

‘THE STATE OF THE BRITISH COAST’

Observable Changes Through Art Imagery 1770-Present Day

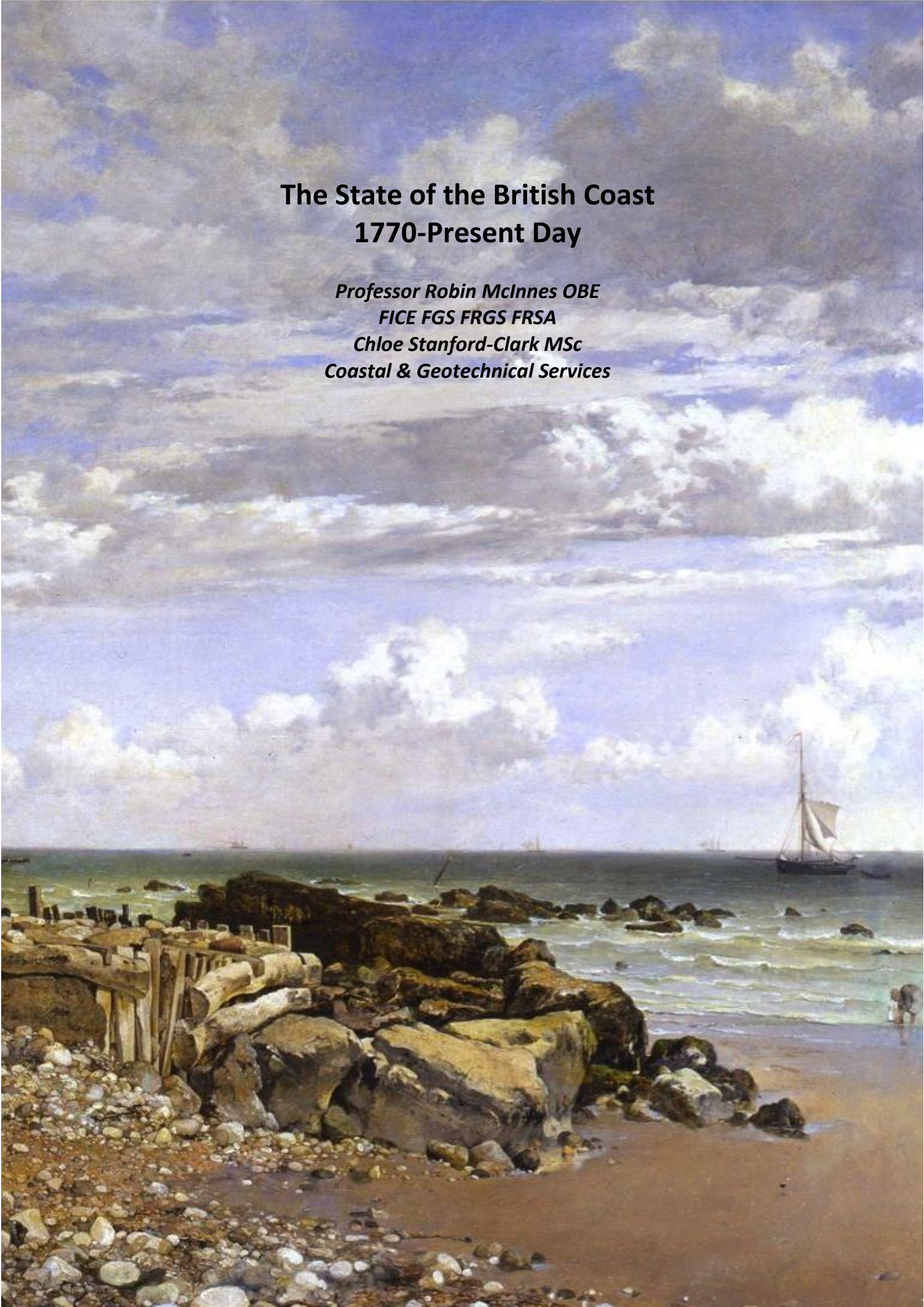




~ THE STATE OF THE BRITISH COAST ~

*Observable Changes Through Art Imagery
1770-Present Day*





The State of the British Coast 1770-Present Day

*Professor Robin McInnes OBE
FICE FGS FRGS FRSA*

*Chloe Stanford-Clark MSc
Coastal & Geotechnical Services*



Fig. i.4. 'On Lundy Island' by Henry Moore RA RWS. 1857. Pencil and Watercolour with Bodycolour.
Courtesy of Christie's Images Limited © 2013.

Foreword



It was just over 10 years ago that Professor Robin McInnes introduced me to the wonderful insights into coastal change that can be gained from studying historical art. As a geomorphologist, I was impressed by the robust nature of Robin's approach and the way art can assist science in measuring topographic change in such a dynamic setting. At that time I was working as a presenter on the BBC series *Coast*, a long running popular television show that exemplified an enduring fascination with coastal landscapes. The beautiful case studies in this report, that represent the culmination of a decade's research by the author, allow us to consider the value of our coastal heritage in a uniquely enjoyable fashion that I think will be of interest to a wide readership.

We are living in a time of unprecedented environmental change and if we are to effectively manage the coastal environment upon which millions of us depend for our livelihoods and well-being, we must understand and appreciate it. I'm sure you will agree, as you marvel at the effort on show in the following pages, Robin's work is a remarkable and valuable contribution.



Dr Hermione Cockburn
Scientific Director, Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh



Fig. i.5. *'Plymouth Harbour, Devon'* by François D'Orléans. c.1856. Watercolour.
Royal Collection Trust/©Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018/The Watercolour World.

'The State of the British Coast'

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Coastal & Geotechnical Services and Chloe Stanford-Clark, 2019

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Fig i.1. (Front Cover) **Top left** *'Llandudno, North Wales'* c.1850. Private Collection. **Top right** *'Brodick Bay, Arran'* by Waller Hugh Paton. 1884. Image courtesy of Patrick Bourne. **Bottom** *'Sidmouth, South Devon'* by Hubert Cornish. c.1815. Private Collection.

Fig. i.2. (Half-Title Page) *'Ventnor, Isle of Wight'* by Randolph Schwabe RWS NEAC. Watercolour. 1933. Private Collection.

Fig. i.3. (Double Page) *'A Crab and Lobster Shore, Bonchurch, Isle of Wight'* by Edward William Cooke RA. Signed and Dated 1857. Oil on canvas. Private Collection. Photograph Courtesy of the Richard Green Gallery, London.

When the picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857 The Art Journal wrote *"This picture has much the appearance of having been painted from a photograph; but it surpasses photography because the detail of the shaded portions is as perfect as the light passages. The pitch of the picture lies in the wondrous painting of the shingle, every stone of which is represented..."*.



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The completion of this study would not have been possible without the invaluable interest, assistance and other support of a wide range of coastal, environmental, heritage and arts organisations and individuals. Their interest and enthusiasm have been particularly encouraging throughout this study. The logos of many of the supporting organisations are provided on page 8 but I would like to thank especially Dr Fred Hohler and his team at Watercolour World, Scottish Natural Heritage and Julia Korner Fine Art for their kind support. I would like to thank Dr Hermione Cockburn for writing the Foreword, my co-author, Chloe Stanford-Clark, for her technical input, Cheryl Taylor for her artwork, graphics and typing, and Heather Cooper for her proof reading. The project would not have come to fruition without the kind assistance of the distinguished architect and watercolour artist, David Addey, who retraced William Daniell's great journey and who allowed me to make use of his archive of British coastal watercolours.

The study report has provided the opportunity to further enhance and promote research that I have undertaken in recent years for The Crown Estate, Historic England, The Maritime Archaeological Trust and the European Commission; I am most grateful to these organisations for their support on the subject of art and change around the British coast. Finally, a special thankyou to my wife, Sylvia, who has accompanied me on many journeys to parts of the British coast and for her photography and good ideas.

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Fig. i.6. '*Lynmouth, Devon*' by Myles Birket Foster RWS, 1825-1899. Watercolour.
Image courtesy: Bridgeman Images.

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Fig i.7. (above) *'Low Tide, Tynemouth'* by Thomas Sewell Robins. Watercolour. 1866.
Photograph courtesy of Hall's Fine Art Auctioneers, Shrewsbury. (Lot 381, 23rd October 2013).



Fig i.8. (above) *'The Pier Head, Aberdour, Fife, Scotland'* by Samuel Bough. 1865. Oil on canvas. Bough's highly detailed view of this coastal location illustrates the seawall, trade and cultural heritage.

Courtesy of Patrick Bourne.

Fig i.9. (below) *'Bow and Arrow Castle, Portland, Dorset'* by John William Upham. 1821. Watercolour. The watercolour illustrates the potential vulnerability of heritage sites within coastal zones such as this.

Image courtesy of Guy Peppiatt Fine Art.



Executive Summary

The remarkable variety and scenic character of the British coast results from not only its geological history over the last 4,000 million years, and the physical processes acting upon that geology, but also from the story of our seafaring nation, our culture and heritage. The total length of the British coastline, including the islands, amounts to over 30,000km (19,500 miles) and since the last Ice Age the coast has been settled upon and developed, taking full advantage of rivers, estuaries and the sea itself as a source of food, as well as for the purposes of trade.

The coastline, which varies considerably in terms of its durability, has been subjected continuously to the processes of weathering, coastal erosion, landsliding and flooding. The recognition of coastal change and the practical experiences of its impacts over the last three centuries in particular, has clearly demonstrated that the coastal zone is an area that is naturally dynamic and prone to significant changes over time and geographical extent. Climate change, with less predictable weather patterns and risks from sea level rise, brings increasing challenges for managers around the British coast. In fact, many of those involved in coastal management believe that meeting the challenges of coastal climate change is the most important issue to be faced by scientists and decision-makers and the communities that they represent. Steadily improving national forecasting is proving to be of particular value alongside the expanding programme of strategic coastal monitoring.

It is now well established that sustainable management of coastal zones can only be achieved through a thorough understanding of long-term coastal evolution and natural processes. Alongside the technical tools that are available to inform us about the rate of coastal change, historical evidence, including artworks and other historical imagery such as old photographs, literature accounts and maps have allowed recognition of the nature, scale and rate of coastal change over a much longer timeframe than is normally considered by coastal scientists and engineers. The use of artworks in particular is being promoted in this new study, taking advantage of the significant increase in the availability of these media online. The photographing of the nation's public collections of oil paintings, now held on the ArtUK website (<https://artuk.org>), and the recently launched 'Watercolour World' project (www.watercolourworld.org) are providing thousands of images of the coastline to new audiences, many publicly available to view for the first time.

Bridging the disciplines of science and the arts, this study takes forward work undertaken previously by the author and colleagues for The Crown Estate, the European Union and Historic England. In partnership with a wide range of key organisations with an interest in both improving understanding of our coastlines, and utilisation of arts media, images have been selected to assess the state of the British coast, and the changes that can be observed since the late eighteenth century.

