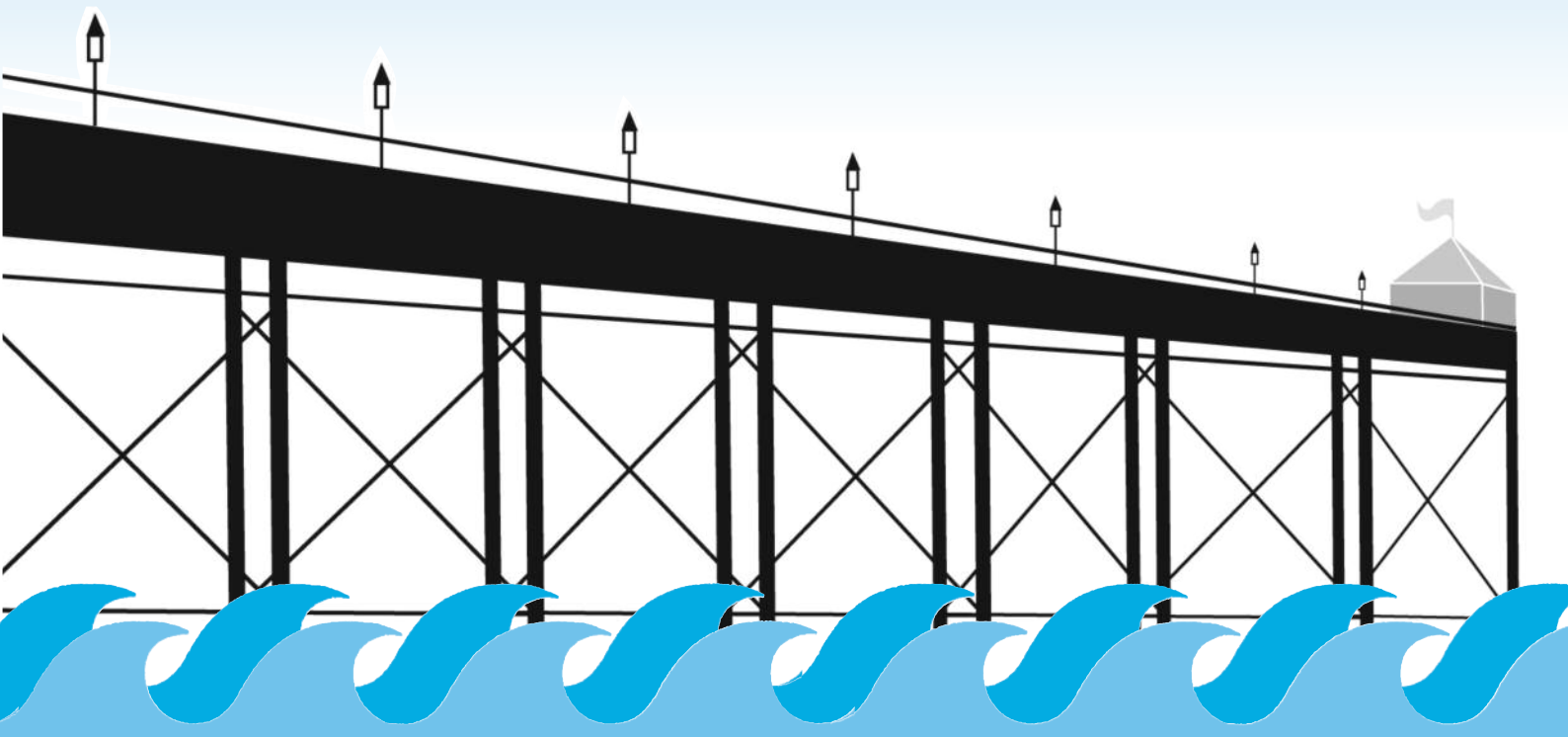
The Seaside Tourist Industry in England and Wales

Employment, economic output, location and trends

Christina Beatty, Steve Fothergill, Tony Gore and Ian Wilson



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Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
Sheffield Hallam University

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The findings presented in the report are however entirely the responsibility of the Sheffield Hallam research team.

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Summary

This report presents new figures on the scale of the seaside tourist industry in England and Wales. The figures are comprehensive in that they cover just about all the places where seaside tourism is a significant component of the local economy, consistent in that they provide data for each individual resort on the same basis, and comparable through time.

The seaside economy has traditionally been measured via large-scale visitor surveys. The approach adopted here is radically different. The report estimates the number of jobs in seaside tourism using official, published figures on local employment. This involves disentangling the jobs supported by seaside tourism from those supported by local consumer spending, often in the same sectors and same firms. The crucial step involves comparisons between employment levels in key sectors in seaside towns and the average in those sectors in comparator towns where there is little significant tourism. The resulting job figures are in turn used to derive estimates of the economic output of the seaside tourist economy.

The report covers 121 places in all, including all the principal seaside resorts, smaller seaside towns, sub-parts of some larger towns and important holiday parks. For statistical purposes, all these places are accurately defined down at the local level so that surrounding rural areas within the same district, for example, are excluded from the figures. The comparator towns are all accurately defined in the same way.

The comparisons standardise for population size and for the extent to which different towns function as 'central places' for their surrounding hinterlands. The job figures all include the self-employed and adjust for the seasonality of employment in the tourist trade.

The key statistical conclusions are that:

- *The seaside tourist industry directly supports some 210,000 jobs, spread across six sectors of the local economy. This is an average year-round figure.*

- *The Greater Blackpool conurbation has the largest single concentration of seaside tourism jobs – more than 19,000 – but no fewer than 58 places each have at least 1,000 jobs in seaside tourism.*

- *Since the late 1990s, employment in the seaside tourist industry is estimated to have increased – by around 14,000 in the principal seaside towns (and possibly as much as 20,000 overall) or by a little more than one per cent a year.*

- *The value of the economic output (Gross Value Added) associated with this employment in seaside tourism is estimated to be £3.4bn in 2007 (or £3.6bn in 2009, adjusting for inflation). This is low in relation to the industry's substantial employment because of the prevalence of low-wage and part-time employment in much of the industry.*

The report speculates that adding in places and sectors not covered in the main estimates, and the inland spend of seaside tourists, might raise the total number of jobs supported directly by seaside tourism to 250,000. Further jobs will be supported through the supply chain and via multiplier effects. The total number of jobs supported directly or indirectly by seaside tourism will therefore be far greater.

The report concludes that seaside tourism in England and Wales is by any standards a large industry. In terms of employment it is comparable to the telecommunications sector and larger than the motor industry, aerospace, pharmaceuticals or steel.

The report's findings also explode important myths about the industry. Far from being in terminal decline as a result of the rise of foreign holidays, a substantial British seaside tourist industry remains alive and well and seems even to have been growing over the last decade. For the future, the industry has a potentially important contribution to make not only to seaside towns but also to the British economy as a whole.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The information gap

This report provides new estimates of the scale and location of the seaside tourist industry in England and Wales. It deploys novel but straightforward methods to generate figures for more than one hundred individual resorts, all on a consistent basis, as well as for the country as a whole. Despite the considerable efforts of tourism researchers over the years, comprehensive information of this kind has hitherto been lacking.

The report fills one of four key gaps in information on seaside towns identified in a recent review commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government[1].

This information on seaside tourism is important because there is a widespread view that the British seaside tourist industry is in terminal decline, or at the very least a shadow of its former self. According to this narrative, the British no longer visit British seaside resorts in the large numbers they did in the 1950s or 1960s. Instead, the rise of cheap air travel and increasing sophistication in tastes has diverted holidaymakers to the Mediterranean and beyond. The British seaside resort has therefore lost much of its core business. However, as those familiar with Britain's seaside resorts know only too well, this is a poor description of the true state of affairs. Some resorts have certainly suffered from the rise of foreign travel, but the tourist trade in quite a number of others remains as robust as ever.

This is where the absence of comprehensive and consistent information is a problem. Nobody really knows quite how many jobs are supported by the British seaside tourism industry, how they are distributed around the country, or whether the numbers are going

[1] S Fothergill (2008) *England's Coastal Towns: a short review of the issues, evidence base and research needs*, report to DCLG, published as supplementary evidence to the Communities and Local Government Committee. The other gaps were the need for a 'benchmarking' exercise on socio-economic conditions in seaside towns (on which separate research has since been completed), a study of incapacity claimants in seaside towns, and a review of the costs and funding of service delivery in seaside towns.

up or down. This has made it all but impossible to negate misleading claims about the inexorable demise of the industry.

The problem is that from a statistical point of view the seaside tourist industry is unlike any other. Industries such as steel, aerospace, motor vehicle manufacturing or even banking are made up of businesses and workplaces that can fairly easily be identified and counted. They constitute specific categories in official statistics, and trends in their employment and output can be monitored. The seaside tourist industry is different. The jobs it supports are spread across a range of sectors – hotels and other short-stay accommodation, but also restaurants, cafes and bars, shops and attractions. The trouble is that many jobs in these sectors are supported by local consumer spending as well as by tourism. Disentangling the impact of one from the other, and quantifying the impact of tourism, is not easy.

The conventional approach to solving this problem has been by means of large-scale visitor surveys. There is no single model, but national surveys typically assemble information on a sample of individuals' travel patterns and spending, which are then grossed-up for the population as a whole to generate statistics on visitor numbers and visitor spend. Two shortcomings of this approach are that it tends to be very costly – large-scale surveys are not cheap – and even large survey samples usually struggle to generate reliable statistics for individual places. Survey-based estimates are further complicated by the fact that although visits involving overnight stays are currently monitored on an annual basis, the national data on day trips – which are hugely important in some resorts – is assembled far more infrequently.

Local surveys attempt to circumvent some of the problems, but differences in methods result in statistics that are rarely comparable between places or through time, let alone comprehensive in coverage. Reflecting the purposes for which they were designed, some of these local surveys focus on specific, tightly-defined seaside towns, but others cover whole local authority districts, which can extend well beyond the town itself. An additional shortcoming of visitor surveys is that they usually stop short of estimating the number of jobs actually dependent on tourist spending, or of the economic output (in terms of value added) of the industry.

A new approach

The approach adopted in the present report is radically different. Instead of trying to estimate the *input* to seaside economies in terms of tourist numbers or tourist spend, it estimates the *output* in terms of jobs supported by seaside tourism. Job figures, in turn, can be used as the basis for estimates of the economic output of the industry.

The report's approach is based on published official statistics that are available for all parts of the country and allow the accurate identification of all but the very smallest seaside resorts. The figures that the approach is able to generate are:

- **Comprehensive**, in that they cover just about all the places where seaside tourism is a significant component of the local economy

- **Consistent**, in that they provide figures for each individual seaside resort on a comparable basis

- **Comparable through time**, in that they allow trends to be monitored nationally and locally

It might also be added that, in comparison to large-scale visitor surveys, the approach deployed in the present report is remarkably *cheap*.

The core of the approach involves comparisons between seaside resorts, on the one hand, and on the other hand towns with little or no tourism. All towns have jobs in sectors such as shops, restaurants and hotels, but seaside resorts have more than others because of tourist spending. In essence, the approach adopted here measures *the additional jobs in seaside resorts that are attributable to tourism.*

In all parts of the country, large numbers of jobs are supported by local consumer spending. Several seaside resorts have substantial resident population, and on this basis alone they can be expected to support substantial numbers of jobs in local consumer services. Likewise, many jobs in the public sector – in schools and hospitals for example – serve the local resident population.

All towns also receive visitors. These include trips to family and friends, business travellers, contractors from outside the area and visitors attending specific events, such as football matches or concerts. These days, most large towns can also boast at least one 'tourist attraction' that draws in visitors from elsewhere. Some of the visitors support jobs in hotels, and more generally visitors add to consumer spending and thereby support jobs in shops, restaurants and so on.

The present report sets out to count the *additional* jobs in places along the coast that can be attributed specifically to seaside tourism – in other words, the additional jobs over and above those supported by local consumer spending and by the 'background' level of visitors found in even some of the least-visited towns around the country.

'Seaside tourism' is of course a lot wider than just set-piece family holidays on the beach. This was never more than just a portion of the seaside tourist industry, and in practice many seaside tourists never set foot on a beach. Nor is seaside tourism limited to those who stay overnight – day trips are an important part of the total. This report counts the impact of both day-trippers and overnight visitors.

The way in which seaside tourism is measured in the report includes all the jobs in specific sectors that cannot be attributed to local consumer spending or to background visitor numbers. Therefore if a town attracts more retail spending because shoppers prefer to shop in a seaside town rather than elsewhere, the additional employment in retailing is counted as tourism jobs. Likewise, if a seaside town draws in the conference trade to a greater extent than other places, the additional jobs also count as tourism jobs. And, if seaside towns draw in more night-clubbers, hen parties or stag nights than elsewhere, the additional jobs supported again count as tourism jobs.

The core of the approach, to repeat, is to measure the additional jobs in seaside towns that are attributable to tourism. This is done primarily by comparing employment levels in seaside towns against levels in comparable towns around the country where there is little or no significant tourism.

2. STATISTICAL METHODS

Geographical coverage

The report covers four groups of places around the coast of England and Wales.

