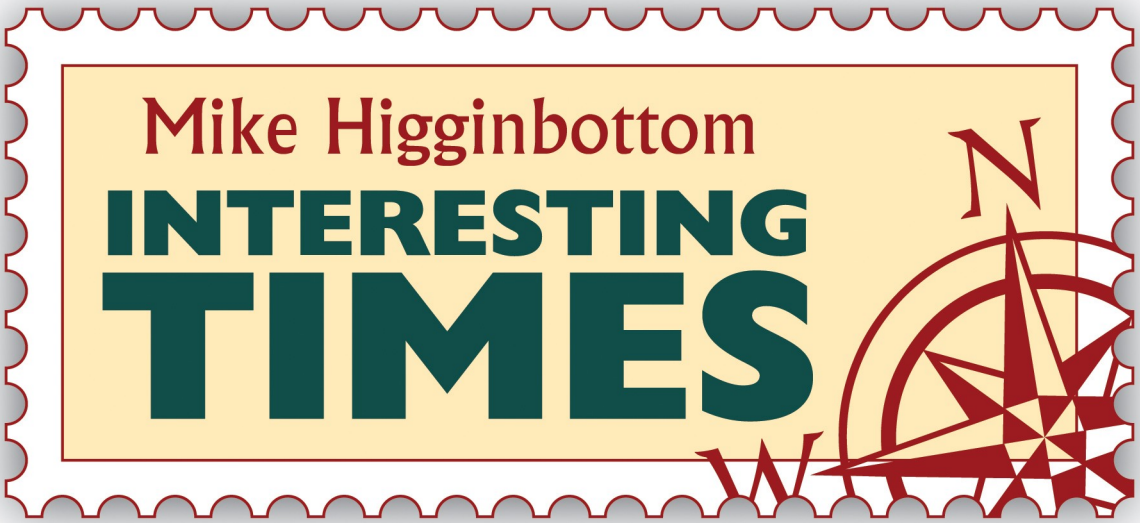

SAMPLE PAGES

The 80-page, A4 handbook for Lancashire's Seaside Heritage, with text, photographs, maps, appendices and a reading list, is available for purchase, price £15.00 including postage and packing.

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INTERESTING TIMES

Lancashire's Seaside Heritage

North Euston Hotel, The Esplanade, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 6BN
01253-876525