This study could not have been undertaken without the keen interest and support of a wide range of organisations and individuals that are closely involved in coastal management and fine art; I am most grateful for their kind assistance.

Professor Robin McInnes OBE
May 2019



Fig i.10. *'At Southend, Essex'* by George Arthur Fripp OWS. 1851. Pencil and Watercolour.
Photograph courtesy of Christie's Images Limited. 2013.

As well as depicting the nature of the shoreline before later Victorian development, highly-detailed watercolours, such as this view by Fripp, illustrate past approaches to the transit of goods along the English coast.

Introduction

What lessons can we learn from observations of changes that have affected the British coast over the last 250 years? How and to what extent have our coastal landscapes, environments and cultural heritage been affected by both natural and anthropogenic influences over that time?

Increasingly sophisticated technologies now allow us to observe and monitor changing conditions within our coastal zones, but such innovative approaches have been introduced relatively recently and there are few locations around the British coast where systematic monitoring has been undertaken for more than twenty to thirty years. Alongside these tools we can now also take particular advantage of the *wisdom of hindsight* by interrogating a vast additional resource of historical imagery that is becoming increasingly available online and which allows a much longer-term perspective to be gained of coastal evolution and the rate and scale of change; such insight can better inform future coastal planning and management.

Over the last fifteen years the Public Catalogues Foundation (PCF), a registered charity, in collaboration with public art galleries, museums and other owners of artworks arranged the photographing of all the nation's 212,000 oil paintings; these are now available for research and interrogation on the ArtUK website (<https://artuk.org/>). In 2016 the founder of the PCF, Dr Fred Hohler, established a new charity, Watercolour World (www.watercolourworld.org/), which has created a visual online topographical record of the world through watercolours spanning the period from 1600-1900. Watercolour World is honoured by the joint patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.

Watercolour World displays watercolours recording, for example, topography, architecture, flora and fauna drawing on the estimated 6.5 million watercolours in public collections in the United Kingdom, as well as some important private collections; these are being indexed geographically on its website. Watercolours represent a fragile art resource and their recording, preservation and dissemination in this way provides a new, unrivalled resource available for scientific and educational purposes. In view of the fine detail of the watercolour painting technique this medium provides the opportunity to reappraise not just the physical changes that have affected the British coast but also changes to the natural environment and our rich coastal heritage over the last two hundred and fifty years in particular.

Alongside other reference works such as illustrated topographical books, coastal change since the 1770s (when coastal painting started to become more popular) can be observed in full colour commencing long before the introduction of both black and white and colour photography. Recognising that a thorough understanding of long-term coastal change is fundamental to sustainable coastal management this study, using art imagery, has carefully appraised the observable changes that have affected coastal landscapes, environments and the heritage they contain.

Previous studies, which have examined art and coastal change sponsored by The Crown Estate (McInnes & Stubbings, 2010¹, 2011²; McInnes & Benstead, 2013a³, 2013b⁴) focused on the impacts of coastal erosion on life and commercial assets, with less attention paid to the historical and natural environments. Subsequently studies supported by the European Union (Momber *et al.*, 2013⁵) and Historic England (McInnes, 2016⁶) examined both coastal heritage risk across North-Western Europe, and the role that imagery could play in supporting coastal heritage risk and management in South-West England. This new study builds on the valuable experiences gained from these earlier studies and increases their geographical extent to cover the whole of the coastline of mainland Britain and the Islands, reviewing the physical, environmental and heritage changes that have become apparent over the recent centuries.

Alongside the wealth of public artworks that are becoming increasingly available, the author has taken advantage of additional art images kindly loaned from private collections, art galleries and auction houses and local authority collections. Certain key artistic tours of the British coast form benchmarks over time

where the state of the coast can be appraised and changes observed. These include coastal voyages and expeditions by some of our greatest topographical artists, as well as those who painted the developing coastal towns and villages through the rapid period of development in Victorian and Edwardian times. Some of these artists returned to paint the same spot many times as the seaside watering places, towns and villages expanded rapidly. The wealth of artworks produced in the nineteenth century including, for example, the often highly accurate '*en plein air*' portrayals of coastal scenery by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their many Followers mean that, combined with their interest in the emerging science of geology, these artworks represent a particularly rich resource for this study. By comparing these early views with present day photographs, it has been possible to review the changing British coast over this extended time period and to analyse and comment on the changes that have occurred.

A key issue that has been explored through the past research and which has been re-examined and refined through this study, is the question of artistic accuracy. Clearly, the more widespread use of art in support of coastal management, which is a prime objective of this study, relies upon the user being satisfied that the image represents a true portrayal of the coastline at the time it was painted. Therefore, further work has been undertaken on improving the ranking system for artistic accuracy that was developed initially for The Crown Estate studies, with later improvements through the Historic England 'CHerISH' study of art and coastal heritage risk in South-West England (McInnes, 2016⁶).

An aim of this new study is to improve our understanding of the long-term coastal evolution and the rate and scale of change affecting the British coast. The study has illustrated changes affecting the largely natural open coasts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and has helped establish the commencement and chronology of coastal defences, noting their impacts over time. Through the thirty-two case study sites selected, the changes, particularly along soft rock and low-lying coastlines, have been more readily identified and this work can support the strategic planning process, for example in confirming '*coastal change management areas*' (CLG, 2010⁸). Furthermore, the study assists in understanding the changing patterns of coastal development over the last 200 years and can in turn inform local planning, for example assisting the preparation of Conservation Area Statements and illustrating *Historic Environment Records* (HERs) (English Heritage, 2015⁹).

In addition to coastal management and planning, some of the very detailed artworks can provide an improved understanding of long-term environmental changes that have affected coastal land, with observation possible of habitat changes, gains and losses, as well as informing us of the changing landscape character, for example in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The CHerISH project (McInnes, 2016⁶) helped to provide additional information on the chronology of coastal heritage sites and the identification of sites at risk or potentially at risk. This work in turn can inform the Historic Environment Records and provide information on the alterations and losses affecting Listed structures, whilst at the same time raising awareness of local and regional heritage. Finally, it is hoped that the study will support fine art research and encourage the bridging of the disciplines of science and the arts, particularly highlighting the value and opportunities provided through the increasingly available online resources provided by the ArtUK and 'Watercolour World' initiatives.

The author is most grateful for the interest and support of a wide range of organisations, networks, groups and individuals from across England, Wales and Scotland, without whom it would not have been possible to complete this study. Because a number of the key artists who painted the coast of mainland Britain did not visit the coastline of Northern Ireland, this study is restricted to England, Wales and Scotland. However, researchers may wish to read the report published by The Crown Estate in 2015 '*Art as a Tool in Support of the Understanding of Coastal Change in Northern Ireland*' (McInnes & Benstead, 2015⁷), which is available at www.thecrownestate.co.uk.

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Fig. i.11. *'Bishop's Castle, Scrabster'* (On the Caithness Coast near Thurso) by Samuel Bough RSA RSW. 1822-1878. Watercolour.

Photograph courtesy of Patrick Bourne.

Fig. 1.1. (Overleaf) *'Shipping off Whitby Harbour'* by John Wilson Carmichael. Signed and Dated 1857. Oil on canvas.

Private Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Richard Green Gallery, London.



Chapter 1: Study Approach





Fig. 1.2. (above) *'Mousehole, Cornwall'* by George Wolfe. 1860. Watercolour. A highly-detailed depiction of the harbour by Wolfe, who followed the Pre-Raphaelite ethos of capturing the landscape truthfully, in precise detail.

Image courtesy of Penlee House Art Gallery and Museum/Watercolour World.

Fig 1.3. (below) *'The Breakwater, Porlock Weir, Coast of Somerset'* by Edward William Cooke RA. c.1862. Oil on canvas. This detailed painting by Cooke illustrates his keen interest in depicting the cliffs, beaches and coastal defences, particularly on the Isle of Wight and in south-west England. His paintings and watercolours form invaluable records of past conditions.

Photograph courtesy of Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.



CHAPTER ONE

‘The State of the British Coast’

Study Approach

1.1. Introduction

The importance of understanding long-term coastal change has long been recognised, particularly since the development and establishment of the shoreline management planning process from the early 1990s (MAFF, 1993¹; Defra, 2006²). It was recognised that a thorough evaluation of coastal evolution and physical coastal processes was fundamental to wise decision-making on the coast. More widely the European Commission promoted ‘*Integrated Coastal Zone Management*’ as part of an overview of coastal areas, and this approach was adopted subsequently by the government (European Commission, 1999³, 2002⁴, 2004⁵; Defra, 2009⁶). Coastal risks are increasing as a result of climate change and sea level rise, resulting in more aggressive and greater erosion, flooding and landslide risks (McInnes, 2008⁷; Moore *et al.*, 2010⁸; Bradbury & Mason, 2015⁹). The shoreline management plans, as they subsequently developed, helped to provide answers to the increasing need to adapt to long-term coastal change to help ensure successful planning and management of the coast looking ahead for the next century. Nationally significant studies around parts of the British coast in recent years commissioned by the Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline (McInnes, 2008¹⁰), the National Trust (National Trust, 2015¹¹), the Scottish Government and partners (Hansom *et al.*, 2017¹²) and the National Assembly for Wales (Dodds, 2017¹³) have led to important advances in addressing risks and promoting sustainability.

In essence, this study looks at the subject of coastal change and its physical, environmental and heritage impacts, particularly since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The measurement of change has been undertaken in an increasingly sophisticated manner over the last twenty years, with tools such as coastal monitoring programmes (Bradbury, 2007¹⁴; Bradbury *et al.*, 2007¹⁵) including airborne and spaceborne techniques, ship-based surveying and ground surveying available to assist our understanding of the complexities of coastal change. Previous studies commissioned by The Crown Estate (McInnes & Stubbings, 2010¹⁶, 2011¹⁷; McInnes & Benstead, 2013a¹⁸, 2013b¹⁹) demonstrated that artworks do provide an important tool to support these other monitoring techniques. The studies illustrated show how works of art extending back to the late eighteenth century, long before the days of landscape photography, can often provide the only record of coastal conditions at that time. Depending upon the accuracy of the artworks, they can provide useful supporting evidence of the nature, scale and rate of coastal change over the last two hundred years.

The Crown Estate studies and subsequent studies commissioned by Historic England (McInnes, 2016²⁰, 2017²¹) have provided the opportunity to investigate thoroughly the contribution that art, photography and historical literature accounts can make to our understanding of the changing coast. However, for this particular study the focus is on the practical applications and beneficial uses of artworks comprising oil paintings, watercolour drawings and prints.

There are several reasons for the focus on art for this particular study. The medium of photography as a tool is far better recognised by the wide range of professionals involved with coastal management and because photographs largely represent a true record of past conditions, there are not generally issues relating to the accuracy of this medium. However, partly because of lack of information on the art resource and concerns about whether artworks represent true depictions of the coastal environment at the time they were painted, art has been much less used as a medium to explore the subject of coastal change.

