

The Anglophile

August 2023



The English Seaside

Beaches, Blackpool & More



EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear all,

Welcome to this August 2023 issue of The Anglophile, which has an 'English Seaside' theme.

Every since early Victorian times, the English seaside has played a big part in England's summer. Even in today's world of inexpensive overseas holidays, millions of the English still go to one of the many beachside resorts around the country.

In this edition, we look at what we regard as the best English beaches and profile one of the great seaside towns: Blackpool.

We have a beaches quiz and a gallery of some great seaside views.

And our great historical figure is King Canute whose (probably apocryphal) claim to fame is an (unsuccessful) attempt to hold back the tide using his exalted position as King.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this issue.

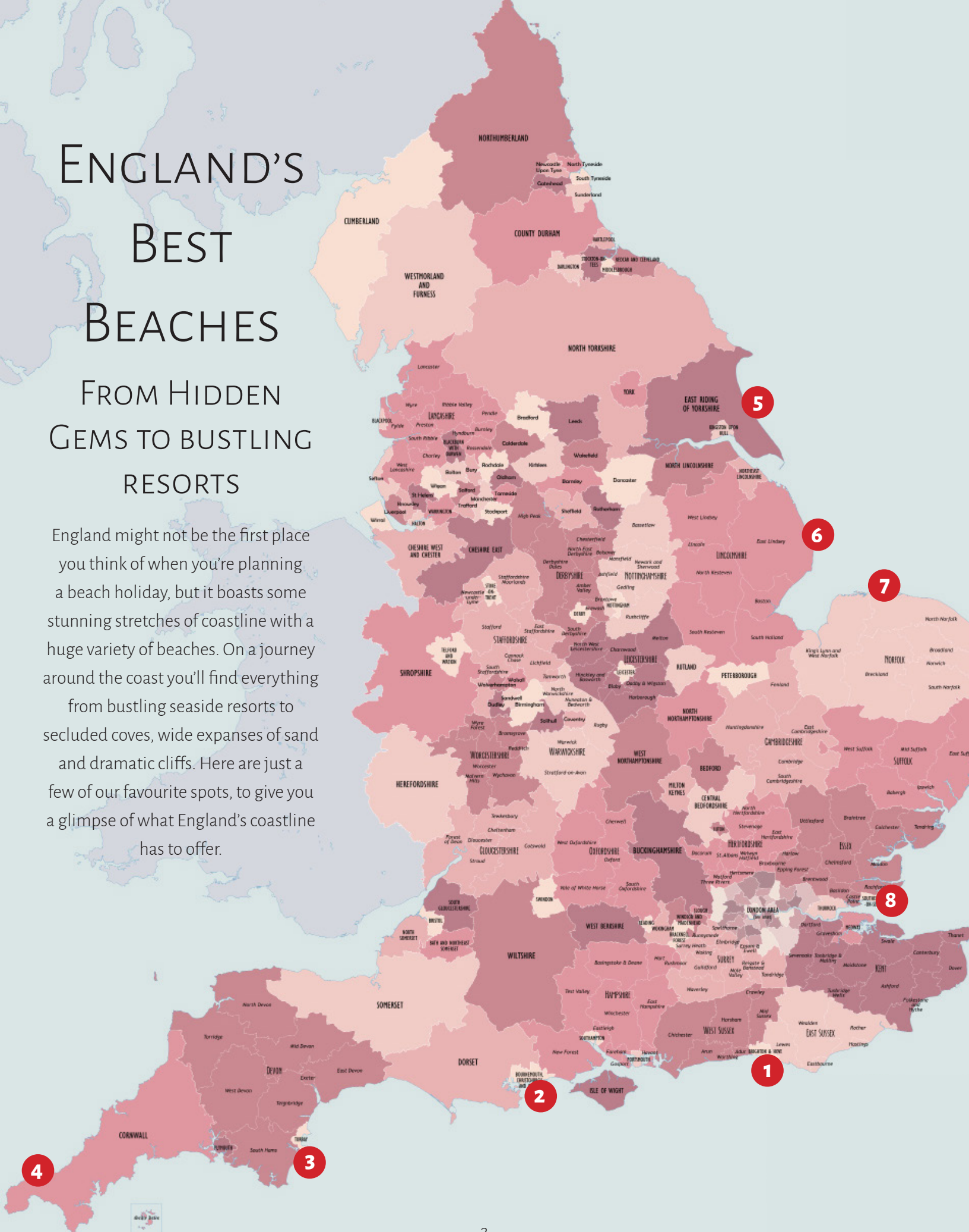
Until next time

Chris

ENGLAND'S BEST BEACHES

FROM HIDDEN GEMS TO BUSTLING RESORTS

England might not be the first place you think of when you're planning a beach holiday, but it boasts some stunning stretches of coastline with a huge variety of beaches. On a journey around the coast you'll find everything from bustling seaside resorts to secluded coves, wide expanses of sand and dramatic cliffs. Here are just a few of our favourite spots, to give you a glimpse of what England's coastline has to offer.