Wednesday July 10th-Monday July 15th 2013

interesting breaks with interesting people

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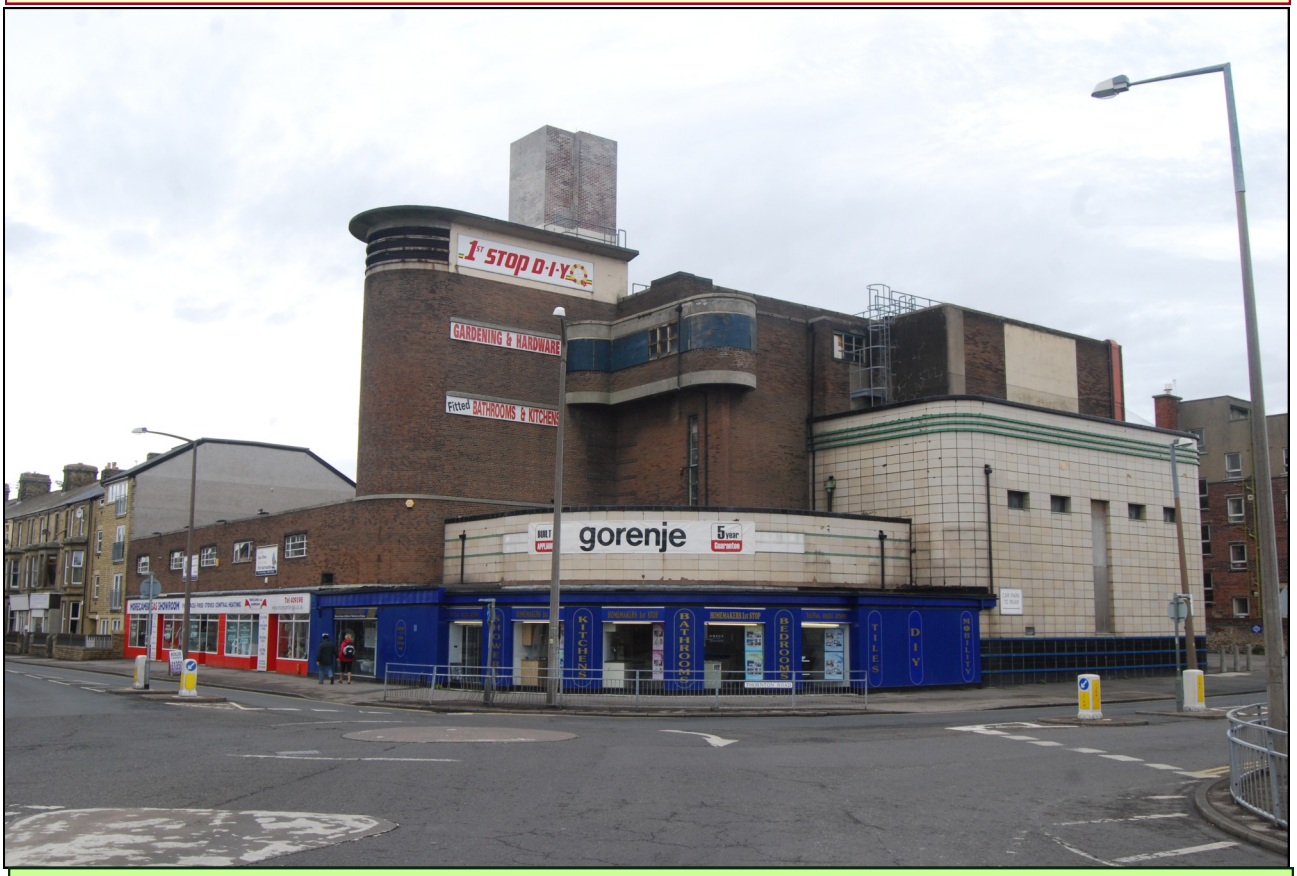
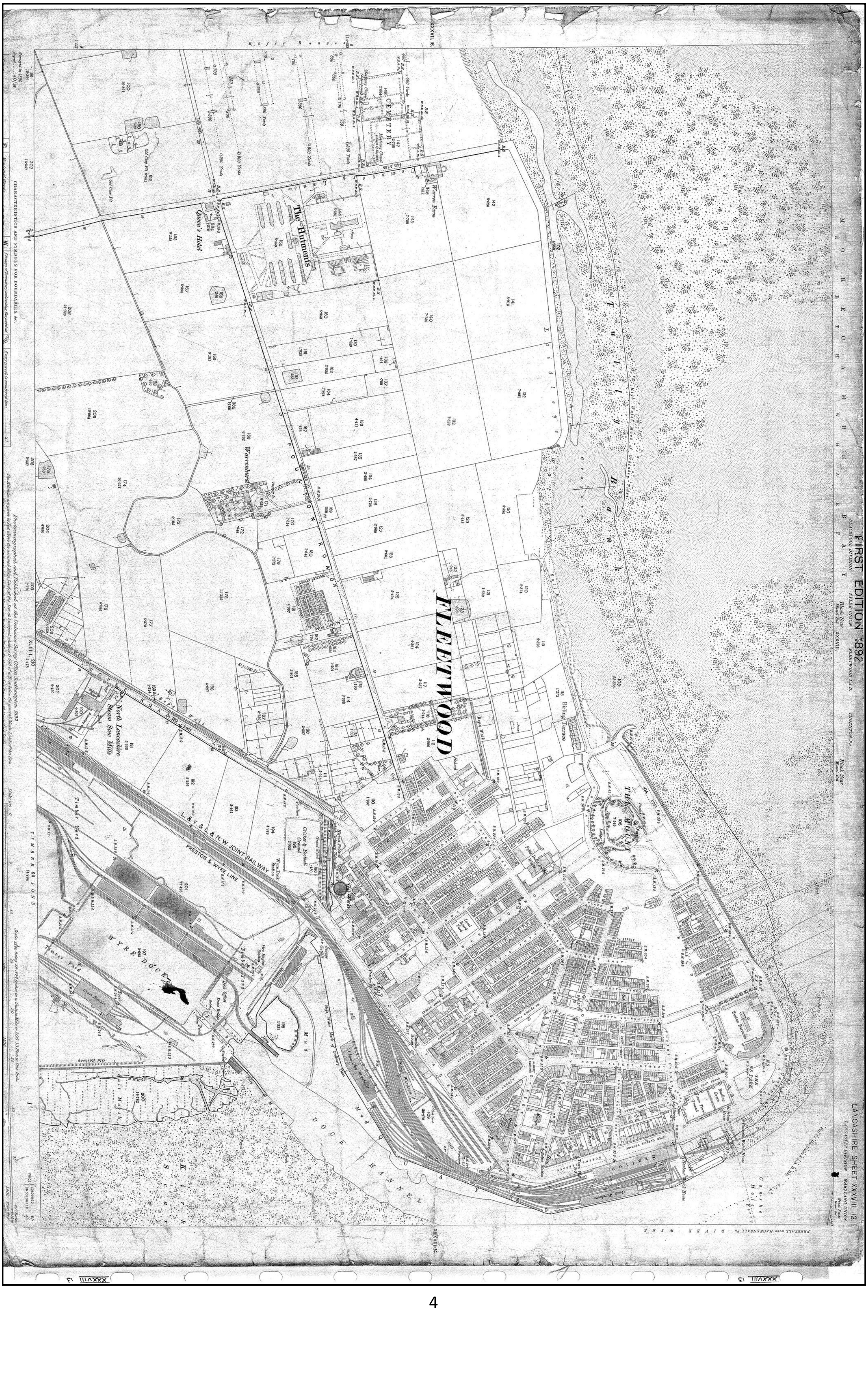


