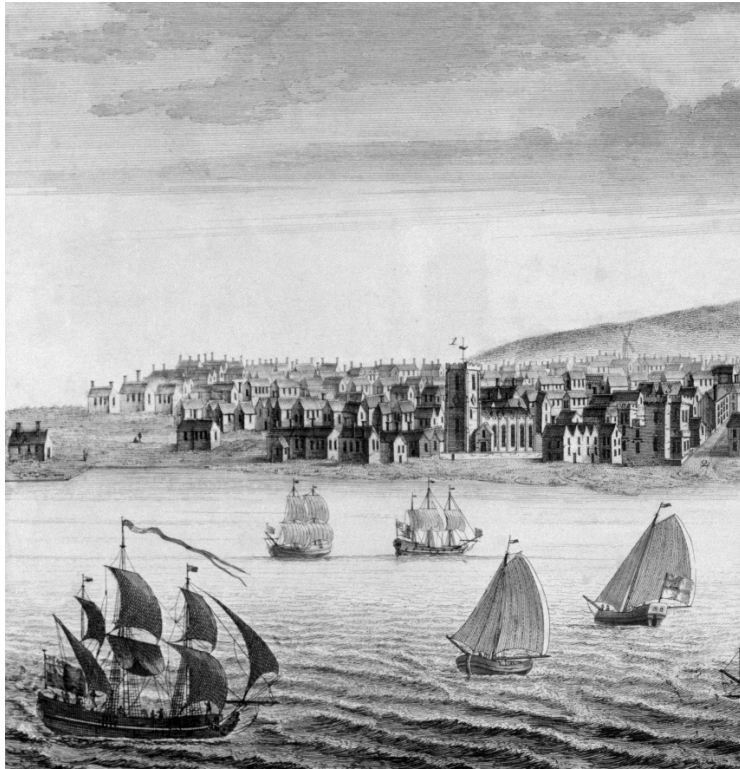


Fig 14 Detail of the bathhouse on the left from Samuel and Nathaniel Buck's 'South-West Prospect of Liverpool' 1728 [BB86/03830]



Fig 15 Quebec House, Portsmouth, a small timber-framed bathhouse beside the port, tangible evidence of this town's early leisure history.

This research demonstrated that three futures lay ahead for ports with sea bathing activity in the 18th century (Brodie 2019a, 59-70). Liverpool, Southampton and Portsmouth shed their original resort function as commercial expansion overwhelmed sites for sea bathing. Margate and Brighton retain vestiges of their commercial function, but they are effectively dedicated seaside resorts. Scarborough, Great Yarmouth and Weymouth still serve both functions as the size and scale of their harbours, and the level of commercial activity, is probably roughly comparable to the 18th century. In contrast, the beach at Hastings, once dominated by commerce, has become a contested space; the beach-launched fishing fleet has gradually been driven back to a shrinking enclave by encroaching leisure activities (Fig 16). This transition is symbolised by the way that trampoline nets have displaced fishing nets.



Fig 16 Hastings seafront, with the beach-launched fleet to the left and encroaching leisure facilities, centre and right. [DP139374]

Many resorts had different origins; where there was no suitable port on to which a leisure function could be grafted, geographically and economically, some resorts were created near a coastal or inland village or, more audaciously, on a stretch of coastline where there was little or no pre-existing infrastructure to support investment. For instance, sea bathing was first recorded at Blackpool in the 1750s where there was a nearby, inland village, but little else along the coastline. Southport and a number of the Lincolnshire resorts began as the site of sea bathing hotels around which development accreted during the 19th century, while Bournemouth began as a single house in 1811, but was soon joined by increasingly ambitious developments promoted by competing local landowners (Brodie 2012c, 84-5; Brodie 2018, 19-20; Brodie 2019a, 74-80) (Fig 17).