Museums, art galleries, local authority collections, archives and private collections throughout Great Britain contain a wealth of artistic images, whilst many others are contained in extensively illustrated topographical publications. Until recently, the availability of the art resource has been relatively unknown except for more famous works, which often hang on the walls of public art galleries. However, this situation changed in 2004 when an initiative by Dr Fred Hohler led to the foundation of a charity, *The Public Catalogues Foundation*, which was established to create a complete record of the national collections of oil, tempera and acrylic paintings in public ownership and to make them accessible to the public. Of the 212,000 oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom, around 80% of these are not on public view and many are held in storage without routine public access. *The Public Catalogues Foundation* worked to rectify this through the publication, initially, of a series of well-illustrated colour catalogues (Ellis, from 2004²²) and then, subsequently, to achieve the widest possible audience, all 212,000 paintings became available online through a collaboration, initially with the BBC, by 2012. Now operating in its own right as ArtUK (www.artuk.org) this charity provides the point of access to the nation's collection of oil paintings where works by some 40,000 painters, held in over 3,000 collections, are available for view online.

Following the creation of ArtUK for the nation's oil paintings, Dr Hohler established a new charity in 2016, 'Watercolour World' (www.watercolourworld.org/), under the joint patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH the Duchess of Cornwall. Watercolour World is a registered UK charity established to create a visual record of the world before photography by aggregating digital images of watercolours created up to the year 1900 on a single geographically indexed website. The prime objectives of Watercolour World are:

- to preserve and make publicly available the documentary information contained in watercolours;
- to collate already digitised UK and international public and private documentary watercolour collections and to make them publicly available to the Watercolour World website;
- to digitise and encourage the digitisation of documentary watercolours in the UK and internationally;
- to encourage the participation of the public in sharing information and helping to identify unrecognised images.

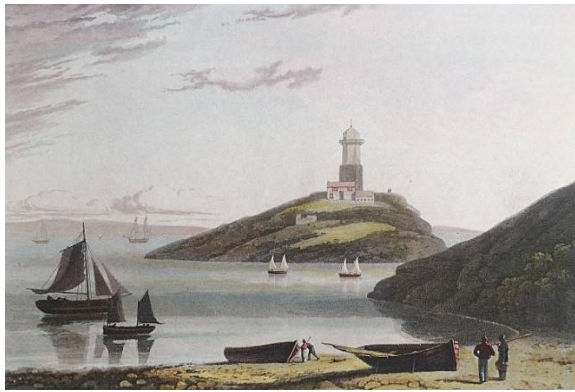
This new initiative is particularly important for those interested in all aspects of coastal management because, by their nature, watercolours tend to allow very detailed images to be produced. An art ranking system that has been progressively developed by the author over the last ten years has highlighted watercolour drawings as one of the most accurate and consequently valuable mediums in terms of illustrating coastal scenery.

The online art resources now available on these two websites have allowed access to thousands of oil paintings and watercolours, which were previously relatively unknown except to specialists; they are now available for research by the full range of coastal professionals and the wider public who may have an interest in different aspects of coastal zones.

For the purposes of this study, the British coast has been explored through the works of a number of key artists or artistic groups that form *benchmarks* illustrating coastal scenery spanning the study time period (1770-Present Day). These comprise:

- **William Daniell's 'Voyage Round Great Britain' (1814-1825)** comprising 308 colour aquatint engravings of British coastal scenery (Daniell & Ayton, 1814¹⁸). William Daniell RA was a fine artist and many of his depictions, particularly of the coastal towns, are accurate, showing the coastline before the Victorian development period and the construction of many of the coastal defences and esplanades. Prideaux (1909²⁴) said "*such a succession of beautiful colour plates is scarcely to be found anywhere, and they are unsurpassed both in delicacy of drawing and tinting*". Many examples of Daniell's aquatints are contained in this report.

A Selection of views from 'A Voyage Round Great Britain' by William Daniell RA (1814-1825)



The Mumbles, South Wales



Tenby, South Wales



Penmaenmawr, North Wales



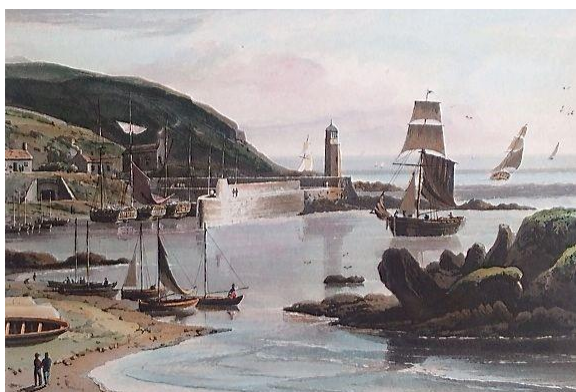
Liverpool, North-West England



Castle Head, North-West England



Whitehaven, North-West England



Port Patrick, West Coast of Scotland



Tobermory, West Coast of Scotland

A Selection of views from 'A Voyage Round Great Britain' by William Daniell RA (1814-1825)



Ayr, West Coast of Scotland



Loch Duich, West Coast of Scotland



Rispond, North Coast of Scotland



Aberdeen, East Coast of Scotland



Leith, East Coast of Scotland



Dunbar, East Coast of Scotland



Whitby, Yorkshire



Lowestoft, Suffolk

A Selection of views from 'A Voyage Round Great Britain' by William Daniell RA (1814-1825)



Southend-on-Sea, Essex



Southwold, Suffolk



Deal, Kent



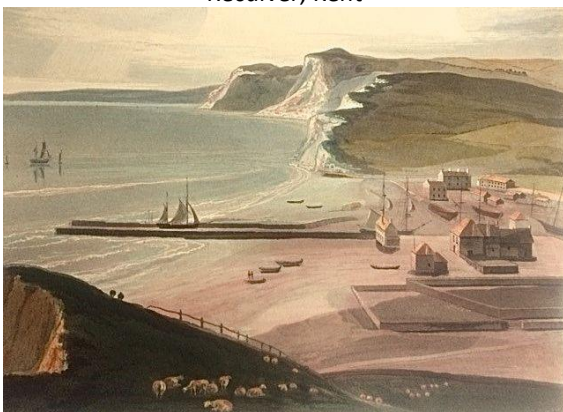
Rye, East Sussex



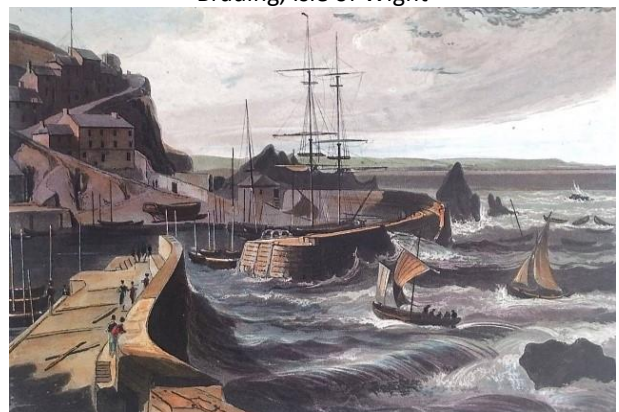
Reculver, Kent



Brading, Isle of Wight



West Bay, Dorset



Mevagissey, Cornwall

- **Works by Pre-Raphaelite artists and their Followers**, which were produced from the late 1840s through to the end of the nineteenth century. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P.R.B.) was founded in 1848 by a group of young artists, poets and critics in London. The Pre-Raphaelites were greatly influenced by nature and these artists wished to depict the landscape in its truest form through laborious study of even the smallest detail. They were unrelenting in their quest for detailed realism and would spend the majority of their time working outside and not within the confines of the studio. John Ruskin, a geologist and botanist by training, and one of the greatest art critics of the nineteenth century said in his Edinburgh lectures *“Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything down to the most minute details, from nature and from nature alone”* (Halsby, 1986²⁵).

On account of their focus on truth of depiction and artistic accuracy, the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but also particularly their Followers, who painted up until the last decade of the nineteenth century, provide a rich resource of detailed coastal views, painted in both oils and watercolours; some examples of their works are illustrated below.

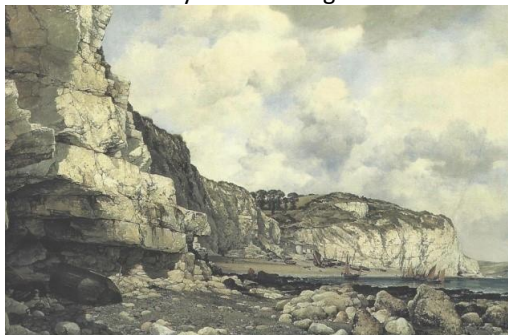
- **Other nineteenth century artists** who specialised in painting maritime and coastal subjects such as Edward Duncan (1803-1882), Thomas Miles Richardson Jnr (1813-1890) and Henry Moore (1831-1895).



Pegwell Bay, Kent. 1858. William Dyce RA.
Courtesy © Tate Images 2018



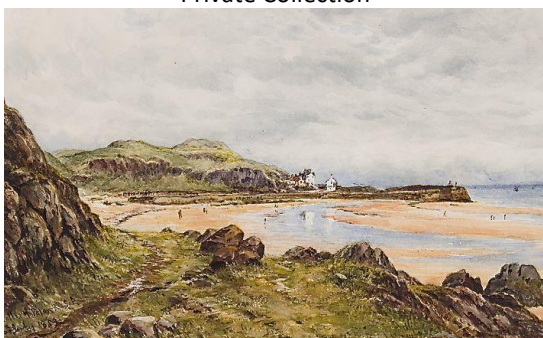
The Lizard, Cornwall. 1876. John Brett ARA.
Courtesy of Maas Gallery



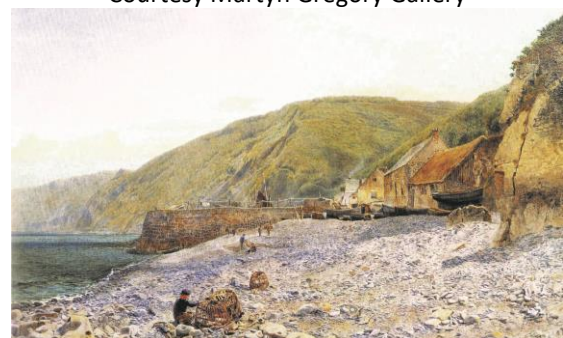
Beer Head, Devon. 1858. E. W. Cooke RA
Private Collection



St Agnes' Point, Isle of Scilly. 1858. E. W. Cooke RA.
Courtesy Martyn Gregory Gallery



Pettycur, Fife, 1797-1874. Oil
Courtesy of Lyon & Turnbull

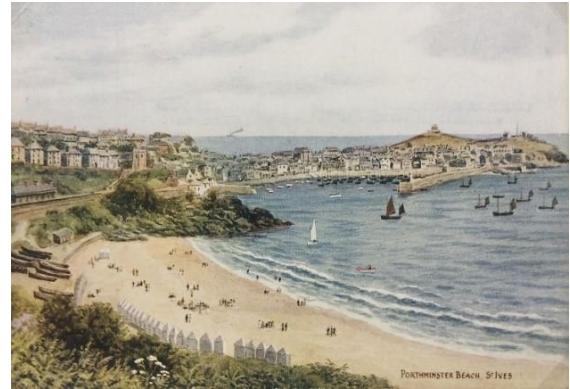


Among the Shingles, Clovelly. 1864. C. N. Hemy RA RWS.
Courtesy The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

- **Alfred Robert Quinton's Coastal Watercolours of England and Wales (c.1900-c.1934)** comprising over 1,500 watercolours, which were painted for reproduction as colour picture postcards by J. & F. Salmon Ltd of Sevenoaks, Kent. Quinton's watercolours are highly detailed and he re-visited many of the locations repeatedly as the coastal towns and villages expanded during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Images courtesy of Salmon's.



