SCARBOROUGH IN THE 1730S - SPA, SEA AND SEX

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Personal health was a key concern in the early eighteenth century and to deal with chronic medical conditions and psychological disorders many wealthy people headed to spas where they could receive treatment. In the 1730s Scarborough's visitors could enjoy the facilities at its spa and patients had begun to use sea water and bathing in the sea to supplement the mineral water treatments. Wealthy visitors also enjoyed a range of entertainment facilities during their stay and extensive and modern accommodation was becoming available. This paper will review the medical practices, as well as the facilities available, and it will also consider the sexual atmosphere that seems to have existed in Scarborough amongst its visitors.

Keywords: Scarborough, spas, sea bathing, pornography, port, poetry.

INTRODUCTION

By the early eighteenth century a distinctive leisure and luxury culture was beginning to emerge in England. This was a result of a growing economy, which was providing a wider range of goods and services, not just for the country's limited number of aristocrats, but increasingly for the wealthier members of the middle classes.[2] An appetite for visits to spas was one aspect of this growing leisured class; they were arriving in search of treatments for physical, mental and imaginary conditions, but in modern terms most were probably simply seeking to improve their well-being. Patrons of spas expected comfortable accommodation and lively entertainment, but a key part of a successful stay was the enjoyment of the company of fellow bathers. For the middle classes, it offered an opportunity to be seen alongside eminent and titled visitors, though Sarah Duchess of Marlborough's letters from

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[2] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and JH Plumb, *the Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England* (London: Europa, 1982), 284-5; Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter *Patient's Progress* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 9.

Scarborough reveal that she successfully ignored, or overlooked, untitled holidaymakers during her stay in 1732.[3]

In the early eighteenth century Bath was the pre-eminent spa, the use sometimes of the definite article in its name as 'the Bath' indicating its status. However, Scarborough was beginning to rise in prominence particularly among the gentry of the north of England and Scotland; in the 1730s it was already being proclaimed as the, 'Montpelier of England'.[4] It was also described as a 'place of health and mirth' where the health-giving properties of its spa waters could be undermined by its busy social life; it had also been extending its medical treatments into the sea with bathing and drinking sea water beginning to become popular.[5] However, it was also a town where the working life of the existing port was conducted alongside the pleasures of its wealthy visitors.

Scarborough seems to be central to the process of transferring the manners and routines of the spa town to seaside resorts. The story of the beginning of a sea bathing culture in early eighteenth century England is dependent on a small number of sources, but at Scarborough an unusually rich vein of material survives. This includes maps and engravings showing the town before, during and after the 1730s, a book entitled 'A *Journey to Scarborough'* that is effectively the earliest guidebook to a seaside resort, a list of the visitors who were in the town in 1733, a journal and letters describing visits in 1725 and 1732 respectively; and three collections of poems, many of them very racy.

This paper will begin by briefly examining the state of medical knowledge in the early eighteenth century and will examine the role of spas and particularly Scarborough in delivering improved health. The growing popularity of sea bathing at this period meant that Scarborough had a major secondary treatment available, one that would eclipse the original use of mineral waters.

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[3] Gladys Scott Thomson, ed, *Letters of a Grandmother 1732-1735* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), 45-67.
[4] *A Journey from London to Scarborough* (London: 1734), 31.
[5] *The Scarborough Miscellany for the Year 1732* (London: 1734), 3.

After considering the evidence for this there will be an examination of how this small town catered for visitors and the impact that these incomers might have had on the tone of the town and the life of the resident population. A noticeable strand of licentiousness appears in some literature and may reflect a new relaxed approach to sexuality that was becoming evident in the early eighteenth century.

TREATING THE SICK IN EARLY-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

Pre-modern England has been described as both a 'sickness society' and a 'medicine society'.[6] In the seventeenth century God still had a role in explaining ill-health, with many people still believing that sickness was linked to sin or some personal failing; and faith healers and magical remedies still had a role in medicine.[7] Sickness and ill health was prevalent due to infectious disease and a poor way of life, and letters and diaries often reveal people's obsession with their health.[8] Reflecting classical thinking, doctors believed that the body needed to be in equilibrium and immoderate behaviour would lead to sickness.[9] George Cheyne in *An Essay of Health and Long Life*, which first appeared in 1724, advocated a balanced, varied diet, drinking water with only a moderate use of alcohol, plenty of sleep, exercise and clear fresh air. Among the treatments he recommended was cold water bathing, but he also included a lengthy section on 'the Passions', claiming that good health was influenced by the emotions, the love of God and an appreciation of beauty.[10] Twenty years later John Anderson published *The Art of Preserving*

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[6] Porter and Porter *Patient's Progress*, 7.
[7] Doreen G. Nagy, *Popular Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State UPP**,** 1988), 36-7; Peter Elmer, 'Medicine, religion and the puritan revolution' in Roger French and Andrew Wear, eds, *The medical revolution of the seventeenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10-45, 16-17; David Harley 'Mental illness, magical medicine and the Devil in northern England, 1650-1700' in French and Wear, *Medical Revolution*, 114-144, 142-4; David Harley 'A Sword in a Madman's Hand: Professional Opposition to Popular Consumption in Waters Literature of Southern England and the Midlands, 1570-1870' in Roy Porter, ed, *The Medical History of Waters and Spas* (London: Wellcome Institute, 1990), 48-55, 49.
[8] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 35; Roy Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society in England 1550-1860* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1990), 24.
[9] Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society,* 25.
[10] George Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (London: 1724) 144ff.

Health organised into four 'books' discussing air, diet, exercise and the passions.[11]

People would often diagnose themselves and take tried and tested folk remedies to deal with their conditions; home remedies might be needed due to poverty or remoteness from a qualified medical practitioner, but equally such treatments were selected because they had a proven record of success.[12] Nicholas Blundell's diary in the early eighteenth century contains mentions of home-administered purges and vomits, some of which may have been traditional remedies, though others were probably the result of his family's regular consultations with doctors.[13] Traditional treatments administered by a family member, a local wise woman or a qualified practitioner were often indistinguishable, but during the eighteenth century there was also a growing use of prescribed pills and proprietary potions.[14]

Consulting a qualified physician required a patient to have sufficient wealth and be near a suitable doctor.[15] If they were ill, but sufficiently wealthy, a doctor would travel to treat them, sometimes covering considerable distances; Dr Robert Wittie, who would later promote Scarborough's spa waters, had practices in York and Hull, but in 1652 he travelled to the country home of a pregnant patient depriving his regular patients for a week, and Nicholas Blundell recorded a number of visits from favourite family doctors.[16] There was also a lively trade in treatment by post. Patients could send a description of their condition to a doctor and receive a reply with a diagnosis, an outline of an improved regimen and perhaps a prescription for a medication that could be made up by an apothecary or at home.[17] Not all people who fell ill employed professional help; Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough considered