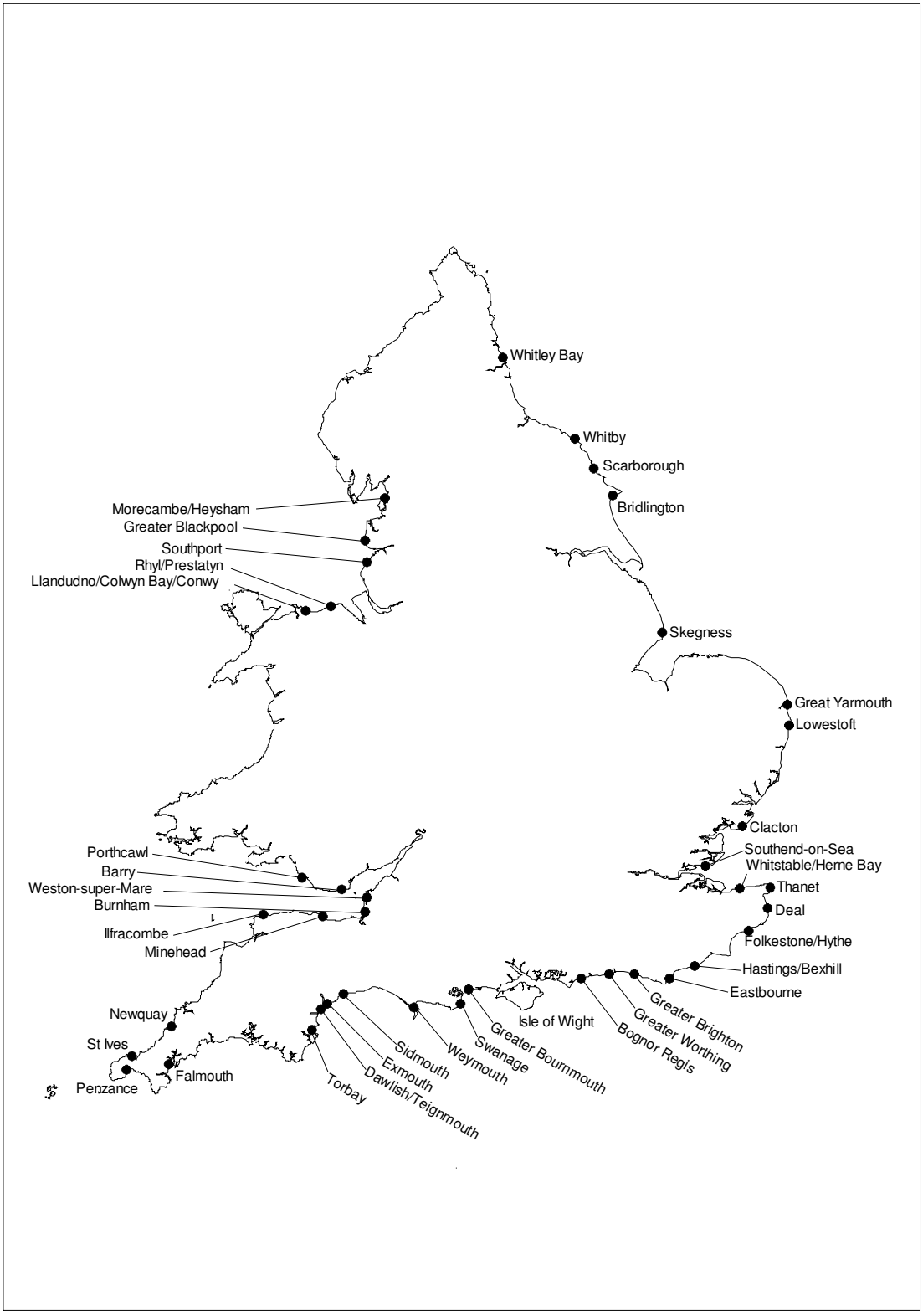
- Principal seaside towns
- Smaller seaside towns
- 'Other' seaside towns
- Holiday parks

The list of **principal seaside towns** in England and Wales has its origins in the 2003 report *The Seaside Economy*[2]. The same list of towns in England was also the basis of the 2008 benchmarking study of seaside towns commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government[3]. Figure 1 shows the location of these towns around the coast. The 41 principal seaside towns in England and Wales have a combined resident population (in 2007) of just under 3.1m.

The list of principal seaside towns covers places with a population of at least 10,000 where seaside tourism is a significant component of the local economy. These seaside towns (or seaside 'resorts' – the terms are largely interchangeable) are a distinctive group of places. Because of their history of tourism, and in most cases the continuing significance of this sector, they tend to share a number of characteristics that distinguish them from other industrial or commercial centres along the coast or inland. This includes a specialist tourist infrastructure (promenades, piers, parks etc), holiday accommodation (hotels, guest houses, caravan sites), and a distinctive resort character that is often reflected in the built environment. Moreover, while some resorts have fared better than others they

[2] C Beatty and S Fothergill (2003) *The Seaside Economy: the final report of the seaside towns research project*, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.
[3] C Beatty, S Fothergill and I Wilson (2008) *England's Seaside Towns: a 'benchmarking' study*, CLG, London.

Figure 1: Location of principal seaside towns



have all to a greater or lesser extent faced challenges arising from the changing structure of the UK holiday trade.

In practice there is no hard-and-fast dividing line between seaside towns/resorts and other places along the coast. At the time of the *Seaside Economy* report, the British Resorts Association[4] was consulted in drawing up the list of principal seaside towns but the final decisions were those of the research team. The list of principal seaside towns covers nearly all the places most famously associated with the British seaside tourist industry, from very large resorts such as Blackpool, Brighton and Bournemouth through to smaller places such as Whitby, Newquay and St Ives.

All the principal seaside towns are accurately defined in terms of their built-up urban area, using ward boundaries. What this means is that the seaside town is often defined more tightly than the local authority district of which it forms part. In a small number of other cases the built-up urban area spills out beyond local authority boundaries – Bournemouth, Brighton, Blackpool and Worthing are cases in point, and to denote this the title 'Greater' is attached to each of these towns. 'Greater Bournemouth' includes Christchurch and Poole. 'Greater Brighton' includes Shoreham as well as Hove. 'Greater Blackpool' includes Lytham St Anne's and Fleetwood. 'Greater Worthing' includes Littlehampton.

There are other instances where neighbouring towns have been added together to produce more meaningful units. This reflects the original focus of the *Seaside Economy* report, which was on labour markets, which tend to operate across relatively broad areas. Thus Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate, as well as the two smaller seaside towns of Birchington and Westgate on Sea, are all added together as 'Thanet'. Hastings and Bexhill are among those included as a single town, as well as Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and Conwy in Wales. The whole of the Isle of Wight is included as one 'town', partly because seaside tourism is widely spread throughout the island and partly because its separation from the mainland accentuates the extent to which it functions as a discrete labour market. In theory it should be possible to apply the methods in the report to the measurement of tourism in each of the component parts of these larger urban areas, but the present project had insufficient resources to allow this.

[4] Now the British Resorts and Destinations Association (BRADA)

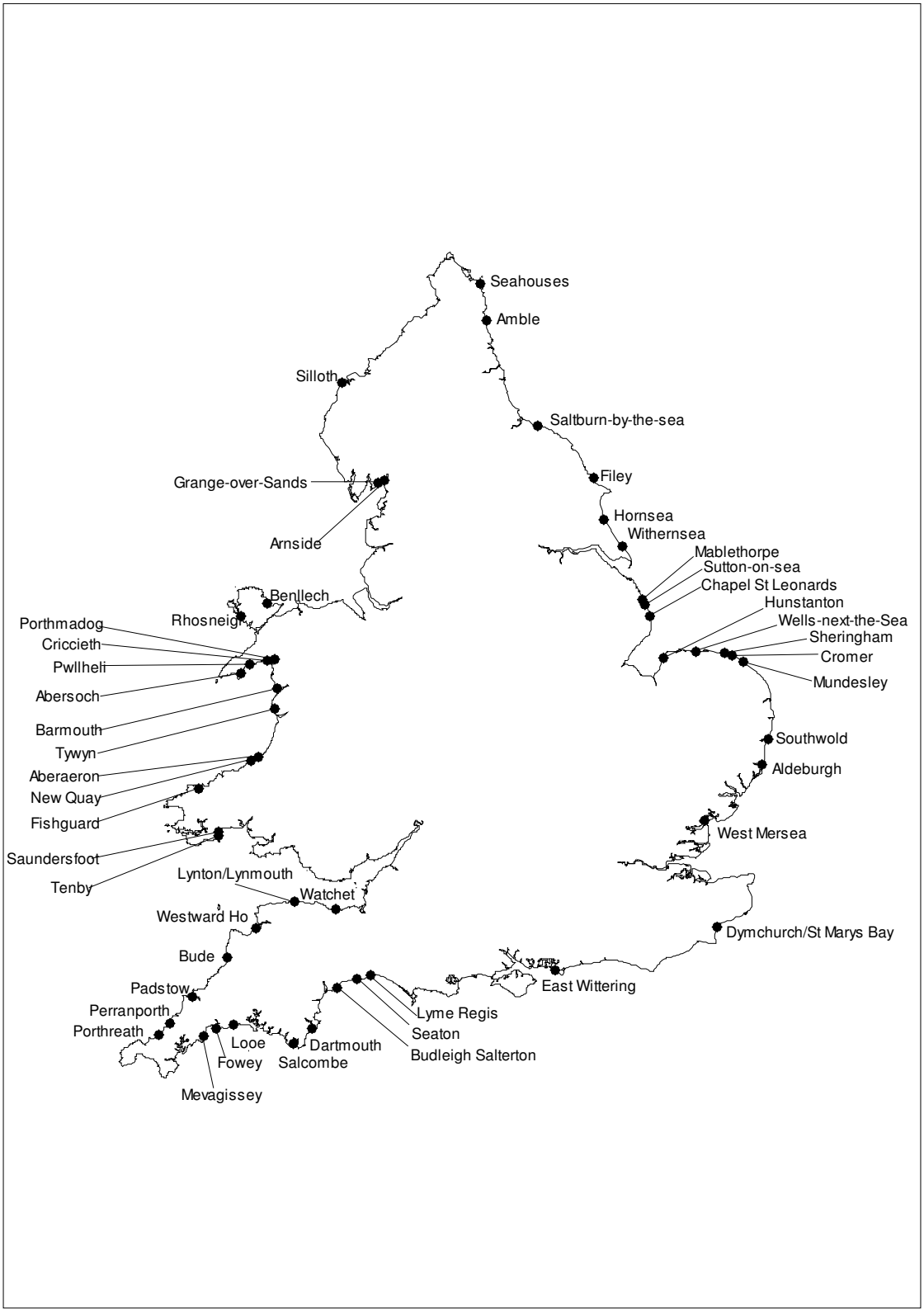
The list of **smaller seaside towns** has its origins in two other studies. The first is a benchmarking exercise covering England's smaller seaside towns[5], and the second a similar exercise for seaside towns in Wales[6]. Both involved the accurate identification and mapping of seaside towns/resorts with a population of less than 10,000. Figure 2 shows the location of these towns around the coast. The 50 smaller seaside towns in England and Wales have a combined resident population (in 2007) of 210,000.

Regarding the distinction between seaside towns/resorts and other places along the coast, the same logic applies to smaller towns as to their larger counterparts. Whilst proportionally fewer smaller coastal towns and villages are devoid of tourism, there are still a number of smaller places around the coast that are essentially industrial or residential settlements rather than 'seaside towns'. Former mining villages along the Durham coast, such as Easington, Blackhall and Horden, are examples. There is again no hard-and-fast dividing line. The research team was guided by a range of information, notably the *AA Book of the Seaside*[7], which though somewhat dated provides an unrivalled, consistent and detailed description of virtually everywhere along the coastline of Great Britain. The mapping exercise was also informed by scrutiny of Ordnance Survey maps of the entire coastline. First-hand knowledge played a part, and the British Resorts and Destinations Association was consulted. The final judgements about inclusion (or exclusion) were those of the research team.

For each smaller seaside town, the boundaries are accurately defined at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level. LSOAs are standard statistical units below ward level and the smallest unit for which a reasonable range of contemporary socio-economic data is available[8]. A typical LSOA covers around 1,500 residents. This effectively sets a lower size threshold below which smaller seaside towns cannot be separately identified for statistical purposes. The present study therefore covers seaside towns with a minimum population of around 1,500[9].

[5] C Beatty, S Fothergill and I Wilson (2010) *England's Smaller Seaside Towns: a 'benchmarking' study*, report to CLG, DEFRA and CRC.
[6] C Beatty, S Fothergill and I Wilson (2010) *Seaside Towns in Wales: a 'benchmarking'' study*, report to Visit Wales (Welsh Assembly Government).
[7] Automobile Association (1972) *AA Book of the Seaside*, Drive Pubications, London.
[8] The only figures for smaller units are Output Area data from the 2001 Census of Population.
[9] The precise lower size cut-off depends on LSOA boundaries. Salcombe, Portreath and Southwold, and New Quay in Wales, all fall just below the 1,500 threshold but can be included because of the way that LSOA boundaries are drawn.

Figure 2: Location of smaller seaside towns



This allows the inclusion of places such as Hunstanton, Wells, Sheringham and Cromer along the Norfolk coast, and Salcombe, Fowey, Padstow and Bude in Devon and Cornwall. The lower size cut-off nevertheless has the effect of excluding a number of smaller places – many of which probably merit the 'village' label - where seaside tourism is prominent. Examples along the North Yorkshire coast include Staithes, Sandsend and Robin Hood's Bay.

The **'other' seaside towns** covered in the report are a mixed group of places. A number are sub-parts of larger urban areas that, taken as a whole, could not be described as a 'seaside resort'. Cleethorpes, which is an integral part of Grimsby, is the most prominent example. Others include Seaburn within Sunderland, Southsea within Portsmouth and Mumbles within Swansea. This category also includes the whole of a number of industrial or commercial towns where seaside tourism is an additional component of the local economy – Felixstowe and Harwich, which are primarily ports, are examples. The list also includes a major yachting centre (Lymington) and residential areas with significant holiday/caravan parks (for example Hayling Island, Selsey and the Isle of Sheppey). The 16 'other' seaside towns shown in Figure 3 have a combined resident population (in 2007) of just over 400,000.