Torquay, Devon



St Ives, Cornwall



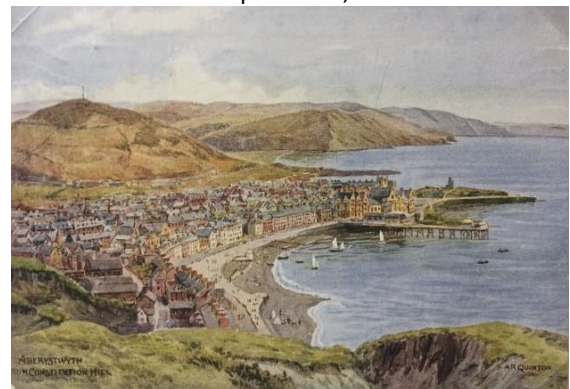
Minehead, Somerset



Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset



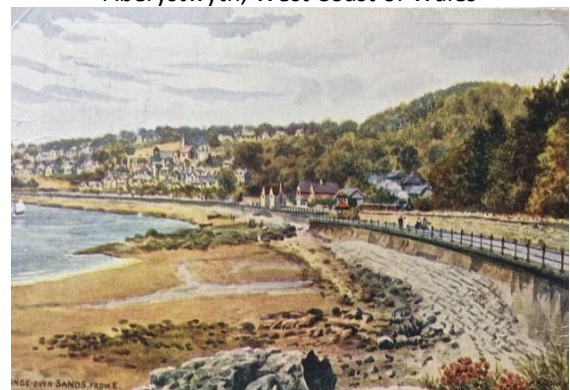
Tenby, South Wales



Aberystwyth, West Coast of Wales



Southport, North-West Coast of England



Grange-over-Sands, North-West Coast of England

Views of the Coastline of England and Wales by Alfred Robert Quinton (1900-1934)



Whitby, Yorkshire



Skegness, Lincolnshire



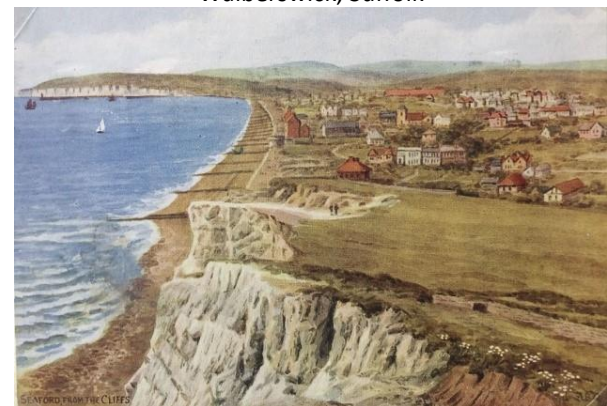
Sheringham, Norfolk



Walberswick, Suffolk



Seaford, East Sussex



Westcliffe-on-Sea, Kent



Bournemouth, Dorset



Lyme Regis, Dorset

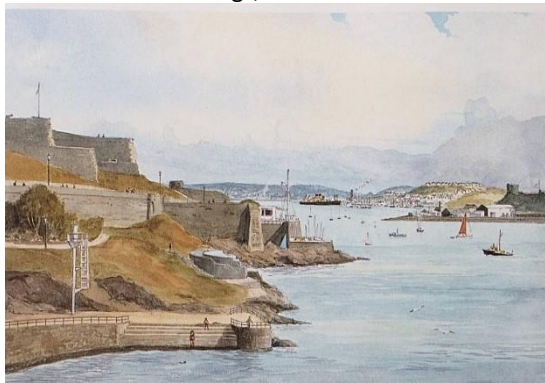
- David Addey's Watercolours - in the footsteps of William Daniell RA.** Between 1995 and 2002 the architect and distinguished watercolour painter, David Addey, retraced William Daniell's earlier tour and he painted the present day view from the vantage points chosen by Daniell nearly two centuries before. Addey's tour provides a new dimension to Daniell's work with many interesting changes to be observed over the intervening time period (Addey, 1995²⁶; Addey, 1997²⁷; Addey, 2000²⁸; Addey, 2002²⁹).



Hastings, East Sussex



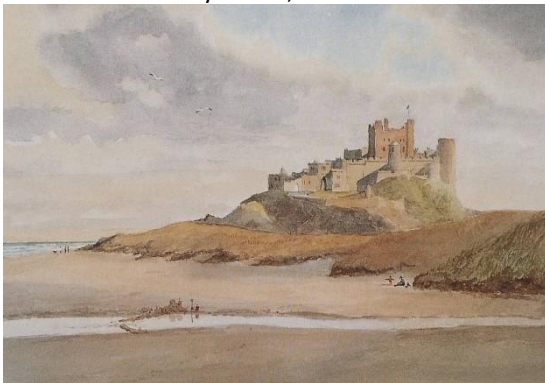
Lulworth Cove, Dorset



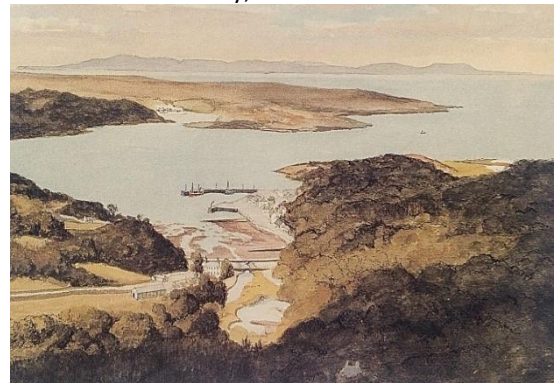
Plymouth, Devon



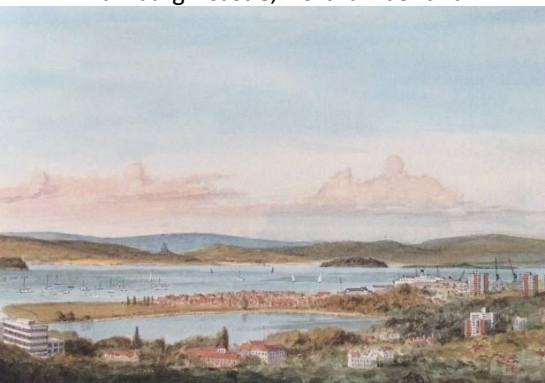
Conwy, North Wales



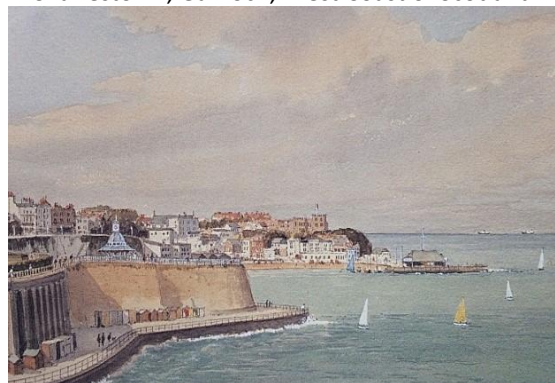
Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland



Charlestown, Gairloch, West Coast of Scotland



Poole Harbour, Dorset



Broadstairs, Kent

- **Present Day Photographs** will bring the sequence of views up to date and allow comparisons to be readily made to inform the findings of this study.

For the purposes of this study the coastline of Great Britain was divided into a series of sections broadly based upon natural 'coastal cells' (MAFF, 1993¹; McInnes, 2008⁷; Ramsay & Brampton, 2000³⁰; Hansom *et al.*, 2017¹²). The British coast is comprised of a series of interlinked physical systems, comprising both offshore and onshore elements. Sediments including clay, silt, sand and gravel are moved around the coast by waves and currents in a series of linked systems (sediment transport cells). Cells have been identified for the whole of the coastlines of England, Wales and Scotland and they represent a practical sub-division of the coast for consideration of coastal defence and other issues at a strategic level.

Taking account of the coastal cell framework and the varying conditions they offer in terms of their geology, geomorphology, processes, heritage and artworks, a series of thirty-two case study sites have been identified. These provide the opportunity to demonstrate the applications and value of art in support of our understanding of physical, environmental and heritage change. The case studies commence on the north-east coast of England from the Scottish border to the Wash, before continuing down the East Anglian coast, around south-east England and along the south coast to Cornwall. Thereafter, the north-west coast of England between the Welsh border and the Solway Firth is considered followed by the coastlines of Wales and Scotland. Each case study follows a similar and concise approach in terms of layout with more detailed consideration of emerging key issues discussed in the following 'Analysis' chapter. From this study 'Conclusions' and 'Recommendations' were drawn.

The purpose of this study is not, therefore, to examine the whole of the British coast but to draw from the case study examples information on coastal change, utilising historical art resources where they are available. There is a greater focus in this study on the undeveloped or more lightly developed coasts, particularly those of scenic importance or of heritage interest, as these were the locations where most artists wished to paint. For researchers wishing to see artworks of more heavily developed coastal locations there are numerous well-illustrated publications (Vincent, 1991³¹; Payne, 2007³²; McInnes, 2014³³).

1.2. Application of the Study Results

The results of this study are likely to be of value to a range of organisations and individuals with an interest in coastal management and planning, nature and earth science conservation and heritage, culture and the arts.

1.2.1. Coastal Management & Planning

- Encouraging an improved understanding of long-term coastal evolution and the rate and scale of coastal change;
- Establishing the commencement and chronology of coastal defences and noting their impacts over time;
- Identification of *Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMA's)* in support of Planning policies;
- Understanding the changing patterns of coastal development over the last 200 years;
- Informing local land use planning including Conservation Area Statements and Development Control.

Users: *Local Authority Coastal Engineers; Coastal Defence Groups; Environmental and Nature Conservation Organisations; Coastal & Estuaries Partnerships; Coastal Landowners, Coastal Scientists and Researchers.*

1.2.2. Nature and Earth Science Conservation

- Improving understanding of long-term environmental changes affecting coastal land;

- Observing habitats and species' changes and their gains and losses;
- Informing Landscape Character Assessments, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Plans and Countryside Management.