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[11] John Anderson, *The Art of Preserving Health* (London: 1744) in John Anderson, *The Miscellaneous Works of John Anderson MD* (Dublin: 1767).
[12] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 12-13; Porter and Porter *Patient's Progress*, 39; Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society*, 29.
[13] F. Tyrer, ed, *The Great Diurnal of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Lancashire* (Manchester: Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1968-72).
[14] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 43, 45; Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society*, 29; Roy Porter *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind* (London: Fontana Press, 1999), 268.
[15] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 31-32.
[16] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 9, 10, 18; Tyrer, *The Great Diurnal*.
[17] Porter and Porter *Patient's Progress*, 76-8; Porter *The Greatest Benefit,* 282.

herself best qualified to diagnose and treat her own symptoms.[18] She could call on a growing body of medical texts available to the public in books, articles in magazines such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and almanacs that mixed medical advice and recipes for treatments with astrological advice on the propitious time to use purges or vomits.[19]

Although historians emphasise the importance of spas in treating patients, it seems that although the spa might be a public face of medicine, it provided only a small proportion of the treatments undertaken by patients. Formal medical treatment at a spa resort was limited in the eighteenth century to the wealthiest section of society. People who visited spas suffered from a wide range of medical conditions; they were a destination for the chronically sick, convalescents and women worn out after childbirth.[20] Many patients also suffered from problems such as scurvy and gout caused by a poor diet, a lack of exercise and the heavy consumption of alcohol. Concerns about infertility and virility appear in medical literature and are prominent in the poetry produced at Scarborough in the 1730s. Visitors also sought treatment for psychological problems, including the vague but pervasive idea of suffering from the spleen, a form of melancholia that required time at a spa to relax and recover.[21] There were also hypochondriacs and a large number of people who came to improve their general well-being, much as modern people seek wellness through a relaxed regime of pampering.

SCARBOROUGH IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Scarborough is a small town on the eastern coast of Yorkshire 200 miles north of London. **Figure 1** The effort required to get to it should not be under-estimated. The major spas at Bath and Tunbridge Wells were within relatively easy reach of London, but according to the 1734 guide Scarborough was a

[18] Thomson, *Letters of a Grandmother*, 63.
[19] Nagy, *Popular Medicine*, 48, 51-53; Porter and Porter *Patient's Progress*, 197-201, 203; Roy Porter, *English Society in the 18th Century* (London: Penguin, 1991), 277.
[20] Anne Digby, *Making a Medical Living* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 216
[21] Oswald Doughty, 'The English Malady of the Eighteenth Century' *The Review of English Studies* 2, no 7 (July 1926): 257-269.

five day journey by road from London while by sea it might take three or four days if the comforts of a collier was the traveller's choice.[22] The obvious overland route was to board the York coach and transfer there to another that took a day to reach Scarborough.[23] Road transport was arduous and dangerous and until a Turnpike Trust was formed in 1752 the final leg of the journey would have been on roads that had improved little since the Middle Ages.[24]

Scarborough was described in the 1720s and 1730s as a town of about 2,000 families, suggesting a population perhaps in excess of 8,000, while in 1743 it was estimated to be home to 1,500 families. **Figure 2** This may still have been a significant over-estimate as Scarborough's population only numbered 6,688 inhabitants in 1801, though it seems that with a decline in the popularity of its spa it did not grow rapidly in the second half of the century. In comparison nearby Whitby had more than 10,000 inhabitants in 1801 and the developing seaside resort of Brighton had just over 7,000, but would more than treble in size in the following twenty years. Margate, Hastings and Weymouth had between 3,000 and 5,000 inhabitants, but mighty Bath in 1801 had a population of 34,000. A mid-eighteenth century population for Scarborough of around 5,000 seems to be a realistic estimate.[25]

The form of Scarborough had been established in the 12th century, when two separate areas were laid out; the earlier was the eastern part known as Oldborough and covered 20 hectares, while the smaller Newborough to the west (14 hectares) apparently followed soon after, and each had its own defences.[26] The town's main streets were aligned primarily along the hillside above the harbour and even as late as 1760 Scarborough was still confined within its medieval walls. At the top of the hill were the castle and the parish

[22] *Journey to Scarborough,* 1-2.
[23] *Journey to Scarborough,* 3.
[24] W. Albert, *The turnpike road system in England, 1663-1840*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 205.
[25] Jack Binns, *The History of Scarborough* (Pickering: Blackthorn Press, 2003), 137.
[26] Trevor Pearson, 'The Topography of the medieval Borough' in David Crouch and Trevor Pearson ,eds, *Medieval Scarborough Studies in Trade and Civic Life* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Occasional Paper 1: 2001), 85-94, 85, 87-90.

church while the busy harbour was at the eastern end of the beach. The streets most frequented by visitors had been paved in the early eighteenth century, prompting one author to christen the best street as 'the Pall Mall of Scarborough'.[27]

SCARBOROUGH'S SPA

During the Middle Ages the church fostered a culture of travelling to religious sites, including sites where waters were used for spiritual cures. Following England's break with the Church of Rome interest in religious pilgrimages declined, but did not disappear entirely, although any overt signs of Catholicism might prove dangerous. Instead, travelling to use waters for spiritual improvement began to evolve into visiting mineral springs for physical cures. A recognisable spa culture developed in the second half of the sixteenth century, led by Bath and Buxton; and by the beginning of the seventeenth century a new scientific approach was being adopted to analysing mineral waters, while new sources began to be discovered, including at Tunbridge Wells in 1606 and Epsom in 1618.[28]

Scarborough's spa waters were discovered in *c* 1626 by 'Mrs. *Farrow* a Gentlewoman of good Repute'.[29] Initially the spa's patrons were relatively local, but by 1660 Dr Robert Wittie noted that it was beginning to attract national attention:

> 'It was found by accident about thirty four years ago, and hath by degrees come into use and reputation, not only among the inhabitants of the Eastriding and the Town of Hull, among whom I lived and managed my profession near eighteen years … but also it hath of late years been well known to the Citizens of York, and the Gentry of the County, who do constantly frequent it; yea and to severall persons of

[27] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 105.
[28] Phyllis Hembry, *The English Spa 1560-1815 A Social History*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 6-8; Brigitte Mitchell, 'English Spas' *Bath History* 1 (1986): 189-204, 190-1.
[29] Robert Wittie, *Scarborough Spaw* (York: 1667), 5.