Odeon Cinema, Morecambe


FIRST EDITION 1892
LANCASHIRE SHEET XXXVIII 13
FLEETWOOD
The Mount
The Hutments
Queen's Hotel
Warren Farm
Warrenhurst
CEMETERY
L. & Y. & L. & N. W. JOINT RAILWAY
PRESTON & WYRE LINE
North Lancashire Steam Saw Mills
Cricket & Football Ground
WYRE DOCK
Timber Yard
DOCK CHANNEL
STATION
Bethel Terrace

Blackpool

There was a watering-place (that is, a resort where sea-water bathing and drinking were indulged in by the well-to-do) at Blackpool in the eighteenth century, but the town's immense popularity dates essentially from the arrival of the railway, which made day-trips feasible from the Lancashire industrial towns, and from the slightly later growth of the custom – assisted by economic deflation in the late nineteenth century and the establishment of public bank holidays – of taking family holidays of a week or longer.

By the end of the First World War Blackpool was such a magnet for holidaymakers that the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway, with two separate large stations in the town, could not cope with the volume of passenger traffic in the summer season except by limiting all trains to reserved-seat ticket-holders.

Blackpool's geographical position meant that during the two world wars it attracted alternative business – military training, displaced civil servants, evacuees and holidaymakers prevented from visiting east- and south-coast resorts; between the wars and after 1945 its holiday trade was sustained by workers taking advantage of paid holidays from work.