The identification of these 'other' seaside towns was guided by the *AA Book of the Seaside* and by the British Resorts and Destinations Association, but the final decisions on inclusion or exclusion were those of the research team. Each of these towns has been accurately mapped at LSOA level.

The final category of places included in the study are described here as **holiday parks**. In practice this is a wider group of places than just 'holiday camps', including a number of places where there is a concentration of camping and caravan sites. The 14 holiday parks shown in Figure 4 have a combined resident population (in 2007) of 34,000.

The holiday parks are all in essentially rural coastal locations. They mostly comprise individual LSOAs. Decisions on inclusion were informed by scrutiny of fine-grain local maps. This category of seaside places is not intended to be a comprehensive list of holiday park locations, many of which fall within the boundaries of the other three categories of seaside towns covered in this report. Thus the large holiday camp at Ingoldmells, near Skegness in Lincolnshire, is listed separately, but the equivalent large holiday camp near Minehead in Somerset falls within the boundaries of the town.

Figure 3: Location of 'other' seaside towns

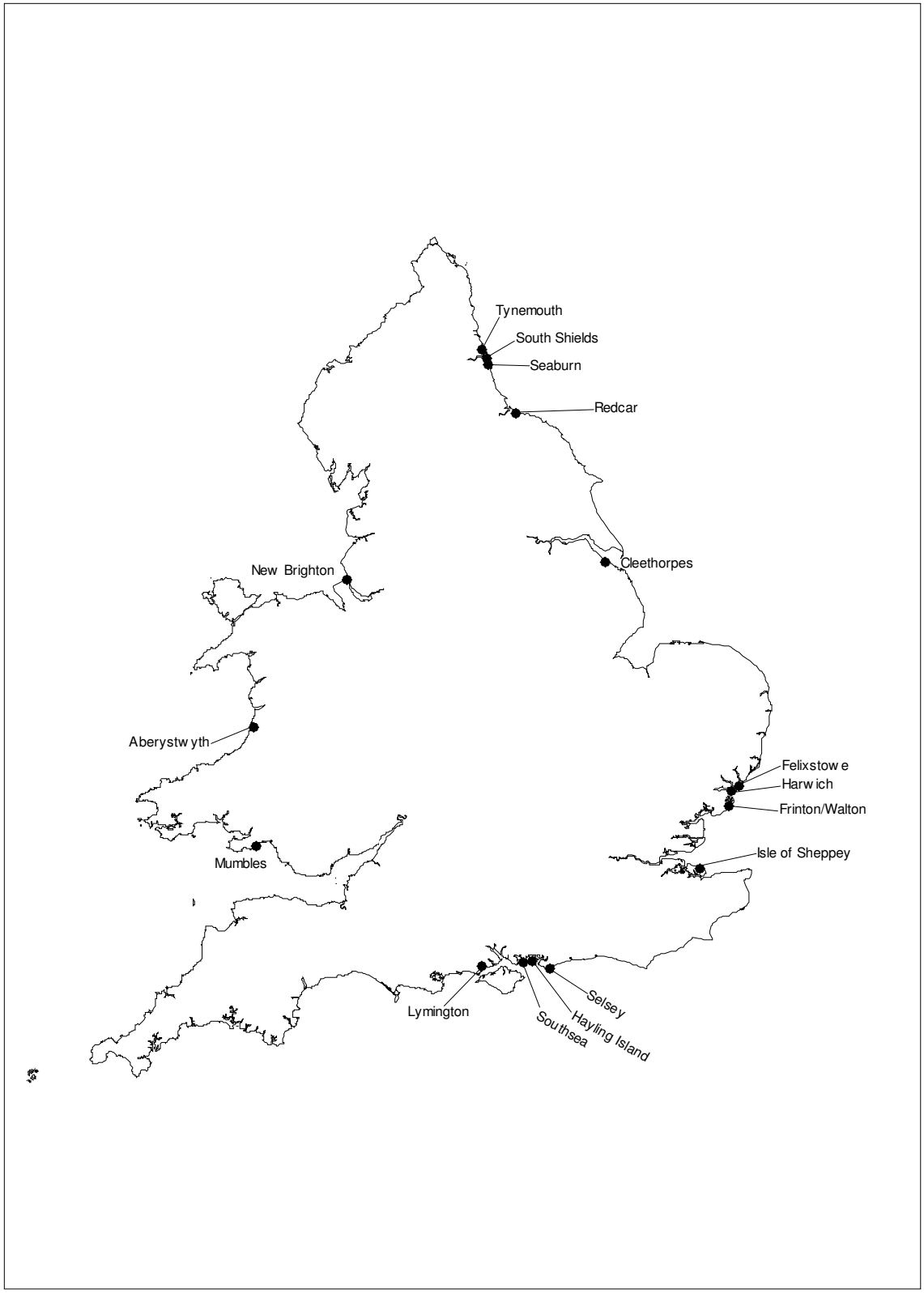
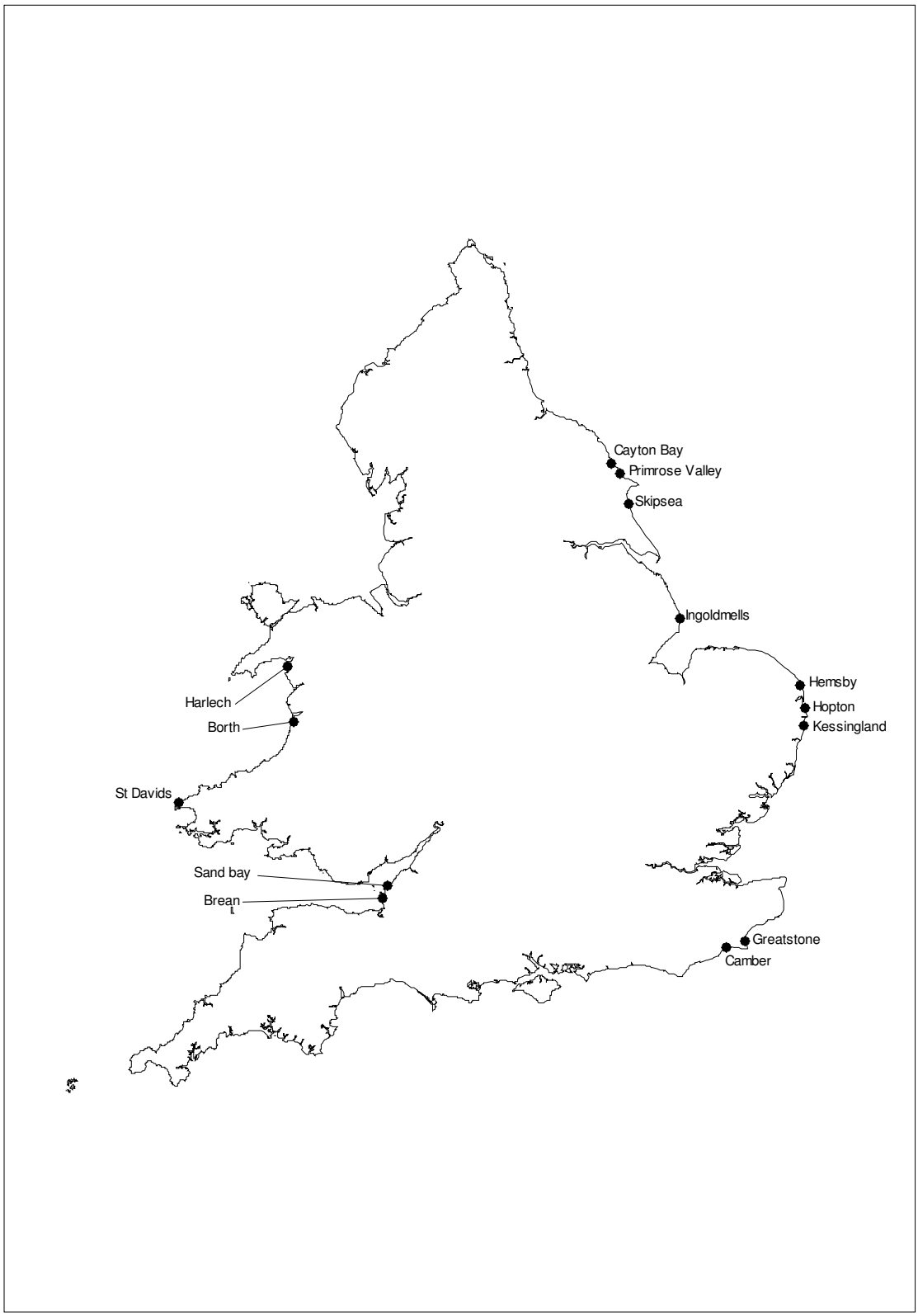


Figure 4: Location of holiday parks



In all the present study covers 121 places spread across the four categories. These have a combined population of 3.7m. Table 1 shows the resident population of each of the towns. This varies from a third of a million in Greater Bournemouth to less than 2,000 in a number of smaller seaside towns.

These 121 places provide coverage of the seaside tourist industry in England and Wales that is only marginally short of comprehensive. The notable omissions are:

- *Very small seaside towns, below the 1,500 population threshold*. There may be 50-100 of these, with a particular concentration in South West England, and in practice they may be proportionally more dependent on tourism and/or holiday homes than larger seaside towns, but their diminutive size means that even in total they are unlikely to account for many tourism jobs.

- *More isolated camping and caravan sites*. These are quite numerous – few areas along the coast are completely bereft of sites. However, other than the jobs on the sites themselves, much of the employment supported by the associated tourist spending may be in the seaside towns covered in the report.

- *Tourist-related businesses along the coast between the main resorts*. This will include pubs, cafes, shops, hotels and guest houses in more isolated locations, for example near secluded coves and along coastal footpaths. Some specific seaside tourist attractions (for example at Land's End) will also come into this category.

- *'Seaside' elements of some industrial or commercial towns*. The present study does not cover absolutely all towns along the coast or on estuaries. Additional places such as Dover, Liverpool, Hull and Plymouth do have further small numbers of seaside tourism jobs, especially if 'maritime heritage' is included.

- *The inland spend of seaside tourists*. For visitors who stay for several days in a seaside resort, particularly those with a car, nearby inland tourist attractions can be an important part of the holiday experience. The approach deployed in the report measures only the jobs supported by seaside tourism in the seaside towns themselves.

Table 1: Population of individual seaside towns/resorts, 2007

	no.		no.
Principal seaside towns		**Smaller seaside towns**	
Greater Bournemouth	335,500	Mablethorpe	8,900
Greater Brighton	284,300	Sheringham	8,400
Greater Blackpool	264,600	Hornsea	8,200
Greater Worthing	191,300	Bude	8,100
Southend-on-Sea	159,900	Cromer	7,900
Isle of Wight	138,500	Withernsea	7,500
Torbay	133,200	Seaton	7,300
Hastings/Bexhill	127,100	West Mersea	7,300
Thanet	122,300	Filey	6,900
Eastbourne	94,900	Amble	6,600
Southport	90,400	Tenby	6,400
Weston-super-Mare	76,300	Dymchurch/St Marys Bay	6,200
Whitstable/Herne Bay	69,700	Saltburn-by-the-sea	6,000
Llandudno/Colwyn Bay/Conwy	66,500	Dartmouth	5,400
Lowestoft	63,900	Pwllheli	5,300
Folkestone/Hythe	60,100	Fishguard	5,100
Great Yarmouth	58,300	East Wittering	4,600
Clacton	58,000	Budleigh Salterton	4,500
Scarborough	54,900	Sutton-on-sea	4,400
Weymouth	52,000	Hunstanton	4,300
Morecambe/Heysham	50,800	Grange-over-Sands	4,200
Barry	50,500	Looe	4,000
Rhyl/Prestatyn	45,200	Padstow	4,000
Bognor Regis	42,300	Westward Ho	4,000
Bridlington	39,200	Watchet	3,900
Whitley Bay	38,400	Chapel St Leonards	3,500
Exmouth	34,200	Lyme Regis	3,500
Dawlish/Teignmouth	30,300	Benllech	3,500
Deal	29,200	Porthmadog	3,500
Newquay	23,500	Aldeburgh	3,400
Penzance	21,600	Silloth	3,300
Falmouth	21,100	Tywyn	3,300
Skegness	20,400	Wells-next-the-Sea	2,900
Burnham	19,100	Perranporth	2,800
Porthcawl	15,700	Saundersfoot	2,800
Whitby	13,700	Arnside	2,700
Sidmouth	13,700	Mundesley	2,700
Minehead	12,100	Seahouses	2,600
Ilfracombe	11,300	Barmouth	2,500
St Ives	11,200	Mevagissey	2,400
Swanage	10,100	Rhosneigr	2,200
		Lynton/Lynmouth	1,800
		Criccieth	1,800
		Abersoch	1,700
		Fowey	1,500
		Aberaeron	1,500
		Portreath	1,400
		Salcombe	1,400
		Southwold	1,300
		New Quay	1,300

(continued)

	no.		no.
'Other' seaside towns		**Holiday parks**	
New Brighton	58,700	Kessingland	5,100
South Shields	46,800	Hemsby	4,600
Isle of Sheppey	39,300	Camber	3,100
Redcar	33,600	Greatstone	2,900
Cleethorpes	30,000	Hopton	2,700
Felixstowe	27,600	Borth	2,200
Southsea	27,400	Ingoldmells	2,200
Harwich	19,800	Harlech	1,900
Tynemouth	18,100	Sand Bay	1,800
Aberystwyth	17,900	St. Davids	1,700
Hayling Island	17,200	Primrose Valley	1,600
Frinton/Walton	16,700	Skipsea	1,600
Mumbles	16,100	Cayton Bay	1,500
Lymington	15,000	Brean	1,400
Seaburn	11,500		
Selsey	10,800		

Source: ONS mid-year population estimates

Comparator towns

The core of the approach to the measurement of tourism involves comparisons between seaside towns and other towns with little or no significant tourism. There are several hundred towns of varying size and function across England and Wales as a whole. The places excluded as possible comparators were:

- *London*, because it is a major tourist destination in its own right

- *London's immediate commuting hinterland*, because the scale of this commuting is likely to have a major distorting effect on the distribution of consumer spending (and thereby jobs) across the region

- *Major regional cities* (eg Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Nottingham etc.) partly on the basis that they are larger than seaside towns and partly because they too pull in significant numbers of tourists and visitors

- *Inland tourist destinations* (eg York, Cambridge, Chester, Cheltenham, Stratford on Avon etc.)

