



Resorting to the Coast Conference Highlights & Speaker Presentations



Resorting to the Coast Conference Post-Event Report

	Page
1. Summary	3
a) Key recommendations	3
2. Introduction	4
a. Objectives	4
3. Programme and speakers	5
a. Full summary of speaker presentations	6
4. Conference suggestions, feedback and key recommendations	17
5. Appendices	19
6. Photo credits	20

1. Summary

The key achievements of the conference were bringing together local groups who previously have not worked as one collective body. The collective body, called Tendring Coastal Heritage Group (TCHG), has the common goal of promoting the seaside heritage of Tendring coastal resorts for the purpose of tourism, preservation of the heritage and working towards changing public perception of the coastal resorts in Tendring.

By highlighting the resorts' positive heritage of the past and harnessing the value of this for future growth it is hoped to revive visitors' expectations towards visiting this part of the coast. The conference also highlighted where the gaps are and need for more assistance in achieving these goals.

Overall the comments received from the evaluation forms and interviews conducted on the day indicate that the conference programme and topics were well received: To summarise some of the comments received:

- a very good day
- surpasses any ideas I thought I may find here today
- the presentations and discussions opened up debate and greater thought about what can be done to help these towns regenerate
- I am very enthusiastic after this conference
- some very interesting insights which I will take away with me
- more answers and solid ideas needed moving forward- how to improve tourism would be good

1a) Key recommendations

- Expand the Resorting to the Coast network (Tendring Coastal Heritage Group) by inviting independent local business, more stakeholders such as holiday parks. The heritage assets, tourism, small businesses are woven together and linked by similar goal to attract visitors to Tendring
- Develop joint working and co-operation between the heritage and community groups through shared themes, performances by artists, activity programming and joint festivals. For example, introducing boat races from town to town and transport linking up the towns and heritage sites more effectively
- Develop heritage based youth projects across Tendring with potential for training and skill swap e.g. digital skills, team and project working
- Increase the publicity of the good work already being done by Tendring Coastal Heritage Group under Resorting to the Coast banner. Some of the suggestions are already being undertaken so we realise how important it is to promote it in the right places.
- It's also recommended that the Tendring Coastal Heritage Group acts as a platform to give voice to consultation and representation across Tendring to

campaign for heritage preservation and re-use of existing heritage (e.g. Clacton Martello Tower, the new Tendring cultural strategy consultation and also independent initiatives to attract visitors to this destination)

- The Tendring Coastal Heritage Group is an effective way to skill swap between the heritage societies and museums and build skills through sharing and joint training courses.
- The RTTC entertainments programme in August 2018 and the seaside heritage day in May 2019 will be a great focus for sharing themes and activities this. There may be potential for the heritage day to be adopted as an annual event and the Tendring Coastal Heritage Group would be an ideal forum for the future planning of this

2. Introduction

The first Resorting to the Coast conference was held on 27 April 2018 at the Columbine Centre, Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex, to promote this Heritage Lottery funded project entitled with the same name.

The conference was free and open to academics and the general public across the UK. The conference was also promoted to local residents and businesses that are enthusiastic about the seaside heritage, tourism, regeneration and the history of coastal resorts across Tendring in Essex: Harwich & Dovercourt, Walton, Frinton, Clacton and Jaywick Sands.

Tendring's coastal resorts played a key role in the establishment of the nostalgic 'British Seaside Holiday' since they became popular in the late Victorian era. Resorting to the Coast is a two year project which supports our local heritage & community groups to promote the wonderful seaside heritage of Tendring's coast as one voice, with the goal of enabling the communities to continue the project beyond the Heritage Lottery funding after July 2019.

These groups include: Walton Community Forum, Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust, Clacton & District Local History Society, Friends of Jaywick Martello Tower, Harwich Society, Harwich Festival, Brightlingsea museum, Brightlingsea Lido, The Grand Theatre of Lemmings and the Essex Record Office.

2a) Objectives

'Resorting to the coast' has been a national pastime since the Victorian period, evolving to address demographic changes, greater mobility, fluctuating levels of prosperity and competing leisure activities. The conference looked at the current issues in the national debate around seaside coastal resorts in relation to promoting their often unsung heritage. We specifically focused on the Tendring coastal resorts

of Dovercourt, Walton, Frinton, Clacton and Jaywick Sands because that is the remit for Resorting to the Coast in our original funding application with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Local history groups associated with these resorts are heavily involved in archiving and promoting their seaside heritage, but we asked whether this valued work is sufficient to attract new visitors? In a world of uneven development, how does a resort set itself apart from the competition? How do you unite as a coastal region when the reality is you're in competition with each other? Can lessons be drawn from the past in order to resuscitate the 'Great British Seaside Holiday' as an object of desire, or is it time to wipe the slate clean and start from scratch?