The famous pebble beach at Brighton

1. BRIGHTON BEACH, EAST SUSSEX

On the south coast, lively Brighton is a vibrant and popular city. Its pebble beach is famous for its long promenade and the historic Palace Pier with its amusements and fairground rides. The beach enjoys a bustling atmosphere great for sunbathing, volleyball, water sports and people watching. And it's an easy walk into the busy city centre, known for its eclectic shops and antique stores, lively nightlife, and cultural attractions.

2. BOURNEMOUTH BEACH, DORSET

With seven miles of golden sand and crystal-clear waters, this south coast beach attracts millions of visitors each year who come to soak up the sun, swim in the sea, or enjoy a stroll along the promenade. It's a popular destination for watersports fans, and visitors will find colourful beach huts, well-kept gardens and a busy town centre with plenty of food, drink and shopping



The pier and seafront at Bournemouth

3. BLACKPOOL SANDS, DEVON

In a sheltered bay near Dartmouth, Blackpool Sands is a hidden gem on the South Devon coast.

A long way from its namesake resort town of Blackpool (see p15) this privately managed beach offers a unique combination of fine shingle, clear waters, and lush greenery, creating a Mediterranean vibe.

The beach is surrounded by woodland, making it a tranquil setting for picnics or nature walks.

With safe swimming conditions and excellent facilities, this is a favourite with families and water sports enthusiasts alike.



Overlooking Blackpool Sands

4. ST. IVES BAY, CORNWALL

Cornwall, in southwestern England, is renowned for its stunning coastline, and St. Ives is one of its crown jewels. With its blue waters, pristine beaches, and charming fishing village atmosphere, it's easy to see why this is such a popular destination. Porthminster Beach, Porthmeor Beach, and Carbis Bay are some of the highlights, each offering its unique charm and opportunities for relaxation or water-based activities.



Quaint and lovely St Ives



Whitby beach, overlooked by the Abbey

5. WHITBY BEACH, YORKSHIRE

On the rugged Yorkshire coastline, Whitby offers a unique blend of history, natural beauty, and traditional charm. The beach is framed by cliffs and overlooked by the dramatic ruins of Whitby Abbey. Visitors can explore the charming town of Whitby – famous for its connection to Bram Stoker’s ‘Dracula’ – tuck in to fish and chips, or simply enjoy a stroll along the sandy shore while admiring the views.

6. ANDERBY CREEK, LINCOLNSHIRE

In the east of England on the Lincolnshire coast, Anderby Creek may be one of England’s best-kept secrets – a hidden gem offering a tranquil and unspoiled beach experience. With miles of golden sand and gentle dunes, Anderby Creek provides a peaceful retreat away from the raucous seaside resort of Skegness, a few miles further south. Take a walk along the shore, explore the nature reserve, gaze skyward at the unique Cloud Bar, or simply relax and listen to the waves. Anderby Creek is a true haven for those seeking solitude and natural beauty.



The wild dunes at Anderby Creek

7. HOLKHAM BEACH, NORFOLK

Holkham Beach, on the North Norfolk Coast, is a haven for nature lovers. This vast expanse of golden sand, backed by pine forests and sand dunes, stretches for miles. Walkers will experience stunning vistas, a rich variety of birdlife, and even the opportunity to spot seals basking on the shoreline.



Heading to the beach at Holkham

8. SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX

Not far from London, in the county of Essex, Southend-on-Sea is a popular destination for beach lovers. Stretching along the mouth of the Thames Estuary, Southend boasts the longest pleasure pier in the world at over a mile long. The sandy beaches provide ample space for sunbathing, beach games, and picnics. Visitors can also enjoy a range of activities including water sports, amusement parks, and endless seaside entertainment.