> quality in the Nation, who upon large commendations of such as knew its operation, have made triall of it'.[30]

Any nascent spa tourism in the first half of the seventeenth century would have been affected by the Civil Wars of the 1640s and more than a decade of Puritanism, but with the Restoration Dr Wittie became the first doctor to promote the spa. He described 'the Spaw Well, which is a quick Spring about a quarter of a mile South from the Town, at the foot of an exceeding high cliff, arising up right out of the Earth like a boyling pot, near the level of the Spring tides, with which it is often overflown.'[31] Today the public fountain produces a rusty trickle, but in the 1730s it produced 'above twenty four gallons of water in an hour,' sufficient for every visitor's needs as well as a bottled water business.[32] In the 1730s 70-80,000 bottles of mineral water were produced annually and some of it found its way to London. The *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1734 contains an advertisement and testimonials for the bottled waters being sold by John Fiddes from his house in Scarborough and from the Golden Wheatsheaf in Covent Garden.[33] In 1738-9 the 6,000 dozen bottles sold had a value of £130, but this significant trade soon declined and had ceased by the beginning of the nineteenth century.[34]

By 1660 Dr Wittie had set himself up as the authority on Scarborough's spa waters, which he claimed could cure a huge range of physical conditions, but his science and his medical claims were challenged by other writers.[35] His first and harshest critic was Dr William Simpson; the two doctors had been rivals since they had practised medicine in York.[36] In 1669 Simpson criticised Wittie's science and thought that he had suggested the spa waters as a treatment for too many conditions.[37] Perhaps most profoundly, Simpson in his

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[30] Robert Wittie, Scarborough Spaw (London: 1660), 7-8.
[31] ibid., 6.
[32] ibid., 6; Meredith Whittaker, *The Book of Scarborough Spaw* (Buckingham: Barracuda, 1984), 43.
[33] *Gentleman's Magazine* April 1734, 224.
[34] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 113; Hembry, *The English Spa,* 210.
[35] Thomas Hinderwell, *The History and Antiquities of Scarborough, and the Vicinity* (York: 1811), 201ff.
[36] Arthur Rowntree, *the History of Scarborough* (London: J. M. Dent, 1931), 249.
[37] William Simpson, *Hydrologia Chymica* (London: 1669).

various works recommended that exercise, fresh air, an improved diet and abstinence from excesses would be more effective than the consumption of the spa water.[38] In 1670 Dr George Tunstall from Newcastle-upon-Tyne entered the debate, suggesting that Scarborough's waters could actually be harmful.[39] After several rounds of heated exchanges Wittie retired, leaving Simpson as the unchallenged evangelist for Scarborough's spa.[40]

In the 1730s discussion about the virtues of Scarborough's spa waters was revived through texts published by the naval surgeon John Atkins, Dr Thomas Short and Dr Peter Shaw.[41] Again there were differences about how the waters worked, but all agreed that they could cure a bewildering range of complaints. Dr Short, as well as recommending drinking spa waters, also urged moderation in diet and alcohol, though most worryingly he suggested that patients 'should use conjugal Pleasures with great Caution and Discretion'.[42] Dr Shaw described the two springs at the spa as the Purgative and the Chalybeate. Both tasted brackish and metallic, and as they had such a strong taste he recommended mixing them with tea, sugar, syrup of Violets and most disgustingly milk, which would curdle when heated.[43] The 1734 guidebook also noted that, 'It is usual to drink a Glass of Spaw- Water mix'd with your Wine at Dinner' and a poet in 1733 stated that at meals:

> 'According to Custom whose Word is a Law,
> The first Glass you take, you dilute it with Spaw'.[44]

[38] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 74-5.
[39] George Tunstall, *Scarborough Spaw Spagyrically anatomised* (London: 1670); F. N. L. Poynter, 'A Seventeenth-Century Medical Controversy: Robert Witty versus William Simpson', E. Ashton Underwood, ed, *Science, Medicine and History.* 2 vols, (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), vol 2, 72-81; Rowntree, *History of Scarborough*, 248-250.
[40] William Simpson, *History of Scarborough Spaw* (London: 1679).
[41] John Atkins, *A Compendious Treatise on the Contents, Virtues, and Uses of Cold and Hot Mineral Springs in general* (London: A. Dodd, *c* 1730); Thomas Short, *The natural, experimental, and medicinal history of the mineral waters of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, particularly those of Scarborough* (London: Thomas Short, 1734); Peter Shaw, *An Enquiry into the contents, virtues and uses of the Scarborough Spaw-Waters* (London: Peter Shaw, 1734).
[42] Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 54.
[43] Shaw, *Enquiry into Scarborough Spaw-Waters*, 90.
[44] *Journey to Scarborough,* 40; *The Scarborough Miscellany for the Year 1733* (London: 1734), 32.

The regime that seems to have been endorsed since Wittie's time was that patients would stay for four to five weeks, between May and September. After a few days recovering from the journey, they would begin by drinking two or three half pints a day, then build up to four to five pints per day. This should take place in the morning, so that the water took its effect before dinner in the middle of the day.[45]

As well as attracting scientific interest, ordinary, albeit wealthy people with leisure time and disposable income, began to arrive at the town to use the waters. Travel to such a remote town was difficult and many visitors probably had a more convenient spa at which to seek treatment. Selecting Scarborough was probably influenced by medical claims, fashion, the quality of the Company in the town and quality of the facilities.[46] In 1662 Sir John Reresby noticed that 'many persons of quality came that Summer for their health or their diversion' and in 1667 Wittie recorded that 'people of good fashion' were coming to Scarborough.[47] While Scarborough did attract some metropolitan visitors, it was more usually a favoured destination for the wealthy from the north of England and Scotland. Daniel Defoe writing in the 1720s said that, 'we found a great deal of good company here drinking the waters, who came not only from all the north of England, but even from Scotland', and in 1733 Edmund Withers described the Company at Scarborough, 'the numbers of strangers resorting to the Spaw was never known to be so great at any time as the present, most of them from remote corners, especially crouds of Scotch gentry.'[48] The 1734 guide recorded that, 'Scarborough has been noted several Years, and resorted to, on account of its Spaw, by the Gentry of the North Parts of England'.[49] It also contains a list of the people who had visited Scarborough in 1733. In the list of Gentlemen

[45] Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 29.
[46] Digby, *Medical Living*, 209; Peter Borsay, 'Health and Leisure Resorts 1700-1840' in Peter Clark, ed, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain.* 2 vols, (Cambridge: CUP 2000), vol. 2, 775-803, 783.
[47] *A Guide To Historic Scarborough* (Scarborough Archaeological And Historical Society 2003), 51, 49.
[48] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain.* 2 vols (London: Frank Cass, 1968), vol 2, 656; 'Letter from Edmund Withers to his Brother Revd. William Withers Vicar of Tunstall', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 12, (1893), 133-5, 134
[49] *Journey to Scarborough,* 31.

compiled from the subscription books of the Spa, the Long Room, the Bookseller's shop and the coffee house 695 names appear, while 360 ladies subscribed.[50] Among the names were two dukes, the Marquis of Lothian, seven earls, three barons, five Yorkshire knights, 22 titled women apparently unrelated to any of the men, a dozen clergy, 8 doctors and 20 military men.[51] One of the most famous visitors was the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, who was working in the grounds of nearby Castle Howard. Colly Cibber, the actor-manager, playwright and Poet Laureate was also among the visitors, and he was celebrated in verse in the 1734 Miscellany.[52] Sarah Duchess of Marlborough's letters reveal the status of the people whom she mixed with, only recording the activities and thoughts of titled visitors.[53]