The objectives of the conference were:

- to raise awareness of the above issues
- to raise awareness of the Resorting to the Coast project, both nationally and locally across Tendring, as a mechanism to promote Tendring's coastal heritage and resources.
- To provide a platform for public views and discussion
- To showcase the local heritage across Tendring with a history fair and provide the opportunity for the groups to meet and talk

3. Programme and speakers

It was decided to include a mix of history and regeneration/tourism topics to open up debate, and important to include the local history groups who have a strong stake hold in the future of heritage in the seaside towns in their region.

Specific speakers were invited based on the above decision and included a mix of invitations from UEL and Resorting to the Coast. Suggested topics were put forward to the speakers for their area of expertise. The speakers were a balance of academic experts in seaside heritage, journalists from the Guardian, members of the Club Critical Theory which is a debating club based in Southend and local volunteer history researchers from Tendring who run the local history museums with research and heritage activities for the public and are members of the new Tendring Coastal Heritage Group.

The conference programme was structured around a balance of individual presentations, plenaries hosted by our conference host and the Critical Club Theory organisers who lead the Q&A sessions focusing on national and local debates and issues. The lunchtime included a history fair, cinema screenings and curator's corner. The conference sessions were divided into:

- Seaside Entertainment & Tourism (history seaside entertainment and the economy, history of Butlin's in Clacton)

- Local History Societies: Past, Present and Future – strengths and wish lists
- Heritage & Regeneration (Club Critical Theory discussion and debate session)
- History Fair, Curator's Corner and Cinema Screening during lunch hour

The speakers' slides are published on our website resources section, with the programme, at: www.tendringcoastalheritage.org.uk

4a) Full summary of speaker presentations in order of presenting:

Welcome & introduction:

Juliana Vandegrift, Project Coordinator, Resorting to the Coast:

Juliana thanked the co-organisers of the conference, University of East London and Cultural Engine and the student volunteers, and welcomed the delegates and speakers to the conference.

At the heart of Resorting to the Coast is its community of volunteers, the true experts on Tendring's seaside heritage. The volunteers have formed the Tendring Coastal Heritage Group especially to launch Resorting to the Coast over a two year programme of activities which delivers a local schools programme with a new resource pack, it records twenty five oral histories, summer entertainments and a travelling exhibition, training for volunteers in promoting and preserving seaside heritage, two conferences, an online compendium of seaside resort history across Tendring and a new website to house all the material and make it available to the public. The project culminates in a seaside heritage day in May 2019 but we are applying for further funding streams to continue the work begun.

It is hoped that conferences like the Resorting to the Coast one will reinforce and draw attention to the historical achievements of the past whilst debating how we can use these as a springboard to attract a new generation of Resorters to the Coast. Suggestions and new ideas were welcomed and a space was provided for conference delegates to post suggestions on the wall. (The suggestions have been recorded in Appendix B).

Dr Toby Butler, conference host and freelance historian:

Toby highlighted that we have the attention of the local authority for Resorting to the Coast (RTTC) as a project is mentioned a number of times in the Essex Economic Commission report published in March 2018. This is a document that Essex Local Authorities and businesses hope will influence priority setting for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and also Government. RTTC is mentioned so it could play a key role in supporting tourism and place-making – heritage informing cultural, tourism and economic development. For some of the towns in the Tendring area this is very important. And this is also one of the key reasons for developing the RTTC project in the first place.

Extract from the Essex Economic Commission report, March 2018:

'Regenerating coastal communities: Coastal regeneration needs to address a range of challenges through a county or regional grouping such as the SELEP Coastal Communities Group or Essex Coastal Forum. Challenges facing some coastal communities include lower pay, poorer qualifications and skills, higher levels of deprivation and costs associated with a larger local population aged 65+. Developing seaside tourism forms part of coastal regeneration, with progress here also dependent on local strategies. An example of a broader local strategy for tourism is 'Destination Southend-on-Sea' and of a focused coastal heritage strategy is Tendring's 'Resorting to the Coast'. (Hyperlink to full report is listed in Appendix A.)

Toby emphasized the importance of ongoing discussion and communication to explore these topics further and events like this conference provide good platforms for this.