- *Towns in or near National Parks*, because they are likely to have employment levels boosted by tourist spending

Filtering out these places leaves 168 towns across England and Wales, each with a population of 10,000 or more, as potential comparators for seaside towns.

To be comparable with the seaside towns, the built-up area of each of the comparator towns was accurately mapped at ward or LSOA level – a major mapping exercise in its own right. Where a comparator town gives its name to the whole district (eg Barnsley, Bridgend) the comparator data therefore refers to the town itself, tightly defined, not the district. Also, where the comparator town spills out across district boundaries the whole of the built-up area was included, in the same way as for some seaside towns (eg Hull, Greater Mansfield).

For smaller seaside towns (ie those with a population of between 1,500 and 10,000) a slightly different approach was adopted. 25 towns of similar size on or near the coast were identified as comparators[10]. This approach responds to the very much larger number of small towns up and down the country and better reflects the impact of a coastal location. The small comparator towns were all accurately identified and mapped at LSOA level in the same way as for smaller seaside towns.

Adjusting for 'central place' effects

A major complicating issue in making comparisons between seaside towns and other places is the extent to which different towns function as a *central place*. Geographers in particular will be familiar with this concept. It refers to the extent to which towns function as service centres for their hinterland, and operates most clearly in the context of retailing but also a wide range of other services. In a nutshell, in relation to their population some places have more service jobs than others because they pull in more consumer spending from elsewhere. This matters in the present context because each seaside town needs to be compared against towns that function as a central place to a similar extent.

[10] The comparator small towns are: Bedlington, Caldicot, Cleator Moor, Dersingham, Easington Colliery, Egremont, Fortuneswell, Freckleton-Warton, Heacham, Holywell, Hoo St Werburgh, Kidwelly, Leiston, Llantwit Major, Loftus, Long Sutton-Sutton Bridge, Lydd, Marske, Millom, Newbiggin, Neyland, Preesall, Skelton, Southminster, St Just.

Other things being equal, larger towns tend to function more as central places than smaller towns. However, what matters most is the size of the town in relation to the size of its hinterland: the bigger the hinterland (in population terms) in relation to the town, the greater the extent to which a town functions as a central place. The distances between towns matter too – a town located close to a major city is unlikely to function as much of a central place. By its very nature, a coastal location is also likely to reduce the extent to which a town functions as a central place because half the town's potential hinterland is in effect missing.

To enable meaningful comparison, the 41 principal seaside towns, the 16 'other' seaside towns and the comparator towns have each been allocated to one of six categories on the basis of the extent to which they function as a central place:

A: Large hinterland in relation to population
B: Significant spending pull from surrounding areas
C: Largely self-contained, with some pull from neighbouring areas
D: Modest loss of spending to neighbouring town(s)
E: Major loss of spending to neighbouring town(s)
F: Sub-area of bigger built-up area

The descriptions are indicative. The important point is the continuum, and the need to compare like-with-like.

There is however no readily available data on the scale and population of hinterlands, not least because the hinterlands of neighbouring towns can overlap a great deal in complex ways. The 168 larger comparator towns have therefore been allocated to each of the first five categories (A to E) on the basis of the total number of jobs per 10,000 residents in two key service sectors, retailing and hotels/restaurants[11]:

A: More than 1,000 jobs per 10,000 residents
B: 850-1,000 jobs per 10,000
C: 750-850 jobs per 10,000
D: 600-750 jobs per 10,000
E: Fewer than 600 jobs per 10,000

[11] The employment data is the average number of employee jobs in the two sectors in 2005, 2006 and 2007, from the Annual Business Inquiry. Employment in hotels/restaurants includes B&Bs, cafes, catering, takeaways, pubs, clubs and bars. The population data is the mid-year population estimate for each town for 2007.

The resulting allocation of comparator towns to categories is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Grouping of comparator towns

CATEGORY A					
Ashford	Boston	Bridgnorth	Bury St Edm'ds	Carmarthen	Chelmsford
Devizes	Doncaster	Evesham	Harlow	Lichfield	Llantrisant
Maidstone	Northwich	Oakham	Oswestry	Preston	Swansea
Swindon	Taunton	Wakefield	Wigan	Yeovil	
CATEGORY B					
Andover	Aylesbury	Banbury	Barnsley	Basingstoke	Bedford
Bicester	Bishops S'ford	Braintree	Bridgend	Brighouse	Chesterfield
Chorley	Colchester	Crewe	Cwmbran	Darlington	Gloucester
Grantham	Gt Harwood	Huntingdon	Kettering	Kidderminster	Llanelli
Middlewich	Milton Keynes	Morpeth	Newark	Newbury	Northampton
Peterborough	Petersfield	Royston	Scunthorpe	Sleaford	Spalding
Stafford	Stevenage	Stone	Stroud	Sudbury	Tiverton
T'bridge Wells	Warrington	Whitchurch	Whitehaven	Wisbech	Worksop
CATEGORY C					
Accrington	Alton	Barrow	Bishop A'land	Buckingham	Burton on T
Caerphilly	Chard	Chippenham	Dereham	E Grinstead	Ebbw Vale
Gainsborough	Halifax	Hinckley	Hitchen	Huddersfield	Hull
Loughborough	Lutterworth	Macclesfield	Market H'boro	Melksham	Melton Mowbray
Newport (W)	Plymouth	Port Talbot	Redditch	Retford	Rugby
Selby	St Ives (Hunts)	Stoke	Stowmarket	Tamworth	Teesside
Thetford	Tonbridge	Uckfield	Wellingborough	Wrexham	
CATEGORY D					
Aldershot	Ashington	Biggleswade	Blackburn	Blyth	Bromsgrove
Burnley	Cannock	Congleton	Consett	Corby	Coventry
Crediton	Daventry	Droitwich	Hartlepool	Horsham	Keighley
Leigh	Luton	Mansfield	Market Drayton	Merthyr Tydfil	Neath
Nelson/Colne	Ormskirk	Pontypridd	Sittingbourne	Skelmersdale	Spennymoor
St Neots	Wantage	Widnes	Winsford		
CATEGORY E					
Aberdare	Brackley	Brynmawr	Colne	Cramlington	Crook
Crowborough	Ellesmere Port	Faversham	Haverhill	Maesteg	March
Neston	Newton Aycliffe	Nuneaton	Peterlee	Rugeley	Runcorn
Rushden	Seaham	Shildon	Shepshed		

Seaside towns cannot be allocated in the same way, on the basis of job numbers, because employment in these sectors combines the jobs supported by tourism with those supported by local consumers. The allocation of seaside towns to each of the categories has therefore been made on the basis of their size relative to their hinterland and on the basis of their proximity to competing service centres, such as neighbouring cities. Account has also been taken of the fact that multi-centred places (Thanet and Torbay are good examples) tend to exert less of a pull on retail spending from surrounding areas than single, larger town centres. First-hand knowledge of the towns and their surrounding areas informed the allocation. The allocation is unavoidably subjective, but reflects a range of evidence.

The allocation of the 'principal' and 'other' seaside towns to the six categories is shown in Table 3. A key point is immediately apparent from this table: in the view of the research team, few seaside towns function as important 'central places'. None have therefore been placed in category A and just two in category B. The vast majority are in categories D and E. This should perhaps not be surprising, because the coastal location of all the towns limits the extent of their hinterland, and most seaside towns are poorly located in relation to the strategic road network. In effect, this means that in the absence of seaside tourism the consumer spending in most seaside towns – in shops, pubs, restaurants, hotels and so on - would be below what might be expected in an inland town of comparable size.

Table 3: Grouping of 'principal' and 'other' seaside towns

CATEGORY B					
Aberystwyth	Penzance				
CATEGORY C					
Greater Bournemouth	Greater Brighton	Lymington	Llandudno/Colwyn Bay/Conwy		
Minehead	Scarborough	Skegness			
CATEGORY D					
Eastbourne	Folkestone/Hythe	Great Yarmouth	Greater Blackpool		
Greater Worthing	Isle of Wight	Lowestoft	Redcar	Southend on Sea	
Southport	Torbay	Weston-super-Mare	Weymouth	Whitby	
CATEGORY E					
Barry	Bognor Regis	Bridlington	Burnham	Clacton	Dawlish/Teignmouth
Deal	Exmouth	Falmouth	Felixstowe	Harwich	Hastings/Bexhill
Hayling Island	Ilfracombe	Isle of Sheppey	Morecambe/Heysham	Newquay	
Porthcawl	Rhyl/Prestatyn	Sidmouth	South Shields	St Ives	Swanage
Thanet	Whitley Bay	Whitstable/Herne Bay			
CATEGORY F					
Cleethorpes	Frinton/Walton	New Brighton	Mumbles	Seaburn	Selsey
Southsea	Tynemouth				

Some examples help clarify the allocation:

- Aberystwyth and Penzance (in category B) are both relatively small towns that serve substantial hinterlands, in Central Wales and West Cornwall respectively

- Greater Bournemouth and Greater Brighton (in category C) are large urban areas and, in absolute terms, larger service centres, but their hinterlands are smaller in relation to their size and (in the case of Brighton in particular) London exercises a competing pull

- Smaller towns such as Minehead and Skegness have also been placed in category C because they are local service centres for rural hinterlands

- Greater Blackpool and Greater Worthing only merit category D because of the competing retail pulls of Preston and Brighton respectively

- Likewise in category D, Southport is overshadowed by Liverpool, Weston super Mare by Bristol, Redcar by Middlesbrough, and Torbay by both Exeter and Plymouth, though all of these seaside towns do have more localised hinterlands that they serve

- In category E, several of the seaside towns are in close proximity to important regional service centres – Felixstowe and Harwich to Ipswich, Exmouth and Dawlish/Teignmouth to Exeter, Falmouth to Truro, Morecambe/Heysham to Lancaster, Whitley Bay and South Shields to Newcastle

- Despite its size, Thanet (pop 120,000) is in category E, partly because it is surrounded on three sides by the sea (limiting its hinterland), partly because it has three lesser town centres (Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs) rather than a single large centre to attract trade, and partly because nearby Canterbury acts as the main retail and service centre for much of East Kent

The final allocation of seaside towns to ‘central place’ categories has been the sole responsibility of the research team.

To estimate the number of jobs supported by seaside tourism, employment in each seaside town is compared with the average (per 10,000 resident population) for all the comparator towns in its category. The effect is that to change the category in which a seaside town is placed would change the estimated number of jobs supported by seaside tourism. A revision from category D to category C, for example, would *lower* the estimated number of seaside tourism jobs.

The comparisons are made sector-by-sector (see below) and take account of population. Thus the number of jobs per 10,000 residents in each seaside town in retailing, for example, is compared with the average in retailing for the comparator towns in the same category[12]. The extra jobs in the seaside town, over and above the comparator, are deemed to be supported by tourism[13].

Employment data

The employment figures used in this report are taken from the government's Annual Business Inquiry (ABI). The ABI produces estimates of employees in employment for local areas, broken down by sector.

The jobs directly supported by seaside tourism are likely to be found in six main sectors of the local economy. These are listed in Table 4, which shows the detailed specification of each sector[14].

[12] Direct comparators towns are not identified here for places in category F, which are sub-parts of bigger urban areas (or, in the cases of Frinton/Walton and Selsey, essentially residential areas close to bigger towns). The comparator for seaside towns in category F has instead been set at two-thirds of the number of jobs per 10,000 residents, in the relevant sectors, in category E comparator towns. This roughly corresponds to the very lowest level of employment, in the relevant sectors, in any of the individual comparator towns. Direct comparators are also not identified for 'holiday parks', where all the jobs in the six sectors are counted as being supported by tourism.

[13] In a very small number of cases a strict application of the method outlined here identifies implausibly low or negative numbers of jobs supported by tourism in retailing in relation to the estimated numbers supported by tourism in hotels and restaurants. In these cases the number of jobs supported in retailing has been set at 30 per cent of the number supported in hotels and restaurants.

[14] The research team has examined a number of other sectors, beyond those listed in Table 4, that might potentially include significant numbers of seaside tourist jobs. These include the railways (SIC 60.1) and scheduled bus services (SIC 60.2). A careful examination of the data, however, suggests that local employment levels in these sectors primarily reflect other factors (for example the impact of commuting flows on railway and station employment).