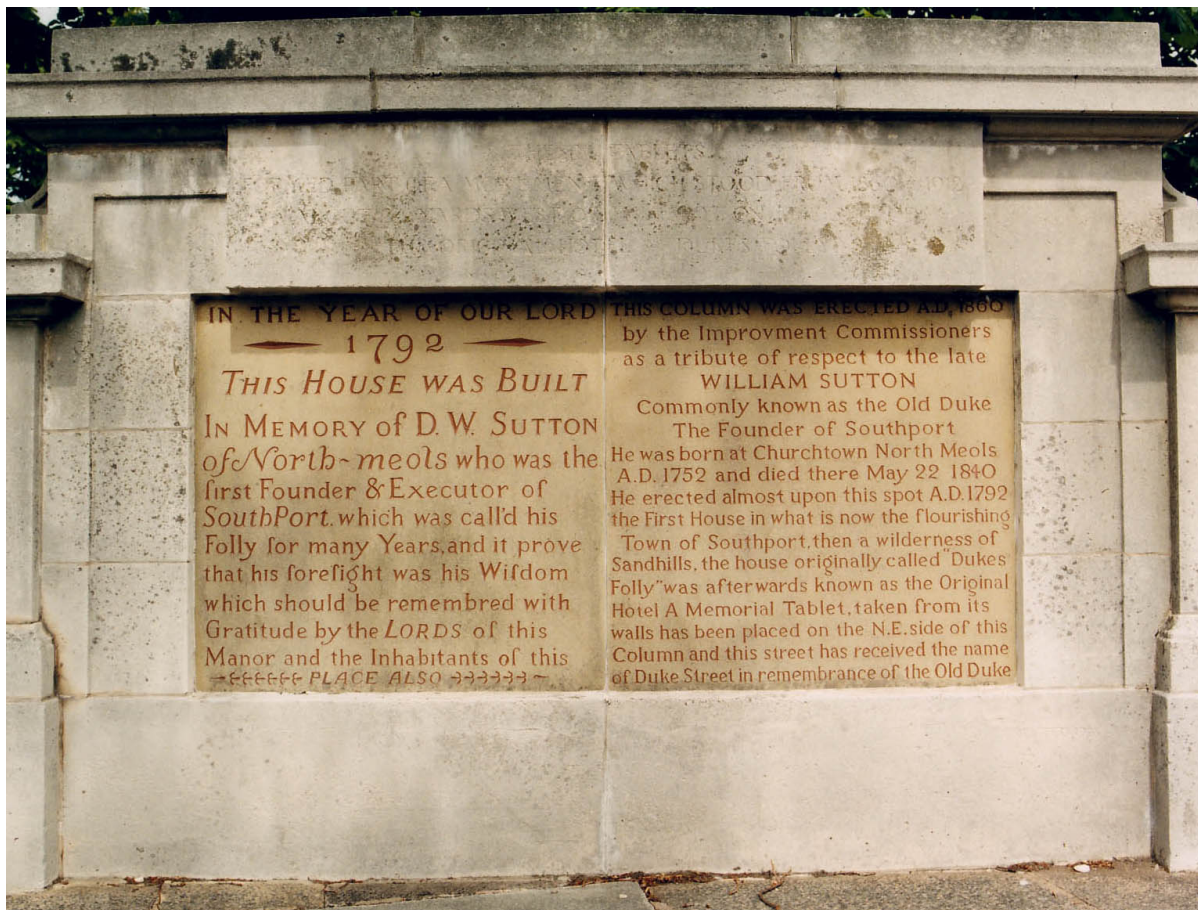
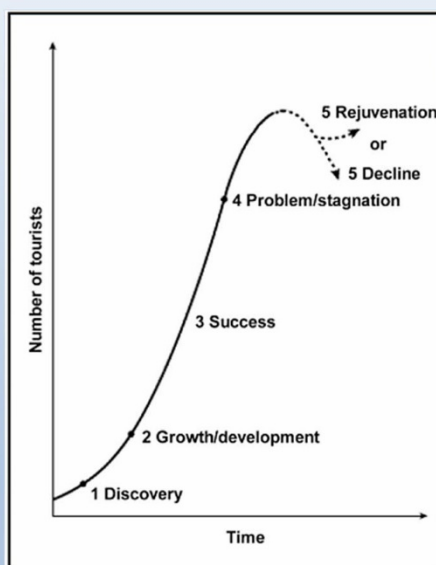


Fig 17 Plaque at Duke Street / Lord Street, Southport [AA058257]

This research prompted consideration of a typology of resort development arranged in a broadly chronological order (Brodie 2019a, 60-2, 70-81). It begins with resort functions emerging within existing ports, and, as demand grew, new developments were created as adjuncts to these historic settlements. This earliest form of resort development dates from the early 18th century onwards. By the second half of the century, a number of resorts begin to come into existence where there was little more than a convenient nearby village, and by the end of the 18th century some development was already taking place on virgin coastline. This typology reflects growing confidence that the seaside was more than just a passing fad, and that investors could expect a return on a wise investment. It is again possible to map this typology across to the initial stages of Butler's TALC model, much as has already been done for the changing investment and the level of intervention within resorts (Butler 1980; Butler 2006) (Fig 18).