Questions Toby posed for the audience at the start of the conference:

What are the key cultural assets in the Tendring district? We have the seaside of course, but what about the sites that are intangible because they have disappeared, places destroyed, oral histories and memories refer to them but what are we doing to preserve these memories?

Toby visited the five key towns the before the conference to see how the heritage was represented in Clacton, Harwich & Dovercourt, Jaywick Sands, Frinton, Walton and asked what does the district offer in terms of interpretation of its heritage? Where are the leaflets, can we revamp the existing information boards along the coast?

How might we link the heritage across the towns of Tendring? There are EU schemes still available, networks already developed.

Local community – those who live here all year round – can we use the heritage for training programmes, art-based work, what stories of this community are presented?

Seaside Entertainment & Tourism Session:

Dr Tony Lidington, freelance researcher and practitioner of seaside entertainment:
British Seaside Entertainments 1891 to the present: an overview

Key highlights:

Evolution of the seaside holiday - began in Victorian days with boat rides on the steamers and pleasure boats from London to Clacton, Harwich and Walton. Seaside was associated with spa towns and bathing which were considered good for health. E.g. Brighton's seaside origins.

Seaside was seen as 'racy and saucy', a chance to 'play for the day' outside the normal conventions and restrictions of day to day living. Piers were set over the stretch of sea water so people could take the ozone air for good health. New technology was introduced in form of the 'mutascope' for saucy entertainment e.g. 'What the Butler Saw'. Play was a major form of entertainment e.g. donkey rides, building sandcastles, entertainment from Punch and Judy shows (which was originally town-based show not seaside) and 'oompa bands' pre 1914.

Covered the origins of the British seaside entertainment in the form of early Minstrel shows which had migrated over from America based on T.D.Rice from the 1830s. Rice was a white American performer and playwright who performed blackface shows and used African-American vernacular speech, song, and dance to become one of the most popular minstrel show entertainers of his time. He is considered the "father of American minstrelsy". His act drew on aspects of African American culture and popularized them with a national, and later international, audience. The minstrelsy form of entertainment became the most popular style at the seaside until Clifford Essex appeared with his banjo orchestra in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. In 1891, the singer and banjoist Clifford Essex saw a French production of 'L'Enfant Prodigue' at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London and decided to create a troupe of English Pierrot entertainers. Thus began the tradition of seaside Pierrots in pointed hats and black or coloured costumes that sang, danced, juggled, and joked on the piers of Brighton, Margate and Blackpool from the 1890s until the 1950s. The style of performance attracted artists from music hall and variety theatre. Some performers, such as Neville Kennard, were known as specialists in the field.

A concert party, also called a Pierrot troupe, is the collective name for a group of entertainers, or Pierrots, popular in Britain during the first half of the 20th century. The variety show given by a Pierrot troupe was called a Pierrot show.

Immensely popular in Great Britain from the 1920s to the 1940s, concert parties were also formed by several countries' armed forces during the First and Second World Wars. During the Second World War, the British Armed Forces' concert party became known as the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), later succeeded by the Combined Services Entertainment (CSE).

Concert parties were travelling shows of songs and comedy, often put on at the seaside and opening with a Pierrot number.

From 1891 Pierrot entertainers in emerging forms began touring seaside resorts. Will Catlin's original Pierrots performed at Scarborough, Withernsea, they even entertained on the war front in Gallipoli and Flanders. Both minstrel troops and Pierrot troops explored gender and fluidity with males dressing as women characters. Costumes varied from nautical and militaria. After Pierrots came performers such as The Vagabonds and Concert Parties. Many famous performers from the 1920s began as Pierrots for example, Clown Bertram, Max Miller. Tony put

forward the case that without Pierrot troupes there would be no Goon Show and without the Goons there would be no Monty Python and in turn no League of Gentleman. Tony talked about the thread of history running through these forms of entertainment originating from seaside entertainment. The Ramblas in Clacton were the last concert party that used the Pierrot format.

Dr Kathryn Ferry, historian specialising in architecture, design and seaside culture:
Holidays with Play: Butlin's at Clacton 1938-83

Key highlights:

Billy Butlin was the master of advertising and the only independent business to advertise at railway station very early on. It has only been eighty years since the first legal paid holidays were given in this country and we had the right to take paid time off work. Butlin's had the slogan 'A week's holiday for a week's play' and Billy Butlin based the price on about a week's pay for a family. Each holiday chalet had its own key which the guests were given. This was very different compared to how guests were treated by the traditional seaside landlady when they were shut out of the accommodation all day in the past! What guests didn't realise was that one chalet key opened all chalets at Butlin's in the 1930s!