Users: *Nature Conservation Organisations; AONB Partnerships; Countryside Managers.*

1.2.3. Heritage and Culture

- Establishing the chronology of coastal heritage sites;
- Assisting identification of heritage at risk;
- Informing Historic Environment Records (HERs);
- Supporting the recording of coastal development – such as alterations to and losses of Listed Structures;
- Raising awareness of local/regional art history;
- Identification of locations of previously unknown artworks;
- Supporting fine art research;
- Bridging science and art;
- Encouraging art history studies and coursework at the full range of academic levels.
- Raising awareness of the work of both ArtUK and 'Watercolour World' initiatives.

Users: *Culture and Heritage Bodies; Researchers; Local Authority Historic Environment Services; Museum and Art Gallery Curators; Schools.*

1.3. Collaborative Working

In order to ensure that the study results are most informative and of real practical value to end users Coastal & Geotechnical Services was delighted to work with a wide range of key statutory bodies, networks, groups and cultural and art heritage interests throughout the project. These included those with interests in environmental protection, nature conservation, coastal planning and management, cultural heritage and arts heritage.

NOTE: Because William Daniell, Alfred Robert Quinton and David Addey did not paint the coastline of Northern Ireland this study is restricted to mainland Great Britain. However, readers may wish to read the report published by The Crown Estate in 2015 '*Art as a Tool in Support of the Understanding of Coastal Change in Northern Ireland*' (McInnes & Benstead, 2015³⁴), which is available at www.thecrownestate.co.uk

1.4. Transferability of Approach

The author believes that the imagery that will become increasingly available through, for example, 'Watercolour World' will attract multiple users and have wide transferability value across Great Britain and abroad. For example, art imagery is already being applied very effectively to support understanding of coastal and estuarine changes in Brittany, France (Motte, 2014³⁵; Motte, 2017³⁶). Apart from examination of the British coast, as described in this report, this methodology can be applied to the thousands of artworks and subjects portrayed by travelling artists across Europe, the British Empire and the world. For example, the Daniell family of artists also travelled and painted extensively in India and the Far East.

1.5. Study Deliverables

1.5.1. This extensively illustrated '*State of the British Coast*' Technical Report will be available to download at www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com

1.5.2. Illustrated presentations at key coastal conferences.

1.5.3. *State of the British Coast* Exhibitions to be mounted in Southampton and Edinburgh.

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Fig. 1.4. *'The Pier and Bay of St Ives, Cornwall'* by Edward William Cooke RA. 1853.

Image courtesy: © 1999 Christie's Images Limited.



Fig. 1.5. (above) *'Ramsgate Pier, Kent'* by Caroline Davidson. 1838. Watercolour. This early view of the beach at Ramsgate, looking towards the harbour, and the view of *'Plymouth Sound'* by Nicholas Condry. **Fig. 1.6. (below)** c.1843 show the level of detail that could be achieved through the medium of watercolour.

Fig. 1.5. courtesy of © The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford; Fig. 1.6. the Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018.



Chapter 2: Artistic Depictions of the British Coast

2.1. The Origins of Coastal Landscape Art

'*Landscape*' is a term used to describe the scenery and environment of the countryside and coastline. Landscape paintings depict the natural beauty of the landscape and of coastal environments, often encompassing a broad view of the coastline, the sea and the sky, together with elements such as the weather and human activities. The word '*landscape*' started to be used in the English language from the early seventeenth century and is derived from the Dutch word '*landschap*', which means '*an area of cultivated land*'. Those landscape paintings which depict specific subjects such as parts of the coastline, buildings and structures, are called '*topographical views*' and are commonly seen in various types of prints (engravings, aquatints and lithographs) as well as in drawings, watercolour drawings and oil paintings (McInnes, 2014¹).

The origins of landscape painting date back to the fifteenth century when landscape scenery was incorporated in the paintings of early artists including Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1515) and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Later, in the Netherlands, Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525/30-1569) also developed stylised panoramas depicting life through the seasons, as well as the daily activities of residents of the countryside and coast. However, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a particular emphasis on portrait painting as English artists had learnt painting techniques from Flemish artists including Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), and the concept of, and value of painting the landscape, as a subject in its own right, had yet to be recognised.

The interest in art was accentuated by the desire of royalty, such as King Charles I (1600-1649) and the nobility across Europe, to become collectors of works of art. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wealthy young gentlemen were starting to travel more widely and they took the Grand Tour, gaining education and aesthetic inspiration from the classical remains and Renaissance art and architecture of Italy and Greece. Art patrons were particularly impressed by the works of the artists Claude Lorrain (1604-1682), Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), whose paintings evoked the classical landscapes of the Italian countryside and the grandeur of ancient Rome with its fine architecture.

During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries Flanders produced some of Europe's leading artists. In fact, artists from the Netherlands, Flanders and Belgium played a significant role in the development of landscape art, particularly in relation to the coastal and marine environments. Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569) produced landscape paintings featuring village life through the seasons. Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) had a powerful influence on visual art and Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641) focused on English portraiture rather than landscape painting. This, in turn, led to other European artists being attracted to work in this artistic centre of activity. Flemish Baroque painting, an artistic style that embraced exuberance and grandeur in Europe from the early 1600s onwards, flourished particularly in the Antwerp School. It was not just Antwerp, however, that provided the setting for creativity, and both Brussels and Ghent were also notable centres of artistic production during this period. However, the Siege of Antwerp (1584-1585) led to Flanders becoming separated and, therefore, independent from the Dutch Republic and this caused many artists to then flee to the Dutch Republic and led to the development of landscape painting during the period that became known as the '*Dutch Golden Age*'. Flanders' influence declined partly as a result of the Eighty Years War (1568- 1648) and following the deaths of leading artists, such as Rubens in 1640.

The '*Dutch Golden Age*' of painting refers to a period spanning roughly the seventeenth century. An independent Dutch Republic emerged after the Eighty Years War and this new nation became the most prosperous in Europe at that time. The Dutch Republic led the field in the subjects of art, science and

aspects of trade. Haarlem and Amsterdam were strong centres for painting at this time. The 'Golden Age' of paintings can be said to fall into the general period of European Baroque art, but with less emphasis on idealisation of love and more emphasis on detailed realism. This provided an excellent backdrop for the development of naturalistic landscape paintings.

Drawings began to be made out of doors and these would form the basis of the paintings that would start to depict the landscape in its true form. Important figures in the move towards realism included Esias Van De Velde (1587-1630), who painted landscape, genre and shipping subjects and Hendrick Avercamp (1585-1634) who painted some of the first Dutch landscape paintings. The Dutch sea coast provided popular subject matter and this, in turn, formed part of the catalyst towards seascapes developing as a more popular movement within the 'Golden Age.' Hendrik Vroom (1566-1640) can be, arguably, considered as the "*first 'Dutch' seascape painter*" (Royal Museums, Greenwich, 2012²) and the father of Dutch marine painting, although he was "*brought up to a Flemish palette, which he maintained all his life*" (Archibald, 1982³). Jan Porcellis (1583-1632) further contributed to the genre of marine painting through his development of tonal painting - a softening and blurring of outlines and a more atmospheric effect being achieved as a result, and it can be argued that it was "*only through this development that marine painting pure and simple could come into its own*" (Stechow, 1966⁴).

The new Dutch Republic's strong economy was based heavily on sea trade and seascapes were seen as celebrating the vibrant activity off the coast. The "*economically successful Dutch Republic prompted increased specialisation*" in this new genre (Royal Museums, Greenwich, 2012²). Naval conflict and also the natural dangers of the sea provided a rich source of material for the artists of the time and as a result "*Dutch painters of seascapes were thorough connoisseurs of ships as well as of the water*" (Stechow, 1966⁴); indeed, Jan Van Goyen's (1596-1656) early sketch books produced surprisingly mature themes during the earlier period of the seascape genre. Later artists of the period included Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682) "*primarily a landscape painter but also did some marines*" (Archibald, 1982³), Albert Cuyp (1620-1691) and Phillips Koninck (1619-1688). Although sea trade provided a plethora of material for artists, many paintings also included detail of land, beaches, harbour viewpoints and views stretching across estuaries.

The strong trade links between the new Dutch Republic and the rest of Europe encouraged the export of artistic works; many Dutch and Flemish painters also worked abroad. The most famous artists who exemplified this trend were Willem Van De Velde (c.1611-1693) and his son, also Willem (1633-1707), who moved to London in 1672. Van De Velde the Elder had a love of the sea and ships and "*perfected his technique to a level never attained by anyone else*" and as a result the "*studio of Van De Velde and his son Willem, dominated marine painting in England and their style and approach to their subjects were the models and inspiration for the first generation of English marine painters*" (Archibald, 1982²). Johannes Hermanus Koekkoek (1778-1851) and other members of his family also painted both fine landscapes and coastal and estuary scenes with shipping.

Dutch art can be noted as being particularly influential on the Norwich Society of Artists (1803-33) or 'Norwich School', due to the history of strong trade links between Norwich and the Netherlands. The Medieval wool trade "*resulted in large numbers of classic maritime and landscape paintings in merchants' manors*" (Dudley Barrett, 2010⁵) and it was not unusual for local gentry to have impressive collections of Old Masters by artists such as Jakob Van Ruisdael and Jan Van Goyen hanging on their walls. The Norwich School "*carried on the landscape tradition, directly and indirectly, from the Flemish and Dutch Masters*" (Dudley Barrett, 2010⁵). In 1821, Joseph Stannard (1797-1830), of the Norwich School, visited Holland to study paintings and indeed, his "*work tended to be highly finished like that of the Dutch masters*" (Hemingway, 1979⁶). The influential role of Dutch, Flemish and Belgian artists on the development of land and seascape paintings cannot be underestimated. In particular, the prosperity of the Dutch Republic created an opportunity for strong trade links with the rest of Europe and this in turn enabled works of art, and, therefore, artistic styles, to permeate into Great Britain.

2.2. The Influence of the Grand Tour

In England, and indeed across north-western Europe, landscape painting was influenced, first, by collectors and artists returning from the Grand Tour, resulting in an Italianate style being regarded as the height of fashion, and second, by artists such as Thomas Gainsborough RA (1727-1788) who were starting, for the first time, to compose portraits of landowners, sometimes in the settings of their country estates. This approach was popularised by Van Dyck and other Flemish artists who were working in England, and in this respect they influenced Gainsborough.

On arrival in Italy, the well-to-do young gentry were able to purchase examples of engravings and paintings after the masters or coastal and landscape scenes that had been painted by local artists for this 'tourist trade'. Often some of the most celebrated Grand Tour travellers were accompanied by their own artists and, later, photographers, who were able to capture the great sights on the tour. For example, the English aristocrat, Lord Palmerston, took the artist William Pars (1742-1782), whilst William Beckford was accompanied by the artist J. R. Cozens (1752-1797), (Hudson, 1993⁷).

The taste for Italian landscapes had been inspired by some of the earlier Grand Tour travellers such as Joseph Addison (1672-1719), who made his tour in 1699 and recorded his experiences in his publication *'Remarks on several parts of Italy, etc'* (Addison, 1799⁸). In crossing the Alps he said that *"the Alps fill the mind with an agreeable kind of horror"*, and he commented on the concept of the 'sublime', which comprised the three pleasures of the imagination – greatness, uncommonness and beauty arising from visible objects.

