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## **The Teesside Seaside between the Wars: Redcar and its Neighbours 1919-1939**

**Mike Huggins and John K Walton**

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### **Introduction**

Between the wars was a boom period for the British seaside resorts. According to one regularly quoted source, in the mid-1930s Blackpool had seven million visitors a year, Southend 5.5 million, Hastings three million, and Rhyl 2.5 million. But the leading Teesside resort, Redcar, claimed a surprising fifth place alongside Bournemouth and Southport with two million visitors, well ahead of resorts such as Eastbourne, Morecambe or Torquay.<sup>i</sup> Such figures may well be no more than rough guesses, but they do indicate how, at least for those in work by this period, increased purchasing power meant that more money could be spent on leisure, and how resorts benefited from increased national leisure spending between 1918 and 1939. The working week was falling slightly, while the number of workers who were getting holiday pay was slowly rising, although still less than half the employed population in early 1939. As early as 1911 the specialised resort towns housed 4.5 per cent of the total population of England and Wales, and by 1951 this had risen to 5.7 per cent.<sup>ii</sup> Millions of visitors came each year. Thousands of workers migrated there for the season. So there were far wider social and economic implications in their development, and the seaside holiday is a cultural form well worthy of our interest. There is an extensive literature on the rise of the seaside resort as a very distinctive kind of town, and the varying nature of select and popular resorts.<sup>iii</sup> Yet although the nineteenth-century fortunes of the Teesside resorts of Redcar, Saltburn, Marske and Seaton Carew have been explored in some detail, their inter-war history has been comparatively neglected.<sup>iv</sup>

The same comment formerly applied to resorts across Britain, but over the last decade a number of articles and monographs have appeared.<sup>v</sup> The leading expert, John K. Walton, has produced well-received works of synthesis, together with detailed longitudinal studies of Blackpool, which include the inter-war period.<sup>vi</sup> But the over-focus on Blackpool (as the prime example of a popular resort) by leading researchers, coupled with concentration on the South-East and more select resorts such as Frinton or Torquay, has distorted the limited historiography, and may have led to an over-optimistic view of the success of tourism between the wars.<sup>vii</sup> The two regions where unemployment was then at its highest, North-East England and South Wales, have received less attention than they deserve.

On Teesside and in County Durham mass unemployment was the most significant economic and social problem of the inter-war years. The region suffered particularly with the decline in the heavy industries of coal-mining, ship-building and iron and steel manufacture. The prevalence of trade depression meant that Durham (and Tyneside) was one of the officially designated Depressed Areas of the 1930s. On Teesside Middlesbrough had 50 per cent of male unemployment in 1926 and this rose again from 1930, and the closure of shipyards and engineering firms in Stockton resulted in 67 per cent male unemployment by 1932.<sup>viii</sup> By contrast between 1929 and 1936 only 11 per cent of the labour force was unemployed in the South East.<sup>ix</sup>

A national rise in real income per head over the period, together with a fall in family size, and a fall in the price of foodstuffs, meant that even in the North-East there were pockets of relative prosperity, and an increase in living standards for those in work, although one with significant differentials in wage rates between, for example, labourers and shipwrights.<sup>x</sup> Even so, all north-eastern towns had relatively high unemployment levels, and the mining villages of County Durham, Seaton Carew's major hinterland, had particularly high rates. By 1931 the North-East as a whole had a male unemployment rate of 24.3 per cent but the employment rate in County Durham was over forty per cent, and in unemployment black-spots like Witton Park it was over ninety per cent. Some of this unemployment was very long term. In Crook, in November 1936, seventy-one per cent of the unemployed had been out for five years or more.

*Percentages out of work amongst occupied males in selected North-Eastern towns in 1931*

Town	per cent unemployed
Darlington County Borough.	18.7
Stockton Municipal Borough.	30.4
Middlesbrough C.B.	27.7
West Hartlepool C.B.	34.7
Sunderland C.B.	36.6
South Shields C.B.	35.9

Source: 1931 Census

It might have been expected that with such high unemployment the Tees resorts would have suffered heavily in the inter-war years. Certainly it has been argued that 'unemployment benefit and assistance, especially as regulated under the notorious means test, simply did not stretch far enough to expend on leisure', and that the unemployed's main cheap luxuries were cinema-going and betting, with few opportunities for visits to the seaside outside the very occasional workers' camp.<sup>xi</sup> That local unemployment influenced leisure spending should be clear from the economic tribulations of professional football clubs in South Wales and the North-West, the struggles of North-Eastern 'amateur' sides, or the failure of so many northern speedway tracks.<sup>xii</sup> So how did the Teesside resorts respond to their own and regional unemployment? What was the role of their local governments? What strategies did the resorts employ? How were they advertised and promoted? What resort aesthetics and entertainment did they offer? To what extent was the balance between visitors and trippers a reflection of hinterland unemployment? And, perhaps the most puzzling question of all, how do we explain Redcar's impressive national ranking in terms of its visitor numbers, given the regional problems, especially since its hinterland was smaller than those of the Lancashire resorts.

This study of the Teesside holiday resorts is therefore important in exploring the fortunes of resorts serving a hinterland whose horizons were bounded by economic depression and mass unemployment through the 1920s and 1930s. Although Teesside had three major resort areas, Redcar (with Coatham) was its main popular resort. Redcar's popularity had been boosted by its Whitsuntide race meeting, which was a magnet to working-class racegoers throughout the region. In 1911, the last census before the Great War, Redcar ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in terms of English seaside resort populations, with a population of 7,790, and was rising after a slow start in the nineteenth century. Its resort hinterland was largely composed of the towns on the banks of the Tees, plus the counties of Yorkshire and Durham. By 1951 it had a population of 27,516 and had moved up rapidly to a population ranking of twenty-sixth amongst English and Welsh resorts, although still headed in the North-East by the Tyneside commuter resort of Whitley Bay which was twenty-first. Only an handful of resorts elsewhere, including the popular resorts of Clacton and Morecambe, could rival its incremental, percentage and changing population ranking growth between 1911 and 1951.<sup>xiii</sup> Such rapid growth might seem to lend support to its claimed visitor numbers, but is surprising and problematic, given the region's economic difficulties, and seemed worthy of further study. How did Redcar show such growth in a period of major unemployment? Almost all other resorts on the Yorkshire coast, including Scarborough, Whitby, and local rival Saltburn, three miles further south, had dropped back in relative population ranking over the same four decades.

Indeed, although figures are distorted because of boundary changes, Saltburn, an example of the quieter, more select resort, actually declined in real terms between 1921 and 1931. It had a population of 4,719 in 1921 in a small urban district. The census was taken in June and this may have inflated figures somewhat through the presence of visitors.<sup>xiv</sup> Its expanded urban district in 1931 had a population of 7,138 and included the small seaside village of Marske-by-the-Sea which attracted small numbers of summer visitors, but there was only a population of 3,968 in Saltburn civil parish. Seaton Carew, run by and a suburb of the industrial borough of West Hartlepool on the Durham coast, where many of the inhabitants worked, also had a resort function, with a population of 4,338 in 1921. Max Lock's survey of the Hartlepoons in 1948 saw it as a 'pleasant alternative to Redcar' for locals and 'inhabitants of Teesside', which provided 'much-needed day resort facilities'.<sup>xv</sup> Coverage of all three resorts therefore provides a good insight both into the different visitor and tripper markets they served, and their contrasting responses to wider social and economic changes between the wars.

The following pages explore the key issues raised above. The first section examines the extent of unemployment in the resorts themselves and the ways in which the local authorities that controlled them developed strategies which served the needs both of their own inhabitants and those of the tourists whom they could attract. The second section assesses the success of such resort strategies in maintaining visitor and tripper demand in a region of high unemployment. The third section explores the extent to which both public and private sectors within the resorts attempted to provide lively yet cheap entertainment appropriate to a depressed region whose residents often had limited opportunities for pleasure.

### **Chapter 1: Unemployment and the resorts' response**

In examining the way in which the Tees resorts responded to the challenge of such high levels of regional unemployment a sensible place to start is with the role of local government in the Teesside resort economies. In

most resorts local authorities were playing an increasingly active role in resort development between the wars, providing, facilitating and regulating many of their key features.<sup>xvi</sup> Even before the first world war resorts like Bournemouth, Torquay, Southport or Scarborough were already investing heavily in amenity and entertainment facilities.<sup>xvii</sup> By the inter-war period this was common practice, with large sums of money being spent on parks, baths, promenades and sporting facilities. Brighton Corporation, for example spent £180,000 in constructing the Marine Drive, and £400,000 in building a promenade.<sup>xviii</sup> Larger municipalities elsewhere also spent money on amusement parks: Dreamland at Margate, the Amusement Park at Eastbourne, and Pleasure Town at Blackpool were all important examples.

But on Teesside all the seaside resorts had high internal unemployment, and consequent drops in rate revenue, soon after the war. Major local industries like ironstone mining at Saltburn or iron and steel making at Redcar and Seaton Carew were all suffering badly. In 1915 the Longacres ironstone mine near Saltburn had closed, and in 1918 the seam at nearby Upleatham ran out. By 1921 there were only forty-two mining and quarrymen in Saltburn. So Saltburn began the period in economic distress, and the other two resorts soon followed suit.

All three places were not just seaside resorts, and had a more mixed economy than specialised resort towns like Blackpool or Scarborough. Census figures show that of the 5,169 males occupied in Redcar in 1921, 1,594 were metal workers, furnacemen, puddlers or boilermakers, mostly working in the Dorman Long steel works and housed at Dormanstown, a working-class area of Redcar. There were also 398 transport workers, of whom 149 were railwaymen. At Saltburn there were 204 metal workers, and 180 transport workers. At all the resorts the building trades provided good opportunities in more prosperous times. All three resorts had an important middle-class commuter function, with many living by the sea but actually working at Middlesbrough, Stockton or West Hartlepool, but all of these towns had high unemployment too. Saltburn had the highest proportion of more middle-class workers, with a high proportion of the professional group (eleven per cent), commercial and financial workers (twelve per cent), and clerks (ten per cent) amongst its occupied population in 1921. Redcar's equivalent figures (five, twelve and nine per cent respectively) were somewhat lower, and Seaton's figures lower still.

By 1921 the Ministry of Labour's Unemployment Grants Committee (henceforth UGC) certified Redcar as having serious unemployment. At the Hartlepoons there were appeals and collections because of the 'extreme distress arising from unemployment', and Seaton Carew ironworks closed because of the coal dispute, affecting over 700 men.<sup>xix</sup> Despite some improvements there were still over 750 in receipt of aid from the National Insurance Fund and the Board of Guardians in Redcar in 1928, and this was before the further difficulties around 1930.<sup>xx</sup>

So all three resort councils were faced with two simultaneous challenges: meeting the needs of their own local unemployed, and deciding whether they should attempt to find the money to invest in facilities to meet the expectations of visitors and trippers, in a highly competitive market. The Corporation at Redcar took a progressive approach and spent heavily, with continuing investment in better facilities to meet new visitor expectations, providing new housing, parks, better promenades, shelters and other features, and using

government grants to occupy an unemployed workforce for much of this, creating a new and individualistic form of conservative municipal socialism in the process. The two other Teesside resorts were more reluctant to use rates for this purpose.