Confidence and the Butler Model 2



The Butler Model of tourist resort development

1 Discovery stage equates to –

Development of Ports – pre-existing transport infrastructure, basic entertainment facilities and accommodation. Investment less risky

2 Growth/development stage equates to –

Creation from Villages – some transport infrastructure, some facilities. Greater risk for investment.

3 Success stage equates to –

Development on Virgin Coastline – no pre-existing facilities or customers - high risk for investment.

Fig 18 Types of Resort Development and the Butler TALC

Why the Seaside? Romantic Vision, Medical Necessity or Sociable Pursuit?

A central theme of my works is considering why people ventured to the seaside? Today, it is for fun, games, relaxation, a change of scenery, time with family, depending on the gender and age of the holidaymaker (Brodie 2018, 11-12). During the Victorian period the harsh living conditions endured by the urban working class might be relieved annually by a brief excursion to a seaside resort. Facilitated by the growing railway network and more affordable fares, huge numbers of day trippers and holidaymakers might return annually to their most convenient seaside resort. This prompted affluent residents and holidaymakers to seek accommodation in suburban developments, away from the busy hearts of resorts, but also to head to resorts beyond the immediate reach of the railway and even to the South of France (Brodie 2019b, 84). But why did people wish to go to the seaside in the 18th century?

Romantic Vision?

The earliest resorts were small ports where visitors could enjoy rudimentary entertainment and accommodation with sociable company. This is in marked contrast to the somewhat idyllic image of the discovery of the sea portrayed by Alain Corbin, who argued that the emergence of seaside resorts was part of the wider desire to connect with nature and its sublime beauty (Corbin 1995). He described a shift in thinking about the sea in Western Europe from fear and loathing to a new infatuation. His narrative rightly places the 'Lure of the Sea' within the Enlightenment, reflecting a movement away from the Bible and mythology to a more scientific and philosophical appreciation. While he discusses the seaside, he is concerned with the wider vision and appreciation of the sea. Therefore, in terms of painting, for example, he effortlessly flits between the contrived, classical imagery of Claude Lorrain, through Dutch seascapes to the haunting works of Caspar David Friedrich.

The experience of early visits to England's seaside was in stark contrast to the idyllic imagery and classical beauty associated with the Grand Tour. While it might have

influenced the landscapes of country houses, it cannot be linked in any meaningful way with emerging seaside resorts (Towner 1996, 10, 96ff). It is hard to equate the beauty of Stourhead's Gardens or Claude's ethereal landscapes and notions embodied in Romanticism and the sublime, with the rugged, haphazard character of England's first resorts. It would take until the early 19th century for John Constable (1776–1837) and JMW Turner (1775-1851) to produce the first romantic images respectively of Brighton and Margate. Neither painter looked squarely, and in detail, at their respective resorts for inspiration. Turner gazed more often out to sea, painting Margate's stunning sunsets, and when he visited Brighton it was the sea and the innovative Chain Pier that were his main interests; Constable was fascinated by the sea, working activity on the beach and the countryside around Brighton (Lancaster 2017; Victoria and Albert 2021; Tate 2021). Their works were created a century after seaside resorts had begun to emerge; earlier images were distinctly topographical, sometimes naive, rather than capturing the picturesque quality of the sea and the coast (Fig 19).



Fig 19 'The Bathing Place at Ramsgate', c1788 by Benjamin West (1738–1820)

Literary works also reveal contrasts between the potential romantic character of the landscape and the reality of the Georgian seaside resort. The Brontës were smitten by the sea: Charlotte's first glimpse of the sea at Bridlington apparently overwhelmed her, while terminally ill Anne in May 1849 made the long journey for a final glimpse of the sea at Scarborough, where she died three days after her arrival (Berry 1990, 5, 11). However, Tobias Smollett in 1771 wrote that 'Scarborough, though a paltry town, is romantic from its situation along a cliff that over-hangs the sea.' (Smollett 1995, 166) Jane Austen could find the sea and its accompanying seascapes and landscapes romantic, yet find humour and discomfort in the reality of a seaside stay. In *Persuasion*, after praising the Cobb, the cliffs and the countryside around the town, she describes Lyme Regis after the season had ended: 'The rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of the residents left; and ... there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves' (Austen 1998, 89). Some of Austen's personal experience of Lyme Regis in 1804 was also less than romantic:

We are quite settled in our lodgings by this time, as you may suppose, and everything goes on in the usual order. The servants behave very well, and make no difficulties, though nothing certainly can exceed the inconvenience of the offices, except the general dirtiness of the house and furniture, and all its inhabitants. (Austen 1913)

Austen's lead character Charlotte Heywood in her incomplete novel *Sanditon* endures a tough journey to that fledgling resort on the south coast, which is comically a work in progress. The original historic village had cottages and the parish church, but nearer the sea a few larger houses had been built providing lodgings, along with a circulating library and a promenade of sorts with 'two green benches by the gravel walk' (Austen 1997, 22, 37).

Medical Necessity?

Instead of following Corbin's thesis, a more fruitful route to understanding the early development of seaside resorts lies in urban history as described earlier, and through

appreciating their evolution in the context of the early stages of the Scientific Revolution. Most often associated with the emergence of mathematics and physics during the 17th and 18th centuries, this was also a time when medicine was being transformed and rudimentary chemistry was breaking its bonds from alchemy. A growing body of scientific and medical literature espoused the virtues of cold water and sea water as medical treatments (Brodie 2012b, 135-6; Brodie 2015, 48-51). The submitted research has examined a range of early medical texts proclaiming the value of spa and sea water. Nationally, the works of Sir John Floyer have proved to be more significant than previously appreciated as he appears to have been the earliest, well-respected physician to proclaim the virtues of sea bathing, and to have attempted to explain its medicinal value in the context of cold, mineral water bathing (Floyer 1702; Floyer and Baynard 1706). In contrast, Richard Russell's role in discovering sea bathing seems to have been exaggerated. His dissertation on the use of sea water appeared in English officially in 1753 and its reputed impact may be due to the leading role that Brighton enjoyed because of its aristocratic and Royal patronage (Russell 1753; Johnson 2017, 590) (Fig 20).