In Great Britain in the nineteenth century travellers also perceived the wilder landscapes as sinister and dreadful. William Daniell and his colleague, Richard Ayton, toured the coast painting and describing its scenery. Ayton wrote *"...here was the ocean in all its grandeur, ploughed up by a storm, and bursting with a continued and sullen roar against precipices of rock, awful for their vastness, black and dreadful, and exposing on their battered sides a combination of all rugged and horrid forms"* (Daniell & Ayton, 1814⁹).

The Grand Tour had, therefore, proved hugely influential in the development of the aristocracy's interest in art and in the movement towards the painting of landscapes.

Fig. 2.1.
'Bamburgh Castle'
by John Varley
(1778-1842).
Watercolour.

To satisfy the tastes of clients some artists exaggerated the topography, giving it a more 'Italianate' or 'Alpine' flavour reminiscent of 'Grand Tour' scenery.

Photograph courtesy of John Spink.



2.3. Picturesque Landscapes

In the eighteenth century English painting was influenced strongly by collectors and artists returning from the Grand Tour but *“The notion of landscape as a category with its own values, independent of associations with antiquity, had to root itself in English approval and understanding”* (Grigson, 1975¹⁰). The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars prevented travel across large parts of Europe from 1789 until after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. This led to an increased interest in the exploration and discovery of the more remote landscapes of the British Isles. In fact, from the middle of the eighteenth century, a number of British writers and travellers such as William Gilpin (1724-1804), sought to define and categorise human responses to natural phenomena such as landscape scenery. Gilpin was less concerned about the topographical accuracy of the scene than with capturing the atmosphere of a ‘picturesque landscape’ (Gilpin, 1786¹¹). An enlightened educationist, Gilpin defined picturesque as *“that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture”* and began to expand his principles of picturesque beauty through travels across the British Isles, to locations including the Scottish Highlands, the Lake District, South Wales and the Wye Valley and the New Forest in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Many other artists of that period including Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), Charles Tomkins and John Nixon produced watercolour drawings or publications richly illustrated with aquatinted plates (Christie’s, 2002¹²; Tomkins, 1796¹³; Nixon, 1796¹⁴).

Such tours resulted in a new-found appreciation of the wild and open landscapes that existed outside the cities. In the eighteenth century watercolour drawing became a popular medium and something of a speciality of English artists. Artists including Paul Sandby RA (1725-1809), Francis Towne (1739-1816), Thomas Girtin (1775-1802) and Alexander Cozens (1717-1786) were leaders in the field of watercolour drawing, shortly to be joined by others including J. M. W. Turner RA (1775-1851), who continued the English tradition of taking tours around parts of the country and abroad, producing numerous drawings, some of which were subsequently worked up into major landscape paintings.

At first, watercolour drawings were not accepted by the art establishment, including the Royal Academy, which had been founded in 1768 for the purpose of cultivating and improving the arts of paintings, sculpture and architecture. However, in response to the lack of interest by the Academy in watercolour drawing a new organisation was established to provide an annual exhibition in London, which would allow the art-form to be introduced to the public more widely. The Society of Painters in Watercolours was founded in 1804 and the medium became accepted increasingly as a fine addition to the world of landscape art.



Fig. 2.2. *‘Barmouth from the Beach, North Wales’* by John Varley.
Watercolour. 1813.

Image courtesy of John Spink.

The desire for topographical subjects depicting the coastline had, therefore, arisen partly as a result of the growing appreciation of the British scenery by the aristocracy, and also through the publication of increasing numbers of books containing engravings, which brought the beauties of the coastline to the attention of a much wider audience. Artists such as Gainsborough, Cozens, Sandby and Farington, Girtin and Turner, were on close terms not only with friendly patrons of the middle classes but with many of the nobility. *"It was an encouragement, too, for the artist that the English man, whether he travelled on the continent or in his own country, was taking a new interest in the prospect and meaning of natural scenery"* (Hardie, 1966¹⁵).

To bring their work to the attention of a wider public, artists such as Turner and Rowlandson travelled extensively, often in difficult conditions, whilst some of the more major publications took years to complete with views being published in parts, such as William Daniell and Richard Ayton's *'Voyage Round Great Britain'*, which extended from 1814 until 1825 (Daniell & Ayton, 1814⁹). These dedicated topographical artists and writers have left a remarkable legacy, which forms a comprehensive illustrated record of the state of the British coastline at the time they were published.

Along the coastline artists who had been influenced by the work of marine painters such as Willem Van de Velde the Elder helped bridge the gap between marine paintings in their own right and coastal topographical views. Edward William Cooke RA (1811-1880) and George Chambers RWS (1803-1840) were two artists who followed the Dutch tradition of painting in an exceptionally accurate and meticulous form. Views by artists such as Chambers and also John Wilson Carmichael (1800-1868), which often are taken from the sea against a backdrop of the coastline, can be most informative when examining both physical and social changes over the centuries, and form a bridge linking with the more traditional coastal topographical artists based on land. The increasing interest in geology and, later, the work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the writings of John Ruskin encouraged a number of outstanding artists to capture the coastal geology and scenery in Pre-Raphaelite detail. Furthermore, naval officers were required to master the skill of drawing as part of their training and many ship logs and accounts of voyages form valuable records of the relatively undeveloped coastlines.

All around the British coast fishing coves and hamlets were expanding into fashionable seaside resorts and spas. Artists were particularly drawn to certain locations, for example Hastings on the south coast, the Ventnor Undercliff of the Isle of Wight, and the dramatic coastal scenery of the West Country. Perhaps many of these artists had seen the earlier works of the great topographers such as Daniell, and his aquatints provided inspiration for artists to go to the locations and produce their own works. Nearly all the famous landscape painters travelled to the coastline. Constable, Cotman, Cox, Turner, De Wint, Copley Fielding and many others painted the foreshore and the sea in their own distinctive styles. This era of coastal landscape painting relied not just on the skills of the original artists in the field, but also a number of remarkably fine craftsmen, engravers and colourists, who produced illustrations through a range of techniques such as aquatint and lithography.

2.4. John Ruskin and Pre-Raphaelite Coastal Landscapes

John Ruskin (1819-1900), the celebrated English art critic, believed that landscape painting was the most important artistic creation of the nineteenth century, leading to an increased appreciation of the natural beauty of the countryside and coastline. In his book *'Modern Painters'* (Ruskin, 1843¹⁶) he argued that the principal role of an artist was to achieve *"truth to nature"* and to *"observe the reality of nature and not to invent it in the studio"*. Ruskin also encouraged the development of a number of artists who became influential in the mid-nineteenth century and were known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. These artists wished to capture nature in its precise detail and beauty, often through painting out-of-doors. The works of the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers coincided with an increased interest and understanding of both the natural and earth sciences following the publication *'The Origin of Species'* by Charles Darwin (Darwin, 1859¹⁷) and the development of the science of geology. Many of the best geological exposures

were to be found around the coastline, and this was one of a number of factors that started to attract important artists including Edward William Cooke RA (1811-1880), William Dyce RA HRSA (1806-1864) and John Brett ARA (1830-1902) to the shoreline to record the varied geology and topography.

In 1848 the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) was formed by a group of young artists, poets and critics in London. The three founding members were Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), John Everett Millais, later Bt. PRA HRI HRCA (1829-96) and William Holman Hunt, later ARSA RWS OM (1827-1919). The Pre-Raphaelites were greatly influenced by nature and the artists tried to depict nature in its truest form through the laborious study of even the smallest detail. They were unrelenting in their quest for detailed realism and would spend the majority of their time working outside and not within the confines of a studio. John Ruskin, a geologist and botanist by training, said during his Edinburgh Lectures of 1853 that *"Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything down to the most minute details, from nature and from nature alone"* (Halsby, 1986¹⁸). Indeed, one of the founding members, William Holman Hunt, is quoted as saying: *"I purpose...to paint an out-of-door picture...with every detail I can see, and with the sunlight brightness of the day itself"* (Payne & Brett, 2010¹⁹).

The Pre-Raphaelite movement *"fundamentally altered English approaches to landscape painting"* (Tate Britain, 2004²⁰) in the mid-Victorian period through the introduction of uncompromising attention to detail. Up until the seemingly radical Pre-Raphaelite movement, Victorian artists had opposed change and modernisation in the countryside and wished to make their pictures as *"sentimental and pretty as possible"* (Wood, 1997²¹). The central pillar of Pre-Raphaelite landscape painting was, therefore, a new method of painting, *"looking carefully at nature, without recourse to conventional modes of composition"*



Fig. 2.3. 'Pegwell Bay – Recollections of October 5th 1858' by William Dyce RA. 1858-1860. Oil on canvas.

Photograph courtesy of © Tate Images, 2018.

and expression" (Payne & Brett, 2010¹⁹). The critics of the time were said to find the work of Pre-Raphaelite landscapes reminiscent of the *"effects which could be achieved with optical instruments, particularly microscopes and the new science of photography"* (Payne & Brett, 2010¹⁹).

John Ruskin played a prominent role in the development of Pre-Raphaelite landscape paintings, including coastal scenes, through his encouragement of the artists to *"go to Nature in all singleness of heart...rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scoring nothing"* (Payne & Brett, 2010¹⁹). John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt were among the first of the Brotherhood to produce landscape paintings based on the influence of Ruskin's principles; they were striving for *"total fidelity to nature"* (Wood, 1997²¹). It was within this canon that the landscape paintings of John Brett ARA (1831-1902) developed, who soon became recognised as the *"head of the Pre-Raphaelite school of landscape painting"* (Payne & Brett, 2010¹⁹). However, it is worth noting that although Brett was not actually a member of the Brotherhood he was strongly influenced by their works. Ruskin also heavily influenced Brett and upon reading Ruskin's essay *'Mountain Beauty'*, in Switzerland in 1856 Brett decided *"in a reasonable way to paint all I could see"* (Marsh, 2005²²).

From 1865 Brett spent a great deal of time painting coastal scenes particularly in England and Wales often showing beaches and cliffs in extraordinary detail. Brett and his large family spent many summers aboard their yacht and this enabled Brett to enjoy time sketching out of doors and devote the latter part of his career to painting seashores and the sea. Many of the wider circle of the Pre-Raphaelites also devoted their attention to *"pure landscape"* (Wood, 1997²¹) or detailed realism, particularly William Dyce RA HRS (1806-1864) and John William Inchbold (1830-1888). Dyce only painted occasional landscapes throughout his career, but did so with such detail and precision that it was enough to class Dyce's work *"among the leading examples of Pre-Raphaelite detail and finish"* (Staley, 2001²³). His detailed study of the geology, a developing science at that time, of the coastline in *'Pegwell Bay, Kent – a recollection of October 5th 1858'* is a true example of meticulous realism in landscape painting. Dyce's oil painting of Pegwell Bay was in fact considered to be so accurate that at the time it was suggested that Dyce had used a photograph to paint from and not from sketches, as was the traditional method. Staley (2001²³) argues that, *"if we compare Pegwell Bay with a contemporary photograph of the same locality, we can see that in this instance Dyce not only equalled, but outdid the camera in clarity and thoroughness"*.