### **Developing Redcar as a holiday resort**

Redcar had always been the leading Teesside resort, with by far the most amenities. Like most other resorts Redcar's political institutions were dominated by the Conservative interest during the period, yet despite ideological qualms Redcar Corporation was by far the most active investor in new development in inter-war Redcar. Although the Corporation were always split between those who wanted to keep down rates and maintain the town as a commuter resort, the dominant view in the town was that Redcar was 'first and foremost a seaside holiday resort' and only secondly a residential town. Blackpool was 'the lung of the western towns', but Redcar was 'the lung of the eastern industrial towns', 'Teesside's Mecca'.<sup>xxi</sup> As the tripper season was more compressed than the visitor season the need for a progressive approach to spending was supported by many residents. A letter from 'Board Residence', for example, felt that 'as one who finds the season all too short at Redcar I say that more and not less money should be spent in attracting the visitor'.<sup>xxii</sup> Furthermore Redcar was the leading Teesside holiday resort, 'Middlesbrough by the sea', and felt it needed to spend to keep its position.<sup>xxiii</sup> Some of Redcar's competitors, who would have liked their own resorts to do likewise, viewed its actions a trifle enviously. The editor of the Saltburn Times, for example, saw Redcar as Saltburn's 'pushful and enterprising neighbour' with an 'almost feverish' level of development.<sup>xxiv</sup>

At Redcar, two progressive strategies were introduced to reduce the impact of unemployment whilst investing in the resort to boost its competitiveness. As a distressed area, Redcar was entitled to apply for government grants to pay unemployed men to work on local schemes. Secondly, the Corporation's Officials and the Relieving Officer of the Board of Guardians worked together on an arrangement under which the ordinary out relief due to an able-bodied man was paid to the Corporation, who found employment of at least equal value to the money voted by the Guardians as relief. In 1926 it was claimed that 'Redcar was the first to introduce it in the north'.<sup>xxv</sup> Wages were lower, only 85 per cent of the rate paid to permanent staff. The Corporation claimed to target those who 'found themselves outside the ranks of those granted unemployment pay' and made maximum effort to 'give them honourable employment on schemes of public utility which will at least enable them to retain their place within the national system of insurance'.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Limited numbers of council houses were built at Redcar between 1921 and 1923. Following the 1923 Housing Act Redcar encouraged private builders by offering them a free building site with roads, sewers and drainage, rather than offering subsidies as did Saltburn. In November 1924 the leading resort expansionist, the Mayor B.O. Davies, claimed that the town's enterprise had been praised by the Ministry of Health, arguing that 'We are having the needs of a developing borough gradually met and at a lower cost to the state than any other authority.' Development cost a sum considerably below the average state subsidy, and he asserted that 'assistance from public funds is limited to the absolute minimum'.<sup>xxvii</sup> In this way the Council opened up a new estate in Redcar in 1925 on land purchased from Lord Zetland, and by October 1925 Davies could boast that almost 350 dwellings suitable for the working classes had been completed, most of which would be sold

to the tenants who could afford them at very competitive prices. Where tenants could not raise deposits, the Corporation helped by collecting weekly contributions spread over three years on top of rent to help saving so a building society could later be approached. By an ingenious method the tenant was given credit for every penny saved in repairs out of the government subsidy, thus giving the occupiers an added incentive to take care of the property. Further council building in Redcar took place on land bought from the major local landowner, Lord Zetland, between 1928 and 1929, and between 1929 and 1931 some 290 more houses were built at Dormanstown as 'workmen's houses'.<sup>xxviii</sup> With the available subsidies it was possible to let houses without any help from the rates as partly developed land was sold to the Corporation at only £100 per acre by Dormanstown Tenants Ltd and Dorman, Long and Co. Further Corporation housing was begun in 1937. At the same time, away from the sea, more lower-middle class housing was encouraged along the Coast Road.

It was however, creative use of the unemployment grants to develop land in the borough for recreational and tourist use which most characterised Redcar's approach. These grants were initially for 65 per cent of interest and redemption charges for half the period covered by borrowing of money for non-revenue producing schemes, but from August 1924 the government paid 75 per cent of the wages of unemployed workmen instead of 60 per cent when work was paid for out of council revenue, while the grant for loan works was raised to 75 per cent in 1925. Between 1921 and October 1928 the council spent £277,799 on unemployment schemes and received £166,168 from outside sources. By 1929 the total sum expended on unemployed work in Redcar had reached over £300,000 including schemes expedited by the council's trading departments, while grants receivable totaled £180,000, by which time the Middlesbrough press were praising the 'energy and enterprise of the Corporation' in adding to Redcar's attractions as a seaside resort.<sup>xxix</sup>

The Corporation worked hard to provide an appropriate infrastructure for residents and visitors. Prior to the First World War Redcar lacked amenities - no public conveniences until 1903, and very little shelter. The former Redcar Council took over the gas works in 1919, and in 1924 electricity was finally and belatedly supplied by Cleveland and South Durham Electric Power Co., proving almost self-supporting after twelve months. This too aided unemployment since the local unemployed laid electric cable on piece rates.

A detailed study of Redcar's Council Minutes clarifies the chronology of developments. The foreshore rights were purchased from the Kirkleatham and Zetland estates in February 1923 for c.£3,500. Sandbanks to the south-east of the town were leveled to create a beautiful Stray area, and the UGC offered £600 towards the £1,000 cost for labour charges. Large grants were also received towards the cost of retaining walls for sand banks, a promenade westward extension and a shelter extension. In 1923-4 the UGC helped fund the re-modeling of sewage systems and by December 1924 all the town was on main water and drainage. A new Eastern Outfall sewer at Redcar was also funded, as was the laying out of Borough Park, half a mile inland on Redcar Lane. In 1924 further loans funded hard tennis courts and pavilion, and the laying out of Zetland Park on the Promenade. A wooden Pavilion was built on the Stray. Coatham Promenade was extended. The sands were laid out under the same scheme in 1924/5, and shelters and public conveniences were built near Redcar pier. In 1924 the executors of a former councillor, Colonel Locke, offered the Corporation a sum of £5,000 for land for a memorial Park. This was laid out between 1926 and 1929, with facilities such as a boating lake,

boathouse, entrance pavilion, and tennis courts all funded through UGC loans. During 1928-9 the council also completed the Promenade extension westward, widened the Esplanade in the most congested portion of the town, and completed schemes of sea defence. In early summer 1929, for the first time in eight years, there was not a single able-bodied man on the out-relief list of the Board of Guardians.

Unemployment works in late 1929 included tunneling to improve the water supply, building a subway and new road, and the building of a boating and yachting lake on Coatham Enclosure, which was to become the most impressive illustration of resort facility development. In early 1930 there were further loans for the building of two open air bathing pools and indoor swimming baths at the Enclosure. The surrounding area was laid out with lawns, flower beds, fountains and paths..

In 1930 more money was borrowed for the purpose of public walks and pleasure grounds on Coatham sandbanks, and more lavatory and shelter accommodation on the widened Esplanade. The Corporation had also acted to ensure 'the reservation of 25 per cent of the grants to ease the call on the ratepayers when Treasury aid was ended', claiming that 'there had not been a single able-bodied man a charge on the public assistance funds of the borough since May 1929'.<sup>xxx</sup>

The capital investment on resort facilities from 1922 to 1931 was ambitious and impressive, but from then on investment lost momentum. This was largely because with the closing of the UGC in 1932 grants were no longer available, although by January 1933 there were still over 2,000 people without work in Redcar. Redcar became more disadvantaged by the setting up of the Special Areas Commission in 1934, since it lay outside. The National Government operated a harsh financial stringency, and the north-eastern towns formed part of 'outer' Britain since its policies favoured the more prosperous South and Midlands.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Without external financial support there was limited building thereafter. The Corporation was unwilling to spend ratepayers' money on expensive further building whilst they paid for unemployment relief. Although the Sands and Entertainment Committee examined various proposals for a ten year programme in January 1936 it was unable to find a clear direction, and a Development Sub-Committee was given the task of considering 'the further development of Redcar as a seaside resort of the first class' and gathering information.<sup>xxxii</sup> But its recommendations largely focused on the updating and extension of existing facilities such as the municipal Pavilion and the Esplanade.

Improved road access from the Teesside towns, which was also a direct result of unemployment schemes, also helped the resorts. In 1922 the Trunk Road to Redcar from Eston, a road later proudly described by Redcar's mayor as 'a great highway which now links Redcar with the populous centres further west' was built by the North Riding County Council.<sup>xxxiii</sup> It replaced the narrower, less direct and badly maintained route to the coast and had a positive effect on visitor numbers, and was seen at its opening as 'a great highway' which 'could not fail to add to the town's prosperity'.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Redcar's section, from Grangetown to Redcar, used men from the Relief list of the Board of Guardians, giving preference to married men, involving 10,000 men and costing over £30,000 in wages. The Ministry of Transport provided 50 per cent of funding, and the County Council 25



per cent. In 1922 the Ministry of Transport offered a grant towards the costs of building its section of the Coast Road linking Redcar to Marske, which opened up Redcar to the south, and incidentally aided motorists' access to Saltburn. Another new road was built to Dormanstown the same year, with support from the UGC. The Grangetown section of the trunk road to Redcar was widened and improved further in 1930 using similar support.

### **Saltburn: a residential resort's response**

Redcar's expenditure on resort-related facilities contrasted with the much less active responses in the other two resorts. There had been unsuccessful moves to amalgamate Redcar, Marske and Saltburn straight after the first World War, but these failed. As a result, Saltburn's Urban District Council, Conservative in politics but with only 4,000 inhabitants, had very limited income from the rates. A penny rate provided only £95. Largely as a result it was the least active of the three councils in terms of its response to local unemployment after the war, although it slowly widened its boundaries, taking over Marske-by-the-Sea in 1928, and becoming Saltburn and Marske Urban District Council in 1932. In the 1920s Saltburn UDC took the view that the town should be developed as a residential and visitor resort, and had 'no ambitions as a popular resort', although it wanted its superior natural attractions in the form of the cliffs and the beautiful valley that ran alongside the town to be exploited, and the predominantly privately-owned amenities to be managed 'progressively'.<sup>xxxv</sup> Progressive management was a key concept in most resorts, but the Council had little money, and the valley gardens, the pier and other facilities in Saltburn were controlled by the major landowner, the Owners of the Middlesbrough estate, headed by Sir Alfred Pease, with other land mainly owned by Lord Zetland. The main estates of both owners lay elsewhere, and they showed little interest in Saltburn's fortunes.

Saltburn UDC Council Minutes from 1920-1932 show that the Council was divided about how to move forward, and initially its employment schemes covered only sea-bank work and street repair, but in 1924 it committed itself to cleaning up its picturesque but increasingly sewage-polluted bay by introducing a £19,000 scheme to improve the outfall using money from the UGC. At this point the Middlesbrough Estate offered to sell the pier, valley gardens and cliff tramway to the council for £15,000. These had been losing money, but had not been managed 'progressively'. In the gardens, for example, there were few shelters for visitors in inclement weather, and the grandstand area was quite exposed. The Council faced a difficult choice. Economic times were hard, the future in terms of visitor numbers was uncertain, yet without a progressive approach to resort revival Saltburn was likely to decline as a resort. There were mixed views in both Saltburn and the region. The editor of the Saltburn Times, who was in favour of purchase, seeing it as 'one of the first steps to ensure in the future an era of greater prosperity', quoted the Yorkshire Post as a strong supporter, while complaining that the Redcar press were 'belittling and satirising everything which the progressives in Saltburn wish to accomplish', and wanted to 'condemn and damn' the proposal. This suggests that there was some fear about Saltburn emerging as a serious rival to Redcar. Yet the Saltburn Times had just included a series of articles on 'Saltburn as a Premier Health Resort' which praised its lack of 'artificial accessories' and 'meretricious accretions', seeing its air, good water and scenic charms' as being all that were needed to attract visitors. Inside Saltburn itself, although the mayor was a leading progressive, the council was 'strongly divided as to the advisability or otherwise of the purchase' although most were in favour. Accordingly the issue was put to the ratepayers in a

referendum.<sup>xxxvi</sup> At a public meeting to discuss the issue the feeling of the meeting seemed broadly opposed to spending, despite high levels of local unemployment.<sup>xxxvii</sup> This was confirmed in the referendum itself, when out of 1,800 ratepayers entitled to vote, only 141 voted in favour, and 669 voted against the purchase.

Initially the Council saw this as a vote against 'excessive' spending, but in late 1928 it applied to the UGC for £4,150 to extend the Hazelgrove end of the Promenade and build some permanent chalets. Following their completion there was an attempt by inland Guisbrough to amalgamate with Saltburn which was opposed both by the Council, and by local ratepayers, who voted instead for amalgamation with Redcar and Marske, which was seen as 'a more effective area from the point of view of mutuality of interest'.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The Council set up a further £3,000 scheme for the unemployed in 1930, improving the layout of the north side of the cliff-top promenade, and building more chalets and shelters. Hazelgrove Gardens were laid out with a tennis court and small putting green. In 1931 the £3,000 Hazelgrove culvert scheme was carried out.

Local rivalries meant that Redcar was opposed to amalgamation, but in 1932 Saltburn expanded its boundaries to take in Marske. There was renewed recognition of the need to give more impetus to resort development, and increased rates income due to boundary expansion. Effort at Marske included the introduction of a Beach Bailiff, improved organisation of beach facilities, and the building of ornamental gardens with a strategically sited small bandstand. By 1935 there was a new Special Developments and Gardens Committee actively looking at a variety of schemes, such as extensions of the Spa Hotel, to develop the resort. In 1936 the Council purchased the Italian Valley Gardens. Two years later the pier was bought for £12,000 after a special Act of Parliament but there was little opportunity to make progress before war intervened.

### **Seaton Carew: suburb of West Hartlepool**

Seaton Carew was part of the Labour-controlled borough of West Hartlepool. Between the wars the borough had more pressing concerns, and showed limited interest in developing its resort suburb, which usually elected Conservative or independent councillors. It saw the village largely as its 'healthy lung', a day-trip resort which provided 'pleasures and open-air facilities for its workers', with its main attraction being its 'vast level and safe stretch' of 'glorious sands'.<sup>xxxix</sup> In 1919, rather than manage development itself, the Council leased Seaton sands to a private company, the Seaton Carew Sands Development Company, which received revenue from all stands on the site, but concerns about the few attractions of Seaton soon led the council to form a special Seaton Development Committee to consider what further could be done. It perceived a major need as the improvement of the transport system. The Corporation controlled the bus system which linked West Hartlepool, Seaton, Middlesbrough and Stockton, and one of the first relief schemes for the unemployed was the building of Brenda Road to improve access. Money from the UGC was devoted to the widening of existing roads in Seaton and to marine engineering in the form of the building of a new sea wall and promenade. This began with the purchase of the related foreshore from the owner, Sir George Leveson Gower, and a long-drawn-out dispute over his wish to impose restrictions as to future use, which was finally won by the Council. The new Promenade and North Shelter, which had cost £40,000 were opened by Princess Mary on August 10, 1926.