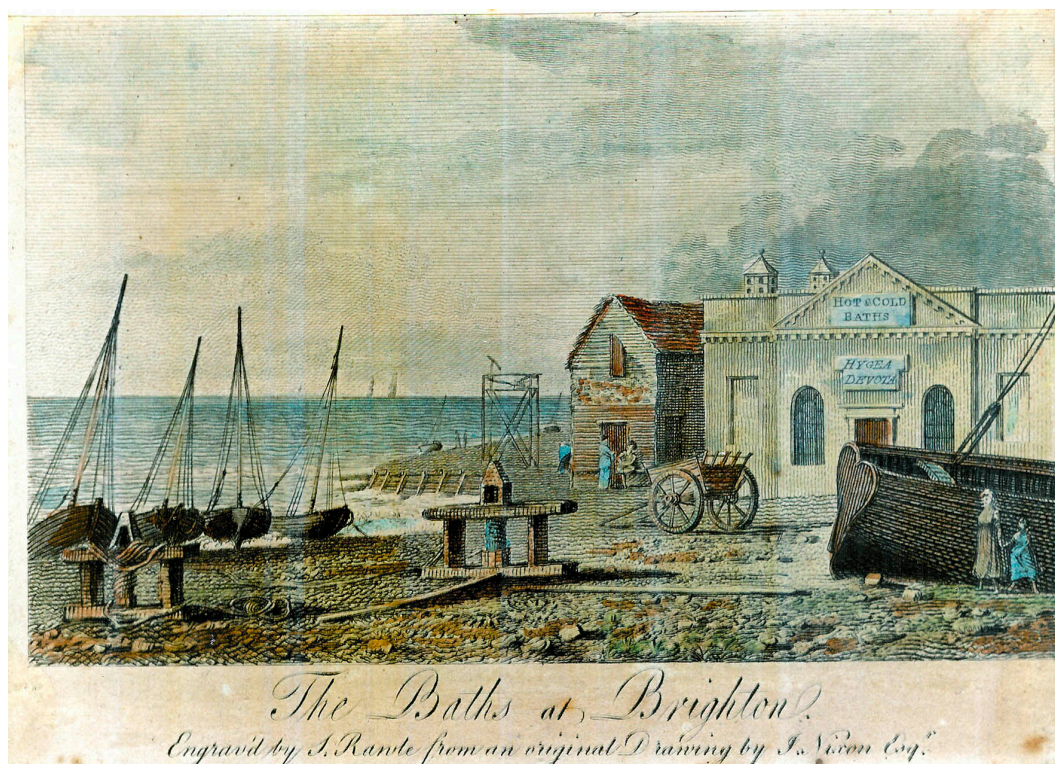


Fig 20 Dr John Awsiter's bathhouse at Brighton set among the fishing boats – a far from romantic experience

Russell's work was based on his experience of treating patients in Brighton and at other resorts there were doctors using their observations and experience to seek to understand the science of sea bathing. 'Scarborough in the 1730s' discusses debates during the 1660s and 1670s about the medicinal value of its spa's water; a similar scientific discussion occurred in the 1730s involving the naval surgeon John Atkins and the physicians Thomas Short and Peter Shaw (Brodie 2012b; Atkins c1730; Shaw 1734; Shaw 1735; Short 1734). Sea water was now being claimed to treat a host of conditions, grouped into skin diseases, problems resulting from a heavy diet, diseases of the blood and melancholic disorders.

This research into the therapeutic significance of sea bathing appears to be somewhat at odds with standard histories of medicine. At best, spa waters and sea water are seen in mainstream works as marginal, perhaps even reflections of rampant quackery, and practitioners advocating these types of therapies were viewed with suspicion (Porter 1997, 267-8; Porter 2006a, 98). Dedicated sea bathing hospitals at Margate, Scarborough and Southport seem to have been overlooked largely in favour of the more familiar metropolitan ancestors of modern teaching hospitals (Porter 2006b, 185; Brodie 2018, 133-4). However, Margate's sea bathing hospital, which opened in 1796, served as a model for *h^opitaux marin* and *ospizi marini* in France and Italy respectively (St Clair Strange 1991, 104; Balducci 2005, 10-11; Laget 2005, 24-9). These widespread institutions continued on the continent through the 20th century alongside medicinal spas and thalassotherapy institutions, whereas this serious therapeutic form, and much of its history, has been lost to modern medicine in Britain.

There was a major difference between the economy of a spa town and a seaside resort. At spas an entrepreneur could enclose a mineral water source and charge patients to drink the water; another way had to be found to monetise the allegedly curative water of the sea. This was done by recommending that bathing be undertaken under medical supervision, with guides helping people to use bathing machines (Brodie 2015, 51; Brodie 2018, 111). My research has taken the story of this curious device back to the 1720s, at least in Liverpool, and tracked it through the

addition of the modesty hood by Benjamin Beale in 1753 at Margate, to the later years of the 18th century when it still remained a thing of mystery (Brodie 2012a, 68; Brodie 2018, 110-4). The first guidebook to Margate included a lengthy description of how to use a bathing machine and Tobias Smollett in *The Expedition of Humphry Klinker* in 1771 still felt the need to provide a lengthy discussion of its use in one of the novel's letters (Lyons 1763; Smollett 1995, 166-7).

Sociable Pursuit?

While the Georgians felt a visit to the seaside would be medicinally beneficial, it was also a place to be sociable and to be entertained. Jane Austen in a letter to her sister Cassandra in 1804 saw sea bathing as a fashionable activity: 'It was absolutely necessary that I should have the little fever and indisposition which I had: it has been all the fashion this week in Lyme' (Austen 1913).

Pimlott recognised that the inspiration for seaside resorts was the emerging spa towns, particularly Bath (Pimlott 1976, 49ff). The shape of the seaside day followed the timetable of spas; scientists and doctors advocated drinking mineral waters or sea bathing in the morning ostensibly for medical reasons, but it also left the remainder of the day free for socialising with the Company, the contemporary collective term for this gathering of the wealthy. This would take place in circulating libraries, assembly rooms, coffee houses and at the theatre, institutions at the heart of the commercialisation of leisure in the 18th century (Plumb 1973, 7, 11-13, 17-18). In the first two institutions, and at some coffee houses, a single fee was charged for a month or a season, an economic model guaranteed to exclude all but the wealthiest (Brodie 2019b, 59-61, 144). The theatre was a different matter; wealth dictated the quality of the view and the character of the people around an audience member. During the Georgian period, performances were notoriously lively; theatres were often venues for rowdy drunkenness, heckling, assaults, riots, and, if a patron paid for a stage seat or access to the Green Room, a chance to try to get acquainted with female performers (Nicoll 1955, 11-14, 37; Clinton-Baddeley 1954, 146, 148-9).