From around 1700 Richard 'Dicky' Dickinson was the Governor of the Spa.[54] The journal of a summer tour by Cambridge University students first described him as, 'a little ugly beggarly fellow', though later, probably after meeting him he was described as 'not so deform'd a Creature as people imagine'.[55] The 1734 guide described him as 'one of the most deformed Pieces of Mortality I ever saw, and of most uncouth manner of speech'.[56] Dicky was also the subject of much doggerel and the Scarborough Miscellany for 1733 urged the readers:

> 'To Scarborough haste from various Regions,
> And pay to Dicky due Allegiance,
> To view so odly form'd a Creature,
> To note his Limbs and ev'ry Feature,
> And hear him jokeing at the Spring,
> While you his Subjects Tribute bring.
> This, with the Waters you are quaffing,

[50] *Journey to Scarborough,* 47-68.
[51] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 102; Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 69; Hembry, *The English Spa,* 211.
[52] *The Scarborough Miscellany for the Year 1734* (London: 1734), 2-3, 9-10, 14-6.
[53] Thomson, *Letters of a Grandmother*, 45-67.
[54] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 98.
[55] *Tour in Several English Counties in 1725*, Bath Central Reference Library, B914.238, 40, 42.
[56] *Journey to Scarborough,* 32.

> Will make you * * * * yourselves with laughing.'[57]

To exploit the waters a series of structures were built. In 1699 a cistern was built by the municipal Corporation, who controlled the spa by virtue of owning the foreshore.[58] **Figures 3 and 4** The 1734 guidebook records that:

> 'He [DICKY] rents the Well from the Corporation at a small Rent, and has built two Houses for the Conveniency of the Company, one for the use of the Gentlemen, and the other for the Ladies. The Custom is, as soon as you enter the Room, to subscribe your name in Dicky's Book, and pay Five Shillings; after which, you have the free use of his Retirements.'[59]

An engraving of the early eighteenth century also shows three buildings, a structure for the use of ladies, one for gentlemen and between, presumably to maintain propriety, the house of the governor of the spa. By the 1730s Dicky lived in a rather grand dwelling, apparently a two storied, five-bay wide house, a building fit for an affluent gentleman.[60] **Figure 5** In the Francis Place view, which dates from before 1722, his house is shown as a more modest structure, little more than a large cabin, suggesting that it had been enlarged during the following decade, an indication of the wealth being generated by the spa.[61]

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough was in Scarborough in 1732, taking the waters for her gout and scurvy. [62] Despite some improvement in her health, she criticised the town because of its steepness, poverty and dirt, and she noted that the 'place where they drink the water is so horrid'.[63] She also

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[57] *Miscellany 1733*, 50-1.
[58] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 98.
[59] *Journey to Scarborough,* 33.
[60] 'A View of the Scarborough Well and the House of Governor Dicky' - copy of Pen and Ink drawing in Courtauld Institute of Art (negative 773/16 (24).
[61] Government Art Collection GAC 6905.
[62] Thomson, *Letters of a Grandmother*, 53.
[63] ibid., 48.

included a graphic account of the process of treatment 'enjoyed' by ladies at the spa:

> 'There is a room for the ladies assembly, which you go up a steep pair of stairs into, on the outside of the house, like a ladder. And in that room there is nothing but hard narrow benches, which is rather a punishment to sit upon than an ease. When the waters begin to operate, there is a room within it, where there is above twenty holes with drawers under them to take out, and the ladies go in together and see one another round the room, when they are in that agreeable posture, and at the door, there is a great heap of leaves which the ladies take in with them ... I came home as fast as I could for fear of being forced into that assembly.'[64]

This description is sufficient to distance anyone's image of an eighteenth century 'spa' from the luxury expected in modern places of pampering that bear the same name.

Dicky Dickinson died in February 1738, having witnessed on 29 December 1737 a so-called 'earthquake'.[65] In fact there was a major landslide requiring the Corporation to rebuild the spa. Nearby Bridlington tried to capture some of the trade that would have gone to Scarborough, but its monopoly of spa facilities in the area was short-lived. On 17 May 1738 *The London Daily Post* recorded the completion of 'the Room for the Reception of the Ladies'. It was a brick building with a chimney at each end and it measured 53ft by 26ft and was 13ft high. The report also noted that the equivalent Gentleman's room would be completed in 10 days time.[66] To secure the site from the sea, large sea defences were created in the 1740s.

SEA BATHING AT SCARBOROUGH

[64] ibid., 46.
[65] Maurice Johnson' 'An Account of an Earthquake at Scarborough, on Dec. 29. 1737' in *Philosophical Transactions* 41 (1739-41), *804-6*; Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 51.
[66] Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 52.

The spa was at the heart of the visitor's health regime in the seventeenth century, but by the early eighteenth century sea bathing was beginning to become a regular treatment and later it eclipsed the declining spa.[67] As early as the sixteenth century there is evidence in England of an interest in sea bathing and spending time at the seaside to enjoy the bracing, health-giving environment.[68] Nevertheless, in 1660 Wittie was cautious about the use of sea water, but by 1667 he reported that bathing in cold sea water had cured his gout.[69] By *c* 1700 Sir John Floyer (1649-1734) had become the leading advocate of cold water bathing and he published several books and papers on the subject. Floyer realised that the sea could be the bath, 'Since we live in an Island, and have the Sea about us, we cannot want an excellent Cold Bath, which will both preserve our Healths, and cure many Diseases, as our Fountains do'.[70] Sea water was claimed to treat a host of physical conditions and psychological disorders, and there were as many scientific theories about how it worked as there had been concerning the spa waters. The 1734 guidebook recorded that, 'What Virtues our Physicians ascribe to Cold baths in general, are much more effectual by the additional Weight of Salt in Sea-Water; an Advantage, which no Spaw in England can boast of but Scarborough.'[71] It also described how sea bathing was undertaken:

> 'It is the Custom, for not only the Gentlemen, but the Ladies also, to bath in the Sea: The gentlemen go out a little way to Sea in Boats (call'd here Cobbles) and jump in naked directly; 'tis usual for Gentlemen to hire one of these Boats, and put out a little a way to Sea a fishing. The ladies have the Conveniency of Gowns and Guides. There are two little Houses on the Shore, to retire to for Dressing in.'[72]

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[67] ibid., 77; Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 121.
[68] Allan Brodie and Gary Winter *England's Seaside Resorts* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2007), 8-11; Allan Brodie, 'Towns of 'Health and Mirth': The First Seaside Resorts, 1730-1769' in Peter Borsay and John K. Walton ,eds, *Resorts and Ports: European Seaside Towns since 1700* (Bristol: Channel View, 2011), 18-32, 19-20.
[69] Wittie 1660, 46-50; Wittie 1667, 172.
[70] Sir John Floyer, *The Ancient ΨΥΧΡΟΛΟΥΣΙΑ [Psykhrolysia] Revived: Or, An Essay To Prove Cold Bathing Both Safe And Useful* (London, 1702), 191.
[71] *Journey to Scarborough,* 36.
[72] *Journey to Scarborough,* 36.