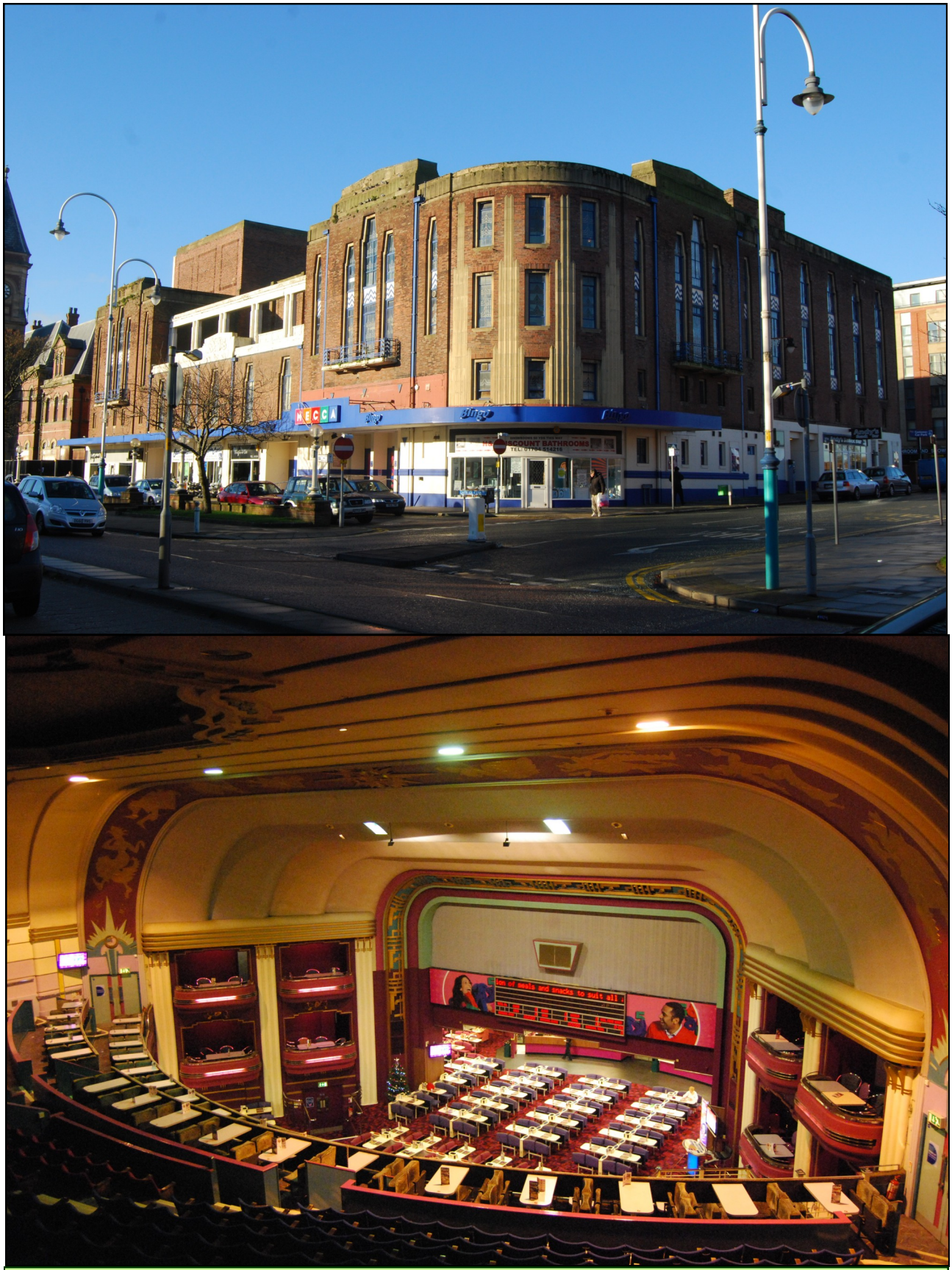
Then, in the 1970s, cheap foreign travel and package holidays overtook the British holiday industry and Blackpool began to struggle to sustain its economy and reinvent its appeal, a process that remains unresolved in the early years of the twenty-first century.