Billy Butlin noticed that the guests, in true traditional British reserve, were not participating in the free activities included as part of their week's holiday at the Butlin's camps. They were used to paying for everything individually and were 'holding back'. This is why he recruited the famous Red Coats who were instructed to jolly the guests along and encourage them to participate in tennis, swimming, ping pong etc.

Butlin's hired top bands of the day to perform and hired the contemporary celebrities to host events like the 'Festival of Holiday, Hope and Happiness'. Billy Butlin designed the entertainment programme around the weekends because he noticed that guests wrote their first postcards on the Monday morning and they talked about the celebrities and entertainments they had seen. Famous celebrities who cut their teeth in Butlin's camps as young camp entertainers, comedians and the famous Redcoats are Des O'Connor, Bob Monkhouse, Cliff Richard, Ted Rogers, Rod Hull, Terry Scott and Jimmy Tarbuck. And Catherine Zeta-Jones won a talent contest at Butlin's in Wales as a child.

After the war, Butlin's holidays were promoted as 'a holiday for mother' and it was progressive in introducing a nappy laundry service, infant feeding rooms, babysitting services.

The Clacton Butlin's could house 6,000 guests per week. In 1963 Butlin's as a whole provided holidays for 1 million guests. The customers were repeat bookers year on year so the camps needed new and novel ideas so in the 1960s there were

chopstick competitions, spaghetti eating competitions, limbo dancing contests, spas and twister dances. By the late 1960s teenagers had gained more of a presence and became 'heard' as well as 'seen' and it began to put families off Butlin holidays. By the late 1960s Bobby Butlin took over from his father. 1971 and 1980 were record numbers of visitor years for Butlin's holiday camps. However, as the fashion for holidays abroad became more affordable and popular, Butlin's was no longer an aspirational holiday for families.

The Clacton Butlin's closed in 1983 and 841 seasonal jobs were lost and it was a big loss to the area and it needs to be commemorated in some way. The decision was made by the Board of Butlin's to close the Clacton camp and it's doubtful that any decisions made by the local authority in Clacton at this time could have influenced Butlin's overall decision and strategy for the company.

Plenary discussion and questions for Tony Lidington and Kathryn Ferry:

It was highlighted by Norman Jacobs that the West Cliff Theatre has a special anniversary coming up in 2019, run by the Friends of West Cliff Theatre, and this is perhaps something Resorting to the Coast could help with the commemoration activities. Tony Lidington suggested a small financial contribution from the council towards the commemoration.

Question from the audience for Tony Lidington on how do researchers and academics present heritage narratives and images which were acceptable in former years but have since become controversial in today's context and beliefs? The example cited for the audience member was the old beauty contests of the 1950s, 60s, 70s when it was completely normal for women to be judged in bathing suits but caused debate in today's world. The question asked how do you present the old history in today's context? Tony Lidington has the same delicate issue when discussing the history of minstrelsy and the entertainers used to 'blackface' with make-up and used names which are controversial and no longer acceptable in today's context. The issue is how do you present the past in today's world? If you refer to the old names used on a twitter post there is no room to provide an extensive background to the history, quotes are in danger of being taken out of context and retweeted inappropriately. Tony advised that the crucial point to remember is that the openness of the discussion is important and the actual debate around the origins of topics and their historical context; as long as we don't celebrate the former beliefs and prejudice e.g. misogyny of former beauty contests and racial slurs of the old minstrelsy performers.

A new question was asked as to whether the council in Clacton cared at the time when Butlin's closed its doors and departed? Kathryn Ferry believes that yes they did mind but they couldn't control the decision made by Butlin's in their boardroom when they made key decisions for their holiday camps across the country at that

period in history. Norman Jacobs commented that the closure of Butlin's impacted the town significantly and Clacton took twenty years to recover after 1983.

Tony Lidington added that if seaside resorts wish to attract the crowds once again, the key is to involve the public in entertaining them. E.g. where is the Granny entertainment and entertainment for the extended family when they come to our seaside towns today? He is a strong believer that young people need to be trained and supported in developing artistic and performing skills and that leads to employment in the arts. It's something that's been neglected for decades and there is no younger generation picking up the baton.