Table 4: Key sectors covering jobs directly supported by seaside tourism
(Defined in terms of the 2003 Standard Industrial Classification)

RETAIL TRADE	
52	Retail trade
HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS (ex 55.2)	
55.1	Hotels
55.3	Restaurants, cafes, takeaways
55.4	Bars, pubs and clubs
55.5	Canteens and catering
CAMPSITES AND SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION	
55.21	Youth hostels
55.22	Camping and caravan sites
55.23/1	Holiday centres and holiday villages
55.23/2	Self-catering holiday accommodation
55.23/3	Other tourist or short-stay accommodation
TRANSPORT	
60.22	Taxis
60.23	Excursions and sight-seeing
61.1	Ferries etc
63.22	Harbours
63.3	Travel agencies and tourist assistance
RECREATION, SPORTING AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY	
92.13	Cinemas
92.3	Theatres, arts facilities and entertainment (ex 92.33)
92.5	Libraries, archives, museums, historic buildings, zoos
92.6	Sporting activities and facilities
92.7	Gambling and other recreation, inc. parks, hire of beach equipment
FAIR AND AMUSEMENT PARKS	
92.33	Fair and amusement parks, inc. theme parks and preserved railways

In seaside towns, it is a reasonable assumption that just about all the jobs in two of the six sectors – campsites and short-stay accommodation, and fairgrounds and amusement parks – will be supported by tourism. The 'benchmarking' approach is therefore not applied to these sectors, but instead *all* the jobs are attributed to tourism. The other four sectors are more mixed, including jobs supported by tourism as well as by local residents. The benchmarking approach is applied to these four sectors[15].

The overwhelming majority of the jobs directly supported by seaside tourism can be expected to be found in these six sectors. The principal estimates presented in this report

[15] In order to avoid distortions arising from large port facilities (eg at Felixstowe) and the national offices of major travel agencies and tour companies (in a number of seaside and comparator towns) individual establishments employing more than 100 have been excluded from SIC 63.22 and 62.3.

therefore refer specifically to these sectors. For clarity, the omissions from the resulting estimates are nevertheless worth noting. These are:

- Directly supported tourist jobs outside the six sectors
- Jobs in other sectors supported through the supply chain
- Wider multiplier effects, for example via the spending of wages earned in the tourist sector

ABI data is based on a sample survey, and the resulting employment estimates for local areas can as a result fluctuate a little from year to year. To circumvent the problem, the local figures presented in this report are a three-year average (for example for 2006/07/08).

To adjust for self-employment, the ABI figures for all years have been revised up by the ratio between total employment (including the self-employed) and employees in employment in each town, recorded by the 2001 Census of Population.

The ABI data used here does not differentiate between full and part-time employment. It also counts all the individual jobs held by men and women who have more than one job.

Seasonality

It has always been known that employment in the seaside tourist economy fluctuates with the seasons, peaking in the summer months and reaching a trough during the winter.

The ABI data from 2006 onwards nominally refers to mid-September, but many of the employment returns from individual businesses actually provide data for October or November. Prior to 2006, the ABI data was nominally for December. What this means, in effect, is that the ABI records employment in seaside towns when it is well below its mid-summer peak and, in the case of earlier years, at or near its winter trough. The raw ABI figures therefore need to be revised upwards to adjust for seasonality.

Monthly figures for each town allow seasonal fluctuations in claimant unemployment to be accurately identified. But this is only part of the overall picture. There is a long tradition of seaside businesses employing students over the summer, and of employing temporary workers from further afield, including these days migrant workers from abroad. It is also to be expected that some seasonal workers will drop out of the labour market altogether over the winter rather than claim benefits. The fluctuations in claimant unemployment therefore provide a *minimum estimate* of the extent of seasonality. The scale of the fluctuations in claimant unemployment is however likely to provide a reasonably good guide to the relative extent to which individual seaside towns are affected by seasonality.

The approach adopted here is to add in the whole of the seasonal fluctuation in claimant unemployment in the district covering each seaside town[16], measured over the 2000-07 period[17], to provide an estimate of *average year-round employment* in the tourist sector[18]. In effect, this treats the jobs underpinning the seasonal fluctuations in claimant unemployment as if they were year-round jobs (which they are clearly not) to compensate for the under-recording of other components of seasonal employment.

This procedure adds 25,000 jobs to the estimated average year-round employment in seaside tourism in England and Wales. Implicitly, if each of these seasonal jobs lasts six months, this method suggests that summer employment in the seaside tourist industry is 50,000 higher than in the winter. If the seasonal jobs on average last only four months, the method suggests that peak employment is 75,000 higher than in winter[19].

[16] District data is used here because the seasonal unemployed may not live in the seaside town itself, especially in the case of the smallest seaside towns, but it is reasonable to assume that the local seaside tourist industry will in most cases account for the majority of the seasonal fluctuation. The resulting estimate of the seasonal fluctuation in seaside tourism employment is capped at 50 per cent of the base-level estimate of tourism employment, to take account of a small number of cases where the seaside town is only a very small part of a much larger district. Where there is more than one seaside town in a district, the seasonal adjustment is allocated between the towns on the basis of the base-level employment estimates.

[17] Data for 2008 and 2009 is excluded to avoid of the impact of recession on claimant unemployment.

[18] In each town, the seasonal employment has been allocated by sector in proportion to the base-level estimates of tourist jobs by sector in the town.

[19] Seasonal fluctuations in total UK employment over the 2000-07, measured by the Labour Force Survey, average around 80,000 between the winter and summer quarters. The seaside tourist industry might be expected to account for a large part of the fluctuation. The UK employment data is therefore broadly consistent with the adjustment for seasonality adopted here.

Monitoring change through time

The *Seaside Economy* report[20] found that between 1971 and 2001 employment and population in Britain's seaside towns grew slightly faster than the national average. Far from entering a spiral of decline caused by the loss of tourism business, the economy of Britain's seaside towns actually proved remarkably resilient over this period. The report even found job growth in the sectors most closely linked to tourism (shops, hotels and restaurants) though it stopped short of disentangling the separate effects of local consumer spending and seaside tourism.

In theory it would be possible to estimate the numbers of jobs supported by seaside tourism as far back as 1971 using Census of Population data, and thereby take a long view of economic change. This long view would unquestionably be desirable because it would expose the full extent to which different resorts have been affected by the long-term increase in the number people opting for foreign holidays. Extending the employment estimates back to 1971 would however be a major exercise in its own right.

The present report takes the estimates of seaside tourism employment back to 1998, which is when the present ABI statistics were first compiled. More precisely, the comparison is between the three-year averages for 1998/99/2000 and for 2006/07/08, to overcome year-to-year fluctuations in the ABI local data attributable to sampling. The estimates presented here therefore cover a relative short recent period, in effect from 1999 to 2007 taking the mid-points of each three-year block.

The estimates of employment change also relate solely to the 41 principal seaside towns. The other categories of seaside places are all defined at LSOA level, and ABI statistics at LSOA level are only available from 2003 onwards, making all but very short-term comparisons impossible. As the figures presented later show, the principal seaside towns account for more than two-thirds of all the estimated jobs directly supported by seaside tourism in England and Wales.

The earlier years' figures on employment in seaside tourism are assembled in essentially the same way as for the later years, involving comparisons between the seaside towns

[20] C Beatty and S Fothergill (2003) *The Seaside Economy; the final report of the seaside towns research project*, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

and comparator towns around the country[21]. An adjustment is made for the discontinuity in the ABI data caused by the shift (between 2005 and 2006) in the month for which employment data is nominally recorded[22].

The employment figures for seaside tourism in both earlier and later years nevertheless remain subject to a margin of error in both cases. This means that small changes in employment in individual towns are liable to reflect estimation errors in either year's data as much as real underlying changes[23]. No figures on changes in seaside tourism jobs in individual towns are therefore presented in the report. Instead, the figures are for regions, at which scale estimation errors in the data for individual towns are more likely to cancel out.

How reliable?

The employment figures presented in this report are *estimates*. Because seaside tourism jobs are spread across several sectors, and because they are often tangled up in the same businesses with jobs supported by local consumer spending, the figures are inevitably a best assessment in the light of the available statistical evidence. Six points are worth noting.

The first concerns the allocation of seaside towns to central place categories to allow benchmarking against comparator towns. In all cases, the allocation was the subject of detailed consideration and debate. Moving a seaside town up between categories, say from category D to C, would typically reduce the estimated employment in seaside tourism by 130 jobs per 10,000 population, or 1,300 jobs for a seaside town of 100,000 people. Lowering a town between categories would have the same effect in boosting the estimated employment.

[21] A difference is that, to simplify procedures, the comparator town data for the earlier years is a revision of the data for 2006/07/08 based on national employment trends (excluding the largest cities) in the relevant sectors.
[22] The adjustment to earlier years' figures is based on the difference between the rate of growth in employment in the six tourist-related sectors in seaside towns and in GB as a whole between 2005 and 2006. Because of seasonal jobs, seaside town employment is higher, relative to the national total, in September than in December.
[23] A longer view of employment change, for example from 1971 to the present day, would be less affected by this problem because the magnitude of longer-term changes would tend to counteract the influence of estimation errors.

Second, seasonal fluctuations in employment, though important, cannot be measured directly. The method used here, based on seasonal fluctuations in claimant unemployment, generates estimates that are consistent with national employment data and takes account of the differences in the extent of seasonality between towns.

Third, the estimates take no account of differences between towns in average incomes. Other things being equal, where average incomes are higher, spending will be higher and more jobs will therefore be supported in local retailing and consumer services. Seaside towns can often be low-wage economies, and they have an above-average proportion of pensioner households[24] who, on average, have lower incomes than those in work. It might be expected, therefore, that in seaside towns local consumer spending would support fewer jobs in consumer services, in relation to their population, than in comparator towns, and that the methods deployed here would consequently under-estimate the number of jobs supported by seaside tourism. Against this line of argument it is worth noting that most of the comparator towns used here are not themselves especially affluent, particularly because in the selection of comparators London and its immediate hinterland were excluded along with a number of prominent historic (and more affluent) towns elsewhere in the country.

Fourth, there is the role of the 'black economy'. This is, by its very nature, unquantifiable. It might be expected that in an industry such as seaside tourism, where a lot of employment is temporary and many transactions are by cash, that cash-in-hand working will be more widespread than elsewhere in the economy. Some employment may therefore go unrecorded. On the other hand, it is not self-evident that the black economy operates on a large scale across Britain as a whole or in seaside towns in particular. Britain is arguably in this regard more law-abiding, and more tax-paying, than many other countries.

Fifth, given the methods deployed here, some of the estimation errors will tend to cancel out. Specific local factors not incorporated into the calculations may distort the estimates in individual places – an out-of-town shopping centre for example, or sampling errors within the ABI data itself. These errors are likely to work in both directions. The estimates of seaside tourism employment in individual towns will therefore be less reliable than the figures for regions, and the regional estimates less reliable than for England and Wales as a whole.

[24] See C Beatty, S Fothergill and I Wilson (2008) *England's Seaside Towns: a benchmarking study*, CLG, London.

Sixth, the estimates presented here do not count all the jobs that involve some contact with tourists, which will in all cases be larger. In practice, many business and individual employees serve both tourists and local residents. On a day-by-day and even minute-by-minute basis, the same employee in a shop or pub for example may deal with both tourists and local residents, and it is one of the distinctive characteristics of the seaside tourist industry that unlike, say, most manufacturing it does not occur behind factory gates but is instead deeply intertwined with the everyday life and urban fabric of seaside resorts. The estimates here refer to the *additional* number of jobs found in seaside towns as a result of their role as seaside tourist destinations. Thus if a seaside business employs ten people rather than five because it serves tourists, only the extra five jobs count as tourism jobs even though all ten employees may have contact with tourists at some stage. In so far as many workers in seaside towns will at some point have contact with tourists and visitors, the impact of seaside tourism on local culture and local identity is likely to be significantly greater than the job figures presented here would at first suggest.

Ultimately, the estimates are perhaps best judged by their *plausibility*, both in terms of the absolute numbers and comparisons between individual places. In this respect, the research team would argue that the estimates stand up to scrutiny.

3. FINDINGS

Employment

Table 5 shows the estimated average year-round employment in seaside tourism in each seaside town. The figures are an average for the three years 2006, 2007 and 2008. This is a particularly important table in the context of the report, and the result of numerous individual calculations. It is therefore worth describing at some length.

At the very top of the table comes **Greater Blackpool** with 19,400 jobs, some way ahead of its nearest rivals. Greater Blackpool comprises Fleetwood and Lytham St Anne's as well as Blackpool borough itself. Even so, it will come as little surprise to anyone familiar with British resorts that Greater Blackpool has the largest concentration of jobs supported by seaside tourism. The sheer scale of the seaside tourist industry in the town means that over the years Blackpool has been able to maintain a powerful pull on visitors from the North West and further afield. The scale of employment in Blackpool's seaside tourist industry is large by any standards. Few other industrial or service clusters, in any sector in any part of Britain, employ nearly 20,000 people.

In second and third place come **Greater Bournemouth** and **Greater Brighton**, each with around 12,000 jobs in seaside tourism. Like Blackpool, these are both large urban areas extending beyond just the town at their core. Greater Bournemouth includes Christchurch and Poole, and Greater Brighton includes Hove and Shoreham. Bournemouth retains a large holiday trade and a substantial conference trade as well. Brighton too has a major seaside conference industry. Both are favoured seaside destinations for day-trippers, shoppers and party-goers.