Along with Dyce, John William Inchbold is also considered to be one of the most prominent Pre-Raphaelite painters of landscapes and was much praised by Ruskin for his detailed landscape paintings. Inchbold's *'Anstey Cove, Devon'* (1853-4) provides an example of Pre-Raphaelite detail of the coastline: *"...the colours are bright throughout, and the foliate detail in the foreground is beautifully and delicately drawn"* (Staley, 2001²³).

The ripples of the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites were felt throughout the art world, and many artists were inspired by their methodical approach to depicting the natural world. From Ruskin's annual reviews of art, he declared that year on year more artists were beginning to emulate the detail used by the PRB. Ruskin and William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919), the longest surviving member of the PRB, even went on to claim, in 1862, that, *"landscape came almost entirely into the domain of Pre-Raphaelitism"* (Staley, 2001²³). Charles Napier Hemy RA RWS (1841-1917) was a follower of the PRB and his work *'Among the Shingle at Clovelly'*, dated 1864, clearly shows a very detailed study of the topography and geology of the coastline.

Edward William Cooke RA (1811-1880) also took a keen interest in depicting the geology of the coastline with great accuracy and precision. The paintings he produced of the English, French and Dutch coastlines formed *"detailed images as intense and totally realised as any from the brushes of the Pre-Raphaelite brethren"* (Munday, 1996²⁴). Furthermore, E. W. Cooke's paintings are now considered to be so accurate that in the twentieth century, his work took on an *"archaeological (sic 'geological') importance"*. *If Cooke painted or drew it, it is reliably correct* (Munday, 1996²⁴). Charles Robertson ARWS RPE (1844-91) is a further example of a Victorian landscape and genre artist influenced by the PRB who painted coastal

views such as 'Lyme Regis', 'Clovelly' and 'Yarmouth, Isle of Wight' showing the estuary of the River Yar and the extent of the mudflats and reed beds in extraordinary detail.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement and its followers' deep fascination with the natural world and capturing every detail as precisely as possible were, arguably, as revolutionary in the art world as the achievements of the Impressionists in France (Tate Britain, 2004²⁰). Indeed, Staley (2001²³) argues that "*Pre-Raphaelitism as a movement marked an almost complete break in the continuity of the English landscape tradition*". The artists were revolutionising the art world by taking their canvases out of doors and working directly from nature; the natural world was not being romanticised and the artists were unrelenting in their pursuit of detail. By looking carefully at nature and trying to portray it as truthfully as possible, the Pre-Raphaelite landscape movement provides an accurate representation of the natural world and the British coastline as it was seen at that time. It is for this reason that Pre-Raphaelite works can be of particular importance for those studying the chronology of physical, environmental and social change around the British coast.

2.5. Art and the Developing Coast

Where the aristocracy explored the coastlines of the British Isles artists and engravers followed, recording images at the request of their masters, or producing their own publications, which were often lavishly illustrated. As early as the mid-eighteenth century visitors were being drawn to the seaside; these were principally those visitors in search of health, leisure and pleasure. The rapid expansion of the railway network and improved road communications linked industrial centres and cities to the coast. Main railway lines extended out towards the rapidly developing seaside towns, where fashionable seafront promenades, piers, hotels and marine villas were being built to cater for the increasing demand. The rapidly increasing popularity of both sea bathing and yacht racing, combined with better communications both on land and across the Channel were all important factors in the development of the Channel coastline.

By the early 1900s there were approximately 100 well-established seaside resorts around the British coast. Visitors wished to have a record of the views of the coastline to take back with them to remind them of their vacation. Before the days of photography large numbers of artists painting in watercolour and oils captured the scenery of the coast and they found a ready market with these often relatively wealthy tourists. Purchasers were seeking images that provided an exact reproduction of the coastal views they had enjoyed so much. As a result, many fine and accurate topographical paintings were produced of the coast during the nineteenth century in particular. Even after the introduction of photography in the late 1850s works of art were still required because it was to be many decades before the innovation of colour photography became widely used, and therefore, landscape paintings in full colour continued to fulfil an important role.



Fig. 2.4. 'A Beach Scene with an Artist surrounded by Onlookers' by John Absolom (1815-1895). Watercolour. Courtesy of John Nicholson Fine Art Auctions.



Fig. 2.5. (above) *'Puckaster Cottage, Niton Undercliff, Isle of Wight'* by Robert Lugar. 1828. Aquatint. One of many Cottage Orné residences around the coast of the Isle of Wight.

Private Collection.

Fig. 2.6. (below) *'Bathing Huts on the Beach at Eastbourne'* by James Holland. 1861. Watercolour over Pencil heightened with White.

Courtesy of John Spink.



The relatively expensive guide books illustrated with steel engravings in the mid-nineteenth century could not be printed in sufficient numbers to meet the demands of increasing numbers of visitors. The invention of chromolithography in Germany and colour plate reproduction of paintings or watercolours to illustrate books allowed much larger print runs to be achieved. Publishers such as A. & C. Black in London commissioned authors and artists to write and illustrate books covering all parts of the European coast to meet the needs of the travelling public.

In 1894 British publishers were granted permission by the Royal Mail to manufacture and distribute postcards, which could be sent through the post. Postcards produced between the 1890s and the 1920s often provided views of coastal scenery and the seaside resorts. Specially commissioned watercolour artists including William Wells Quatremain (fl.1890-1910), Henry Wimbush (fl.1888-1904) and the prolific Alfred Robert Quinton (1852-1934) fulfilled the demand for illustrations, some of which provide accurate portrayals of conditions on the coast at that time.

Further expansion of resorts and spas led to an ever-increasing demand for paintings of coastal scenery. Artistic 'Schools' developed around the coastline, often centred on particularly attractive, aesthetic locations where artists enjoyed working together and collaborating and developing individual styles drawing on the beauties of the coastal scenery, and the impact of the meteorological conditions, such as the sunlight on the water.

The nineteenth century was the great period of English coastal landscape painting with the cliffs, shores and dunes as well as the developing ports and seaside resorts being depicted. In addition to individual works of art numerous topographical books were written, often finely illustrated, with a range of media including first copper and then, later, steel plate engravings, aquatints and lithographs. Alongside original works of art, these provide a rich source of information on the changing and developing coastline over a period of some 200 years. Topographical books included William Daniell's *'Voyage Round Great Britain'* containing 308 fine aquatints (Daniell & Ayton, 1814⁸). This publication was highly admired – "*Such a succession of beautiful coloured plates is scarcely to be found anywhere, and they remain unsurpassed both in delicacy of drawing and tinting*" (Prideaux, 1909²⁵). Other important works included Finden's *'Ports, Harbours and Watering Places of Great Britain'* illustrated with steel engravings (Finden, 1838²⁶) and Clarkson Stanfield's *'Coastal Scenery'* (Stanfield, 1847²⁷) provided comprehensive illustrated overviews of all or parts of the British coast.

Artists including John Wilson Carmichael (1800-1868), Alfred De Breanski (1852-1928), Edward William Cooke (1811-1880) and John Brett (1830-1902) produced accurate coastal paintings. Scenes along the shoreline, often showing fishermen at work or shipwrecks, were painted in watercolour by Thomas Miles Richardson Junior (1813-1890) and Edward Duncan (1803-1882), whilst Myles Birket Foster (1825-1899) and Charles Robertson (1844-1891) captured the same scenes in finely detailed watercolours. It is this legacy of topographical art that can illustrate the story of the discovery of the coast and how it has changed over the last two hundred years.

2.6. Artist Colonies on the Coast

Coastal art colonies began to emerge in the nineteenth century and thrived until the early years of the twentieth century. In the post Napoleonic War years and after the European-wide revolutions of the early 1800s there began a gradual movement of artists towards the coastal towns of Europe. This trend continued until the outbreak of the First World War and thereafter the move towards the acceptance of the harsh realities of modernity. Art colonies emerged as village movements and gradually grew in size throughout the 1800s. Between 1830 and 1914 approximately 3,000 professional artists participated in this movement from the densely populated urban areas into countryside and coastal locations.

There were over eighty art communities around the Channel-Southern North Sea coasts and these can be divided into three main types: first, villages with transient and fluctuating artist populations, for example Honfleur on the French coast and Katwijk on the Dutch coast; second, villages with semi-permanent visiting and residing artists, for example, Concarneau in France, St Ives on the Cornish coast and Bonchurch, Isle of Wight; third, villages with mainly stable groups of artists in residence, for example, Egmond on the Dutch coast and Newlyn in Cornwall and Walberswick in Suffolk, East Anglia (Newton (Ed.), 2005²⁸; Munn, 2006²⁹).

Painting by the coast was seen as a means of reverting to a simpler way of life away from the industrialisation of many European cities. *“For many, however, it was simply the feeling of being drawn towards water that provided inspiration for their work”* (Gates, 2012³⁰). Typically, the colonies were situated at the edge of the country they inhabited, providing the artists with a *“sense of relief and release just getting there”* and, furthermore, the extreme position *“adding to a sense of...other-worldliness”* (Dudley Barrett, 2010⁵); the remote peninsulas and coasts of Cornwall, Normandy and Brittany are examples of this. Stanhope Forbes described the *“beauty of this fair district [Newlyn, Cornwall], which charmed us from the first, has not lost its power and holds us still”* (Hardie, 2009³¹). The remote coastal areas had a *“distinct topography, and ethnic particularities”* which made them almost seem like a *“world apart from the rest of Britain”* (Gates, 2012³⁰).

The artists of the colonies shared a further common aspiration and that was to paint *en plein-air* (i.e. out of doors). The artists were keen to embrace descriptive realism and the naturalist principles that inevitably followed on from this. They were eager to paint out of doors in front of the subject and capture the subject in its natural setting. The French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884) was the *“major influence for this approach”* (Wallace, 2007³²), as he created his figures in landscapes mostly out of doors. The School of Newlyn were particularly influenced by this continental approach. Indeed, Stanhope Forbes is quoted as saying *“Yes, those were the days of unflinching realism, of the cult of Bastien-Lepage”* (Hardie, 2009³¹).



Fig. 2.7.
‘Undercliff Cave’ (Orchard Bay, St Lawrence, IW) by Edward William Cooke RA. A typically ‘geologically’ detailed oil by Cooke, who painted more views of the Isle of Wight Undercliff coast than of any other location in Great Britain. Courtesy of Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.



Fig. 2.8. 'Fisherman's Cottage at Wembury Bay, South Devon' by Samuel Phillips Jackson. 1857. Watercolour.

Courtesy of Christie's Images Limited © 1992.