At Scarborough an engraving produced in 1735 by John Setterington includes a depiction of sea bathing.[73] **Figure 6** Men are shown entering the sea from a cobble, and he also illustrated a single primitive bathing machine. By 1745 an engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck depicted five bathing machines and by the end of the eighteenth century between 30 and 40 were catering for bathers, a reflection of the growing popularity of sea bathing.[74]

PROVISION FOR VISITORS

Documentary sources suggest that in the early eighteenth century sea bathing was beginning to be enjoyed by people at a number of coastal towns and on less populous stretches of coast. Nicholas Blundell and his family used the sea near their home at Little Crosby, near Liverpool at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and Mrs Massingberd of Gunby in Lincolnshire described in a letter dated 2 May 1725 how, 'Sr Hardolf Wastnage & his lady come in Whitsun week to a farmhouse in this neighbourhood to spend three months in order to bath in ye sea'.[75] Apart from access to the sea, the key consideration was suitable accommodation for visitors. To cater for them at Scarborough there were a number of 'ordinaries', taverns that provided meals. In 1686 there were 74 beds in inns and stabling for 144 horses, and in the 1734 guidebook, five 'ordinaries' are listed. **Figure 7** Four can be identified on the 1725 map.[76] In August 1725 the Cambridge University students stayed at the New Inn, which was a 'good house' run by Mr Chapman.[77] However, most people probably stayed in the houses of the town during their lengthy visits. In 1697 Celia Fiennes wrote that, 'In this town we had good accommodations and on very Reasonable terms.'[78] Joseph Taylor in 1705 was less

[73] John Setterington, *View of the antient Town, Castle, Harbour, and Spaw of Scarborough*, British Library Maps K.Top.44.47.b.
[74] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 121-2.
[75] R M Neller, *The growth of Mablethorpe as a seaside resort 1800-1939,* (Mablethorpe, 2000), 13 citing Lincolnshire Record Office LAO, MASS 13/16.
[76] Hembry, *The English Spa*, 210.
[77] *Tour in Several English Counties in 1725*, 40.
[78] Christopher Morris, *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes c 1682 – c1712* (London: Macdonald and Co, 1984), 101.

enthusiastic about the accommodation. His party set up at the post-house on the seafront, but 'there being very indifferent Entertainment, we were forc't to remove to a neighbouring house', where the accommodation was no better but they did have a more civil landlady.[79] John Macky in 1714 noted that Scarborough lacked the refinements of Bath or Tunbridge Wells, but, 'there is very good Accommodation for those that drink the Waters'.[80] Sir Walter Calverley, who visited Scarborough in June 1717, described his accommodation in more detail, 'The next night at Mr. Rayn's in Scarborough, where we lodged all the time, and had three lodging rooms and a dineing roome, which I paid 20 shillings a week for, but it is not usuall to pay for the dineing roome.'[81] Scarborough in 1734 was described as having well-built houses which were 'for the most part, uniform, neat and commodious'.[82] 'The Lodgings here are very reasonable, and well furnished, there being here an Upholsterer from London.'[83]

In the seventeenth century the town consisted of a mixture of timber-framed, brick and an occasional stone building.[84] By the mid-seventeenth century any thatch that had been used was already giving way to slate or pantiles.[85] Behind the modern harbourside road is the original Quay Street, which contains a number of timber-framed structures. The Three Mariners (47 Quay Street) is a timber-framed house of perhaps the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, but with a seventeenth century brick façade. **Figure 8** A short distance to the west is the now unconnected 45 Quay Street, though they seem to have been part of a single structure. It seems to have been an

[79] Joseph Taylor, *A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Brown, 1903), 67.
[80] John Macky, *A Journey Through England* 2 vols, (London: 1722), vol 2, 215.
[81] Charles Jackson, ed, Y*orkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Memorandum book of Sir Walter Calverley* (Durham: Surtees Society, 1886), 143.
[82] *Journey to Scarborough,* 37.
[83] *Journey to Scarborough,* 38.
[84] Christopher Hall, 'Domestic Architecture in Medieval Scarborough' in Crouch and Pearson, *Medieval Scarborough,* 95-104.
[85] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 83; A lack of archaeological evidence and contemporary documentary references suggests there may not have been much use of thatch in the town; Trevor Pearson, *The Archaeology of Medieval Scarborough* (Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society, 2005), 68.

inn or, in view of its proximity to the harbour, perhaps a warehouse.[86] Further east, 2 Quay Street is a small, but high-quality remnant of a timber-framed house of the fifteenth century. **Figure 9** The Newcastle Packet Inn (13 Sandside) was medieval in origin, but underwent a major refurbishment in 1898-9. An article published a decade earlier suggested a thirteenth or fourteenth century date, though a fifteenth century date seems more likely.[87] Old photographs, as well as Setterington's engraving, suggest that the town had many more timber-framed buildings than now exist. Stone was much rarer than either timber-framing or brick, though there seem to have been useful supplies nearby. The castle and the parish church were the largest stone buildings in the town, but at least one stone building of early origin has survived. The King Richard III appears to be a seventeenth-century stone building on the harbourside, though it may contain some earlier fabric; it now opens on to the roadside, but in the eighteenth century would have been immediately on the quayside. **Figure 10**

By the early eighteenth century the transformation of Scarborough's housing stock seems to have been beginning, a process that would accelerate later in the century. Brick houses were being built for prosperous local people, but many of these were also probably planned with the expectation of providing accommodation for visitors. One of the largest, and oddest, new brick buildings is 33 Sandside, a large building originally on the quayside. **Figure 11** Although superficially now domestic, an impression increased by its refenestration, it probably also had a commercial function in the early eighteenth century. On other streets inland a number of early eighteenth-century brick houses were built; in 1725 the students' journal recorded that, 'The Houses of this Town are of brick and are mostly new built'.[88] One of the buildings in Princess Street (43-5) is unusual as it has a helpful 1712 datestone. **Figure 12** Despite improvements being made to Scarborough's building stock it was still nevertheless modest compared to what was available in Bath. Queen Square in Bath was laid out in the late 1720s and

[86] Pearson, *Medieval Scarborough*, 121-3.
[87] Hall, 'Domestic Architecture' 99-101; Pearson, *Medieval Scarborough,* 124-6.
[88] *Tour in Several English Counties in 1725*, 41-2.

consisted of palace-fronted Baroque facades, an architectural essay beyond anything that could have been imagined at Scarborough.[89]

A supply of reasonable accommodation was essential for spa visitors and sea bathers, but they also expected to be entertained during their visit. An anonymous visitor to Scarborough in 1742 recorded a typical day:

> 'The Diversions of the Day at Scarbro' are like those of all other places, day after day, just alike. From 7 o'Clock in the Morning they drink the Waters or wash in the Sea; at eleven to a public breakfast where you have pretty good Musick and breakfast for a shilling; and then to dancing till 2 o'Clock; then to Dinner; then to Dressing, and between 5 and 6 to the Ball Room when they dance and play at Cards or Roly Poly till between ten and eleven, then to bed; and the next Morning they rise to act the same farce over again.'[90]

The Assembly Rooms were at the heart of the entertainment in the town and on the 1725 map two assembly rooms were marked, one described as the Long Room and the other that was known as the Long Room or the Assembly. Remarkably a building survives at 27-29 Princess Street on the site of the first Long Room, and may be an adaptation of the early assembly room. In the 1734 guidebook only the second one on St Nicholas Street was described:

> ‘This is a noble, spacious building, sixty two Foot long, thirty wide, and sixteen high, the Situation being so lofty, commands a Prospect over the Sea, and you may sit in the Windows and see the Ships sailing at several Leagues distance. Here are Balls every Evening, when the Room is illuminated like a Court Assembly … Gentleman (only) pay for Dancing one Shilling each, on one side of the Room is a Musick-Gallery, and at the lower end are kept a Pharô Bank, a Hazard-Table

[89] Walter Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath* (Weston-super-Mare: Kingsmead Press, 1980), 5-6.
[90] Whittaker, *Scarborough Spaw*, 73.