At spas, a master of ceremonies often welcomed new arrivals, managed a daily programme and regulated the behaviour of visitors, a practice followed at some seaside resorts. By 1790 there were over 1,000 subscribers to the assembly rooms at Margate and Charles Le Bas, Master of Ceremonies for the next 20 years at least, enforced a series of rules (Hall 1790, 10; Anon 1809, 20-21). This was a practical necessity to provide his paying customers with a safe environment in an urban setting that must have been far from civilised at times.

The Seaside Resort in the Early 19th Century: exclusivity v populism

Two articles in this submission explore contrasting aspects of the English seaside in the decades immediately after 1815, but before railways would transform them. ‘L’architectura grandiose’ describes a series of high-status architectural projects inspired by prestigious London developments, particularly the houses being constructed around Regent’s Park (Brodie 2012c). The earliest examples are two developments at Brighton; they reflect the growing affluence of people who wished to live permanently, or reside for the summer, at seaside resorts, and their appetite for a sea view and the company of fellow wealthy people. My work was the first to identify a number of large developments as a significant phase in the story of the seaside; nothing had been previously written about these schemes as a coherent group.



Fig 21 Lewes Crescent, east side, Kemp Town, Brighton [DP017940]

The developments to the east and west of rapidly growing Brighton were beyond previous urban development; this reflected where substantial areas of land with a sea view were still available. However, these locations also satisfied a growing demand for high quality accommodation away from the increasingly busy hearts of resorts. Swann discussing the growth of Bath noted that: ‘As a resort becomes less select, the rich and famous in turn may wish to move away from the newcomers’ (Swann 2010, 47). Kemp Town to the east, begun in 1823, and Brunswick Town to the west, commenced a year later, both have grand palatial facades behind which substantial four- and five-storeyed terraced houses were constructed (Fig 21). The influence of John Nash’s Regent’s Park becomes explicit at St Leonard’s beside Hastings, where the 1828 development was initiated by James Burton. He was a prominent London builder who constructed houses in Regent’s Park and whose more famous son Decimus was one of the architects of houses in Nash’s scheme (Miller 1981, 11-14; Nathaniels 2012, 155-6, 162-3) (Fig 22). Brighton and St Leonard’s inspired several schemes in the south-east, where London’s rapidly growing population, and increased affluence, were the key drivers for tourism expansion, though in other parts of the country a similar increase in the scale and ambition of new schemes can be detected. This type of scheme would fall out of fashion in the mid-19th century, when new exclusive developments focused on providing villas set in their own grounds. HJ Perkin writing in 1976 described social zoning at Victorian seaside resorts in north-west England; however it is clear from this research that this phenomenon can be found earlier in the 19th century, as is evidenced by these prestigious projects (Perkin 1976).



Fig 22 The Marina, St Leonard's-on-Sea [DP17995]

These schemes demonstrate the growth in the volume of the upper end of the holiday market and an increased likelihood that speculators could recoup their investment. In contrast, a form of mass tourism was beginning to develop. ‘The Brown Family Adventure’ examined one of the earliest cartoon books published in England, only a decade after the pioneering work of the Swiss humourist Rodolphe Töpffer (Kunzle 2007, xiii-xv). Leighton’s cartoon book is an important work as it provides a vivid portrait of a seaside holiday decades before photography would be capable of capturing its character. Based loosely on Charles Dickens’ *The Tuggses at Ramsgate*, John Leighton’s *London Out of Town* of 1847 recounts a respectable middle class visit to a North Kent resort, undoubtedly Margate (Dickens 1836; Leighton 1847). It depicts the range of activities taking place at a resort in the 1840s, from polite musical entertainment to the raucous music hall populated by minstrels. Margate enjoyed significant influxes of less-affluent visitors even in the 18th century, the Thames providing an early highway channeling a growing metropolitan market to the seaside. As sailing ships gave way to steamers, the number of visitors increased significantly and Margate grew rapidly even prior to the arrival of the railways. Trew

Pledger discussing the significance of early passenger steamer services identified the 'social decline' that Margate underwent (Pledger 2010). He rightly recognised that this began to occur prior to the arrival of steamers in 1815 and that aristocrats had been supplanted at an early date by the middle classes, who would in turn be displaced by growing numbers of working class visitors later in the century. However, Leighton's cartoon book illustrates how Margate's charms were already being enjoyed equally by successful businessmen, shopkeepers and 'nymphs' from Whitechapel, a euphemism for sex workers (Fig 23).