Seafront entertainment at Southend-on-Sea

England's coastline is a treasure trove of beaches and coves, busy resort towns and quiet seaside villages, with something to appeal to all tastes. Our selection barely scratches the surface of the hundreds of unique places to visit, so whether you're seeking lively seaside fun or a secluded spot to connect with nature, you'll find a vast range of destinations, just waiting to be explored.



ENGLISH BEACHES: THE QUIZ

How much do you know about the beaches and coast of England? Find out by taking our quiz below. Answers on page 16.

1. Which coast is Brighton on? North, South, East or West?
2. How long is the sandy beach at Bournemouth? 3 miles, 7 miles or 12 miles?
3. In which English county is St Ives?
4. Whitby has a strong connection to which famous gothic novel?
5. Which river estuary does Southend-on-sea lie on?
6. What's the name of the famous traditional puppet show that appears at many seaside resorts?
7. Brighton has a famous pier... what's it called?
8. Which famous structure inspired the designers of the Blackpool Tower?
9. How tall is the Blackpool Tower?
10. What's the name of Blackpool's famous wooden rollercoaster?
11. Which sea coast does Blackpool lie on?
12. True or false? Brighton is famous for its sandy beach.
13. What's the name of the well-known venue below Blackpool Tower?
14. What was the name of King Canute's father?
15. How long did Canute reign for? One, two or three decades?
16. Which early historian first recorded the story of Canute and the Waves?
17. Which religion did Canute convert the Scandinavians to?
18. Which cathedral houses Canute's remains? Westminster, Winchester or York Minster
19. In which year did Canute die?
20. What was the name of Canute's wife?

Gallery: The English Seaside



The Pier at Blackpool

Buckets and spades have
made for seaside fun since
the early days of tourism



MARKET PLACE



The gift shop in Whitby,
North Yorkshire



Blackpool Tower and
illuminations

A traditional seaside Punch & Judy show



Starlings Over Brighton Pier At Sunset





Rockpooling at the beach

Sunset at Blackpool beach



BLACKPOOL

JEWEL OF THE NORTH WEST

If there's one place that sums up the English seaside, it's Blackpool. Since its early days as a bawdy Victorian beach resort that drew the first generation of working class tourists in their millions, Blackpool remains one of England's most popular destinations.

In the north west of England on the scenic coast of the Irish Sea, Blackpool's iconic landmarks, lively entertainment scene, and stunning coastline, make it the go-to destination for those seeking the quintessential British seaside experience.