At West Hartlepool, however, most ratepayers could see little benefit in allowing the Council to waste their money on Seaton Carew. A recurring theme in local government is how easily communities can be marginalised by local authorities if they are not the central urban area in the council's jurisdiction. When the sea-wall work began a public meeting of West Hartlepool ratepayers made their views clear, telling the council that the meeting 'views with concern the contemplated serious expenditure at Seaton Carew, particularly at a time when taxation weighs so heavily on industry, and respectfully requests that the work be suspended'.<sup>xI</sup> Although work continued, as unemployment increased the Council increasingly showed reluctance to spend further money on the resort. Prior to the first world war, the Hartlepoons Electric Tramway had organised some entertainments at Seaton to boost passenger numbers. After the war this role was taken over first by the Council Tramways Committee and then by Parks, whose Bands Sub-committee selected bands to play on Seaton bandstand during the holiday season. However there was always an insistence that bands should give their concerts free of costs to the Council, although a collection could be taken, which limited the quality of band prepared to risk travel when east coast weather could be inclement. In 1929 limited and fairly unambitious schemes to widen and extend the existing promenade, with further grass plots, an approach road and a circular bandstand, were presented to the Park Committee. A low-status Seaton Sands Sub-Committee made decisions about letting sites on the sands, which bands should play on the band-stand, sites for concert parties or the purchase of further tents or deckchairs. This under-spending was the more significant for Seaton Carew since West Hartlepool, although a low-spending county borough overall, was nationally the tenth-highest spender on its parks and open spaces between the wars.<sup>xII</sup>

### **Marketing the resorts**

Although local government in all three resorts contributed to some aspects of resort development, the resorts still had to be advertised if they were to attract not just day trippers but the potentially more lucrative long-stay visitors. Most British resorts relied on two forms of marketing. Advertising was often done in conjunction with the railway companies but since most companies served many resorts, their interests could sometimes be conflicting. So it was also the responsibility of groups of tradesmen or the local corporation. At Blackpool, where the Corporation was dominated by the accommodation and entertainment businesses, the resort was unique in being allowed to spend money from the rates as early as 1879. It set up an Advertising Committee, and employed a advertising manager, while working hard to extend its season and expand its catchment area, using newspaper advertisements, guidebooks and booklets, posters, fetes, carnivals, and, from 1912, illuminations.<sup>xIII</sup>

The Teesside resorts were relatively slow to spend money on such approaches. As might have been expected, Redcar was by far the most active and 'progressive' in this respect. During the mid-1920s Redcar increasingly professionalised, rationalised and refocused its resort services administration, although initially there was a lack of clarity about what form this should take. Initially regulation of the beach and organisation of holiday period arrangements was carried out by the General Purposes Committee. In 1923 a Summer Season Arrangements Committee was formed initially just to cater for band appointments, and a Musical Arrangements Sub-committee ran in 1925. Following the introduction of an August Carnival as an added resort attraction in 1923 this was run by a Carnival Committee until a new and more powerful Musical Entertainments and

Advertising Committee was formed in late 1925. This lacked control over the sands, which was still the responsibility of the General Purposes Committee. From November 1926 more direction was imposed with a new Sands and Entertainments Committee and a separate Parks Committee, which together helped give Redcar a significant edge over its local rivals. With the development of the Coatham Enclosure complex, a special Coatham Enclosure Committee was created in 1929.

One continued weakness however, was a lack of full-time officials dealing with resort issues. In 1924 an Amusements Manager was appointed, supported by the seasonal supervisory appointments of the Sands Bailiff and first one and later two Promenade inspectors. The town still lacked professional staff to promote the resort, although within the council offices there was an 'advertising department' which largely handled enquiries. Such slowness compared badly with resorts elsewhere. Torquay, for example, had a committee explicitly concerned with publicity from 1924.<sup>xliii</sup> Initially there was a lack of expertise in advertising, although The Health and Watering Places Act of 1921 provided opportunities for publicity activities, but by 1928 a sum equivalent to a penny rate was spent, and more imagination was shown in seizing advertising opportunities. Following the appointment of an Entertainments and Publicity Manager in late 1934 even more effort was put into advertising, and offering facilities for visitors.

Redcar Corporation also relied largely on the advertising provided first by the North-Eastern Railway Company, and then (from 1923) the London and North-Eastern Railway (LNER), a grouping which created better marketing opportunities in the West Riding. But the LNER also served other resorts, including regional competitors such as Saltburn. The money spent on advertising by the Corporation was initially relatively limited but from December 1922 it used £200 from its beach profits for a joint scheme of advertising matched with £200 advertising from the railway, and this went up to £300 in 1924/5, before dropping to £250 in 1925/6.

Discussions with the LNER focused upon attracting visitors from further away, from regions where there was less unemployment. The LNER also annually included details of Redcar in its LNER (Apartments and ) Holiday Guide. In 1926 the LNER advertising was with special attention to the Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Newcastle, Bishop Auckland and York districts, and increasingly, the Corporation encouraged the LNER to focus its advertising on the West Riding, and in February 1929 even circularised the various clubs and organisations in the West Riding and East Lancashire with a view to bringing the claims of Redcar as a holiday resort before them. To an extent this worked. According to the Mayor's review in October 1929 there had been an extension of its popularity among the holiday makers particularly of the West Riding of Yorkshire. To widen its catchment further, in December 1930 the Committee suggested to the LNER that it should give more consideration to the Scottish sections of the Company's system. It also became involved in the Yorkshire Joint Advertising Scheme to 'bring the merits of Yorkshire seaside resorts before the public', contributing £50 out of the advertising account.<sup>xliv</sup> Dealings with the LNER could be problematical, since there were sometimes different perceptions of Redcar's public image. In November 1935, for example, the LNER poster suggestion of 'Redcar for the Children's Holidays', contrasted with the Corporation's wish for 'Redcar for your summer holidays', possibly implying two different target markets.<sup>xlv</sup> Yet Redcar especially catered for children, and this certainly helped attract family groups of trippers.

The Corporation also used money from the advertising account for further regional advertising. In 1925 a 400-foot film of Redcar was made and exhibited, and a cinema slide advertising Redcar's attractions was used in 1926. It advertised in the publications of the Cleveland Agricultural Society show held at Redcar Racecourse in 1928 and 1929. It worked with Cleveland Golf Club to advertise the golf links. In 1930 it went further, producing a small booklet advertising Redcar's attractions, spending £50 on an agreed advertising scheme for the Redcar Festival Week, and issuing a special newspaper advertisement for the Whit holidays. In December 1930 the Corporation authorised purchase of a quarter of a million advertising stamps at a cost of £50 to be affixed to letters and parcels sent from the borough.

Such initiatives received general praise, with the Corporation seen as having made every effort to place the town's amenities before the holiday-making public. From April 1936 the XL Carrying Company's van, which traveled between Redcar and London each week, carried a poster advertising Redcar. The same year the Corporation issued 2,000 What's On in Redcar pamphlets each week giving particulars of events at hotels, cinemas, municipal pavilion etc. Its 1937 fifty-page brochure, Redcar for Health, focused on its key facilities, 'its miles of golden sands, bathing pools, golf course, putting greens, tennis courts, cinemas, theatres, boating lakes, parks, bands, pleasure park, paddling pool, galas, fishing, pier and ballrooms'.<sup>xlvi</sup>

Some of the Corporation attitudes, however, were perhaps less helpful in creating a lively resort image for Redcar. While the Corporation was relatively unified in trying to promote Redcar as a resort during an economically different time, the predominantly conservative, traditional attitudes of Corporation and residents, and an implicit divergence of public opinion over the direction the resort should take, came out clearly in a number of major disputes over Sunday availability of facilities. This placed obstacles in the way of some Sunday leisure, and may have inhibited some trippers and visitors, as happened also at Whitby and at more conservative Saltburn, where even beach stalls were not allowed to trade on Sundays. Within Redcar Corporation, while Sunday band concerts and orchestral concerts were allowed, there were internal disagreements whether Sunday afternoon play on the miniature golf links, tennis courts, and bowling greens or boating on Locke Park should be allowed and a 1929 plebiscite to ascertain the feelings of voters showed that a majority were opposed to this. When the Corporation in April 1930 agreed that boating should be allowed on Coatham Enclosure after 1 p.m. on Sundays this led to a petition from over a hundred clergy, ministers, religious head teachers and other Christian workers and a resolution of protest from Redcar Parochial Church Council, to get the Sunday boating decision rescinded. At a full meeting of the Corporation, defenders of opening argued that other popular resorts allowed Sunday amusements, and it was continued on a split vote, ten votes to six. An attempt was made to arrange for a vote of the electorate on the specific question of boating on Sunday afternoons, which was defeated by the same margin.<sup>xlvii</sup> As a result of the vote the chairman of the Coatham Enclosure Committee resigned. The other parks remained closed through the 1930s. Although Sorrow's Pierrot troupe were allowed to give Sunday 'high class' evening al-fresco concerts in August 1934 the programmes of the 'sacred concerts' had to be pre-submitted to the chair, and the concerts stopped from 1935.

The other two resorts were less successful in marketing terms. Saltburn UDC had a less strong resort services structure. It had a special Sands Committee by 1922, and a separate Baths Committee dealt with its old-fashioned brine baths. In 1927 these were amalgamated to become the Baths, Boats and Beach Committee, but by 1930 the Beach and Boats Committee was a separate entity. Even after amalgamation there was little further change. Less money than Redcar was spent marketing the resort, but it paid the NER and LNER for some joint advertising, spent sums of under £10 to advertise in the railway guide, had a small Town Guide booklet, and the local Chamber of Trade carried out advertising. Saltburn was slow to rekindle its resort function after 1918, and by 1924 the editor of the Saltburn Times was having to challenge ‘rumours spread abroad throughout the length and breadth of the land that Saltburn does not cater for visitors and excursionists’, and having to accept that it had ‘certainly not received that share of patronage which one might have expected’.<sup>xlviii</sup> Its first Carnival was held in 1924, the year after Redcar, and further money paid to the LNER for joint newspaper advertising rose from £67 in June 1926 to £150 by 1932. Following amalgamation the Council also produced a free larger booklet for postal enquirers covering Saltburn and Marske-by-the-sea, which referred to its scenery, delightful gardens, sea-water swimming baths, safe sea bathing, chalets and tents for hire, together with sports facilities in the form of fishing, golf, tennis, and cricket. Print runs varied, but were usually about half that of Redcar.

Seaton Carew received very limited advertising support from West Hartlepool, and its potential as a way of increasing rateable wealth was clearly held in low esteem. The Seaton Sands Development Committee was wound up after the building of the new sea wall and promenade. The Carnival introduced in 1924 was mainly for locals. Seaton merely received two or three pages of coverage in the annual Official Handbook to West Hartlepool with Seaton Carew sent out to potential visitors.

Overall it is clear that of the Tees resorts Redcar was by far the most active in its response both to local unemployment, and to the challenge of the regional trade depression which could have severely damaged visitor and tripper demand. It improved the level of its facilities, and actively marketed the resort in a variety of ways. Saltburn and Marske was less active, and Seaton the least active of all. The ways in which this impacted on visitor demand are the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter 2: The Tourists: Visitors and Trippers**

Each of the resorts had a different local authority response to local and regional unemployment, and attracted different numbers and mixtures of long-stay visitors and day trippers. The consequent different mixtures of social classes showed different patterns of behaviour and enjoyment. Saltburn attracted the highest proportion of visitors, Seaton the highest proportion of trippers. Redcar had a mixture of both, and by far the highest numbers overall, catering for a largely working and lower-middle-class clientele who could not dream of traveling further afield because of financial constraints. The next section begins by discussing the evidence for long-stay visitors at the three resorts, followed by discussion of the pattern of tripper numbers.