Local History Societies: Past, Present & Future session:

Roger Kennell, Chairman of Clacton VCH Group: *Clacton Victoria County History Group:*

Topics covered:

- Education is key and most important – telling the story of Clacton and the seaside towns of Tendring coast so that residents are proud of the past achievements and are motivated to preserve it for future generations.
- Clacton Victoria County History Group has monthly meetings and has secured funding in the past for WW2 projects plus more.
- The group has a presence at multiple local events and activities and supports these by having different exhibitions every year. For example, Clacton Airshow, Clacton Museum in the library, St James exhibition, Essex Record Office Listening Bench Project
- Future prospects – members would like a heritage centre focusing on all of Tendring's seaside history. Clacton's Martello tower could be a possible development opportunity for this if the right partners collaborated on this
- There seems a real sense of optimism for future growth of the holiday/heritage industry in the UK now and the wheel has turned full circle. The huge investment in Clacton pier currently, for example, and this might inspire others to invest also. Piers are so 'retro' they're back in fashion!

Dr Josie Close, Curator, Walton Maritime Museum: *Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust:*

Topics covered:

- Frinton & Walton are blessed with a rich heritage in both towns and surrounding countryside with the Naze tower, Martello tower, geological heritage dating back millions of years, protected wildlife, Walton Maritime Museum, Frinton Crossing Cottage, Garden and Railway Museum plus its

archives, former wind and tide mills, radar defences, history of RNLI lifeboats and the James Stevens lifeboat

- Existing co-operation in the shape of Walton Community Forum, Essex Wildlife Trust, Naze Tower and Naze Protection Society for erosion
- Co-operation beyond Walton in form of Essex Museums Development, Share museum collaboration, Clacton history groups, Brightlingsea museum
- Resorting to the Coast has now encouraged links previously not made. Post RTTC 2019: We need to plan now for ongoing engagement and co-operation.
- Note that after considerable effort from the town and Tendring District Council in celebrating Walton's railway station's 150th anniversary in 2017 there is no lasting legacy
- Future prospects could include: Work with TDC + Planners to upgrade + infill abandoned, derelict areas- jobs for young people
 - Mill Lane scope for
 - Medical Practice,
 - Craft Workshops,
 - Small biz [printers, boat-related]
 - Maritime Coastal Agency empty! – prime site
 - Sea School, Training + Practice
 - Broader publicity
 - Stena Line, Greater Anglia
 - ECC support Essex Outreach
- Feedback from external sources: “East England's coastal town's not well known” (Samantha Richardson, Coastal Tourism Academy)

David Whittle, Vice-chairman of the Harwich Society: *Coastal Heritage*

Topics covered:

- Special location of Harwich, surrounded by water, it has a military history, it was also the location for the filming of Hi-de-Hi television series based on the old holiday camp, Warners.
- Harwich hosted the first Kinder transport children from Germany in 1938
- Mayflower's history with the town and Christopher Jones' house
- Harwich Society formed in 1969 now has 2000 members, who lead and support numerous activities each year such as the maritime heritage trail, Ha'penny pier and visitor centre. The Society runs and maintains several visitor attractions within the area. It is restoring the largest ancient monument in the area, the Harwich Redoubt Fort, and has so far spent over £300,000 on the project. It established and maintains a Maritime Museum in the disused Low Lighthouse. It also runs the High Lighthouse, the Radar Tower on Beacon Hill and the Lifeboat Museum, which is housed in the old Victorian Lifeboat Station. The Harwich Society Visitor Centre, which is manned by

volunteers throughout the summer, is located in the old Ticket Office on the Ha'penny Pier. In addition, the Society also owns a small nature reserve, Bobbitt's Hole, which is in Dovercourt.

- Naval shipyard – Men of War boats built between 1620 to 1827
- Lifeboat from Clacton and a blue flag beach at Dovercourt

Plenary discussion and questions for Roger Kennell, Josie Close, David Whittle, hosted by Toby Butler:

Q: Toby asked what is at the top of their wish list for Tendring in terms of historical interpretation, debate, tours, information boards, marketing of heritage, where it could be improved?

Josie Close: Finds it much harder to engage younger people with the museum's resources. Children today are digitally savvy with the technology, they make films, play interactive games and she is very keen to have outreach with the young people for Walton Maritime Museum where she is volunteer curator. Engaging with families and children at the museum will be her main focus for the next few years.

Roger Kennell: Agrees that introducing digital technology in their museums is the way forward to engage new visitors and younger people. He also advocates the volunteers taking the history out of the museum space to the younger generations in different formats and locations.