Fourth on the list comes **Torbay** with an estimated 9,200 jobs. Although Torbay has three component parts – Torquay, Brixham and Paignton – the Torbay area as a whole is smaller than the three seaside conurbations above it on the list – a population of 130,000 compared to more than a quarter of a million in each of Greater Blackpool, Greater Bournemouth and Greater Brighton. The large number of jobs in seaside tourism in

Table 5: Estimated average year-round employment directly supported by seaside tourism, by town, 2006/8

	no. of jobs		no. of jobs
Greater Blackpool	19,400	Porthcawl	1,400
Greater Bournemouth	12,100	Porthmadog	1,400
Greater Brighton	11,900	Hunstanton	1,300
Torbay	9,200	Ilfracombe	1,300
Isle of Wight	7,900	Lowestoft	1,300
Great Yarmouth	5,600	Padstow	1,300
Newquay	5,300	Whitstable/Herne Bay	1,300
Southport	5,300	Aberystwyth	1,200
Thanet	4,800	Dartmouth	1,200
Llandudno/Colwyn Bay/Conwy	4,600	Brean	1,100
Scarborough	4,200	Cromer	1,100
Southend-on-Sea	3,400	Felixstowe	1,100
Weymouth	3,400	Hayling Island	1,100
Eastbourne	3,300	Looe	1,100
Hastings/Bexhill	3,200	Seaburn	1,100
Southsea	2,900	Lymington	1,000
Skegness	2,800	Aldeburgh	900
St Ives	2,600	Hemsby	900
Tenby	2,600	Lyme Regis	900
Cleethorpes	2,500	Swanage	900
Ingoldmells	2,500	Frinton/Walton	800
Weston-super-Mare	2,500	Hopton	800
Falmouth	2,300	Pwllheli	800
Bridlington	2,200	Redcar	800
Morecambe/Heysham	2,100	Salcombe	800
Minehead	2,000	Sheringham	800
South Shields	2,000	Camber	700
Whitby	2,000	Fowey	700
Clacton	1,900	Grange-over-Sands	700
Rhyl/Prestatyn	1,900	Isle of Sheppey	700
Dawlish/Teignmouth	1,800	Mablethorpe	700
Greater Worthing	1,800	Primrose Valley	700
Folkestone/Hythe	1,700	St. Davids	700
Penzance	1,700	Burnham	600
Bognor Regis	1,600	Cayton Bay	600
Exmouth	1,600	Deal	600
Bude	1,500	Harwich	600
New Brighton	1,500	Lynton/Lynmouth	600
Sidmouth	1,500	Saundersfoot	600
Whitley Bay	1,500	Seahouses	600
Kessingland	1,400	Selsey	600
Mumbles	1,400	Southwold	600

(continued)

	no. of jobs
Aberaeron	500
Abersoch	500
Barmouth	500
Fishguard	500
Perranporth	500
Saltburn-by-the-sea	500
Tynemouth	500
Wells-next-the-Sea	500
Withernsea	500
Borth	400
Filey	400
Hornsea	400
Mevagissey	400
New Quay	400
Seaton	400
Sand Bay	400
Skipsea	400
Benllech	300
Budleigh Salterton	300
Chapel St Leonards	300
Criccieth	300
Harlech	300
Silloth	300
Arnside	200
Barry	200
East Wittering	200
Greatstone	200
Portreath	200
Tywyn	200
Westward Ho	200
Amble	100
Dymchurch/St Marys Bay	100
Mundesley	100
Sutton-on-sea	100
West Mersea	100
Watchet	less than 100
Rhosneigr	less than 100

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

Torbay reflects the area's continuing appeal to visitors and holidaymakers from around the country.

In fifth place, the **Isle of Wight,** with an estimated 7,900 seaside tourism jobs, is a distinctive place in its own right because of its physical separation from the mainland but tourist jobs are actually spread across a number of smaller places including Shanklin, Sandown, Ryde, Cowes and Ventnor.

Great Yarmouth, Newquay and **Southport** are each estimated to have more than 5,000 seaside tourist jobs, though probably for somewhat different reasons. Great Yarmouth is a major traditional resort in the mould of Blackpool, though not on the same grand scale. Newquay's concentration of seaside tourist jobs is remarkable for such a small town (pop 23,000) and reflects the town's appeal not only as a family holiday destination but also as the surfing capital of Britain. The figures suggest that Southport is high up on the list because its retail offer is part of its seaside appeal and pulls in visitors from Merseyside and other surrounding areas.

Scarborough, Thanet, Weymouth, Southend, Eastbourne, Hastings/Bexhill and **Llandudno/Colwyn Bay/Conwy** all have an estimated 3-4,000 jobs in the seaside tourist industry.

The figure for **Southsea**, an estimated 2,900 jobs, in part reflects a concentration of hotels and restaurants that also serve the wider Portsmouth area.

Further down the list, **Skegness** and the neighbouring holiday park complex at **Ingoldmells** each have an estimated 2-3,000 jobs in seaside tourism. Combined, their seaside tourism employment (5,400) places them on a par with Great Yarmouth, Newquay and Southport – a great many jobs for another area with a small resident population (around 22,000).

In all, there are 58 places where employment in seaside tourism is estimated to be at least 1,000. These include some quite small towns such as Whitby, St Ives, Sidmouth, Bude, Hunstanton, Cromer, Dartmouth, Tenby, Porthmadog, Looe, and Padstow.

Table 6 shows the estimated share of employment in the towns accounted for by seaside tourism. Two measures are presented here. The first is the share of the jobs in the six tourist-related sectors (see Table 3 earlier) – the proportion of all the jobs in retailing,

hotels, restaurants, bars, recreation etc in each town estimated to be dependent on seaside tourism. The second measure is the share of all jobs in the town (in all sectors) estimated to depend on seaside tourism.

A couple of technical points need to be noted in interpreting these statistics. The first is that in the group of places defined here as 'holiday parks' (which includes a number of clusters of camping and caravan sites as well as holiday camps) the methods deployed here attribute *all* the jobs in tourist-related sectors to tourism – hence '100 per cent' is recorded for these places in the first column of Table 5. This will in practice overstate the contribution of tourism but is unlikely to be far wide of the mark.

The other technical point is that the figures for places that are sub-parts of larger urban areas (Seaburn, Cleethorpes, Southsea and Mumbles are examples) should be treated with caution because the comparisons are with the numbers of jobs located specifically in these places rather than in the wider town of which they form part. In the case of Seaburn for example, the comparison is therefore not with jobs in Sunderland as a whole.

The comparisons with employment totals present a different picture to the data on absolute numbers of tourism jobs. Whereas the largest seaside towns (Blackpool, Bournemouth and Brighton for example) have the largest concentrations of seaside tourism jobs, the smallest seaside towns mostly have the greatest dependence on this sector. Putting aside the special case of the holiday parks, the proportion of jobs dependent on tourism in the six sectors rises as high as 90 per cent in Salcombe, Fowey and Southwold. Among the principal seaside resorts (those with a population of 10,000 or more), the highest estimated dependence on tourism is in Newquay (79 per cent) and St Ives (77 per cent). In 60 towns in all, beyond the holiday parks, seaside tourism is estimated to account for half or more of all jobs in the six sectors. By implication, local consumer spending supports less than half the jobs in these sectors in these places.

Among the largest seaside towns, in Greater Blackpool seaside tourism is estimated to account for 48 per cent of employment in the six sectors. Bearing in mind that this is a major urban area in its own right (pop 260,000) it is to be expected that substantial numbers of jobs in shops, restaurants and pubs will be supported by local consumer spending rather than by tourist spending alone. In Greater Brighton the equivalent figure is 31 per cent, and in Greater Bournemouth 25 per cent.

Table 6: Estimated share of employment directly supported by seaside tourism, by town, 2006/8

	as % of jobs in tourist-related sectors*	as % of all jobs
Brean	100	82
Ingoldmells	100	83
Hopton	100	78
Hemsby	100	78
Borth	100	73
Skipsea	100	59
St. Davids	100	57
Sand Bay	100	55
Greatstone	100	53
Primrose Valley	100	48
Camber	100	47
Harlech	100	44
Kessingland	100	38
Cayton Bay	100	23
Salcombe	91	58
Southwold	90	39
Fowey	90	59
Tenby	88	53
Porthmadog	88	43
Aberaeron	88	29
Lynton/Lynmouth	87	51
Padstow	86	51
Abersoch	86	57
Hunstanton	85	56
New Quay	84	59
Looe	84	50
Aldeburgh	83	44
Lyme Regis	83	44
Barmouth	81	49
Seahouses	81	42
Dartmouth	80	35
Saundersfoot	80	49
Perranporth	79	44
Mevagissey	79	45
Newquay	79	41
Bude	78	34
Portreath	78	40
St Ives	77	36
Grange-over-Sands	77	39
Criccieth	77	33
Wells-next-the-Sea	75	38
Pwllheli	75	23
Cromer	73	28

(continued)

	as % of jobs in tourist-related sectors*	as % of all jobs
Southsea	70	32
Seaburn	70	42
Silloth	67	27
Fishguard	65	21
Sheringham	65	24
Mumbles	65	30
Cleethorpes	65	30
Benllech	64	34
Ilfracombe	64	26
Saltburn-by-the-sea	63	27
Mablethorpe	62	32
Sidmouth	62	20
Whitby	62	29
Falmouth	62	25
Arnside	62	27
Minehead	61	26
Chapel St Leonards	59	40
Tywyn	58	18
Withernsea	58	24
Porthcawl	57	26
Skegness	57	27
Seaton	57	21
Selsey	56	17
Swanage	56	22
Filey	54	23
Hornsea	53	17
Budleigh Salterton	53	21
East Wittering	52	21
Frinton/Walton	51	19
Great Yarmouth	51	16
Dawlish/Teignmouth	50	18
Hayling Island	49	21
Greater Blackpool	48	15
Westward Ho	47	18
Tynemouth	46	16
Bridlington	46	17
Mundesley	45	18
Torbay	44	15
Scarborough	44	15
Exmouth	43	12
Weymouth	42	17
Penzance	41	15
Llandudno/Colwyn/Bay Conwy	40	14
Isle of Wight	40	13

(continued)

	as % of jobs in tourist-related sectors*	as % of all jobs
Southport	39	13
Morecambe/Heysham	39	11
Rhyl/Prestatyn	39	13
South Shields	38	13
Lymington	38	11
Thanet	38	11
Whitley Bay	37	12
Felixstowe	37	7
Aberystwyth	37	10
New Brighton	36	10
Bognor Regis	35	10
Dymchurch/St Marys Bay	35	12
Clacton	33	11
Burnham	33	7
Harwich	33	10
West Mersea	32	7
Amble	31	8
Greater Brighton	31	7
Sutton-on-sea	30	10
Eastbourne	28	7
Hastings/Bexhill	27	6
Weston-super-Mare	26	7
Greater Bournemouth	25	6
Folkestone/Hythe	24	6
Deal	24	9
Isle of Sheppey	23	5
Whitstable/Herne Bay	22	6
Watchet	20	8
Redcar	20	5
Southend-on-Sea	19	4
Lowestoft	18	5
Rhosneigr	15	6
Greater Worthing	10	2
Barry	6	1

* Retailing, hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars, recreation, transport etc (see Table 3)

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

As a percentage of all jobs in the towns, seaside tourism jobs are much lower. Again putting aside the holiday parks, the highest estimated figures are just under 60 per cent in Fowey, Salcombe and New Quay in Wales (not to be confused with Newquay in Cornwall). In the principal seaside towns the figure is much lower, typically 10-20 per cent, with Greater Blackpool for example at 15 per cent[25]. These relatively low figures should not be surprising. In just about all contemporary local economies the public sector (schools and colleges, the health service and central and local government) accounts for a substantial proportion of total employment, usually a quarter to a third. Local consumer spending also accounts for large numbers of jobs. Furthermore, the tourism jobs identified here are only those estimated to be *directly supported* by seaside tourism. Further jobs will be supported indirectly through the supply chain and via multiplier effects.

Table 7 aggregates the estimated number of seaside tourism jobs into the four groups of places, introduced earlier, and for England and Wales as a whole. The most important figure here is the total. Overall, it is estimated that some 210,000 jobs are directly supported by seaside tourism in England and Wales.

Table 7: Estimated average year-round employment directly supported by seaside tourism, by category of place, 2006/8

	no. of jobs	as % of jobs in tourist-related sectors	as % of all jobs
Principal seaside towns	147,000	36	10
Smaller seaside towns	30,000	74	34
Other seaside towns	20,000	44	14
Holiday parks	11,000	100	54
England and Wales	210,000	41	12

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

[25] At the foot of the list, Barry is a substantial seaside town (pop 50,000) that to a large extent now functions as a residential suburb for nearby Cardiff. It is widely accepted that the town's has declined as a tourist destination over the years. Barry has been allocated to 'category E' in the calculations, alongside places such as Whitley Bay and South Shields, to reflect the competing influence of Cardiff on local service sector employment levels. An allocation to 'category F', which is largely reserved for sub-parts of larger urban areas, would be hard to justify in Barry's case but would have the effect of boosting the estimated tourism employment from 200 to around 1,000. In practice, the size, proximity and recent dynamism of Cardiff may be exerting a particularly powerful influence on service sector employment in Barry, in which case the estimates of seaside tourism employment in the town presented here may be towards the lower end of the likely range.

Around two-thirds of these – 147,000 jobs – are in the 41 principal seaside resorts (those with a population of at least 10,000), where they account for just over a third of all the jobs in the six tourist-related sectors and 10 per cent of total employment. Smaller seaside towns have some 30,000 seaside tourism jobs, but here they account for three-quarters of the jobs in the six sectors and a third of total employment. The 'other' seaside towns and holiday parks account for 20,000 and 11,000 jobs respectively.

Overall, in the 121 places covered in the report, seaside tourism is estimated to account directly for just over 40 per cent of all the jobs in tourist-related sectors of the local economy, and 12 per cent of all employment.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of the jobs by sector, across England and Wales as a whole. Fractionally under 100,000 of the 210,000 jobs estimated to be directly supported by seaside tourism are in the 'hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars' sector. Camping and caravan parks, holiday parks and other short-stay accommodation adds a further 28,000. Major numbers of retail jobs are supported by seaside tourism – the estimated figure is 55,000. Recreational, cultural and sporting activities account for a further 16,000, and the remaining two sectors (amusement parks and transport) for the remainder.