> and Fair Chance; and in the side Rooms, Tables for such of the Company, as are inclined to play at Cards: below Stairs you have Billiard Tables. It is kept by Mr Vipont, Master of the Long-Room at Hampstead … Every thing is conducted in the politest manner by Vipont, who is a perfect Master of his Business.'[91]

Two complementary views of this building survive; a detail from the 1725 map shows its grandiose two-storied façade of *c* 1700, consisting of nine bays with a central door, while Setterington's engraving in 1735 depicts a side view from the south. **Figure 13** Scarborough's accommodation was modest compared with Bath's newest buildings and similarly its assembly rooms were humble compared to the opulence of nearby York's Assembly Room, built in 1731-2 and reminiscent of a grand classical temple.[92]

Visitors to Scarborough also had access to what appears to have been an early circulating library:

> 'In the Long-Room Street is the Book-sellers Shop, where Gentlemen and Ladies subscribe five Shillings, for which they have the use of any Books during the Season, and take them home to their Lodgings. Here are also Raffles for Books, they have the Choice of any others of the same Value. They likewise take in all the News-Papers.'[93]

The 1734 guide to Scarborough also recorded that, 'in the Afternoon are Plays acted, to which most of the Gentry in Town resort; Kerregan is now here with his Company, and (allowing for Scenes and Decorations) they perform several Plays very well.'[94] *The York Courant* of 8 May 1733 recorded that, *'Mr Keregan [sic] was last* week in Scarborough where he obtained the leave of the Bailiffs for his company to perform the ensuing season; upon which he

[91] *Journey to Scarborough,* 38-9.
[92] James Stevens Curl, *Georgian Architecture in the British Isles 1714-1830* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2011), 33, 293.
[93] *Journey to Scarborough,* 41.
[94] ibid.

has taken a Piece of Ground to build a large Booth on, by the sign of the Crown and Sceptre in the Horse Fair, near the Market Place'.[95]

As well as these formal entertainments, visitors could enjoy a Coffee House in the High Street (actually on the corner of Newborough and St Thomas Street). Gentlemen subscribed 2s 6d and '*have the Use of Pen, Ink and Paper for the Season*'.[96] **Figure 14** There were also two bowling greens. The Old Bowling Green at the top of the town was just inside the walls and may have fallen out of use, but the one in St Sepulchre Churchyard featured on the key to the 1725 map and would have been more convenient for visitors staying in the heart of the town. Not all activities took place in the town; the beach was a pleasant place to stroll and a major attraction was its races on the sands.[97]

THE SEXUAL TONE OF SCARBOROUGH

Wealthy visitors to Scarborough could afford a life with leisure and pleasure, and among their pleasures was a novel openness and exposure to sex.[98] Sex was equated with good health, happiness and beauty and copulation was advocated as a cure for some medical conditions.[99] Sex was highly visible in some Georgian towns, as can be seen from James Boswell's *London Journal*.[100] The apparently huge numbers of prostitutes and their widespread distribution in London and at fashionable watering places meant that everyone might be exposed to their charms.[101] From 1757 lists of prostitutes working in

[95] Sybil Rosenfeld, *Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces* (Cambridge: 1939), 116. The Crown and Sceptre is shown on the 1725 map.
[96] *Journey to Scarborough,* 43.
[97] *Journey to Scarborough,* 31.
[98] Porter, *English Society,* 259-66; Roy Porter *Enlightenment Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000), 271.
[99] Roy Porter, 'Mixed feelings: the Enlightenment and sexuality in eighteenth-century Britain' in Paul-Gabriel Boucé, *Sexuality in eighteenth-century Britain* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982) 1-27, 4, 6; Paul-Gabriel Boucé, 'Some sexual beliefs and myths in eighteenth-century Britain' in Boucé, *Sexuality in eighteenth-century Britain*, 28-46, 44; Roy Porter and Lesley Hall, *The Facts of Life* (New Haven: Yale, 1995), 77, 107
[100] His most famous encounter with a prostitute was on the newly-opened Westminster Bridge. Frederick A. Pottle, *Boswell's London Journal 1762-1763* (London: William Heinemann, 1951), 255.
[101] Porter, 'Mixed feelings', 9-11; Peter Wagner, *Eros Revived* (London: Paladin 1990), 133-4; R.S. Neale 'Bath: ideology and Utopia 1700-1760 in Peter Borsay, ed, *The Eighteenth-*

Covent Garden were published and their titillating descriptions meant they sold thousands annually.[102] Bernard de Mandeville in *A Modest Defence of the Public Stews* in 1724 argued that commercial sex was better than men preying on virtuous young women.[103] However, the predominant image of prostitution was reflected in Hogarth's 'Harlot's Progress' (painted in 1731 and engraved in 1732). It charts the fall of Moll Hackabout who arrived in London, became the mistress of a wealthy merchant, then rapidly declined with a spell as a common prostitute, time in the Bridewell and ultimately death due to syphilis. There are no indications of how many prostitutes worked the streets of Scarborough, but the presence of significant numbers of wealthy men means that they may have been commonplace and as Scarborough does not seem to have had a strict Master of Ceremonies, it may have had a more permissive atmosphere.[104] Although there appears to be an increased sexual tone and permissiveness in the early eighteenth century, the church courts, which dealt with some sexual cases, were still active though they were already in decline.[105]

With an increasingly relaxed attitude to sex in society, it is no surprise that a pronounced sexual undercurrent seems to have been obvious among some of the visitors to Scarborough. Saucy is a word that has become synonymous with the twentieth-century British seaside, but in Scarborough in the 1730s it is possible to detect a similarly bawdy thread in some of the poetry contained in the short-lived *Scarborough Miscellany*, published annually from 1732 to 1734. Today the poetry is simply contained in its volumes, but in the eighteenth century its poems may have been recited and the songs sung to amuse and stimulate the bawdy atmosphere of a gathering.[106]