One reason for Blackpool's continuing success in appealing to a broad social spread of holidaymakers has been its compartmentalisation into compact social enclaves. The area between the North and Central Piers and the former North and Central Stations is the historic core and commercial centre. Boarding houses for workers on a tight budget mushroomed within walking-distance of the railway stations, and tucked behind the railway lines lay cheap housing for the workers, many of them itinerant, who provided the services on which the resort depended, from domestic work in boarding houses and hotels to retailing at every level and the municipal infrastructure of transport, street cleaning and other public services. For these people, and for many of the landladies and proprietors of shops and small hotels, a working life in Blackpool represented "three months' hard labour and nine months' solitary confinement": many stayed only for a few years, and many Blackpool businesses had a short life, while a very few others literally made fortunes.

On the low cliffs to the north, a more exclusive middle-class enclave grew around Claremont Terrace; to the south of the brash "Golden Mile", quieter, more modest accommodation catered for more prosperous artisans and tradespeople. Inland, particularly in the inter-war period, residential suburbs spread, populated partly by older incomers seeking retirement. Dr Rhodes Boyson remembers his holidays in Blackpool before the Second World War:

> We went to the same lodging house every year. Those of us who were Nonconformists, as my parents were, stayed in the north of the town; the Anglicans went to the Central Pier and the Roman Catholics stayed in the south.

Throughout its history the town maintained this balance, compartmentalising its residential, seasonal and commercial areas in order to maintain a potentially fragile economy: only after the 1960s did the driving energy of popular working-class holiday provision slacken to reveal serious economic and social problems that were actually present from the beginning.



Garrick Theatre, Southport: *Top:* exterior; *above:* interior

Morecambe

> "I don't think there is a town in the kingdom that has got so many places of entertainment as we have. Blackpool can't hold a candle to us," was the boast of C A MacKay, the town's publicity officer from 1929 to 1936 – before he left to become Blackpool's publicity officer.
>
> Roger K Bingham, *Lost Resort: the flow and ebb of Morecambe* (Cicerone 1990), p 213

Morecambe: origins

The name "Morecambe", possibly derived from the Celtic [*Mwr* = "great" + *Cwm* = "bowl-shaped valley"] or alternatively from the Old English [*mor* = "peat" + *cumb* = "hollow"], was hardly ever used in the historic past, and then only vaguely. The Roman historian Ptolemy's "*Aesterium Moricambrics*" might refer to the Lune estuary or an inlet on the Solway Firth. Otherwise, the earliest datable reference to the "bay of Morecambe" is in West's *Antiquities of Furness* (1774).

The present town is centred on the former village of Poulton, which expanded to absorbed adjacent settlements at Torrisholme, Heysham and Bare. The first three of these are documented at the time of Domesday Book (1085-6).

As the little resort grew from the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was publicised as Poulton-le-Sands to distinguish it from Poulton-le-Fylde, and this was eventually superseded after the generic name for the bay was adopted by the Morecambe Harbour & Railway Company in 1846.

The first holiday visitors to Poulton-le-Sands came in search of therapeutic sea-bathing. Roger K Bingham refers to an account by Richard Ayton, who visited in 1813. He had trouble securing accommodation because "this was the first day of a spring tide and the crowd collected in the village were the manufacturers from the inland towns, come for the benefit of the physic of the sea".

The artist J M W Turner (1775-1851) visited Morecambe Bay repeatedly: images which can be reliably located in the area include 'Figures Crossing a Flat Stretch of Country. ?Lancaster Sands' (sketch, *c*1812-15), 'Lancaster, from the Aqueduct Bridge' (watercolour, *c*1825) and 'Crossing Lancaster Sands' (watercolour, *c*1826).

Most travellers came by coach from Lancaster, which had a coastwise steamer service that extended as far as Liverpool. From 1829 Mr Eidsforth of Poulton Hall organised an annual regatta which "stript the village of all its former objectionable qualities…presenting a maritime situation which we think would now vie with some of the most celebrated watering-places in this kingdom…"

The earliest recognisable housing developments were the expensively ashlared **Morecambe Terrace** at the end of Lord Street, built between 1824 and 1847, followed by **Eidsforth Terrace** in the 1850s.