Table 8: Estimated average year-round employment directly supported by seaside tourism in England and Wales in key sectors, 2006/8

	no. of jobs
Hotels and restaurants	99,000
Retail trade	55,000
Campsites and short-stay accommodation	28,000
Recreation, sporting and cultural activity	16,000
Fair and amusement parks	5,000
Transport	5,000
Total	210,000

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

Table 9 aggregates the estimated number of seaside tourism jobs by county. The figures here are for pre-1996 English counties and therefore include a number of unitary authorities within their boundaries as well as the areas administered by the present-day

county councils. Lancashire tops this list with an estimated 21,500 jobs, nine-out-of-ten of which are in Greater Blackpool. East Sussex (which includes Brighton[26]), Dorset (which includes Bournemouth), and Devon and Cornwall are not far behind, though the figure for Cornwall in particular will understate the full scale of the industry because of the numerous coastal villages in the county that are too small to be included in the present study. More generally, what is notable in this table is that quite a number of counties around the coast have sizeable numbers, usually several thousand, of seaside tourism jobs.

Table 9: Estimated average year-round employment directly supported by seaside tourism, by county, 2006/8

	no. of jobs
Lancashire	21,500
East Sussex	19,000
Devon	18,900
Cornwall	17,700
Dorset	17,300
Norfolk	11,100
Kent	9,400
Isle of Wight	7,900
North Yorkshire	7,900
Essex	6,900
Merseyside	6,800
Lincolnshire	6,500
Humberside	6,100
Suffolk	5,200
Tyne and Wear	5,100
Hampshire	5,000
West Sussex	4,300
Somerset	3,800
Avon	2,800
Cleveland	1,300
Cumbria	1,300
Northumberland	700
Wales	20,800
England and Wales	210,000

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

[26] For the purpose of these calculations, the whole of Greater Brighton has been included in East Sussex, though a small part of this large urban area is actually in West Sussex. This also applies to subsequent figures on GVA in seaside tourism by county.

At the regional scale, in Table 10, the geographical pattern is more uneven. The South West of England, with an estimated 60,000 jobs directly supported by seaside tourism, heads the list, which is to be expected given its long coastline, large number of resorts and mild climate. The South East of England, with 46,000 jobs, comes second. Along the northern half of the east coast, the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands muster a combined total of just 27,000 jobs.

Table 10: Estimated average year-round employment directly supported by seaside tourism, by region, 2006/8

	no. of jobs
South West	61,000
South East	46,000
North West	29,000
Eastern	23,000
Wales	21,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	14,000
North East	7,000
East Midlands	6,000
England and Wales	210,000

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

Economic output

Table 11 translates the employment figures into estimates of the value of the annual output of the seaside tourist industry. The number of jobs by sector in each town has been multiplied by the average Gross Value Added (GVA) per job in each sector[27] in each region in 2007[28].

GVA is the standard measure of economic output, which counts the value of sales by businesses less the value of inputs like goods and raw materials. GVA is not the same as tourist spending, it should be emphasised. Tourist spending will include the purchase of items manufactured elsewhere, for example, whereas GVA measures, literally, the 'valued added' within the sector itself.

[27] Four SIC sectors are used here: G Wholesale and retail trade; H Hotels and restaurants; I Transport, storage and communications; O Other community, social and personal services.
[28] This is the most recent date for which figures are currently available.

Table 11: Estimated annual output (GVA) directly attributable to the seaside tourist industry, by town, 2007

	£m		£m
Greater Blackpool	279	Minehead	24
Greater Brighton	258	New Brighton	24
Greater Bournemouth	177	Porthmadog	24
Isle of Wight	149	Sidmouth	23
Torbay	120	Whitley Bay	23
Great Yarmouth	116	Whitstable/Herne Bay	22
Thanet	100	Exmouth	21
Southport	94	Aberystwyth	20
Hastings/Bexhill	74	Padstow	19
Southend-on-Sea	67	Dartmouth	18
Newquay	65	Seaburn	18
Eastbourne	64	Sheringham	18
Scarborough	58	Brean	17
Southsea	58	Redcar	17
Skegness	54	Frinton/Walton	16
Llandudno/Colwyn Bay/Conwy	53	Harwich	16
Clacton	45	Hayling Island	16
Weymouth	45	Hemsby	16
Weston-super-Mare	44	Looe	16
Cleethorpes	36	Mumbles	16
St Ives	35	Aldeburgh	15
Bridlington	34	Fowey	14
Falmouth	34	Lyme Regis	14
Morecambe/Heysham	34	Porthcawl	14
Ingoldmells	33	Pwllheli	14
Tenby	33	Swanage	14
Folkestone/Hythe	32	Mablethorpe	13
Rhyl/Prestatyn	32	Salcombe	13
Greater Worthing	31	Camber	12
Felixstowe	30	Hopton	12
Kessingland	29	Isle of Sheppey	12
Bognor Regis	28	Southwold	11
Bude	28	St. Davids	11
Hunstanton	28	Grange-over-Sands	10
Penzance	28	Saltburn-by-the-sea	10
South Shields	28	Deal	9
Whitby	28	Perranporth	9
Lowestoft	27	Saundersfoot	9
Dawlish/Teignmouth	26	Withernsea	9
Cromer	25	Cayton Bay	8
Lymington	25	Hornsea	8
Ilfracombe	24	Primrose Valley	8

(continued)

	£m
Seahouses	8
Selsey	8
Aberaeron	7
Abersoch	7
Barmouth	7
Burnham	7
Filey	7
Fishguard	7
Lynton/Lynmouth	7
Wells-next-the-Sea	7
East Wittering	6
Seaton	6
Skipsea	5
Tynemouth	5
Tywyn	5
Barry	4
Borth	4
Budleigh Salterton	4
Chapel St Leonards	4
Greatstone	4
Harlech	4
Mevagissey	4
Sand Bay	4
Silloth	4
West Mersea	4
Benllech	3
Criccieth	3
New Quay	3
Amble	2
Arnside	2
Dymchurch/St Marys Bay	2
Portreath	2
Westward Ho	2
Mundesley	1
Sutton-on-sea	1
Rhosneigr	less than 1
Watchet	less than 1

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI and ONS

Regional GVA data by sector offers only a rough guide to GVA in tourism in the seaside towns themselves, so the estimates must be treated as approximate. As with the estimates of employment, the GVA figures presented here refer the economic output *directly supported by seaside tourism*. The total contribution to local economies, including through supply chain linkages and multiplier effects, will be significantly larger.

What needs to be kept in mind is that the GVA per job in the sectors in which seaside tourism jobs are concentrated is low. This is partly because so many of the jobs are part-time, and partly because many are low wage. Unlike say much of manufacturing, seaside tourism is not a 'high productivity, high wage' environment underpinned by substantial investment in plant and machinery. Thus in 2007 the national average GVA per job in hotels and restaurants (which accounts for around half of all seaside tourism jobs according to the estimates presented earlier) was just £11,000 a year, compared to a national average of £36,500 a year across all sectors. Furthermore, the national average GVA per job in hotels and restaurants is boosted by London, where GVA tends to be higher across most sectors. In several regions where seaside towns are to be found, including the South West, GVA per job in this sector was below £10,000 a year in 2007. What this means is that in relation to employment, the economic output of the seaside tourism sector is low.

The ranking of individual towns, in terms of the economic output of the seaside tourist industry, is little different to the ranking in terms of estimated employment, as might be expected. Greater Blackpool tops the list with an estimated GVA directly attributable to seaside tourism of nearly £280m a year.

Table 12 summarises the data for the four groups of places and for England and Wales as a whole. The key figure here is once again the total. It is estimated that in 2007 the economic output directly attributable to seaside tourism totalled £3.4bn. Adjusting for inflation, but not for any change in output that may have occurred, would put the 2009 figure at around £3.6bn.

Table 13 aggregates the GVA estimates by county. This shows that, as with employment, seaside tourism makes the greatest contribution to economic output in East Sussex, Lancashire, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset.

Table 12: Estimated annual output (GVA) directly attributable to the seaside tourist industry, by category of place, 2007

	£m
Principal seaside towns	2,410
Smaller seaside towns	470
Other seaside towns	350
Holiday parks	170
England and Wales	3,400

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI and ONS

Table 13: Estimated annual output (GVA) directly attributable to the seaside tourist industry, by county, 2007

	£m
East Sussex	410
Lancashire	310
Devon	260
Cornwall	250
Dorset	250
Norfolk	220
Kent	180
Essex	150
Isle of Wight	150
Merseyside	120
North Yorkshire	110
Suffolk	110
Hampshire	100
Lincolnshire	100
Humberside	90
Tyne and Wear	70
West Sussex	70
Avon	50
Somerset	50
Cleveland	30
Cumbria	20
Northumberland	10
Wales	280
England and Wales	3,400

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI and ONS

Finally, Table 14 aggregates the GVA data by region. Seaside tourism makes the largest estimated contribution to economic output in the South East of England – just over £900m in 2007. Although the South West of England is estimated to have more jobs in seaside tourism (Table 10 earlier) the South East maintains a slim lead in these GVA figures because of the higher average GVA per job within this region. Whether the regional GVA averages for the South East as a whole accurately reflect output per job in the seaside towns themselves is a moot point. In practice, it might be reasonable to assume that the economic output of the seaside tourist industries in the South East and South West are broadly comparable.

Table 14: Estimated annual output (GVA) directly attributable to the seaside tourist industry by region, 2007

	£m
South East	910
South West	860
Eastern	480
North West	450
Wales	280
Yorkshire and the Humber	200
North East	110
East Midlands	100
England and Wales	3,400

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI and ONS

Trends through time

Table 15 shows the estimated change in seaside tourism jobs, by region, between 1998/2000 and 2006/8. The figures here refer just to the 41 principal seaside towns in England and Wales. Also, the figures for the three regions covering the northern part of the east coast (North East, Yorkshire and the Humber and East Midlands) are merged to provide a more reliable estimate[29].

[29] In the classification used in this report there is just one principal seaside town in each of the North East (Whitley Bay) and East Midlands (Skegness). The figures on change in tourism employment in individual seaside towns are subject to an important margin of error (see section 3 earlier).

Table 15: Estimated increase in seaside tourism employment in principal seaside towns by region, 1998/2000 to 2006/8

	no. of jobs
South West	8,900
North West	2,700
South East	1,600
Wales	1,300
North East/Yorks & Humber/ East Midlands	800
Eastern	-1,300
All principal seaside towns	14,000

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

The most important figure on this table is the estimated increase of 14,000 in seaside tourism employment across England and Wales as a whole between the late 1990s and the second half of the 2000s. This represents an increase of around 10 per cent in the number of tourism jobs in these 41 principal seaside towns.

This is an important observation. It indicates that, far from declining, employment in the British seaside tourist industry actually appears to be increasing, on average by perhaps just over one per cent a year. If the experience of the principal seaside towns can be generalised to other seaside places, then in total the increase in seaside tourism employment in England and Wales between the late 1990s and the second half of the 2000s may be around 20,000[30].

The geography of change appears to be uneven. The South West of England accounts for more than half the estimated growth. By contrast, there appears to have been a small fall in seaside tourism employment along the East Coast taken as a whole. The South East, North West and Wales have all gained modest numbers of tourist-related jobs. It is worth noting that this is exactly the same regional pattern of change that the *Seaside Economy* report[31] observed between 1971 and 2001 for overall employment (ie including non-tourist sectors) in the same list of principal seaside resorts.

[30] Based on the principal seaside towns accounting for around two-thirds of the total number of jobs supported by seaside tourism.
[31] C Beatty and S Fothergill (2003) *The Seaside Economy: the final report of the seaside towns research project*, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

Three statistical provisos need to be added however. First, the seemingly precise figures presented here are subject to a margin of error, inherent in the estimation process. Second, the figures here do not cover the twenty or thirty years prior to 1998 when, notwithstanding more recent trends, it is distinctly possible that seaside tourism employment in England and Wales did go through a period of contraction in response to the rising popularity of foreign holidays. Third, the favourable national trend since the late 1990s does not mean that seaside tourism employment has not been falling in a number of specific places, not just along the east coast but in other parts of the country as well.

4. ASSESSMENT

Comparisons with other industries

Table 16 compares the estimated employment in the seaside tourist industry with employment in a number of other important industries. The seaside tourism figures are for England and Wales whereas the figures for the other industries are for Britain as a whole. The data for other industries is adjusted for self-employment to place it on the same basis as the seaside tourism figures.

Table 16: Employment in selected industries, 2008

	no. of jobs
Higher education	489,000
Computer software	463,000
Insurance & pension companies	338,000
Telecommunications	224,000
SEASIDE TOURISM	**210,000**
Motor industry	165,000
Publishing	154,000
Aerospace	110,000
Advertising	100,000
Air transport	99,000
Radio and television	78,000
Railways	61,000
Pharmaceuticals	50,000
Steel industry	40,000
Fishing	14,000
Coalmining	7,000

Seaside tourism figures are for England and Wales; other figures are for GB

Source: Authors' estimates based on ABI

The important point to note is that, at an estimated 210,000, employment in the seaside tourist industry is comparable to employment in a number of major industries and greater than in several others. Employment in seaside tourism is broadly comparable to employment in telecommunications, for example, and greater than in the motor industry, aerospace, pharmaceuticals or steel.