Century Town A Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820 (London: Longman, 1990), 223-242, 225-6; Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 112.
[102] Hallie Rubenhold, *Harris's List of Covent Garden Ladies* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005).
[103] Porter *Enlightenment Britain*, 373.
[104] Porter, *English Society,* 227, 233.
[105] Paul Hair, ed, *Before the Bawdy Court* (London: Paul Elek, 1972), 23-4; C.R. Chapman, *Ecclesiastical Courts, Their Officials and Their Records* (Dursley, Lochin, 1992) 12.
[106] Randolph Trumbach 'Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism in Enlightenment England' in Lynn Hunt, ed, *The Invention of Pornography* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 253- 282, 261

The first poem of the 1732 edition of the Scarborough Miscellany, entitled '*Scarborough A Poem*', begins with the rousing lines:

> 'Hail blissful Town, of Health and Mirth the Seat!
> Hail Sov'reign Springs, with Ease and Strength repleat!'[107]

But only two lines later the poet has drifted towards more sensitive matters, recounting how, 'In hope of Heirs, the steril Couple' have come to Scarborough:

> 'From Fears of dying Childless, both are eas'd,
> The Man's contented, and the wife is pleased.
> For when the Waters fail, there's some will say,
> The Cause has been remov'd --- some other way.'[108]

Was the man reinvigorated by his stay at the resort through bathing, drinking spa water and an atmosphere of titillation, so that he could provide himself with an heir, or was his wife impregnated 'some other way'? *The Nottingham Weekly Courant* of 26 November 1717 carried an advertisement purporting to be from a woman whose husband's impotence meant that she required the services of 'any able young Man' as a suitable replacement.[109] At Bath age inequalities between some overweight, gouty husbands and younger wives prompted a number of satirical works.[110] Around 1700 there was a temporary but marked fall in fertility among the aristocracy who were becoming concerned with the problem of dealing with younger sons; nevertheless, the need to provide an heir was so important that many doctors made a lucrative living exploiting men's fear of impotence.[111]

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[107] *Miscellany 1732*, 3.
[108] ibid.
[109] Porter, *English Society,* 261-2
[110] Peter Borsay, *The Image of Georgian Bath 1700-2000: towns, heritage and history* (Oxford: OUP 2000), 34.
[111] Angus McLaren *A History of Contraception* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 146; A. D. Harvey *Sex in Georgian England* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co, 1994), 152.

Other poems in the *Miscellanies*, inspired by the rambling writings of doctors, claimed that sea bathing could cure impotence as it stimulated blood flow and the nervous system. One poet, echoing Dr Simpson in the 1660s, suggested that improved diet and a reduced consumption of alcohol should also result from a visit to Scarborough. He claimed that its waters:

> 'Restores lost Appetite, and cures the Ills
> Of midnight Riots and luxurious Meals.
> When languid Nature's genial Pow'rs decay,
> These Springs new Vigour to the Nerves convey.'[112]

Consumption of Scarborough's waters could revive the appetites of husbands and wives resulting in heirs, but an equally strong stimulus was an environment where sexual experiences, thoughts and images were commonplace. The poems illustrate how much sex was on the minds of visitors to Scarborough. This would have started early in the day, when men took to the sea to bathe naked and women immersed themselves covered only in thin slips. Men were supposed to be kept apart from female bathers, but Setterington's engraving shows women on the beach while men bathed naked in the sea and some of the poems make it clear that men were able to feast their eyes on women bathing in the sea. One poem described female bathers as they emerged from the sea in their thin, clinging garments:

> 'Tis here each Morn (while his full Bosom heaves)
> The green-ey'd God, the bathing Fair receives;
> With swelling Pride he presses round her Charms,
> Clasps her white Neck, and melts within her Arms.
> Now loosly dress'd the lovely Train appears,
> And for the Sea, each charming Maid prepares,
> See kindly clinging the wet garment shows,
> And evry Fold some newer Charms disclose.'[113]

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[112] *Miscellany 1733*, 14,
[113] *Miscellany 1732*, 7.

In the male-dominated language of the *Miscellanies* ladies were invariably referred to as being like Venus or were 'nymphs'; one song-writer in the 1733 miscellany wrote that:

> 'When she bath'd I have seen the Salt Wave
> Seem eager the Fair-One to meet;
> Each wantonly strove, which shou'd have
> The Pleasure of Kissing her Feet.
> But now the Sea, sullen and rough,
> In Murmurs retires from the Shore,
> Ye Waves you've had Pleasure enough,
> In clasping the Nymph I adore.'[114]

The language and imagery is attempting to be both romantic and sexual, much as the poet in 1734 imagines the pleasure of being a flower on the bosom of Miss D-rc-y.[115] This material is mildly titillating and was not pornography in either the modern sense or in terms of the material being circulated in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Since the Restoration there had been a fertile trade in erotic publications, and some of the late seventeenth-century material was used to mount political attacks on religion or the debauched court of Charles II.[116] Nicolas Venette's book *Tableau de l'amour conjugal,* first published in 1686, was a manual discussing sex and love and a series of English editions appeared in the early eighteenth century.[117] Although it took the form of a manual, its material was apparently regularly used for titillation.[118] The poems of the *Scarborough Miscellany* appear only 15 years before John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, which was published in 1748 and 1749, the work widely recognised

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[114] *Miscellany 1733*, 44.
[115] *Miscellany 1734*, 51-2.
[116] Wagner, *Eros Revived*, 47-86; Rachel Weil 'Sometimes a Scepter is only a Scepter: Pornography and Politics in Restoration England' in Lynn Hunt, ed, *The Invention of Pornography* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 125-53, 125-31, 143
[117] Porter and Hall, *Facts of Life*, 81.
[118] Peter Wagner 'The discourse on sex – or sex as discourse: eighteenth-century medical and paramedical erotica' in G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, eds, Sexual *underworlds of the Enlightement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 46-68, 47.

as one of the founding works of modern pornographic literature in English.[119] It caused such a furore when it was published that Cleland was arrested and the book was only able to be published in full in 1970.[120]

It is important to see Scarborough's 'poetry' in the context of wider pornographic material and in terms of how people were conducting themselves at the resort. It does not necessarily demonstrate that licentiousness and promiscuity was widespread, and there is a woeful lack of information about how many prostitutes were working in Georgian spa towns or seaside resorts, However, the poems suggest that there was a racy dimension to a stay at the resort, stimulated by invigorating bathing customs, the sight of beautifully-dressed women and the presence of handsome, virile, sometimes-naked men. A similar atmosphere seems to have existed in Bath where the bathhouses seem to have been a focus for promiscuous behaviour, pornographic poems stimulated and recorded the sexual tone of the town, and prostitutes and virile young men met the carnal needs of visitors.[121]

THE WORKING AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF SCARBOROUGH

Setterington's engraving of Scarborough shows well-dressed men and women on the beach while men bathed in the sea; and a painting by Thomas Ramsey in the Scarborough Art Gallery dating from 1775 shows elegantly-attired visitors promenading on the beach in front of a number of bathing machines. **Figure 15** Both depict the wealthy visitors who had arrived at the resort, but what published sources do not reveal is the reaction of local residents to the signs of luxury and the merriment that filled their streets. The local populace of around 5,000 would have outnumbered the visitors considerably, even at the height of the season, and therefore they may have continued with their busy working lives, largely able to ignore the presence of outsiders.