### **The Visitors.**

In terms of long-stay visitors there was a clear division between the comfortably-off middle classes who by careful saving could often afford to travel some considerable distance to their chosen resort, and those who had little choice but to stay a short time at a nearby resort. Wealthy resorts elsewhere were targeting the North-East by the inter-war years, while those who could afford a holiday away from home were becoming more adventurous. So individual resorts were constrained by the patterns of regional demand and potential choice. In 1921 potential long-stay holiday-makers from Middlesbrough during Whit Week could choose from cheap weekly excursion tickets to north Wales, Douglas and the Isle of Man, Southport, London or the Channel Isles. However, the number who could afford to travel such distances was becoming increasingly few by the mid-1920s, and in 1930 only 125 people could afford the day trip to Blackpool at Whit from Middlesbrough offered by the railway company. By 1938, as unemployment lessened, the pull of Blackpool became stronger and facilities for travel by express and luxury coaches to Blackpool were a weekly feature from the Hartlepoons and Country Durham.<sup>xlix</sup>

Even for short trips the north-eastern consumer had an ever-wider choice. For August Bank Holiday 1932, for example, there were cheap trips from Darlington to Whitby, Tynemouth or Whitley Bay on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, to Redcar and Saltburn on Sunday and Tuesday, or to Scarborough on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday, while on Monday a trip to Redcar and Saltburn was on offer to those living in Northallerton, Thirsk and the Wear Valley. In York the LNER was offering weekly tickets at 10 shillings which allowed people a cheap holiday, traveling to a different seaside resort each day.

So given the economic problems of the hinterland, and increasing competition for visitors, what does the evidence suggest about visitor numbers in the Teesside resorts? Was any drop in those who could now not afford a long stay compensated for by a matching increase in those previously better-off now saving money by staying more locally? Did the Teesside resorts continue to offer accommodation for wealthier long-stay visitors or was accommodation increasingly at the cheaper end of the market?

Lacking official figures, we do not know the actual numbers of visitors to the Teesside resorts, but some sense of their significance can be found through a surrogate measure, the availability of overnight accommodation. It is clear that none of the Teesside resorts aspired to select status in terms of hotel accommodation. Redcar tried to attract larger numbers of a largely regional clientele who could not afford to travel too far, and although it had the largest number of hotel beds, the Coatham Hydro Hotel was the only hotel recognised by the AA and RAC, and of the others, although both the larger Swan and Queen Hotel had ballrooms, others, such as the Royal, Cleveland, Red Lion, Clarendon, Station and Lobster hotels were public houses with limited accommodation. By contrast Saltburn tried to recruit smaller numbers of wealthier holiday makers from a wider area of England. It had the large, palatial but expensive Zetland Hotel, owned by the LNER, but net receipts at such hotels were generally in decline by the 1930s, as demand from the rich had become stagnant, and the hotel was distant from major centres of population.<sup>1</sup> The Alexandra and the Queen Hotel were also of reasonable quality while the Spa Hotel needed some refurbishment. At Marske there were no major hotels, although in 1932-3 the Ship Inn was rebuilt in Tudor style with improved accommodation, the Clarendon offered rooms, and the Holiday Fellowship

of the Methodist Church took over the former summer residence of the Pease family, the imposing, stone-faced Cliff House, about the same time. At Seaton Carew the two leading nineteenth-century hotels, the Seaton and Marine, both now required major upgrading, and the recently converted Staincliffe Hotel, which had a tennis court, restaurant and three nights' dancing each week, offered the best standard of accommodation.

Overall therefore it was largely lodging-house accommodation that was available to visitors. In comparing availability between resorts, all resort historians have long recognised that figures and definitions for lodging, apartment and boarding houses are problematic and unreliable and the Teesside resorts are no exception.<sup>li</sup> Certainly more defined themselves as lodging-house keepers in the June census of 1921 than the 1931 census taken earlier in the year.<sup>lii</sup> So it is difficult to be clear about change over time, but we can compare resorts. The 1921 census aggregative Yorkshire figures revealed that Redcar had 167 lodging house keepers, and Saltburn had only seventy-nine, the same as Withernsea in the East Riding, and slightly fewer than Whitby's eighty-seven. Scarborough had 1,340 lodging house keepers, and Bridlington 923, and Redcar's figures are much more in line with those of Filey, with its 141 lodging-house keepers, making its claimed visitor numbers even more problematical. The Tees resorts' numbers compare badly to those resorts catering for the West and East Ridings, suggesting the latter had greater demand for long-stay visits, and that unemployment in the areas served by the Tees resorts was even then beginning to force some of these domestic entrepreneurs out of the trade.

Directory figures also give lodging-house numbers, but are equally unreliable although they confirm the rank ordering of the three resorts. The various Ward's Directory figures over the period show that Seaton Carew boarding-house numbers were declining, dropping from an average of six addresses in the 1920s to five addresses in the 1930s. None of those listed in 1921/2 were still there in 1927, and only one from 1928 to 1936, which suggests problems with cash flow, and that Seaton was increasingly a tripper resort. Redcar figures were higher, but also dropped over the period. In 1932/3, when unemployment was having a major impact in the region, the relevant Ward's Directory showed Redcar had a mere eleven addresses, perhaps implying that Redcar landladies or landlords felt it was not worth while advertising in directories catering for a local market. The equivalent Saltburn entry had thirty-nine addresses, which clearly placed it out in front in terms of the provision of visitor accommodation. Demand for holidays was clearly limited during this period, although Saltburn's visitors' lists demonstrate that Saltburn was attracting business across the season. Locally it was believed that at Saltburn 'the general run of apartments are well above the average provided at other seaside resorts' but at the same time there was a 'silly and absurd discouraging of the visitor of moderate means'.<sup>liii</sup> Charges were supposedly high, with one writer to the Saltburn Times quoting charges of between nine guineas and eleven and a half guineas a week, with extra charges of five shillings for gas, 3/6d for coals or cruet.<sup>liv</sup> A letter in response dismissed such cases as occasional 'black sheep', denying that Saltburn really had a name for high accommodation charges, though accepting that shop prices were higher than nationally.<sup>lv</sup> Such examples, even if isolated, suggest that Saltburn was attempting to maintain its nineteenth-century role as a more up-market select resort, helped by its scenic beauties and distance from the large Teesside towns.



Peak numbers of predominantly short-stay visitors over the bank holiday weekends swelled demand and other families might then let rooms. Redcar Corporation began a register assembled by the Town Clerk in 1924, and this was circulated to intended visitors. An accommodation list in the Cleveland Standard in June 1934 listed twenty-one furnished houses and 103 apartments offering accommodation in Redcar, while in 1937 a total of 211 advertised accommodation in the Redcar Town Guide, many offering alternatives - either board residence (four meals a day) or bed and breakfast. This was probably the maximum reasonable accommodation available, but is dwarfed by Blackpool, where the even the minimalistic 1931 Census recorded nearly 4,000 lodging houses and 240 hotel keepers, or by Margate, where almost half the rateable properties were involved in accommodating visitors.<sup>lvi</sup> Redcar's relatively limited overnight accommodation almost certainly reflects limited long-stay demand. In the mid-1930s available accommodation lists at Redcar have lower totals than the Edwardian lists when a peak occupancy at Whit of 6,000 residential visitors was claimed.<sup>lvii</sup> In the highly unlikely event of this being achieved weekly from May to September there would still have been fewer than 200,000 'visitors' a year, well below the claimed two million.

At Saltburn Samuel Rapp, a local grocer, operated an apartments agency which listed rooms to extend peak season accommodation, while at Marske, a cluster of prefabricated, wooden chalets grew up in the fields above the cliffs to the east of the village, which were used by weekend visitors, and some locals occasionally let rooms.

Availability of accommodation was in excess of its probable use. Unfortunately only the Saltburn Times, unlike the Redcar and West Hartlepool papers, continued to provide weekly visitors' lists, which indicate who stayed, where they stayed, how long and where they were from.<sup>lviii</sup> A survey of the lists published in July and August 1924 showed that most visitors stayed only a single week, and that fifty-two per cent had nearby addresses in Yorkshire and County Durham, while twenty-one per cent came from the Midlands and the South, and the rest from elsewhere. While this showed Saltburn had a wide hinterland, its visitor region had declined in size since the Victorian period when Saltburn had over two-thirds of visitors from outside the region.<sup>lix</sup> From 1929 the economic situation on Teesside got worse, and by 1930 it was clear that local trade was almost stagnant. A July Cleveland Standard editorial said that 'retailers and boarding house proprietors are approaching Autumn and Winter with great anxiety: for the majority of these traders have experienced unparalleled poor business this season, for very few visitors have arrived for holidays beyond the day trippers, who are no help... those who have saved up are afraid to have a holiday this year with their family.'<sup>lx</sup>

By the following year a press report suggested that Scarborough was 'absolutely deserted' by visitors while Saltburn had 'much heart-aching and poverty' as a result of too little demand for accommodation.<sup>lxi</sup> Regional economic difficulties had ensured that the demand for the week-long holiday had declined. As the Northern Daily Mail observed in 1933, 'fewer people are going to the expense of traveling any distance by train, but are finding amusement nearer home.'<sup>lxii</sup> Although visitor demand picked up somewhat at Saltburn in the later 1930s, by then it had become largely a commuter resort for the Tees towns offering limited select holiday accommodation.

In order to attract some limited further spending Redcar resorted to the long-established pattern of encouraging Territorial Army training, a pattern which had been well used by British resorts in the nineteenth century but because of associated misbehaviour had then been phased out. The Territorials were attractive not only to those with an interest in military life, physical fitness and male sociability but also to the unemployed or those on low pay because of the opportunities for free travel and recreation they provided. Redcar's mayor admitted in 1928 that though 'some seaside resorts do not encourage these camps', the town would 'look forward with pleasure to having some camps again next summer'.<sup>lxiii</sup> A letter from the General Staff of Northern Command stated that 'the desire by the townspeople of Redcar to have the Territorial troops in their locality, and the sympathetic attitude of the Council was much appreciated... and the advantages of Redcar ....were recognised.'<sup>lxiv</sup> The First Durham Light Infantry Brigade regularly trained on the coast south of Redcar in the 1930s. Church, chapel and Boy Scout camps were also encouraged. By the 1930s Church Lads' Brigade groups from throughout the north regularly camped at Redcar, while Boy Scout groups came from as far north as Glasgow.<sup>lxv</sup> The Church Lads also sometimes provided free entertainment. In 1936 a display and torchlight tattoo was held in August by the West Riding Church Lads' Brigade. Redcar also had a purpose-built School Camp, at which unemployed men could stay in August but only in weeks when no women were booked in.<sup>lxvi</sup> However, proposals for a holiday camp in 1936 fell through, although a summer school camp for 450 boys was now open. By 1937 however, the Coatham Farm Holiday Camp, overlooking the golf course, was offering facilities, and targeting the Scouts, Rovers, Boys' Brigade, cycling clubs and riding parties, and there was a further camping ground on Ings Road.<sup>lxvii</sup> Informal camping on the Stray was discouraged. Judging by surviving photographs of the period, nearby Marske seems to have specialised in Girl Guide bell-tented camps, set up in a field on the cliff top, with special tents on the beach for their changing facilities.

The Teesside resorts were particularly unsuccessful at attracting the potentially lucrative conference trade, since they lacked the facilities of leading conference centres like Blackpool, Southport or Scarborough, although the local press kept hoping it could rival them, and Redcar offered maximum free facilities to delegates with limited success.<sup>lxviii</sup> In 1932, for example, the Railway Clerks Association of Great Britain and Ireland applied to hold their 1933 conference at Redcar and in 1936 the British United Order of Oddfellows Friendly Society conference was held there at Whitsuntide.

