



The Seaside

Britain has one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world. People in Britain were heading to the seaside to enjoy the water as long ago as the 1700s. They had begun to develop a better appreciation of nature. The villages on the coast were the perfect place to explore.

It wasn't until the invention of the steam train and the industrial revolution that seaside towns began to resemble the ones we love today. Victorian Brits flocked to seaside towns such as Blackpool and Skegness in their thousands. They considered colder waters better for their bodies. It was also too expensive for most people to travel to Europe.

The Victorians didn't sunbathe. They would arrive at the beach fully clothed. They would bathe in the sea to cleanse their bodies. Many beaches were segregated. This means that men and women had their own areas in some resorts. The Victorians considered it inappropriate for men and women to bathe in the sea together.

Beach huts were provided for people to change into bathing suits. Some women still preferred not to be seen. They could use a bathing machine. These were sheds mounted on wheels. The lady would enter the hut and change into her bathing suit. The cart was then pulled out into the water by horses. A hole in the bottom of the shed allowed the lady to lower herself into the sea in privacy.

It wasn't normal for people to take picnics to the beach. This definitely meant the beaches were a lot cleaner. People mainly used the beaches for brisk walks. Some things were very similar. Victorians loved to build sandcastles and eat ice-creams. The Victorians also invented the halfpenny stamp. This made it possible to send postcards home cheaply. It would have been too expensive before this.

Many of the things we associate with the seaside were built by the Victorians. They knew they needed to entertain the people flocking to the coast. Music-halls and fabulous piers gave people places to go and shows to watch. Pleasure gardens meant that people from cities could see beautiful gardens and observe nature.

Seaside towns have struggled over the last 30 years. Holidays to hot European countries are a lot cheaper than before. 64% of Brits had a holiday abroad in 2019. On the other hand, 69% also had a holiday in the UK. That is more than the previous year. Maybe the good old British seaside holiday is set to make a comeback?

They may not be as popular as they once were but the British seaside definitely still has lots to offer.



RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. When did British people start heading to the seaside?
2. Which two things meant that more people started to visit the seaside?
3. Victorians loved to sunbathe: True or false?
4. What did people use to get changed in?
5. How did pleasure gardens help people from cities?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Which word means “looks like”?

Resemble

Flocked

Explore

S

How did Victorians make it easier to send postcards?

V

Find a word that means the beaches were separated for men and women

I

Why might the British seaside be making a comeback?

P

If you could live at the seaside, what would you enjoy doing most?

Answers:

1. The 1700s
2. The invention of the train and the industrial revolution
3. False
4. Beach huts
5. They meant they could see beautiful gardens

V: Resemble

S: They invented the halfpenny stamp

V: Segregated

I: More people are going on holiday in the UK

P: Accept answers that discuss valid seaside activities. Be mindful of children that have never visited the seaside.