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[119] Trumbach 'Erotic Fantasy' 253.
[120] John Cleland, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), vii, x; David Foxon *Libertine Literature in England 1660-1745* (New York: University Books, 1965), 53.
[121] Borsay *Georgian Bath*, 32-8.

The realm of visitors to Scarborough was the left-hand side of Setterington's engraving where the spa was located, but his panoramic view has another, less well-known, right-hand side showing the working life of Scarborough. Unlike most contemporary spas Scarborough was already a substantial working town. It was an important harbour of refuge, a major ship-building and ship-owning port, and a significant harbour for colliers. **Figure 16** In 1732 an Act of Parliament introduced a levy of a half penny for every chaldron of coal leaving north-eastern ports and this, combined with a series of other duties, was to fund the construction of a new pier, which would cost £12,000.[122] However, this project became a protracted problem that dragged on through the eighteenth century.[123] Scarborough was one of only seven ports with more than 100 ships, and in 1702 606 men were recorded as working on ships registered at the port.[124] In 1730 there were 20 ships weighing over 200 tons and about 70 were between 60 and 100 tons in size.[125] Most of Scarborough's ships had been built in its own shipyards, which stretched from the Old Pier to King Richard III's house.

The urban environment along the harbourside must have been unpleasant and would have served to keep many visitors at bay. One brave visitor in July 1700 said that, 'I can see nothing but close stools and drying fish, which is all I can see inside and out of the houses. The Streets are covered with garbage of fish and cods heads, which in London are worth five or six shillings a piece but are of no value in Scarborough'.[126]

The link between fishing communities and faith is often made, but the truth in Scarborough is that while the vast majority of its inhabitants would have attested to being Christians, most were not active worshippers. In 1743 the Archbishop of York Thomas Herring was informed by the Vicar Theophilus

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[122] 5 Geo II, c.11; Rowntree, *History of Scarborough*, 181; Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 132.
[123] Rowntree, *History of Scarborough*, 181-3.
[124] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 90-1; *Undercliff Study*, 176.
[125] *Undercliff Study*, 186.
[126] Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), 32; *Scarborough: The Undercliff Study*, (Scarborough House Detectives Group, n.d.), part 1, 182.

Garencières that Scarborough had 1,000 Anglican communicants, though only 120 took communion regularly. There were 27 Presbyterian families, 29 Quaker families and 3 Roman Catholic ones.[127] In 1703 a Presbyterian chapel was erected on St Sepulchre Street and it, and its larger successors, were popular during the bathing season, presumably to cater for the influx of Scottish visitors, the 'crouds of Scotch gentry' witnessed by Edmund Withers.[128] The Quakers also had a noticeable presence in the town. Celia Fiennes, who visited Scarborough in 1697, said that:

> 'The town has abundance of Quakers in it, most of their best Lodgings were in quakers hands, they Entertain all people soe [some] in Private houses in the town by way of ordinary, so much a Meale and their Ale every one finds themselves, there are a few Inns for horses only.'[129]

As well as providing good accommodation their meeting house was a popular destination. Celia Fiennes had been puzzled by the way their services were conducted and the words of a song in the 1733 *Miscellany* celebrated, 'seeing several Stars and Garters at the Quaker's Meeting-House'.[130] The 1734 guidebook suggests that its popularity was in part due to its position low on the hillside, whereas devout Anglicans had to ascend to the top of the hill for services in the parish church.[131] The meeting house was on Cook's Row, not far from the Presbyterian chapel, which was probably little used outside the summer season when large numbers of Scots came to bathe and drink the waters.

In 1745 Scarborough found itself potentially in the frontline against another invading horde of Scotsmen. As a result of the Jacobite Rising of 1745 towns in the north of England were vulnerable to attack. A map of 1745, published in 1747, suggests that 99 guns manned by 400 men were deployed to defend the town with a further 400 infantrymen in the batteries around the town's

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[127] Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 140.
[128] Hinderwell, *History and Antiquities*, 186; Binns, *History of Scarborough*, 102-3.
[129] Morris, *Celia Fiennes*, 101.
[130] ibid.101; *Miscellany 1733*, 46.
[131] *Journey to Scarborough,* 43.

defences. However, the forces of Bonnie Prince Charlie marched southwards along the other side of the Pennines and Scarborough's defences were never needed. Peace returned to Scarborough and the bathers were soon back in the sea.

1754 – A POSTSCRIPT

In August 1754 the Swedish industrial spy Reinhold Rücker Angerstein visited Scarborough. He summarised neatly the twin aspects of Scarborough with its harbour, its shipping and its fisheries and the newer sea-bathing industry that he winessed. **Figure 17** He recorded the busy trade he saw but he also noted how Scarborough was shifting from making its wealth from commerce to deriving most of its income from leisure:

> 'The town was in its heyday during the war years because of the many ships built here and the capital raised through freight. Now there is little employment apart from what can be gained from freight between Newcastle and London, as well as minor trade with Spain in fish, caught here in the bay and dried in the sun.'[132]

Angerstein was intrigued by organised sea bathing, an activity he had not witnessed before on his journey:

> 'Bathing at Scarborough, and the spa water drunk here, are now the principal sources of income for the inhabitants. Large numbers of Gentry, or the well-off in society in the country, come here for the sake of their health, though even greater numbers come to enjoy themselves or to seek an advantageous marriage. Bathing is done in the cold, salt seawater; the beach is sandy and gently sloping, well suited to bathing. For the greater convenience of the bathers more than 30 wooden bathing houses have been built …

[132]Torsten and Peter Berg ,eds, *R.R. Angerstein's Illustrated Travel Diary, 1753-1755* (London: Science Museum, 2001), 227.

> There are many people who also drink the salt water. There is also an acidic water spring near the sea shore which many guests use for water drinking. This spring water contains minerals and iron and is called Spa water.'[133]

This paper has concentrated on the 1730s at Scarborough, where the practices of the spa are particularly well documented and the first coherent picture of an emerging sea bathing culture can begin to be constructed. Elsewhere in England there are only occasional and fragmentary references to sea bathing at this date. The wealth of material at Scarborough is available because of the town's pre-existing well-developed spa culture, a culture that would serve as a model for the future development of Georgian seaside resorts, their institutions and their behaviours. Some of the sources that illuminate the leisure practices of the 1730s also point to an obvious sexual undertone to behaviour in Scarborough. Interestingly twenty years later Angerstein was still clear about the sexual quality of sea bathing:

> 'Women are dressed in a blue shift and accompanied by a married lady. But men usually enter the water naked, and those who wish to boast of their manliness only allow themselves to be driven a short distance out, so that they have the opportunity to show off their well-built bodies that much longer in front of the women bathing nearby.'[134]

Almost 300 years ago Scarborough was already the home to a holiday based on the spa, sea and sex and it can justly be claimed as a distant but direct ancestor of the modern seaside holiday.

[133] ibid., 228.
[134] ibid.