What seems clear therefore is that insufficient wage earners in the hinterland were in work to enable any of the Teesside resorts to do well solely out of long- stay visitors and their spending. For working-class people in the North-East the seaside holiday was a practical proposition only for the few. There was no parallel here to the expansion of Blackpool boarding-house numbers through the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>lxix</sup>

#### The trippers

Instead, both Redcar and Seaton Carew attracted large numbers of trippers throughout the inter-war period. At Seaton Carew however cheap rail trips came mainly from local mining villages like Trimdon, Wingate, or Castle Eden at major holiday periods, while most came even shorter distances. In 1921 at Whitsuntide, for example, no fewer than 20,000 were carried from West Hartlepool by tram, while the Seaton to Middlesbrough buses had 'an extraordinarily busy day'.<sup>lxx</sup> Redcar had a relatively larger tripper hinterland, with cheap rail excursions from Teesside, County Durham, the North and West Ridings and occasionally Newcastle. Trippers

therefore often had relatively little time in the resort, and some a very short time. In 1934 the LNER ran cheap evening 'bathing specials' to Redcar (although not to Saltburn) on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and out of 5,000 excursionists to Redcar on a mid-June Sunday, over 3,000 came by evening train. <sup>lxxi</sup>

In terms of money coming into the resort economy, trippers were problematical. Demand could be fickle, changing economic conditions had an immediate impact, and all resorts were very dependent on the weather, even though the north-east coast is generally drier (but mistier) than the north-west. All figures indicate the major fluctuations in revenue that adverse weather in the form of rain or gales could generate. In 1931 owing to the unfavourable weather between Whitsuntide and the end of June the receipts on the Redcar foreshore showed a substantial reduction, with income from deck-chairs having dropped to £90 as against £151 the previous year. <sup>lxxii</sup> In 1934 the bad weather on August bank holiday Monday meant that one ice-cream vendor who had taken £15 in 1933, took only £1 -10s, while overall rail passenger figures for the day dropped from over 15,000 to 5,560. <sup>lxxiii</sup>

Trippers to the Tees resorts were particularly concentrated at weekends, the Whitsuntide and August bank holidays, and Stockton Race Week, which was an annual holiday in Stockton, although with limited impact elsewhere. Right from the beginning of the twentieth century Redcar was the main magnet attracting the majority of Whitsuntide Teesside trippers, and certainly its client base then was composed largely of trippers rather than long-stay visitors. In part this was also due to the annual Whitsuntide race meeting, which brought crowds from a wide area. In the first years after the war the revival of the races ensured high numbers, often with the men at the course, while wives and children played on the beach. The North-East Daily Gazette reported in 1920 that no less than 200 trains of various kinds would be dealt with at the races, and that 'all previous records are likely to be eclipsed.' It estimated that quite half of Middlesbrough's population traveled by train, tram, motor bus or in horse and donkey-drawn vehicles. 18,000 traveled from Middlesbrough on the railway alone. <sup>lxxiv</sup> This was despite the national restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Transport which meant that the railway company could not offer weekend or other cheap ticket for travel by the ordinary trains. The race meeting helped to publicise the town as well as inflating tripper numbers. In 1930 'the races of course accounted for the largest part of the great invasion.' <sup>lxxv</sup> Another advantage of having the race meeting was that its attendances were less affected by the weather, as bus and rail excursions were booked beforehand. While the storms, winds and rain of Whitsuntide 1935 had a negative impact on excursion numbers from Middlesbrough and Stockton over the weekend, the attraction of the races on Whit Monday kept traffic up. Trains and buses had to be duplicated to cope with the large crowds, although 'optimism did not run to leaving mackintoshes and umbrellas behind'. <sup>lxxvi</sup> While Saltburn and Marske also attracted Whit trippers, the press rarely gave details although both usually expected to be 'crowded' at Whit. <sup>lxxvii</sup>

But Whitsuntide demand was highly responsive to economic shifts. Even by 1922 local economic difficulties meant fewer long-stay visitors. Instead it had become 'a holiday of day trippers' and numbers had diminished even there. <sup>lxxviii</sup> Seaton Carew ever-increasingly drew its trippers from West Hartlepool, and nearby mining villages, with buses also from Haverton Hill, over the Tees from Middlesbrough. In 1926 the General Strike, and more particularly the miners' strike, had a major impact on all three resorts. By the late 1920s demand

picked up slightly, and in 1929 bus staffs dealt with abnormal Whit traffic in Redcar. In 1930, though the road traffic was claimed to be 'the heaviest for the past few years', and 'trains were leaving for Redcar every ten minutes' from Middlesbrough to meet demand on Whit Monday, overall Whit numbers seem to have been slightly down once more.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

Demand certainly dropped in the early 1930s, although it is unclear by how much. Even in 1932 it was estimated that 70,000 people visited Redcar on Whit Monday with over 30,000 by rail.<sup>lxxx</sup> Bad weather in the middle of the decade depressed demand but certainly 1936 was seen in Redcar as generating the best Whit crowds since 1929. On Whit Monday 1936 there were an estimated 60,000 visitors in the town and 30,000 on the racecourse. Early in the morning about 28,000 arrived in more than 100 trains from Teesside, Co. Durham, Leeds, Newcastle, Bradford, Barnsley, Doncaster, Sheffield and York, showing the width of the day-tripper and racing hinterland, and rail figures were 3,000 up on the previous year. On Whit Tuesday there were 10,000 by rail and even more by road, and an attendance of 11,000 at the race course.<sup>lxxxi</sup> Demand at Whit thereafter seems to have steadily grown until 1939, when it dropped. Seaton Carew transport services carried 28,701 in 1938, an increase of almost 5,000 on the previous year.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

In most British resorts August Bank Holiday was a second important holiday time, although this was not universally observed on Teesside owing to the later August Stockton Race Week, which was a local equivalent of the Lancashire Wakes week, a period when many manufactories and industries closed. For August Bank Holiday shops and banks closed but the works stayed open. Although numbers were always well below those traveling at Whit, in 1920 the rail traffic reached a new record for an August Bank Holiday Sunday. By noon on August Bank Holiday Monday only about 3,000 passengers had traveled to Redcar from Middlesbrough, although a number of charabanc trips were also run, full of rowdy trippers, but afternoon traffic was high, with trains from Darlington, the Hartlepoons and Sunderland. Though there was 'fair sprinkling of men, it seemed pre-eminently a women's and children's holiday'.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Nationally 1926 was a record year, despite the miners' strike, thanks to fine weather, with Blackpool receiving 250,000 visitors and trippers, and 26,000 traveling to Douglas in the Isle of Man on the steamers. Bridlington got 26,000 trippers on the Monday. But Redcar numbers in 1926 were well still below such figures. By 1936 however, there were an estimated 30,000 trippers in Redcar on Bank Holiday Monday, of which 12,000 came by rail.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Stockton Race Week was a time when Redcar and Seaton Carew were particularly crowded, almost matching Whitsuntide numbers.

Overall it is clear that throughout the season the bulk of those coming to Redcar and Seaton Carew were trippers, a trend already becoming clear during the First World War when in 1916, despite significant restrictions and an absence of beach facilities, 'no less than 200,000 passengers arrived by train' alone during August.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Most day trippers, however, came from areas where unemployment was still a major factor. What seems to be clear is that unemployment or short-time work did not necessarily mean that people did without visits to the seaside. But people rarely abandoned such pleasures altogether, though financial constraints did have a more major impact on spending patterns once they were there. The enjoyment of at least one visit to the seaside in the year, with its excitement and release, seems to have been a spending priority, as was the cinema, gambling for small amounts, and drinking. Unemployment made the seaside trip all the more important in

helping to forget the horrors of the depression. Most north-eastern pubs had an 'outing fund', spent on an annual trip to the seaside, with charabancs loaded with liquor the night before for an early start.

Although money was tight, in 1922 it still seemed as though 'even depleted purses could stand one more little dip' at Whitsuntide, even though 'monetary stringency' caused many people to walk to the seaside from the Teesside towns.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> In 1930 local papers claimed 'new records' during a sunny Whitsuntide, with 'mammoth crowds', but a feature of the trains from the mining district of Durham was that the womenfolk nearly all came 'armed with large paper carriers containing food for the day... either a precaution against a probable shortage in the cafes or ...prompted by an unavoidable spirit of frugality', while Teessiders were seen as having 'light pockets'.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> The same year a report by the Hackney Carriage inspector showed that a total of 2,500,000 passengers had travelled in and out of Redcar on the buses alone during the four summer months of the previous year, and Redcar Corporation wrote to bus proprietors expressing their satisfaction with the way in which the exceptional holiday traffic had been dealt with.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Yet the Cleveland Standard made the point that 'many people have managed to scrape up sufficient money to have a holiday, but....under strict rations', and traders complained of poor business.<sup>lxxxix</sup> This pattern, once established, continued through much of the 1930s. While the Redcar and District Free Press editor admitted in 1932 that for the past few years seaside pleasures have been taken 'seriously' he also added, 'and certainly in our district, very cheaply'.<sup>xc</sup> As late as 1936 Redcar people were complaining that although they had 'had the people this season', 'no large amount of money has been spent'.<sup>xc1</sup> At West Hartlepool, and the surrounding Durham villages, depression had little impact on numbers visiting Seaton Carew, which maintained large crowds on its beach for the key popular festivals of Whit, August Bank holiday, and Stockton Race Week in the 1930s. Here the impact was felt much more by the LNER, which found that few were travelling by rail away from the Hartlepoons for excursions elsewhere.<sup>xcii</sup>

By the 1930s the Teesside local authorities were beginning to recognise that to invest in modern, up-to-date, novel attractions was extremely high risk, since popularity might well be short-term, especially if they were outdoor attractions. The Coatham Enclosure at Redcar provided a graphic illustration of the potential dangers of local authority investment. The bathing pool was a big initial success in the early 1930s, but its use soon dropped dramatically. By 1934 it was already apparent that 'the bathing pool was not extensively patronised during the greater part of the summer owing to the prevalence of cold winds'.<sup>xciii</sup> The Corporation tried holding band concerts there and charging admission. Most trippers simply stayed outside and listened for nothing. The Enclosure's overall revenue for the season dropped. The revenue from the baths on August Bank Holiday 1933 was £316, in 1934 it was £197.<sup>xciv</sup> The total revenue for the period from the beginning of April to the second week in November 1935 showed a decrease of £243 on the previous year, while in 1936 the Baths Superintendent reported that the period from 1 April to 31 August showed a decrease of £345 on 1935.<sup>xcv</sup>

As well as relatively limited spending power, escaping the pressures of their home towns meant that some trippers brought further problems to the resorts in the form of less acceptable behaviour. The resorts were increasingly crowded with lots of young people bent on pleasure, the more so since at this time youths were often earning, as employers often reduced wage bills by using young, cheap labour, and later sacking apprentices once they qualified for skilled wages. Generally the resorts were more concerned with revenue than

behaviour, and there was little sense of moral panic in descriptions - 'the holiday spirit saw its most boisterous outward expression in the behavior of hilarious bands of youths'.<sup>xcvi</sup> There was, however, more concern about the behaviour of women. In unemployed communities women were under great pressure to support families and the trip to the seaside seems to have been an opportunity to let off steam, another sort of freedom. Even before widespread unemployment, in 1920, a Cleveland Standard editorial was already expressing concerns about 'the indecent conduct of women day trippers on the sands, which is most disgusting and demoralising'. At Redcar they were 'driving nice people away'.<sup>xcvii</sup> The concern was that Redcar was 'fast losing its reputation for quality of visitors, owing to members of this class invading the town.' A 1930 Standard 'gossip' feature suggested that 'some of the women from the pit country merely visit the seaside to indulge in a 'wet' afternoon and make themselves a nuisance and an eyesore'.<sup>xcviii</sup> Bad behaviour also resulted in much litter - 'The Promenade on Sundays resembles a fish and chip parade and show ground'.<sup>xcix</sup> Where men were in work, then the pleasures of excess and conspicuous spending could be even more readily indulged and a great deal of money could be spent in a short time. A total amount of £160, provided out of a pleasure party fund, was brought by forty members of the New Hesleden and Dalton Dale Men's club to spend in eight hours at Redcar in August 1938.<sup>c</sup>

What seems clear is that during the depression there were a variety of strategies in North-Eastern communities which still allowed a very occasional trip to the seaside. Day-trip savings clubs, large numbers of trips organised by church and chapel organisations, and occasional charity outings organised for the unemployed in Stockton, Jarrow and other towns, all took on added importance in depression, but transport costs played a key role in limiting choice.

### **Changes in transport: rail to road**

The change from holiday rail travel to road travel was a central theme in the inter-war period. After the first world war, there was some delay with rail fares held artificially high, before the railways began once again to offer cheap fares and excursions, and these were still higher than pre-war. All three resorts, in their own ways, found difficulties in obtaining the level of cheap fares to their resorts which they wanted from the LNER. Saltburn, for example, had complaints from visitors that no special facilities from Harrogate, York and West Riding towns were on offer, and both Saltburn and Redcar wanted cheap weekly tickets to aid their visitor numbers. The LNER was slow to move, although by 1933 it had introduced cheap weekly tickets to link Redcar and Saltburn with the whole East Durham area as far as South Shields and Sunderland, and by 1937 there were facilities from as far afield as the West Riding and parts of Lancashire, as well as Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow.