Of course, in so far as the seaside tourist industry has a disproportionate share of part-time and low-wage jobs, these comparisons are flattering to the industry. In terms of the industry's contribution to national output it would not rank quite so highly. Even allowing for this factor, however, the comparisons show that seaside tourism is unquestionably a major industry in its own right.

The wider local economic impact

The estimates presented in section 3 of the report concern the number of jobs *directly supported* by seaside tourism, and their economic output. More specifically, they are estimates of the number of jobs located in the resorts themselves in six specific sectors of the local economy. This does not, however, provide a fully comprehensive view of the impact of seaside tourism on local economies.

At this point it is important to emphasise that the calculations, shown in Table 17, become speculative. There is no simple method by which accurate estimates can be derived, and to attempt to generate more robust figures would involve a major research project in its own right. Informed speculation is however justified.

The first line of Table 17 shows the 210,000 jobs estimated to be supported directly by seaside tourism in the 121 places covered in this report. To this needs to be added the jobs in seaside places not covered by the report – the very smallest places (sub-1,500 population), isolated camping and caravan sites, other isolated tourist business along the coast, and the seaside tourism jobs in towns like Dover, Liverpool, Hull and Plymouth that are not covered by the report. These 'missing places' are individually unlikely to account for many seaside tourism jobs. Collectively, however, they may be a more important part of the jigsaw – 20,000 additional jobs might be a reasonable estimate, with a particular concentration in the far South West, where the coastline is very long and there are numerous small coastal settlements. These jobs are shown in the second line of the table.

Table 17: Speculative estimates of the wider impact of seaside tourism on employment, England and Wales, 2006/8

	no. of jobs
Directly supported by seaside tourism	210,000
'Missing' places	20,000
'Missing' sectors	10,000
Supported by inland spend of seaside tourists	10,000
DIRECT JOBS	250,000
Jobs in supply chain	50,000
DIRECT + SUPPLY CHAIN JOBS	300,000
Multiplier effects	300,000
DIRECT + INDIRECT JOBS	600,000

Source: Authors' estimates

Then there are the 'missing sectors' – those other parts of the local economy where jobs are likely to be supported directly by seaside tourism. A careful scrutiny of the fine detail of the government's Standard Industrial Classification suggests that these missing sectors are unlikely to be extensive, but they will for example include jobs in local rail and bus services supported by tourism (including Blackpool's famous seaside trams), in some health spas, in foreign language schools (which might be seen as a distinctive branch of seaside tourism in some South Coast towns in particular) and even in launderettes. A figure of 10,000 seems appropriate here.

The inland spend of seaside tourists also supports jobs, especially in places like Cornwall, Devon and North Yorkshire where inland tourist attractions (eg the Eden Project, North York Moors Railway, stately homes) can be an integral part of the seaside holiday package. In the light of the number of jobs estimated to be directly supported in the seaside towns themselves, a figure of 10,000 jobs may be appropriate here.

Adding in these other directly supported jobs brings the new total to 250,000.

Then there are the jobs in the seaside towns that are indirectly supported by seaside tourism through the local supply chain. These are likely to be multiple and varied. The

sale of ice cream to tourists, for example, may support a manufacturing facility in the town, and more generally wholesalers will support the local tourist-related retail trade. Hotels will draw on local laundry services, food and drink suppliers, tradesmen, banks and accountants. Parts of the building trade will directly serve tourist businesses. Within the public sector, policing, refuse collection and health services will to some extent need to be boosted to cope with visitor numbers. It is very difficult to put a reliable order of magnitude on these linkages, and there is no hard data on which to base a judgement, but a supply chain multiplier of 1.2 might not be unreasonable, in which case a further 50,000 jobs might be attributable to seaside tourism.

Finally, there are the wider multiplier effects. Beyond supply chain linkages, multipliers operate through a number of channels. One is through the spending of wages earned in the tourist sector, which supports further jobs in local consumer services. The more important effect is through migration: job opportunities attract residents, and the 200,000-plus jobs supported by seaside tourism mean that the population of seaside towns is a great deal higher than would otherwise be the case. Additional residents bring additional spending. In turn, key public sector funding formulas are driven by population numbers, so a higher population leads to more jobs in schools, hospitals and local government, and the wages of public sector workers support further jobs in local consumer services. In the modern economy these wider multiplier effects are potentially very substantial, not least because consumer services and the public sector now comprise such a large component of local economies. Once again there is no hard data on which to base a judgement. A multiplier of 2.0 might not be unreasonable, in which case a further 300,000 jobs in or around seaside towns would be supported indirectly by seaside tourism.

The speculative nature of these calculations must be emphasised. They do however suggest that the total number of jobs supported directly and indirectly by seaside tourism, in and around the seaside towns of England and Wales, could be as large as 600,000. This is far in excess of the directly supported jobs alone. Similar multiplier calculations could nonetheless be applied to other industries that underpin local economies, so there is nothing unique about seaside tourism in this regard.

In terms of economic output, these admittedly speculative calculations suggest that the estimated £3.6bn a year output directly associated with the 210,000 jobs in seaside tourism might in fact be as large as £4.3bn when the ‘missing’ sectors and places are included, £5bn when supply-chain linkages are taken into account, and perhaps as large as £10bn when wider multiplier effects are taken into consideration.

There is yet another factor that probably applies more to seaside towns than other places. This is that seaside towns attract additional residents because people like to live there. Some of these are residents who commute to jobs elsewhere (a popular model in the South East of England). Others are in-migrant retirees. It is the character of the seaside towns themselves, which includes their role as tourist destinations, that often influences these choices. These in-migrants then underpin further jobs in local services. In so far as some of these migration flows can be attributed to the pull of a seaside tourist destination, the influence of tourism on the seaside economy might therefore be said to be still larger.

Taking this argument to its logical conclusion it could be argued that the only reason why some seaside towns exist at all is because of seaside tourism. It is certainly true that quite a number – Southport and Bournemouth are examples – were originally developed purely for seaside tourism rather than from a pre-existing coastal settlement. Following this logic, it could be argued that the *whole* of the employment in some of these places should be attributed to tourism.

This would however be a distortion. Over the years, other sectors have grown up alongside tourism so that the economies of the towns are no longer wholly dependent on this one sector alone. These days there are universities and colleges, hospitals, government offices, manufacturing firms and countless service sector businesses that support local jobs independently of seaside tourism. If the seaside tourism industry were to completely disappear overnight, the towns themselves (and all their other employers) would not simply disappear too, in the same way that mining communities did not vanish when their coalmines closed. There would be a painful period of downward adjustment, as in former mining communities, that would leave seaside towns smaller in terms of jobs, population and incomes, but the towns themselves and a substantial proportion of the jobs within them would survive.

What the estimates presented in this report show is the extent to which jobs in seaside towns remain *directly dependent on seaside tourism*. What needs to be kept in mind is that in all the towns there will in addition be a further large tranche of jobs, difficult to determine in size, that depends *indirectly* on seaside tourism.

Implications of the findings

The findings in this report explode important myths about the British seaside tourist industry.

In recent years the view has become widespread that the British seaside tourist industry is in terminal decline, following the trajectory followed by say the British coal industry. Since the rise of cheap air travel, the story goes, the British holidaymaker has turned his or her back on seaside resorts at home in favour of sunnier destinations further afield. This is consigning British seaside resorts to the scrap heap of history, it is usually assumed. This view is deeply entrenched in the media, it would seem, and is the starting point for so much political and cultural discussion about seaside towns.

Those who know Britain's seaside resorts very well have long known that this simplistic view is far from accurate. Our own widely quoted research[32], published in 2003, did much to cast doubt on conventional wisdom. A more recent review of seaside towns has confirmed the complexities of the true situation[33].

A little careful thought about the economics of tourism points to a key explanation: foreign travel may have become relatively cheaper, compared to the past and compared to domestic tourism, but the population as a whole has also become distinctly more affluent over the last thirty or forty years, and travel and leisure has always had what economists call a 'high income elasticity of demand'. In other words, as people become richer they spend a disproportionate share of the increase in their income on discretionary items like tourism. What this means in practice is that as consumers have become more affluent they have had more money to spend on foreign holidays but also on domestic tourism as well. This manifests itself as second and third annual holidays, day trips and short-breaks, holidays and travel for those who were previously unable to afford them, and more spending in the visitor destinations.

What the evidence in this report shows is that the British seaside tourist industry remains very substantial. In terms of employment directly supported, the industry continues to rank alongside many of the country's other great employers. Furthermore, there is no evidence

[32] C Beatty and S Fothergill (2003) *The Seaside Economy; the final report of the seaside towns research project*, CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.
[33] J K Walton and P Browne (eds) (2010) *Coastal Regeneration in English Resorts 2010*, Coastal Communities Alliance, Lincoln.

that during the first decade of the 21st century there has been any overall contraction in the scale of the industry. In fact, the estimates in the report suggest that over the last decade employment in the seaside tourist industry has been growing by around one per cent a year. Not all resorts have fared equally well of course, but to focus on the weaker performers is to miss the big picture.

There is tangible evidence in the report, therefore, that the economic processes that in theory might be expected to underpin a continuing role for the British seaside tourist industry are indeed at work. Far from being on its last legs, the British seaside tourist industry is still alive and well and, handled appropriately, should probably have a long future too.

These conclusions pose a challenge for conventional thinking and policy-making. The British seaside tourist industry has always had something of a Cinderella status, not least because of the absence of tolerably reliable statistics on its employment, output, location and trends. Mixed in with jobs supported by local consumer spending, in sectors like retailing and catering, and with many businesses serving both local residents and visitors, it has hitherto been nigh on impossible to discern exactly what has been happening within the sector, locally or nationally. So the industry has been easily overlooked.

What the figures in this report show is that the large British seaside tourist industry is deserving of policy attention – and probably support – in its own right. The industry is an important national asset. Furthermore, in so far as British seaside resorts are in competition with destinations abroad (which must to some extent be the case) an extra visitor to the British seaside rather than abroad is good for the national economy as whole. Because air travel carries a large carbon footprint, an extra UK visitor to the British seaside is also likely to be good news for the environment.

None of this is about 'returning to the past'. The bucket and spade holidays of the 1950s and 60s, often the same week every year to the same place, are unlikely ever to return. The market has become more sophisticated, more fragmented, and more diverse. The changes have deeply damaged some resorts – Margate (part of Thanet) in Kent is perhaps one of the clearest examples. But the changing market has also given tremendous impetus to others, such as the coastal towns of the far South West that have been opened up by rising car ownership.

That a large seaside tourist industry has survived and adapted should be good news, not just for seaside towns but also for UK plc. The challenge is to ensure that it delivers its full potential in the coming years.

APPENDIX: Options for further research

The statistical methods deployed in this report could in principle be extended to provide more detailed or wide ranging estimates of employment and output in the tourist sector. The options outlined below have not been pursued in the present report because of limits on the scale of funding (and thereby research time) rather than because of insurmountable technical obstacles.

1. *Geographical disaggregation*

Several of the principal seaside towns span more than one local authority (eg Greater Blackpool, Greater Brighton, Greater Bournemouth and Greater Worthing) or combine two or more neighbouring towns (eg Hastings/Bexhill, Whitstable/Herne Bay and Thanet (Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs)). This reflects the origins of the list in the 2003 *Seaside Economy* report, which dealt principally with local labour markets, which tend to operate at this wider geographical scale.

It would be possible, with appropriate methodological development, to disaggregate the seaside tourism estimates for these larger units into their component parts. The crucial employment data, from the Annual Business Inquiry, is available at a sufficiently fine geographical scale to allow this.

2. *A longer view of employment change*

The estimates presented in the report only cover changes in seaside tourism employment between 1998/2000 and 2006/08. This relatively short period excludes the preceding twenty or thirty years when the largest adjustments in response to the rise of foreign holidays are generally held to have occurred. As a result, the longer-term decline of seaside tourism employment may be obscured.

It would be possible, again with appropriate methodological development, to extend the basic approach as far back as 1971 (or to an intermediate date) using a combination of Census and other official employment data. Some of the methodological development would need to cover the comparator towns.

3. *Local figures on employment trends*

The report has stopped short of presenting figures on employment change in tourism in individual towns. This is because there is a margin of error in the estimates for both the beginning and end years, and over the relatively short period 1998/2000 to 2006/08 this can obscure underlying trends. A longer view of employment change (from 1971, 1981 or 1991 to the present day) would largely overcome this problem, allowing local estimates to be published.

This problem could be solved as an integral part of extending the national estimates of seaside tourism employment further back in time (see point 2 above). An important benefit would be that individual seaside towns that have experienced an important loss of tourism employment, and which may as a result require support of various kinds, could be accurately identified.

4. *Individual town studies*

The information presented in the report has concentrated on broad aggregates, for example on total seaside tourism employment in each town and by sector at the national scale. It is in theory possible to provide a more detailed view of individual towns, for example on employment in seaside tourism through time and by sector.

A more refined and detailed view of the data for individual towns would require more sophisticated assembly and checking of ABI employment data. However, since the estimates presented in the report are already underpinned by calculations by sector and by town, only limited methodological development would be required. This research would need to be commissioned on a town-by-town basis.

5. *Extending the approach beyond seaside towns*

The report's basic approach, involving comparisons with towns where there is little or no tourism, is in principle equally applicable to other important tourism locations. The prime examples are inland tourist destinations such as York, Oxford, Cambridge, Stratford, Chester, Bath and many other smaller places. This would in the first instance require mapping and data assembly for the towns. The resulting tourism estimates have the potential to be directly comparable to those presented here for seaside towns.

Extending the approach to cover larger cities that are also important tourist destinations (most notably London) would require more substantial methodological developments, especially around appropriate comparators.

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