David Whittle: They have a 49 inch television which plays history videos about Harwich and a new website under development for the Harwich Society. David also visits schools to talk about the history of Harwich and Dovercourt and has school visits to the various heritage places.

An audience member recommended Essex University's intern placement scheme for its Masters students which the local societies could engage with.

Q: The question was asked by Toby that in terms of infrastructure, availability of community spaces, support from government agencies do they think there are gaps that need to be addressed?

Josie Close: We need a central location for comfort, practical purposes to provide training and project opportunities for interns at the Walton Museum and it is probably similar situation across Tendring for the other history groups and museums. Josie would like to see curatorial students using the materials at the museum but it's not practical as the building is old, cold, lacks facilities etc.

Roger Kennell: Clacton museum needs to digitise a lot of material and a catalogue of resources.

David Whittle: Emphasised the importance of providing ample car parking in Harwich because he believes a large number of people come to the town, drive around, cannot find parking and leave.

Q: How do you think it will be useful to work cooperatively?

Josie Close: Helpful to have a regional map of the heritage attractions. Suffolk has a brilliant map, where is the one for Essex? Nobody knows about us! Perhaps we could work closer with Greater Anglia railway to do more promotion of the region at the railway stations.

Roger Kennell: We should work together as one voice. As a collective we have so much to offer in the way of heritage across Tendring and Tendring District Council needs to promote it more effectively.

David Whittle: Form a network similar to Maritime Heritage East to work cooperatively.

Comment from the audience: Tendring wide publicity is non-existent and the Tendring District Council needs to get a lot more involved and promote it. The closure of Walton Tourist Information Centre was a loss to the town. Do we engage enough with the caravan parks – could they help with promotion, could they provide an office for interns?

Heritage and Regeneration: introduced by Dr Andrew Branch, University of East London

Club Critical Theory discussion and debate session hosted by Dr Andrew Branch (University of East London) with today's members:

Dr Daniel Burdsey (Brighton University)

Dr Tim Gale (Bournemouth University)

Tim Burrows (journalist for the Guardian)

Joanne O'Connor (journalist for the Guardian)

Challenging talks on seaside cultures including forgotten communities, regeneration, resentment. Heritage culture and diversity in terms of engagement. Successful examples of coastal towns which have regenerated and also ones where it didn't work quite so well and the pitfalls to watch out for.

Dr Andrew Branch opened the plenary session with four questions for the speakers and audience to address:

How is history made and valued, by who and how?

How does the sense of geography help us?

How can top down strategic decisions be sensitive to these issues?

Socio-economic class of these decision makers is narrow, so how can it be representative of all the communities living in seaside towns?

Speakers:

Dr Daniel Burdsey, University of Brighton: *What Heritage, Whose Heritage? Race, the English Seaside and Using the Past to Shape an Inclusive Seaside Future.*

Topics covered:

- The English seaside is popular as a place that is both experienced and imagined; The role of heritage and nostalgia in forming emotional bonds
- But whose identities are included in and excluded from seaside cultures? Whose stories get told and whose are silenced?
- What are the implications for those who are not celebrated as/in culture and heritage or are not permitted to have a say in what is remembered?
- 'There are important questions concerning the abilities of local authorities to reinvent the seaside, whether they are pursuing insular or parochial visions, how processes of coastal regeneration divide communities, and the degrees to which research knowledge is brought to bear on the decision-making process about changing leisure tastes and markets and the economic benefits they may bring' (Gilchrist, Carter and Burdsey 2014: 2)
- Remembering the historical connections between minority ethnic communities and the seaside, and celebrating the contemporary ways in which they enrich its spaces and cultures (as tourists, residents, refugees, students, retirees, workers)
- Regeneration beyond gentrification (which can reinforce race, class and local boundaries)
- Leisure and tourism infrastructure that reflects multi-ethnic Britain
- Not necessarily a case of "wiping the slate clean" but thinking about what and who need to be added to it

Dr Tim Gale, Lecturer, Tourism Management, Bournemouth University: *Seaside Cultures and Cultural Change*

Topics covered:

- Who is the seaside for and how do we repurpose our heritage?
- How do you get Millennials interested in the seaside when their memories are of holidays abroad? You bring the beaches to the urban settings, e.g. pop-up

beaches in London and Bristol where the beach comes to us rather than us to the beach. There are even virtual beaches for online gamers.