Fig 23 Page 9 of John Leighton *London Out of Town*. London, 1847

Conclusion

This commentary has examined the distinctive methodology employed in the two books and seven articles in the accompanying submission, works that explore the early development of the seaside resort in England. The submitted research has used a range of written and visual sources, but most distinctive is the use of architecture and the historic environment to provide evidence for the story of seaside resorts. These strands of information have come from almost twenty years of architectural investigation on the ground.

This combination of approaches has allowed the development of new thinking about the origins of resorts, including a typology of resort development in which phases of creation can be linked to confidence in the economics of the seaside holiday. The commentary and submitted works have also looked at the reasons for the development of resorts and the holiday habit, such as the search for improved health and the desire for sociable company. The various submitted works describe the character of early resorts and reveal an urban history that is far from the romantic discovery of the sea espoused by Alain Corbin.

In the years after 1815 tensions become increasingly obvious between genteel residents and seasonal holidaymakers on the one hand and a growing number of less affluent short-term visitors and day trippers on the other. A limited form of popular tourism had begun to emerge at some resorts, but with the crystallisation of the railway network from the 1840s onwards, the seaside gradually became a playground for the masses.

In *The Seafront* the question is posed - is there a seaside architectural style (Brodie 2018, 208)? While there may be characteristics that seaside buildings share from the Victorian period onwards, in the 18th century the house is the hero; the Georgian house, at times serving as a home, lodgings, a circulating library or a bathhouse, would increasingly be supplanted by more specialised buildings during the 19th century (Brodie and Winter 2007, 176-7). The hotel that began to appear in the early 19th century for handfuls of wealthy customers grew by the mid-19th century to cater

for hundreds of guests in some cases (Brodie 2018, 192). Georgian entertainment venues were superseded by large, sometimes industrial-scale, leisure complexes. By the end of the 19th century, Georgian institutions were increasingly forgotten and most non-domestic buildings had been lost, or dramatically altered or repurposed. This submission contributes to recovering that history and understanding the significant legacy from this period that can be found in England's seaside resorts.

Extending my research approaches

This body of research has hitherto focused specifically on the origins of the English seaside resort, and by extension the fewer, predominantly smaller, resorts in Scotland and Wales. Consideration has also begun into whether typologies of resort origins and development could apply to European resorts; initial findings suggest that it would work in northern and north-western Europe, though the dates for the stages would shift into the 19th century (Pori 2017).

The opportunity to work on a whole class of settlement for almost 20 years is a rarity. Phyllis Hembry carried out detailed historical research on England's spas and while she examined the development of towns, her engagement with buildings and the places as they exist was largely absent (Hembry 1990; Hembry 1997). However, having begun to research spa towns for *Tourism and the changing face of the British Isles*, this would be the next logical settlement type for a treatment similar to my work on seaside resorts. Initial research suggests broadly similar paths of development and a distinctive morphology is evident in some spa towns, where development clusters around water sources and subsequently in separate estates (Brodie 2019b, 42-3, 45). This parallel with seaside resorts is obvious where development focuses on the sea and sea view, and later in suburban estates. This is unsurprising as both types of settlement evolved rapidly during the 18th and 19th centuries to service the pursuit of leisure and both seem to follow at least the initial stages of the TALC model in terms of confidence in investment.

Much of my research has focussed on early ports and how they were adapted, or transformed, to cater for people seeking to improve their health by sea bathing, but

also to meet a growing demand for leisure and sociable company. An obvious extension of my work is to look at these and other port towns as a whole during this period. There have been some rapid character assessments of ports, but this has focused on the port alone, as commercial entities, rather than the wider settlement (Ports 2021a; Ports 2021b). There is clearly further work to be done on their wider development in the 18th and 19th centuries, including by applying the approach of systematic fieldwork with detailed local history. It seems likely that the same stages of confidence in their viability could apply as in seaside resorts and spa towns.

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