Blackpool Illuminations

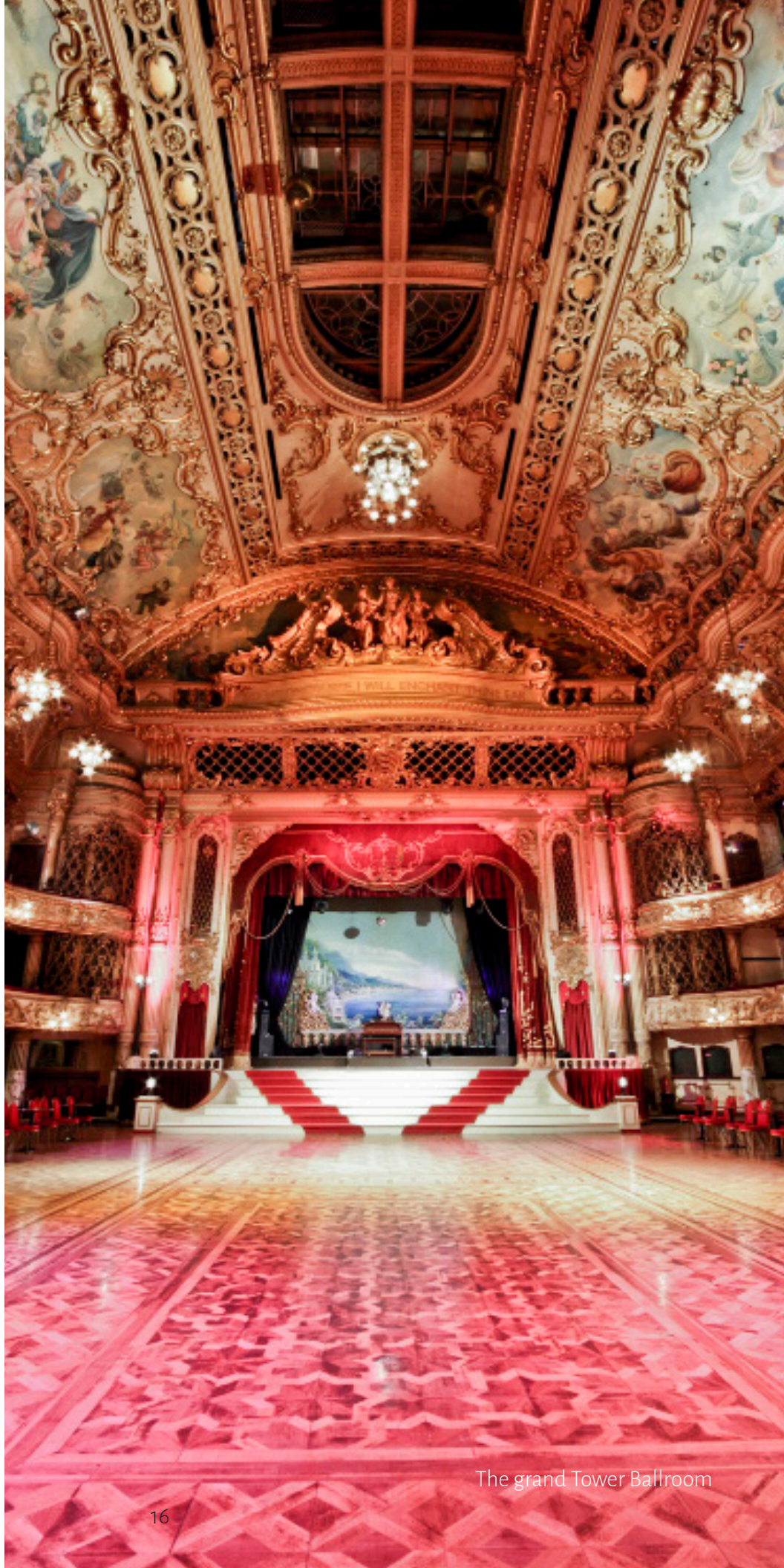
ATTRACTIONS AND LANDMARKS

At 518 feet tall, Blackpool Tower stands over the town like the Eiffel Tower's baby brother. Its observation deck offers panoramic views and, at its foot, the equally famous Tower Ballroom is an opulent dancehall renowned as the international home of ballroom dancing.

For thrills and nostalgia, head to the Pleasure Beach, one of England's best-loved amusement parks. With rides including the legendary wooden roller coaster, the Big One, and classic attractions like the Ghost Train and the Carousel, the Pleasure Beach offers fun for visitors of all ages.

The Blackpool Illuminations are another highlight that draws millions of visitors from around the world. From September to the new year, the town is lit by over a million bulbs, creating vibrant scenes, artistic sculptures, and six miles of light shows along the promenade.

Quiz Answers: 1. South;
2. 7 miles; 3. Cornwall; 4. Dracula;
5. The Thames Estuary; 6. Punch & Judy; 7. Palace Pier; 8. The Eiffel Tower; 9. 518 feet; 10. The Big One;
11. The Irish Sea; 12. False — it's a pebble beach; 13. The Tower Ballroom; 14. Sweyn Forkbeard;
15. Two decades; 16. Henry of Huntingdon; 17. Christianity;
18. Winchester; 19. 1035;
20. Emma of Normandy



The grand Tower Ballroom



A traditional seaside Punch & Judy show



The Big One – Blackpool's iconic wooden rollercoaster



Famous for fish & chips!

ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHTLIFE

Blackpool is synonymous with entertainment, and offers a huge array of shows, theatres, and nightlife. The Victorian Grand Theatre hosts variety shows, musical theatre, ballet, opera, and comedy. And the famous Winter Gardens offers everything from live music to conferences and exhibitions.

For a dose of classic British seaside fun, head to one of Blackpool's famous piers. North Pier, Central Pier, and South Pier offer a mix of classic entertainment, including cabaret, magic shows, live music and the very British Punch and Judy puppet shows.

The newly revamped promenade is lined with shops, amusement arcades, and traditional seaside stalls, and it recalls the town's Victorian heyday. Grab a stick of rock candy, pop on a 'kiss-me-quick' hat, play a game of bingo, or try your luck in the amusement arcades. Then kick off the evening with fish and chips on the beach.

After dark, a thriving nightlife scene offers countless bars, clubs, and pubs catering to all tastes, from trendy cocktail lounges to lively nightclubs.