- Using seaside resort of Rhyl in Wales as a case study to illustrate the national pattern of the four ages of the British seaside holiday from rise, decline and on the incline again.
- Coastal tourism once again a growing industry; £8bn domestic overnight and day trip spend, supporting 210,000 jobs valued at £3.6bn and many SMEs (NCTA, 2017)
- Investing in new attractions and facilities, upgrading accommodation and conserving the best of the historic built environment while enhancing the remainder; also efficiencies to make businesses lean and more productive
- Rate of growth does not match that of the visitor economy nationally; perception issues (run down and tacky, closed in the winter, etc); pace of change is glacial
- Seaside resorts among the most deprived areas in the UK; what of Rhyl? (Ocean Beach Funfair and Sun Centre closed, façade gaps, plans for new hotel/ restaurants/ leisure facilities)
- Banksy's pop-up 'Dismaland' and its impact on Weston-super-Mare and perception of seaside.

Tim Burrows, Guardian journalist and writer, grew up in Southend:

Topics covered:

- Talked about his time spent visiting Harwich and the local history group very recently and touring the sights; Harwich is impressively powered by its people, but Tim posed the questions of whether nostalgia is now the most important aspect of heritage because who is the seaside for today? If today's seaside resorts are to flourish they need to talk to the younger generation of today. There's a blank canvas to work with.

Joanne O'Connor, Essex born and based, journalist, writer about the arts, culture, travel for the Observer, the Guardian and the Financial Times.

Topics covered:

- When Joanne researches and publishes her interviews and stories heritage always evokes a strong response from the public and those interviewed.
- The reaction, however, is mixed and there's a sense that celebrating heritage is popular not for everybody and it's associated with gentrification, social cleansing and increased house prices. 'DFLs' – Down from London and a 'beasted' bandwagon. Do we want Londoners here?

- Clacton was built for Londoners! But are we catering for the younger generation's needs today? What is the point of tourism if it doesn't create jobs for the younger generation? Joanne cited personal example of her extended family and her younger cousins who live in Clacton with no employment, and those relatives who have left Clacton for Colchester and London where the job prospects delivered more than Clacton could provide.
- When Joanne was a teenager she used to go on daytrips to Southend with her school friends who were a multi-racial group of Muslims, Sikhs and now there's a whole generation of multi-racial British who are nostalgic about their visits to the seaside, how does the heritage address this need? She gives Radical Essex as a good example of starting with what already exists within our heritage. It celebrates ownership and pride in heritage and has a positive effect on the young.

4b) Feedback on speakers was very positive; the afternoon plenary provoked the most questions from the audience. The cinema screenings worked well because people could dip in and out. The history fair was very well received and enjoyed and generated a lot of conversation about the heritage and how to promote it.

Comments received:

- the wealth of information and heritage that exist and is being developed on varying scales. That there is so much passion to develop these areas and improve people's awareness of coastal towns
- it's still quite traditional and not as joined up as I thought it would be
- lack of collaboration on the wealth of heritage asset. Sharing people and moving them around would be the way forward

5. Conference suggestions, feedback and recommendations

Delegates' suggestions posted on the comments wall during the conference have been summarised in a table and attached at the end of this report as Appendix B. Where a suggestion is outside the scope and purpose of Resorting to the Coast project it will be passed onto the relevant organisation for consideration.

Similarly where a suggestion could be helped by the Resorting to the Coast project it will be considered. And where suggestions are already being supported by RTTC this has been highlighted.

Below is a selection of comments from the attendee's feedback forms received at the end of the conference

Evaluation question: 'Were expectations met?'