On Teesside regular bus routes were dominated by the United Automobile Services/Bus Co. although many other firms offered more local services, all of which were used by trippers too, but for seaside visits charabanc trips, organised by local community groups such as the pub or church, which allowed people to travel with those they knew, offered a cheaper alternative. As early as 1920 the Gazette commented on the increasing popularity of motor transport, 'an agency of democratic development in a democratic age' which was 'the grown and increasingly formidable rival of the railway.' In a year just before depression really bit it saw

charabanc parties as exuberant, 'devoted to alcoholic beverages as the central glory of any festivity', 'rough and generally self-assertive, recently arrived at the stage of economic comfort', but felt that they would learn by experience and 'gain a closer intimacy with the loveliness of England and a new angle of contact with other classes.'<sup>ci</sup>

By the 1930s, encouraged by better road facilities, the motor coach, with its cheapness, crates of beer, flexibility and freedom became the core image of visits to the seaside. Increasingly Redcar became the main resort for day outings by motor coach from towns and villages in north Yorkshire and south Durham. It was seen as a particularly good resort to which to take children, because of the variety of entertainments and amusements on offer. It became a particularly popular venue for Sunday School trips with all denominations, from the Church of England to Methodists or the Salvation Army, and for charity trips for the children of the unemployed. Children usually traveled with their teachers, often with cheap dinner and tea arranged with one of the local cafes, and sports were organised on the sands. A sample analysis of reports of trips reported in the Darlington and Stockton Times between May and August 1932 showed that Redcar took the vast majority of Sunday School trips. There were far fewer trips to Seaton Carew, and even fewer to South Shields or Whitley Bay. No trips were reported to Saltburn, probably because of its more select, quiet status, and because of its increased distance. More secular trips were often organised by CIU working men's clubs. In York, for example, they expended £1,018 in 1938 on children's outings.<sup>cii</sup>

Amongst the middle classes, and the wealthier young, cars were used to open up a new leisure industry of trips to the seaside.<sup>ciii</sup> Parking became a recurrent problem in the inter-war years as the number of private cars grew. The convenience of motorists, and the potential spending they represented, had to be balanced against the views of ratepayers.<sup>civ</sup> Redcar adopted a range of short-term, piecemeal strategies in the 1920s. Whatever solutions were adopted there were always objections. In 1931 the frontagers of Queen Street 'offered strong objection to any parking being allowed' there.<sup>cv</sup> The Stray sand dunes towards Marske seemed to offer a longer-term solution and were soon supplementing Promenade parking, with 'record' use in August 1938.<sup>cvi</sup> But even here there were complaints. A Ratepayers Association Meeting in 1939 opposed a new scheme offering parking for 200 cars on the Stray, though a supporter argued that the site was 'used very little except by dogs and a few boys playing games.'<sup>cvii</sup> Charabanc and motor bus parking was easier to deal with. A stand for visiting charabancs was put on land on Corporation Road in front of West Dyke School and the Amusement Park in the 1920s and by 1936 the Corporation was also using the Pleasure Park (at cost of £40 ) and the whole length of Zetland Park for motor buses. At Seaton Carew, where numbers of cars were far fewer, the West Hartlepool Parks department built parking for a hundred cars, a bus loading station, together with lavatory accommodation and sheltered seating beyond Church Street, and employed disabled ex-servicemen as car park attendants after 1929. At Saltburn, the east side of the lower promenade was laid out as a fee-charging Motor Park in 1924, supplemented by Coral Street Green in 1926, but there was strong Saltburn Ratepayers Association resistance in the early 1930s to Council attempts to expand much-needed visitor parking on the cliff-top promenade. Charabancs parked at Hazelgrove top.

As we have seen, each of the Tees resorts attracted a different mix of trippers and visitors from the surrounding region. In part this was a function of the actions of the respective local authorities. But it was also a function of the entertainment and accommodation facilities provided. This was a reciprocal arrangement, since without facilities, visitors and trippers would not come, but since they wanted entertainments that were both appealing and within their budget the resorts had to adjust their offerings in the light of demand factors. The following chapter explores the nature of facilities offered at each of the resorts in the light of variation in demand.

### **Chapter 3 Entertainment at the Tees resorts - a response to employment difficulties?**

For a region with economic difficulties, the entertainment experience of the seaside provided a place on the margin where brief escape from the problems of everyday life could sometimes be found. At all British resorts after the first world war parks, gardens, promenades, swimming pools and sporting amenities proliferated, often provided by the local authority, while the beach became increasingly an area for relaxation and informality, for family and fun.<sup>cviii</sup> For those trippers and visitors with less money, there were clear sets of expectations about the entertainments that should be on offer. Some of these, such as the pier, donkey rides, sandcastle building, or Punch and Judy, were part of long-established seaside traditions, while others like the pierrots, were more recent, and all were coupled with popular mainstream amusements such as the cinema. Both Redcar and Saltburn offered facilities for long-stay visitors, but their social tone was different. Saltburn's clientele, a more middle-class, respectable group, wanted and valued its natural attractions, its Valley Gardens, high sea cliffs, broad expanse of beach and rocks, its pier and fairly limited other facilities. One regular visitor, for example, praised it as a 'premier health resort' because of its 'sea air, good water, scenic charms' and lack of 'artificial accessories'.<sup>cxix</sup> Seaton offered even fewer facilities. West Hartlepool's 1947 Town Guide made a virtue of necessity, rationalising their lack and claiming Seaton 'was fortunate in being able to call upon the entertainment and amusement facilities of West Hartlepool, which if provided at Seaton Carew would have spoiled those natural surroundings which attract so many visitors'.

One of the reasons for Redcar's strong growth was its ability to accommodate the new informality demanded by its long-stay visitors, who seem to have wanted a less 'select', more lively atmosphere than that provided at Saltburn. But what is also clear is that Redcar was also forced to concentrate effort on cheap facilities to meet the needs of day trippers, often with little money, and extract what limited income it could by maximising tripper numbers, alongside trying to maintain visitor numbers.

It was the beach that for many continued to be the main attraction. One of the main features of the Tees resorts, all situated around the wide Tees Bay, was their broad expanse of good quality sandy beach. The beaches were controlled by byelaws which usually covered booths, tents, performances, games, selling and hawking, begging and touting, noisy instruments, broken glass, beating of carpets, riding and driving of horses etc., driving motor vehicles, fighting, boxing and wrestling. Saltburn and Redcar both employed a Sand Bailiff to enforce them, but in general a light touch was applied to ensure an appropriate level of liveliness. Redcar had gained full control of its foreshore by the early 1920s, when at Seaton the foreshore rights were still leased from Sir George Gower, and here this led to conflict in 1924 when he supported complaints from visitors about the



annoyance caused by noisy roundabouts.<sup>cx</sup> As the more 'popular' tripper resorts Redcar and Seaton Carew beaches both deliberately offered visitors and trippers a potent combination of cheapness and liveliness. In 1920, at Redcar, on or adjacent to the beach were three sets of roundabouts and swings, plus ice cream pitches, fruit & sweet, novelty, newspaper, soda and lemonade stalls, adult riding devices, aeroplane spinners, sea motor cars, weighing machines, facilities for buying tea, Punch and Judy, donkeys and horses, and beach photographers. From 1924 there were ten uniform kiosks on the beach, as well as other facilities, together providing the Corporation with a fluctuating income of between £1,000 and £1,500 per annum. At Redcar, auctioning of facilities, which were privately run, showed only limited revenue fluctuation through the 1920s, suggesting that concessionees experienced little growth, although money offered from 1930 onward was often less. Sole rights to the beach ice-cream concession, dominated by the Rea and Pacitto families, which raised £395 in 1925, raised only £350 in 1931. The only area where there was significant growth was the tea concession, which raised £105 in 1925 and £350 six years later. At less popular Saltburn ice-cream concessions peaked at the £65 offered by Galante in 1930, not much higher than the £40 Pacitto paid for the Marske beach concession in 1932. Overall Saltburn beach income rose from 1925 to 1928 before levelling off, and then dropping in the early 1930s, although Saltburn maintained its symbol of modernity from pre-war days, holding its own annual motor races in the form of speed trials on the beach, organised by groups such as the Yorkshire Automobile Club and the Middlesbrough Motor Cycle Club.

The North-Eastern areas of heavy industry were relatively conservative in gender attitudes, male-centred, with young women's leisure interwoven with day-to-day routines and social and familial responsibilities. Older women's lives were often dominated by work and worry. So the seaside offered an escape, providing rare mixed-gender leisure opportunities in a more hedonistic context. The resorts aided this in a number of ways, from mixed bathing to opportunities for dancing.

All three larger resorts were relatively early in abandoning both the more formal use of bathing machines and the segregation of the sexes into separate parts of the beach, and all introduced the increased informality of mixed bathing from tents instead. Saltburn managed the tents directly from the outset, but at Redcar there was an initial mixture of private and publicly managed bathing and 'sand' tents until 1927. Redcar also provided bathing costumes for hire. Beach photographs show an greatly increasing willingness to hire a deck chair by the 1930s. In earlier photographs only a minority were using them, but the later 1930s a majority were, and increased numbers of deck-chair attendants were required. This may be an indication of increased prosperity, as the regional economy improved in the later 1930s, rather than simply a change in fashion. Sunbathing was a fashionable innovation, increasingly as seen as an attractive part of beach culture. Given the frequent mist, the north-facing coast at Redcar and Saltburn, and the cold North Sea, this was more difficult than at the sunnier southern resorts, although Redcar's Town Guide in 1937 claimed disingenuously that 'Redcar is blest with as much sunshine as other coasts and even in winter is comparatively mild'. By the 1930s a man with 'skin as brown as an onion' was displaying his tan with obvious pride at Seaton Carew.<sup>cxii</sup> Other beach and promenade activities were related to national press publicity and promotions. In the 1920s the Daily Chronicle promoted sand sports competitions twice a year. The Daily Mail ran a 'sand design' competition through the 1920s and 1930s at all three resorts, so children could indulge their buckets and spades to good effect, while the 'Daily

Mirror Eight' girls visited Redcar in the 1930s. There were also the usual competitions to recognise the paper's representative and win a cash award.

The first generation of fun palace arcades with their automatic coin-operated slot machines reached the Tees resorts at the beginning of the 1930s. An purpose-built arcade at the end of Redcar promenade was the first of its kind in the region. Initially it was known locally as the White Elephant but soon made money. By the mid-1930s it also had a dodgem car track. Both Redcar and Seaton Carew had a number of such establishments, indeed at least one operator, Tom Bestwick, who began at Seaton, had sites at both resorts in the 1930s, and appears to have been influenced by his brother, who supplied him with fruit machines from his Chicago home.<sup>cxii</sup> In the 1930s the arcades were a novelty, capable of satisfying a variety of interests: gambling, amusement, competition with others or pure entertainment, some machines based on dexterity, and others (illegally) on pure chance, with the added attraction that the arcades provided shelter in bad weather. The sheer variety of machine, floor, wall and pin-tables, What the Butler Saw, football, racing and boxing machines, mechanical executions or strength machines, ensured that something was provided for all, and they were particularly attractive to trippers.

Other liminal, cheap, entertaining, informal yet basically inoffensive beach entertainment and musical comedy was provided by the pierrots, troupes of beach entertainers, sometimes with whited faces, ruffed suits and pom-poms for day performances, and more formal attire for evenings, who performed on pitches on the beach, on a wooden stage, usually giving a morning, afternoon and early evening show, plus a show from 10.30-11.30 p.m. at the height of the season. Walton sees these as flourishing mostly 'in small resorts with little competition from a weightier entertainment industry', but it is worth pointing out that for Redcar, where cheap entertainment was in demand, they had clear advantages over evening theatre performances for the tripper audience.<sup>cxiii</sup> In August 1920 the main group at Redcar were the Cosy Corner Pierrots. Redcar sometimes had more than one group, although the main site by 1924 was adjacent to the old Coatham Pier Head, and to stop competition, and to raise income, the Town Clerk advertised the fixed pitch in The Stage and the World's Fair. Willet's White Stars performed in 1925, and the dominant figure of the 1930s pierrot shows, Billy Scarrow, presented his first pierrot show at Redcar in 1926 with the Cosy Corner Entertainers, doing a concert show at the Coatham Pier site. He was back again in 1927. Scarrow did a season with the 'Song Demonstrators' in 1928 on a beach site while the Pavilion was modernised. He was back again in 1931 with the Optimists Of 1931 and staged a show each summer on the beach thereafter.<sup>cxiv</sup>

At Saltburn the same pattern emerged, with several different troupes in the 1920s, although Loftus entrepreneur George Derricke(s) ran a company from 1923 to 1926, and the Grapho troupe appeared regularly from 1931. Significantly, money paid for the annual Saltburn concession had rapidly declined from around £50 in the 1920s to £15 for the season of 1931. The pierrots used a beach stand, although also allowed to use the lower promenade in 1925, and later gave evening shows in Hazelgrove Gardens. Pierrots and concert parties seem to have had less success at Seaton Carew beach. When attempts were made in the early 1920s to have a stage on the sands for a concert party they were successfully opposed by both Sir George Gower and the West Hartlepool Parks Committee.<sup>cxv</sup> It may be that insufficient income during weekdays could be generated for a troupe to survive.

Another cheap attraction was Sunshine Corner, a stage and background originally situated on Redcar's central beach opposite the Royal hotel, and later moved to Coatham Beach. It featured light entertainment, and sing-alongs with a religious theme. Children were encouraged to go on stage and join in, rewarded with a stick of rock. Here again seats had to be paid for, while a collection was taken from other spectators.

All three resorts had fishing boat fleets, indeed there were still thirty-four fishermen at Redcar in the 1921 census. So pleasure and fishing trips were still seasonally offered by local fishermen, especially at weekends and bank holidays. The local term used was 'foying', and both boats and boatmen were licensed, although the numbers licensed dropped over time at all three resorts. At Redcar, for example, forty-one boats were licensed in 1924, but only seven 'pleasure boats' by 1935, when even Marske had two boats. Initially touting for custom had been banned but by 1936 at Redcar touting was allowed within ten yards of the gangway. Photographs show men and children launching the boats and moving the gangways.