Blackpool – a seaside town with something for everyone

MILES OF SAND

No trip to Blackpool is complete without a trip to the beach. The wide expanse of golden sand stretches for miles, making it a popular resort for sunbathing, building sandcastles, or swimming in the sea. There are deckchair and beach hut rentals, as well as seaside cafés and ice cream parlours.



FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN

Since the 1860s, Blackpool has been a resort destination for families, offering a whole range of activities to keep children entertained. Beyond the Pleasure Beach and the Tower, there are several family-friendly attractions worth exploring. The Sandcastle Waterpark is the country's largest indoor water park, featuring an array of slides, wave pools, and lazy rivers.

Blackpool Zoo is home to over 1000 animals including lions, tigers, elephants, gorillas and giraffes. The zoo offers educational talks, feeding sessions, and even the opportunity to get up close and personal with some of the residents.

Blackpool definitely divides opinion. If you like things low-key and tranquil, then this bustling resort may be a little unsubtle for your tastes. But there's a reason why Blackpool has been one of the jewels in the crown of England's tourist industry for nearly two centuries, and for an up-beat, nostalgic dose of very British seaside fun, Blackpool can't be beaten.

GREAT FIGURES FROM BRITISH HISTORY



KING CANUTE: A MISUNDERSTOOD MONARCH

The history of England through the Middle Ages is full of strange and unprovable tales of Kings – both real and legendary – whose exploits became the stuff of myth. Think of King Arthur's sword in the stone, King Alfred burning the cakes, and King Canute commanding the tide.

While Arthur and Alfred's stories are almost certainly the invention of medieval story tellers, there's likely to be a little more truth to the famous tale of Canute and the Waves – even if the moral of the story has been turned on its head by many.

Canute is often portrayed as a vain and arrogant king. Seeking to showcase his power and influence, he set his throne by the seashore and commanded the incoming tide to halt and retreat.

But according to most accounts, Canute actually set out to teach his courtiers a valuable lesson. By failing to command the tide, he intended

Canute teaches his courtiers a
lesson in humility



A mortuary chest at Winchester Cathedral, believed to hold the remains of Canute



to show his humility and the limits of his authority. As the waves lapped at his feet and refused to obey his commands, his courtiers were reminded that even the most powerful ruler has no control over the rule of God or the laws of nature.

The story was first recorded in the early part of the 12th century by English historian Henry of Huntingdon:

‘When he was at the height of his ascendancy, he ordered his chair to be placed on the sea-shore as the tide was coming in. Then he said to the rising tide, “You are subject to me, as the land on which I am sitting is mine, and no one has resisted my overlordship with impunity. I command you, therefore, not to rise on to my land, nor to presume to wet the clothing or limbs of your master.” But the sea came up as usual, and disrespectfully drenched the king’s feet and shins. So jumping back, the king cried, “Let all the world

know that the power of kings is empty and worthless, and there is no king worthy of the name save Him by whose will heaven, earth and the sea obey eternal laws.’

The story of ‘Canute and the Waves’ remains a potent morality tale, proving that even the most powerful individuals should know their own limitations.

So who was the man behind the legend?

Canute – also spelled Cnut or Knut – was born in the late 10th century, the son of Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard, who set out to conquer England in 1013.

After a long series of conflicts and alliances, Canute eventually led a 10,000-strong Danish army to invade from the East, and took the throne of England – the first Danish king to rule over the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. He remained king for nearly two decades.

While his reign was best known for his symbolic demonstration on the beach, it marked a period of stability and prosperity for England, characterised by efficient governance, fair laws, and strong military leadership.

He reformed the legal system and maintained peaceful relations with neighbouring kingdoms. Canute's wise rule and the protection of his land against foreign aggressors – backed by a formidable army – extended beyond England. He also ruled over Denmark and Norway, unifying the kingdoms and becoming one of the most powerful rulers of his time.

Under Canute's leadership, England experienced a long period of economic growth, supported by trade and diplomatic relations with other European nations. And his reign saw the Scandinavian lands converted to Christianity as Canute worked to spread the faith throughout his domains.

Canute died in 1035 in Shaftesbury in Dorset, in the south of England. Despite his attempts to establish a succession plan, his empire gradually disintegrated amid conflicts and power struggles among his descendants. Nevertheless, his impact on English history, and his reputation as a wise and just ruler, remain firmly etched in the English imagination.



Above: The story of Canute and the Waves has inspired artists for centuries

Below: Canute and his Queen, Emma of Normandy



The Anglophile

published by englandexplore.com