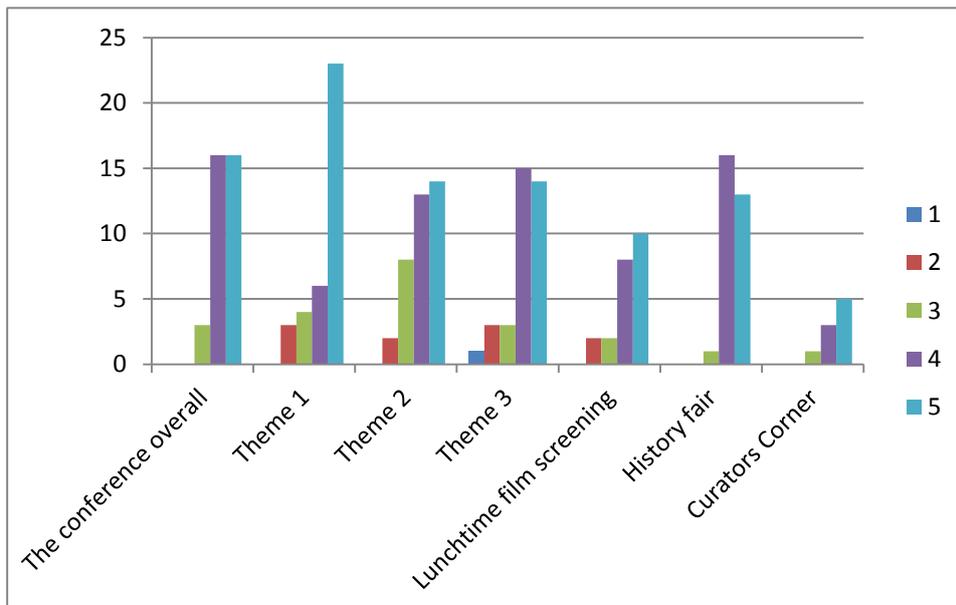
- A very good day

- Surpasses any ideas I thought I may find here today
- the presentations and discussions opened up debate and greater thought about what can be done to help these towns regenerate
- I am very enthusiastic after this conference
- some very interesting insights which I will take away with me
- more answers and solid ideas needed moving forward- how to improve tourism would be good

Responses to the question ‘What is the one thing you discovered today about the Tendring coastal towns and their heritage that most surprised you?’ mainly fall into two areas:

- 1- the amount of heritage that exist and the level of interest
- 2- That work is disjointed and societies don’t seem to communicate

	1	2	3	4	5
The conference overall	0	0	3	16	16
Theme 1	0	3	4	6	23
Theme 2	0	2	8	13	14
Theme 3	1	3	3	15	14
Lunchtime film screening	0	2	2	8	10
History fair	0	0	1	16	13
Curators Corner	0	0	1	3	5



5a Key recommendations

Based on suggestions which were generated by the discussions and presentations at the conference and from the audience's suggestions, here are the key recommendations:

- Expand the Resorting to the Coast network (Tendring Coastal Heritage Group) by inviting independent local business, more stakeholders such as holiday parks. The heritage assets, tourism, small businesses are woven together and linked by similar goal to attract visitors to Tendring
- Develop joint working and co-operation between the heritage and community groups through shared themes, performances by artists, activity programming and joint festivals. For example, introducing boat races from town to town and transport linking up the towns and heritage sites more effectively
- Develop heritage based youth projects across Tendring with potential for training and skill swap e.g. digital skills, team and project working
- Increase the publicity of the good work already being done by Tendring Coastal Heritage Group under Resorting to the Coast banner. Some of the suggestions are already being undertaken so we realise how important it is to promote it in the right places.
- It's also recommended that the Tendring Coastal Heritage Group acts as a platform to give voice to consultation and representation across Tendring to campaign for heritage preservation and re-use of existing heritage (e.g. Clacton Martello Tower, the new Tendring cultural strategy consultation and also independent initiatives to attract visitors to this destination)
- The Tendring Coastal Heritage Group is an effective way to skill swap between the heritage societies and museums and build skills through sharing and joint training courses.
- The RTTC entertainments programme in August 2018 and the seaside heritage day in May 2019 will be a great focus for sharing themes and activities this. There may be potential for the heritage day to be adopted as an annual event and the Tendring Coastal Heritage Group would be an ideal forum for the future planning of this

Appendices:

Appendice A

Essex Economic Commission report, March 2018:

<http://www.essexgrowth.co.uk/media/1036/eec-final-report-march-2018.pdf>

Appendix B:



Suggestions
Comments RTTC 2018

Appendix C:

The speakers' slides are published on our website resources section, with the programme, at: www.tendringcoastalheritage.org.uk

Dr Andrew Branch, *plenary host for Club Critical Theory*

Dr Daniel Burdsey, *What Heritage, Whose Heritage? Race, the English Seaside and Using the Past to Shape an Inclusive Seaside Future.*

Mr Tim Burrows, *Club Critical Theory discussion*

Dr Toby Butler, *conference host*

Dr Josie Close, *Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust*

Dr Kathryn Ferry, *Holidays with Play: Butlin's at Clacton 1938-83*

Dr Tim Gale, *Seaside Cultures and Cultural Change*

Mr Roger Kennell, *Clacton Victoria County History Group:*

Dr Tony Lidington: *British Seaside Entertainments 1891 to the present: an overview*

Ms Joanne O'Connor, *Club Critical Theory discussion*

Mr David Whittle, *Coastal Heritage & Harwich Society*

Ms Juliana Vandegrift, *Welcome and Introduction*

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