The promenades, often lined with flower beds, with a range of cafes, arcades, and shops adjacent along the front, and the opportunity they provided to see and be seen, were part of the seaside attraction at all resorts. Other attractions on the front were often provided by the local authority.

Blackpool's illuminations attracted both publicity and crowds, but in the North-East use of this device was relatively late. Unlike Blackpool, where the promenade had been lit as early as 1879, and illuminations had been a way of extending the short summer season since 1912, Redcar only got electricity in 1924. Here the illuminations, another municipal initiative, were a way of enhancing the summer season, usually in August and September, but occasionally at Easter, and not extending it, as at Blackpool. Money spent on illuminations by the Corporation was variable, but was usually only between £200 and £300. Despite encouragement, shopkeepers, tradesmen, café and hotel owners were generally unwilling to illuminate their own premises.<sup>cxvi</sup> But the illuminations were usually seen positively by the local press. They provided another free experience, and helped to create a holiday atmosphere. The Cleveland Standard in 1934 said that 'their value to the town in the way of publicity is incalculable...many excursionists come to the town in the evening to see the illuminations', and the pier stayed open till eleven.<sup>cxvii</sup> At Saltburn the Valley Gardens and Hazelgrove Gardens were lit up as an added attraction.

Music for the holiday crowds was an attraction at all resorts. Although more select resorts such as Torquay, Whitby or Bournemouth continued to support municipal orchestras, in the North-East the long-standing working-class brass band tradition of the nineteenth century initially continued to appeal. Saltburn's privately run Valley Gardens sometimes had major bands, such as the Seaforth Highlanders, although even here there were complaints that 'crowds get music free in the Rose Walk instead of paying for admission', and Saltburn Council also provided bands, normally paying less than £100 a season.<sup>cxviii</sup> At Seaton Carew the local authority arranged for bands to play at the small bandstand, leaving bands to take their own risk. Redcar's much larger bandstand was located centrally on the Promenade, with a semicircle of sheltered seats, although bands sometimes also played in Redcar parks, with admission charged. Each year the Corporation organised the band concerts and paid significant sums, just under £400 in the 1923 summer season, and rising thereafter, although

revenue from seat hire seems generally to have balanced this.<sup>cxix</sup> Money was used from the rates, although following the 1926 General Strike the financial results of spending more on bands 'fell below expectations'.<sup>cxx</sup> Economic difficulties and changes in attitude meant that by the early 1930s it was beginning to be felt that the expensive regimental bands were no longer value for money, and were perhaps less 'modern'. Instead the Corporation hired a range of regional bands on fifteen occasions on 'the usual terms of £5 for two concerts (afternoon and evening) and 1d per chair let'.<sup>cxxi</sup> Band concerts were increasingly affected by motor traffic noise on the nearby Promenade, and attempts were made to reroute traffic during performances. Increasingly, however, Redcar was not attracting the kind of clientele who appreciated such music. The young and active, who spent their money most freely, were much less prepared to spend their holiday time lounging idly in chairs listening to classical music.

All three resorts used carnivals as another free attraction, Redcar from 1923, during Stockton Race Week, and Saltburn and Seaton Carew from 1924. Redcar reorganised this as an Entertainment Week in the mid-1930s. In 1935 it had events on the sands, including a comic boxing tournament and rugby match, children's sand sports, special programme and carnivals at the New Pavilion, a mannequin parade and diving exhibition at the open-air swimming pool, a carnival ball, a children's beauty competition, roller skating race, firework display at boating lake, comic cricket match, and a Grand Carnival parade. It also had the standard attraction of most seaside resorts, the bathing beauty competition. Redcar Corporation also tried (unsuccessfully) to extend the season in 1930 with a Festival Week held in mid-September, centred round illuminations and special attractions at Coatham Enclosure.

The public parks were another cheap facility in the armory of the resort, and Redcar had by far the widest range of facilities, with three parks provided by the Corporation: Locke Memorial Park, with its tennis courts, bowling and putting green and boating lake, Zetland Park, with tennis courts, bowls, flowered banks, shrubberies and rose walk, and Borough Park which was chiefly devoted to sport, with bowls, cricket, football and tennis courts. During the season there were single and pairs bowling tournaments with prizes of totaling seventy-two guineas at Borough Park in Festival Week by the 1930s. In 1936 204 entries were received from as far afield as Eastbourne and Carlisle. Zetland Park hosted an annual tennis tournament in mid-August, with prizes given by the Parks Committee, initially in association with the Lawn Tennis Association. Redcar and District Sea Anglers Association held a Fishing festival of five days each September, with advertising subsidised by the Corporation. Saltburn had the Valley Gardens, a commercial facility controlled by the Middlesbrough Owners, its Hazelgrove Gardens, and laid out gardens to beautify the town's central square in 1930. Although West Hartlepool spent heavily on its own parks it was less inclined to provide large and expensive park facilities for weekend day trippers and Seaton Carew lacked any major park facility. Sports were part of the attraction at all three resorts for more middle-class visitors and wealthier residents. Each had its own golf course and cricket ground, and tennis facilities.<sup>cxxii</sup>

Dancing was a popular inter-war entertainment for all groups in society, although especially popular with the working classes, but regular entrance to formal dances at the Staincliffe at Seaton, or at the Swan, Coatham Hotel and Pier Pavilion at Redcar were probably too high for the unemployed. It is therefore somewhat

surprising that although Saltburn temporarily introduced open air dancing in 1934, there was then still no open-air dancing at Redcar, given its working-class attractions. Yet advertisements and newspaper reports make it clear that dancing in Redcar's hotels was a particular attraction to 'youth', the group least likely to be affected by unemployment, but keen to dance and meet the opposite sex.

The seaside pier, a feature which Seaton Carew singularly lacked, was still popular in the inter-war years, and the Saltburn and Redcar piers were major targets for investment. At Saltburn, the pier was badly damaged by the sailing ship *Ovenbeg* in 1924, and with estimated repairs of £3,000 the owners were initially reluctant to spend the money, being doubtful of a return on their investment, although it was repaired in the 1930s using Skinningrove steel. Instead, a small theatre was built at the landward side, where concert parties and dramatic performances were presented.

At Redcar, Coatham Pier had ceased trading in 1899 and had disintegrated thereafter, although its skating rink on the landward side was used by concert parties. In 1927/8 it was rebuilt by Redcar Council to function as the New Pavilion for the summer and as a winter cinema. It too held dances and indeed had a tournament of dancing in mid-June 1934. But from 1928 the summer concerts held there proved very popular attractions. Shows included both concert and theatrical parties, and occasional performances by light Symphony Orchestras. Theatrical agents in London were used to get first-class companies, who would take a guaranteed proportion of weekly takings with a minimum fee. The titles of some of the troupes playing gives some indication of the type of entertainment offered: *Smile-a-While*, *Farce*, *Mirth Pageant*, *Holiday Fair*, *Merry Scamps*, *Band Box*, and *Blue Dragoons*. By the mid-1930s the national popularity of radio broadcasting was influencing performances. At Whit 1937, reflecting the rapid spread of the wireless, it had the famous Broadcasting Show 'North Regional Follies,' and had an increasing emphasis on Farces, Follies and similar comic summertime shows. In 1938 it had Les Hollwood, the 'famous radio comedian' in 'Redcar Follies of 1938' with tickets priced from 2/ to 6d.<sup>cxxiii</sup> In this year 'for the first time in its history [the Pavilion] not only paid its way and all charges attached to it, but also contributed about £500 towards the general rate fund'.<sup>cxxiv</sup>

The privately owned Redcar Pier Pavilion and ballroom had been built in 1907 on the landward end of Redcar Pier, at the town's south-eastern end. Around 1920 it was extended shorewards to include café/ tea rooms. Here again the Corporation was active in developing its facilities, first leasing it from the Pier's directors in 1926. A dance orchestra at the Pier Pavilion in 1926 at Whit shared profits on a 50/50 per cent basis, and dances were organised by the Corporation thereafter. In 1928 they offered £400 for a ladies' orchestra led by Miss Phyllis Mary Hollins of Harrogate for a programme of eight weeks in July and August playing over thirty-four hours weekly. The Corporation approached the BBC with a view to paying to have a performance broadcast, but after some discussion it was decided 'not to incur any expenditure'.<sup>cxxv</sup> From 1929 however the Corporation withdrew from its direct management and entertainments were run by Mr. T Thompson, a major local entrepreneur, who also ran both local cinemas.

Most seaside resorts had more than their fair share of cinemas, but cinema facilities in the Tees resorts were poorer than elsewhere. Indeed Redcar initially retained the Empire Music Hall, which drew 'packed houses'

and was 'a hearty laugh' in 1920, but this soon closed.<sup>cxxvi</sup> It also had the Palace of Varieties Theatre which initially had variety entertainment during the week and films at the weekend but this soon shifted to cinema. By 1937 the two main cinemas were the 'cosy and comfortable' Central Hall, and the more expensive, more 'modern luxury' Regent Cinema, which also by the end of the period featured occasional radio celebrity concerts such as Cavan O'Connor, the BBC Sing Song star, radio's 'Vagabond lover' in August 1938. These cinemas were a particular attractions during wet Bank Holidays. In 1934 one cinema found it worth having a 10 a.m. performance, and at the other at least 2,600 tickets were sold during the day.<sup>cxxvii</sup> Much smaller Saltburn could also sustain two cinemas, the larger Picture House, at the seaward end of the Valley Gardens, and the smaller Kosy Cinema in Milton Street.

An amusement park, with its modern, thrilling and technologically advanced rides was a common way of promoting the carnival, exciting atmosphere of many resorts. A Teesside attempt was made only at Redcar, on West Dyke Road, about 400 yards from the sea. It was opened in 1924 on land owned by the Corporation, despite some opposition from a minority of councillors and some local householders. It covered about four acres and was set up by a Cleethorpes entrepreneur, as a Pleasure Park 'with modern amusements such as exist in some seaside resorts'. He wanted a lease of 15 years, and offered a total rental of £6,000 for it.<sup>cxxviii</sup> The park had facilities such as scenic motors, a large covered skating rink, 'Hilarity Hall', 'Noahs Ark', cork-loaded guns, coconuts, hoopla, and a 'Trip through the River Caves' together with the most spectacular attraction, what was claimed as the largest and most up to date Giant Racer (a type of Big Dipper) in the provinces. There was an associated motor park for cars and buses. The site closed in 1938 when the lease ran out, and was used for building land. Although the Redcar Pleasure Park Company Ltd. discussed other possible foreshore sites with the council on a long lease, they were unable to agree terms. This suggests that profits were not sufficiently certain for renewed initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

The differences in visitor numbers, provision of amenities and entertainment, and local attitudes between the Tees resorts are typical of many inter-war resort regions. But the experience of regional unemployment makes the North-East a much more fascinating case study than many of the other regions resort historians have studied. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Tees area already lagged well behind the North-West and South-East in developing a widespread seaside holiday market. So it is perhaps unsurprising to find that during the long-lasting trade depression of the 1920s and early 1930s there was little if any expansion of existing numbers of long-stay visitors. Sadly for Redcar's resort boosters, it is clear that its claimed two million 'visitors' a year cannot be substantiated.

Unemployment was a social issue that dominated the period, and this study also contributes to wider debates about its impact on leisure. While some historians have asserted that the unemployed would have little chance of a seaside visit, the large numbers going on day trips to the Tees resorts suggest that this picture may well be overdrawn, and it should be noted too that both Seaton Carew and Redcar were both within walking distance of major Teesside conurbations, and that many amusements at the seaside could be obtained for nothing. The Pilgrim Trust, in their studies of Co. Durham, demonstrated miners' 'determination to make the best of things',

and 'make do'.<sup>cxxix</sup> A visit to the seaside offered cheap excitement, fresh faces and a ozone-filled change of air. Despite the widespread unemployment, diminished income and economic distress of the period it is clear that many people in the towns and villages of Teesside, the North Riding and County Durham were willing to make sacrifices for some sort of seaside visit. The evidence on visitors and trippers, despite its imperfections, is clear that those who could afford a cheap seaside holiday continued to attend their local resorts, although accommodation provision and visitor numbers were relatively poor in comparison with the resorts of the more prosperous areas of England, and it was day-trips that provided much of the resort revenue for both Redcar and Seaton Carew.

As a result the three resort areas experienced different fortunes. Redcar managed to capture the lion's share of revenue at the expense of Saltburn, Seaton Carew, and perhaps Whitby, based partly on its generally informal atmosphere and welcoming attitude to trippers, and by attracting those long-stay regional visitors who enjoyed a more 'lively' holiday. Seaton Carew, which had previously had a mixed economy of visitors and trippers, was forced to largely abandon its attempts to offer accommodation for visitors, and became almost entirely a West Hartlepool suburb, attracting large numbers of trippers at weekends, bank holidays, and during Stockton Race Week. Saltburn, unable to compete with Redcar in terms of tripper attractions, refocused its efforts to become largely a commuter resort with a quieter, more 'select' ambiance for smaller numbers of wealthier visitors.