The population of Poulton-le-Sands grew from 177 in 1821 to 540 in 1831: both census-counts took place in May, so the numbers may include a proportion of visitors. The further development of the place depended on the arrival of the railway, which came at first not to transport holidaymakers but to sustain the port of Lancaster, which was silting up precisely at a time when the size of ocean-going vessels was increasing.

Background reading

General

Keith Parry, *The Resorts of the Lancashire Coast* (David & Charles 1983)

Blackpool and Fleetwood

Peter Bennett, *Blackpool Pleasure Beach: a century of fun* (Blackpool Pleasure Beach 1996)

Bill Curtis, *Fleetwood: a town is born* (Terence Dalton 1986)

Ted Lightbown, *Blackpool: a pictorial history* (Phillimore 1994)

Vanessa Toulmin, *Blackpool Illuminations: the greatest free show on earth* (Boco 2012)

Vanessa Toulmin, *Blackpool Pleasure Beach* (Blackpool Borough Council 2011)

John K Walton, *Blackpool* (Edinburgh University Press/Carnegie 1998)

John K Walton, *The Blackpool Landlady: a social history* (Manchester University Press 1978)

Lytham St Annes

Frank Kilroy, *The Wreck of the* Mexico (1986, Lytham St Annes Branch, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, reprinted with an addendum by David Forshaw, 2012)

Peter Shakeshaft, *St Anne's on the Sea: a history* (Carnegie 2008)

Brian Turner, *Victorian Lytham: portrait of a nineteenth-century watering place* (Lytham St Annes Civic Society 2012)

Southport

F A Bailey, *A History of Southport* (Angus Dowie 1955; Sefton Council Libraries & Arts Department 1992)

Morecambe

Roger K Bingham, *Lost Resort: the flow and ebb of Morecambe* (Cicerone 1990)

Barry Guise & Pam Brook, *The Midland Hotel: Morecambe's White Hope* (Palatine 2009)

Appendix 1: Late nineteenth-century British steel towers

Details of Blackpool and Morecambe Towers are at pages 30-31/33-36 and page 60 respectively.

The Metropolitan Tower Construction Company, led by Sir Edward Watkin, at the time a leading light in the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire, the Metropolitan and the South Eastern & Chatham Railways and the Channel Tunnel Company, began a tower on a 280-acre site at Wembley alongside the Metropolitan main line in 1889. The structure, intended to be 1,150 feet high, reached only the first 155ft stage, and was scrapped in 1907. Eventually Wembley Stadium was built on the site.

The Brighton 'Eiffel' Tower & Winter Gardens Ltd, was floated in 1891 with a nominal capital of £10,000, of which only £743 had been raised in the first five months. The company was dissolved in October 1892.

The Standard Contract & Debenture Corporation was responsible, in addition to the Blackpool project, for the New Brighton and Douglas, Isle of Man, tower projects in the same period.

The Douglas Tower, intended only to be 375 feet high, was designed by Thomas Floyd, the borough engineer of Douglas Corporation, and planned in conjunction with the Douglas Head Suspension Bridge Company, which planned to bridge the harbour to improve access to the Marine Drive. The foundation stone was laid in October 1890 and no further construction ever took place. The costs of the opening ceremony remained unpaid and the company's total cash assets were eventually discovered to be £3. The Manx Clerk of the Rolls declared against "being left in the dark amidst chicanery and rascality".

The New Brighton Tower & Recreation Company was established in 1895. Its tower, 567ft 6in high, was designed by Frank Maxwell and opened – incomplete – at Whitsuntide 1896. The octagonal building at the base was built in the same red Ruabon brick as the Blackpool building. Within the legs stood the 3,000-seat Grand Tower Theatre, and there was a ballroom which could accommodate a thousand couples. Because of a lack of maintenance during the First World War the tower was demolished in 1919-21 and the building survived until 1969.