The Tees resorts offered a remarkable diversity in their response to economic difficulties. Of course, they were not alone in facing such internal problems. Seasonal unemployment was endemic in all resorts, and even in 1938 Blackpool had nearly twenty-five per cent winter unemployment, and Great Yarmouth 22.5 per cent. But there were real differences of scale, and unemployment was much higher in the North-East throughout the year. Redcar's response should be singled out therefore as particularly impressive, in doing so much for its own unemployed while trying to boost the town's revenues. Throughout the period it is clear that despite some on-going internal conflicts, its local authority and business community largely successfully pursued a broad strategy of maintaining its position as the leading Teesside resort, providing a range of facilities for visitors, for whom it continued to appeal, while recasting its attractions and remaking its image so that that it had the types of attractions which would bring in large numbers of trippers and extract from them what money they had to spend in difficult circumstances.<sup>cxxx</sup> Indeed Redcar Corporation appears to have been unusually progressive for the North-East, and not just for a Tory council.<sup>cxxxi</sup> But the case should not be overstated. Municipal involvement in resort economies through 'municipal conservatism' could be found elsewhere, building parks, promenades, and bathing pools and subsidising or operating directly more conventional entertainments.

The debates over both spending levels and Sunday opening from the residential lobbies of all the Tees resorts could also be found elsewhere. Torquay had its oppositional Ratepayers' Association, and, from 1930 its Citizens' League. Folkestone's Ratepayers' Association managed to drastically cut back salaries and membership of the municipal orchestra in the 1930s.<sup>cxxxii</sup> Nevertheless Redcar's high level of resilience during a period of sustained economic difficulties showed a high level of commitment to the tourist industry, and should perhaps be more widely appreciated. It showed an innovative ability to channel and exploit what could potentially have been highly problematic local unemployment to provide an impressive infrastructure of parks,

pools, promenades and other facilities. Its pleasure-seeking trippers, many themselves from even more depressed areas, had full cause to be grateful for its efforts.

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<sup>i</sup> W. Dougill, 'The British Coast and its Holiday Resorts', Town Planning Review 16 (1935) p.265.

<sup>ii</sup> J. K. Walton, 'Seaside Resorts and Maritime History', International Journal of Maritime History, 9 (1997), p.127.

<sup>iii</sup> The references in the following works provide a useful background to the literature: J. K. Walton, The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750-1914 (Leicester, 1983); J. Travis, The Rise of the Devon Seaside Resorts 1750-1900 (Exeter, 1993); J.K. Walton, The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century (Manchester, 2000); The Rise and Fall of British Coastal Resorts (1997) eds G. Shaw and A. Williams; J. V. N. Soane, Fashionable Resort Regions: Their Evolution and Transformation (Wallingford, 1993); N. Morgan and A. Pritchard, Power and Politics at the Seaside: The Development of Devon's Resorts in the Twentieth Century (Exeter, 1999);, The Later Kentish Seaside, eds F. Stafford and N. Yates (Gloucester, 1985). Mention should also be made of L. Chase, 'The Development of Place Image in Inter-War Clacton and Frinton' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 1999).

<sup>iv</sup> M. Huggins, 'Victorian Seaside Resorts Around the Mouth of the Tees', Northern History, 20 (1984), pp.187-206; M. Huggins, 'Fashionable Watering Places or Popular Resorts?', Journal of Regional and Local History, 3 (1983), pp. 51-62; M. Huggins, 'The Rise and Decline of the Seaside Resort of Seaton Carew', Durham County Local History Society, 35 (1985), pp. 35-54. Teesside's local historians have given only limited space to the twentieth century in their resort histories. See, for example, J. Cockcroft, Redcar and Coatham: A History to the End of World War 2 (Redcar, 1980).

<sup>v</sup> Examples include L. Chase, 'Modern Images and Social tone in Clacton and Frinton in the inter-war Years', and A. Durie, 'The Scottish Seaside Resort in Peace and War c.1880-1960', both in International Journal of Maritime History 9 (1997); P. Thornton, 'Coastal Tourism in Cornwall since 1900', and N. Morgan, 'Seaside Resort Strategies; the Case of Inter-war Torquay', both in Recreation and the Sea, ed. S. Fisher (Exeter, 1997); J. Heuston, 'Kilkee; the Origins and Development of a West Coast Resort', in Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis, eds B. O'Connor and M. Cronin (Cork, 1930); D. Hardy and C. Ward, Arcadia for All (1992); C. Ward and D. Hardy, Goodnight Campers! The History of the British Seaside Camp, (1987); N. J. Morgan, 'Perceptions, patterns and Policies of Tourism: the Development of the Devon Seaside Resorts During the Twentieth Century with Special Reference to Torquay and Ilfracombe', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 1991).

<sup>vi</sup> E.g. J. K. Walton, 'The Seaside resorts of England and Wales, 1900-1950' in Shaw and Williams, Rise and Fall; J. K. Walton, Blackpool. (Edinburgh, 1998); J. K. Walton, 'Popular entertainment and Public Order: The Blackpool Carnivals of 1923-4', Northern History, 34 (1998), pp.170-188.

<sup>vii</sup> See G. Cross, Worktowners at Blackpool (1990) for an analysis of Mass Observation Blackpool material.

<sup>viii</sup> J. Burnett, Idle Hands: the Experience of Unemployment, (1994), pp.209-10.

<sup>ix</sup> S. Jones, Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939 (1986), p. 109.

<sup>x</sup> Jones, Workers at Play, 10-14 provides detailed figures.

<sup>xi</sup> Jones, Workers at Play, 58, 118, 127.

<sup>xii</sup> See M. Johnes, 'That Other Game: A Social History of Soccer in South Wales c.1906-1939' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1998); A. Appleton, Hotbed of Soccer: The Story of Football in the North-East (1960), p. 29; D. Russell, 'Football and Society in the North-West, 1919-1939', North West Labour History, 24 (1999/2000), pp. 3-14; J. Williams, 'A Wild Orgy of Speed: Responses to Speedway in Britain Before the Second World War', The Sports Historian, 19 (1999), p.6;.

<sup>xiii</sup> J. K. Walton, 'The Seaside Resorts of England and Wales, 1900-1950: Growth, Diffusion and the Emergence of New Forms of Coastal Tourism', in Shaw and Williams, Rise and Fall of British Coastal Resorts, p.36, cites Morecambe, Bognor Regis, Clacton and Christchurch as others.

<sup>xiv</sup> See J. K. Walton and C. O'Neill, 'Numbering the Holiday Makers; the Problems and Possibilities of the June Census of 1921 for Historians of Resorts', Local Historian, 23 (1993), pp.205-16.

<sup>xv</sup> M. Lock, The Hartlepoons; A Survey Plan (West Hartlepool, 1948), p.189.

<sup>xvi</sup> Walton, The British Seaside, 122-168

<sup>xvii</sup> Walton, The British Seaside, 96.

<sup>xviii</sup> C. Musgrave, Life in Brighton: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day, (1970), p.391

<sup>xix</sup> Northern Daily Mail, 5 April 1921.

<sup>xx</sup> Redcar Council Minutes (RCM), Mayor's review 10 Nov. 1928.

<sup>xxi</sup> Cleveland Standard (CS), 18 May 1939; North-Eastern Daily Gazette (NEDG), 2 Aug. 1920.

<sup>xxii</sup> CS, 4 Aug. 1934.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Saltburn Times (ST), 13 Sept. 1924.



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- xxiv ST, 30 Aug. 1924.
- xxv RCM, 6 Oct. 1926.
- xxvi RCM, Mayor's review, 10 Nov. 1928.
- xxvii RCM, 14 Oct. 1924.
- xxviii RCM, 1 Aug. 1929.
- xxix NEDG 6 June 1930.
- xxx RCM, 9 Oct. 1930.
- xxxi S. V. Ward, The Geography of Inter-war Britain: The State and Uneven Development (1988) makes this very clear.
- xxxii RCM, 13 Jan 1936; 20 Feb. 1936.
- xxxiii RCM, 4 Nov. 1925.
- xxxiv See Cockcroft, Redcar and Coatham, 109.
- xxxv ST, 30 Aug. 1924.
- xxxvi ST, 30 Aug. 1924; 28 June 1924; 4 Oct. 1924.
- xxxvii ST, 11 Oct. 1924.
- xxxviii Manuscript Minutes of Saltburn Urban District Council, 11 Nov. 1929.
- xxxix West Hartlepool Corporation, Official Handbook to West Hartlepool with Seaton Carew (West Hartlepool, 1930).
- xl West Hartlepool Council Minutes, Letter received by Seaton Development Committee, 18 Feb. 1924.
- xli Ward, Geography of Inter-war Britain, 166. Blackpool topped the table of spending with 8.4 times the average inter-war spending, and the next eight in the table were all seaside resorts. South Shields, with 2.7 times the national average, was the highest north-eastern county borough resort in spending on parks and open spaces.
- xliv Walton, Blackpool, 82.
- xlvi See Nigel Morgan, 'Seaside Resort Strategies: The Case of Inter-War Torquay', in Recreation and The Sea (Exeter, 1997) ed. S. Fisher, pp. 84-100.
- xliv RCM, 2 Feb. 1931
- xlv RCM, 21 Nov. 1935
- xlvi Redcar Corporation, Redcar for Health (Middlesbrough, 1937) p.26.
- xlvi Report in CS, 7 June 1930 gives details of debate
- xlvi ST, 26 July 1924.
- xlvi NEDC, 26 May 1922 ; NEDG, 9 June 1930; NDM, 1 June 1936. The illuminations were a major attraction, and the British Legion women's section in the remote village of Middleton in Teesdale had a visit in 1932; Darlington and Stockton Times, 30 July 1932.
- <sup>1</sup> See R. Pope, 'Railway Companies and Resort Hotels Between the Wars', Journal of Transport History 22, 1 (2001), pp.62-73.
- <sup>ii</sup> J. K. Walton, 'The Blackpool Landlady Revisited', Manchester Region History Review, 8 (1994), pp.23-30.
- <sup>iii</sup> See Walton and O'Neill, 'Numbering the holiday makers', 205-16.
- <sup>iii</sup> ST, 5 July 1924; 2 Aug. 1924.
- <sup>iv</sup> ST, 4 Oct. 1924
- <sup>iv</sup> ST, 11 Oct. 1924
- <sup>vi</sup> E. Brunner, Holiday Making and the Holiday Trades (1945), p. 53.
- <sup>vii</sup> Redcar News, 20 June 1909.
- <sup>viii</sup> These are very late examples. See J. K. Walton and P.R. McGloin, 'Holiday Resorts and Their Visitors', Local Historian, 13 (1979), pp. 324-8 for a discussion of visitors' lists.
- <sup>ix</sup> M. Huggins, 'Victorian Seaside resorts', 202.
- <sup>x</sup> CS, 19 July 1930
- <sup>xi</sup> CS, 1 Aug. 1931
- <sup>xii</sup> NDM, 7 Aug. 1933.
- <sup>xiii</sup> RCM, Mayor's review, 11 Oct. 1928.
- <sup>xiv</sup> RCM, 8 June 1930.
- <sup>xv</sup> RCM, 22 Jan. 1935.
- <sup>vi</sup> C. Ward and D. Hardy, Goodnight Campers: The History of the British Holiday Camp (1984), p.40
- <sup>vii</sup> Redcar Corporation, Redcar for Health (Middlesbrough, 1937).
- <sup>viii</sup> e.g. NEDG, 30 May 1925,
- <sup>ix</sup> J. K. Walton, 'The World's First Working-Class Seaside Resort? Blackpool Revisited, 1840-1974', Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 88 (1992), p.18.
- <sup>x</sup> NDM, 17 May 1921.
- <sup>xi</sup> CS, 16 June 1934. In York the equivalent evening trips to Scarborough were also very popular in the later 1930s. See B. Seebohm Rowntree, Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York (1941), p.398.



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cxxv RCM, 28 Feb.1928; 15 March 1928.

cxxvi CS, 7 Aug. 1920.

cxxvii CS, 11 Aug. 1934.

cxxviii RCM, 25 March 1924.

cxxix See J. Stevenson, British Society 1914-45 (1984), p292.

cxxx This was a characteristic of municipal government in most successful resorts throughout Europe. See J. K. Walton, 'The Seaside Resorts of Western Europe, 1750-1939', in Recreation and the Sea ed. S. Fisher (Exeter, 1997), p.49.

cxxxi L. Baston, 'Labour Local Government, 1900-1999', in The Labour Party: A Centenary History, eds B. Brivati & R. Heffernan (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 449-84: K. Young, 'The Party and English local government', in Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900 eds A. Seldon and S. Bell (Oxford, 1994), pp. 403-43.

cxxxii Walton, The British Seaside, 170, 180-1.