Appendix 2: Blackpool trams: twentieth-century evolution

For its core year-round services Blackpool Corporation Tramways built up a fleet of fairly conventional British double-deck cars: in the early years they had open tops and exposed driving positions; after the First World War newer vehicles were built with upper-deck roofs and the earlier ones modified to correspond. Faced with political opposition to the purchase of new cars in the 1920s, the General Manager, Charles Furness, quietly rebuilt a heterogeneous collection of pre-war vehicles, the "Marton Boxes" and the "Motherwells", into a traditional but extremely durable bogie double-decker with deliberately dated Tudor-arch windows in the lower deck: these "Standards", as they came to be called, often contained little more of the earlier vehicle than the number, and some were eventually built new by an outside manufacturer, Hurst Nelson of Motherwell. Seven of the forty-two Standards have been preserved, three of them in the United States.

To cope with the exceptional summer traffic on the promenade Blackpool early adopted a unique patented design named, after the contemporary battleship, the "Dreadnought". These eighteen-ton juggernauts, with two staircases at each end for rapid loading and unloading and noted for their distinctly limited braking power, were moving landmarks on the promenade until 1934, and one of the twenty, No 59, built in 1902, still survives.

The Tramroad Company's fleet consisted entirely of single-deckers, of two patterns, strikingly similar to the rolling-stock of the nearly contemporary Manx Electric Railway – a long, fully-enclosed bogie saloon known from their rectangular shape as "Box Cars", and an open-sided crossbench design, known to

Appendix 5: Blackpool Illuminations switch-on celebrities

1934 Lord Derby
1935 Audrey Mossom (Railway Queen)
1936 Sir Josiah Stamp
1937 HRH Prince George, Duke of Kent
1938 Councillor Mrs Quayle

1949 Anna Neagle
1950 Wilfred Pickles
1951 Stanley Mathews
1952 Valerie Hobson
1953 George Formby
1954 Gilbert Harding
1955 Jacob Malik (Russian Ambassador)
1956 Reginald Dixon
1957 John H Whitney (American Ambassador)
1958 A E Matthews
1959 Jayne Mansfield
1960 Janet Munro
1961 Violet Carson
1962 Shirley Ann Field
1963 Cliff Michelmore
1964 Gracie Fields
1965 David Tomlinson
1966 Ken Dodd
1967 Dr Horace King (Speaker of the House of Commons)
1968 Sir Matt Busby
1969 Canberra Bomber
1970 Tony Blackburn
1971 Cast of *Dad's Army*
1972 Danny La Rue
1973 Gordon Banks
1974 Wendy Craig
1975 Tom Baker
1976 Carol Ann Grant (Miss United Kingdom)
1977 Red Rum
1978 Terry Wogan
1979 Kermit the Frog and the Muppets
1980 Cannon and Ball
1981 Earl & Countess Spencer
1982 Rear-Admiral "Sandy" Woodward
1983 Cast of *Coronation Street*
1984 Johannes Rau (Minister-President, North Rhine Westphalia & David Waddington, QC, MP (Minister of State, Home Office)
1985 Joanna Lumley
1986 Les Dawson
1987 Frank Bough, Ann Gregg & Kathy Tayler, BBC *Holiday* programme
1988 Andrew Lloyd Webber & Sarah Brightman
1989 Frank Bruno
1990 Julie Goodyear & Roy Barraclough (Bet & Alec Gilroy, *Coronation Street*)
1991 Derek Jameson and Judith Chalmers
1992 Lisa Stansfield
1993 Status Quo
1994 Shirley Bassey
1995 Bee Gees
1996 Eternal
1997 Michael Ball
1998 Chris De Burgh
1999 Gary Barlow
2000 Westlife
2001 Steps
2002 Ronan Keating
2003 Blue
2004 Geri Halliwell
2005 Chris Evans
2006 Dale Winton
2007 David Tennant
2008 *Top Gear* Team
2009 Alan Carr
2010 Robbie Williams
2011 Keith Lemon
2012 Team GB – Beth Tweddle, Max Whitlock, Sophie Hosking, Luke Campbell, Stephen Burke & Karina Bryant

The switch-on ceremony was broadcast by BBC Radio 1 (1993-1996), BBC Radio 2 (1997-2009) and Real Radio/Smooth Radio (2010-2011).