2.7. British Coastal Art – Key Literature Summary

Information on coastal art is contained in a hierarchy of publications ranging from comprehensive descriptions of our art history, dictionaries of artists or exhibited works, or national collection catalogues and overviews (e.g. Williams, 1926³³; Hardie, 1966¹⁵; Brook-Hart, 1974³⁴; Mallalieu, 1976³⁵; Lambourne & Hamilton, 1980³⁶; Graves, 1984³⁷; Halsby, 1986¹⁸; Mackenzie, 1987³⁸; Newall, 1987³⁹; MacMillan, 1990⁴⁰; National Museum of Wales, 1988⁴¹; Antique Collector's Club, 1992⁴²; Wood, 1995⁴³; Joyner, 1997⁴⁴; Smith & Skipwith, 2003⁴⁵; Halsby & Harris, 2010⁴⁶) to art overviews which postulate theories on the landscape and the development of art over time (e.g. Gilpin, 1776¹¹; Huish, 1904⁴⁷; Clark, 1949⁴⁸; Tooley, 1954⁴⁹; Pevsner, 1956⁵⁰; Wood, 1997²¹; Wilton & Lyles, 1993⁵¹; Broughton *et al.*, 2005⁵²; Payne, 2007⁵³; Wootton, 2008⁵⁴; McInnes, 2008⁵⁵; McInnes & Stubbings, 2011a⁵⁶; 2011b⁵⁷; McInnes & Benstead, 2013a⁵⁸; 2013b⁵⁹).

Other publications describe artistic colonies or schools of artists (e.g. Hemingway, 1979⁶; Staley, 1973²³; Marsh, 2005²²; Collins, 2005⁶⁰; Newton (Ed.), 2005²⁸; Munn, 2006²⁹; Wallace, 2007³²; Hardie (Ed.), 2009³¹; Dudley Barrett, 2010⁵). A further group of publications are devoted to specific art collections or geographical regions within coastal zones (e.g. Ellis (Ed). From 2005⁶¹; Turley, 1975⁶²; Hemming, 1988⁶³; Drummond & McInnes, 2001⁶⁴), and finally, monographs on the works of individual artists including Reynolds, 1984⁶⁵; Villar, 1995⁶⁶; Munday, 1996²⁴; Shanes, 1981⁶⁷; Brett *et al.*, 2006⁶⁸; Spink, 2008⁶⁹; Payne, 2010⁷⁰; Kirby Welch & Morton Lee, 2011⁷¹; McInnes, 2014⁷².

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Chapter 3: Assessing Artistic Accuracy



Fig. 3.1. *'The Port of Leith near Edinburgh'* by Louise Rayner (1832-1924). Watercolour and Bodycolour.
Courtesy of © 1991 Christie's Images Limited.



Fig. 3.2. (above) *'The Coast near Land's End'* by George Wolfe. 1861. Pencil and watercolour.
Photography courtesy of © Christie's Images (2018).

Fig. 3.3. (below) *'St Agnes Point, Isle of Scilly'* by E. W. Cooke RA. c.1848. Watercolour heightened with white.
Courtesy of Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.



3.1. Introduction

Landscape painters generally create images that we can understand easily and appreciate. In addition, their artworks allow us to readily appreciate how the coastline has changed over the centuries. The British coastline has been a significant source of inspiration for artists, particularly since the late eighteenth century, providing a wealth of artworks that can be examined and appraised in terms of improving our understanding of how the coastline has been altered by natural physical processes and human intervention. Such works of art are of immediate interest to both those living on the coast and to visitors because they allow an immediate visual comparison to be made with the present day situation.

Coastal paintings, drawings and prints may also help in informing us about future changes that may be expected as a result of climate change and rising sea levels. Artworks do not just describe physical impacts of cliff erosion, landsliding or inundation but they also illustrate both environmental change and the progression of coastal development particularly through the Victorian and Edwardian periods. In fact, works of art extending back to the late eighteenth century, long before the days of photography, may provide the only record of our changing coast over time, depending on the accuracy of the work concerned. Art can, therefore, form a useful benchmark when assessing the nature, scale and rate of coastal landscape evolution.

“The arts have sometimes been perceived as having little practical application but, in fact, they can form valuable components of the wider study and comprehension of the complexities of the coast if they are brought together rather than being considered as separate entities” (Koff, 1999¹). For example, in geography the visual arts can aid environmental problem solving because they integrate physical and human aspects of the discipline by offering interpretation of the human-landscape interaction. *“Art can be used to reinvigorate interpretation of landscapes because art has been generally been under-used by scientists compared with other art forms such as photography and cartography”* (Koff, 1999¹).



Fig. 3.4. *'Towards Land's End'* by Charles Naper. Oil on Board. c.1940.

Image courtesy of Penlee House Art Gallery & Museum, Penzance.

The coastlines of Great Britain have been developed progressively in recent centuries, particularly since the discovery of the seaside for health-giving and recreational reasons. Over the last two decades considerable efforts have been made to try and encourage improved management of the coast in order to safeguard its special qualities - the natural environments and heritage, for future generations. The concept of utilising historical works of art to support coastal management developed from a visit by the author to Tate Britain in 2007. He was examining the painting by William Dyce of '*Pegwell Bay, Kent – Recollections of 5th October 1858*' from the point of view of a geologist and coastal scientist. In particular it appeared that the detailed portrayal of the chalk cliff geology, the wave cut platform on the foreshore, the beach and the coastal defence structures could form a reliable record of coastal conditions at this location on that exact date. This raised the question as to how many paintings, watercolours and prints existed for other coastal locations, and were they true representations of the coastline?

With sponsorship from The Crown Estate and the National Maritime Museum provided by The Crown Estate – Caird Fellowship 2008 it was possible to investigate this theory further through a study of the coastlines of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (McInnes, 2008²). Later, The Crown Estate, through its Marine Stewardship Programme, sponsored a further study for the coastline of '*East Anglia*' (McInnes & Stubbings, 2011a³) as well as national reports for '*England*' (McInnes & Stubbings, 2011b⁴), '*Wales*' (McInnes & Benstead, 2013a⁵), and '*Scotland*' (McInnes & Benstead, 2013b⁶). These studies, combining fine art and coastal science, have demonstrated that the wealth of British paintings, watercolour drawings and prints in national, local and private collections, form a valuable additional resource to support our understanding of how the coastline of the British Isles has changed since the 1770s. The role that historical imagery can play in supporting understanding of coastal heritage risk was highlighted in a further study, '*CHerISH*', commissioned by Historic England and completed in 2016 (McInnes, 2016⁷). These artworks highlighted not just changes in the physical conditions as a result of natural processes but also human impacts, which have led to environmental changes, as well as describing the history and cultural heritage of coastal zones.

In order to test the validity of the concept of using art to inform us about the changing coast it was necessary to develop a ranking system for the various types of artworks, which would allow the development of a list of those artists whose works prove to be consistently accurate in terms of their depictions. The objective was to develop a readily available tool for use by those professionals interested in increasing their knowledge of coastal issues, which would also support existing scientific approaches available for measuring coastal change. In order to achieve this, coastal landscape art was considered against four criteria. First, the accuracy and usefulness of the *artistic style of painting*; for example, caricaturist or genre works, picturesque views, marine and yachting subjects and topographical or coastal scenery paintings, drawings and prints.

The second category considered the *most advantageous medium* in terms of achieving detailed depictions of the coast. Categories appraised included copper plate engravings, oil paintings, steel engravings and aquatints, lithographs, and watercolour drawings.

The third category considered the *value of the subject matter* depicted by the artists, and included, first, general coastal views, second, more detailed views of the beach, the cliff and the hinterland, and, third, a very detailed appreciation of the coastal zone showing the profile of the beach, the cliff geology, vegetation, heritage features and coastal development patterns.

Finally, the *value of the time period* was considered in terms of its usefulness in informing us of the patterns of coastal change. Three epochs were identified - a '*Pre-Victorian*' period broadly extending from 1770-1840, the '*Victorian Coastal Development*' period from 1840-1880, and, finally, the '*Late Victorian and Edwardian coastal development period*', which, in practice, extended up to 1930.

For each frontage of the British coast, after a coarse screening, works of art were considered against these scoring criteria, and a short-list has been prepared of those artists whose artworks were considered to be useful in supporting understanding of change within coastal zones.



Fig. 3.5.
'Lulworth Cove, Dorset' by
 William Daniell
 RA. Aquatint.
 1824.
 Private
 Collection.

3.2. Art Ranking Criteria

3.2.1. Accuracy of Artistic Style

Varying artistic styles contribute to the level of detail that they can provide in terms of their portrayal of the coast. Five style sub-categories were considered; namely, *Caricaturist and Genre works*, *Picturesque Scenery*, *Maritime and Yachting Subjects*, *Topographical Paintings*, and, finally, *Topographical Works with a Pre-Raphaelite influence*.

1. For the *Caricaturist/Genre* category, including works by artists such as James Gillray (1757-1815), George Cruickshank (1797-1878), John Nixon (c.1750-1818) and Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and for the *Genre artists*, for example some of the works of the Newlyn School artists and the Scottish watercolourists, their interest often focused more on human and social subjects rather than views of coastal scenery. Informative as they are as social records, often these works do not contain enough detail to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the coastal conditions at that time; in view of this, such works scored one point out of a total of five in this category.



Caricaturist/Genre category

Fig. 3.6. *'Coastal Defences'* by Thomas Rowlandson RA. Watercolour. c.1785.
 Image courtesy of Guy Peppiatt Fine Art/ Watercolour World.

2. The second category relates to views of *Picturesque Scenery* depicting our coastlines in the manner of the Italian landscape artists observed on the Grand Tour. Often the picturesque views, such as those promoted by William Gilpin and produced by Thomas Walmesley, Francis Jukes, John Dennis and others, were aesthetically pleasing, but the artists exaggerated or otherwise adjusted the landscapes, with hillsides and cliffs appearing more 'Alpine' and precipitous; the desire of the artist was to depict the local scenery in the manner of a classical landscape often to satisfy the tastes of their patrons. Whilst the *Picturesque* style is less concerned with topographical accuracy, it can provide at least some indicators of the general nature of the landscape at the time. For example, the proximity of development to the coast, the nature of the coastal topography, and the presence of features such as watercourses. These artworks can, therefore, inform coastal study in a broad sense. For this reason, the *Picturesque* works scored two out of the maximum of five points.



Picturesque Scenery category

Fig. 3.7. 'Mirables Among the Rocks, Isle of Wight Undercliff' by Thomas Walmesley. Aquatint. 1810.

This work by Walmesley, one of twelve 'Select Views of the Isle of Wight and Environs' depicts the landscape in the 'Picturesque' style that was fashionable at the time. The height of the cliffs and the romantic appearance of the image reflect the appearance of an Italian landscape. These kinds of images score two points in the art ranking system.

3. *Maritime and Yachting subjects* depicting coastal shipping and craft form a significant component of coastal art. Many yachting, fishing and other shipping scenes include the coastal scenery as a backdrop. Whilst those paintings that are set further away from the coast are less interesting in this context, some works do actually contain a detailed topographical background. Often works produced by Naval Officers or others who had served on board ship, prove to be particularly accurate as draughtsmanship formed part of their Naval training. Taking account of the contribution of these paintings a ranking of three points is allocated for this category.

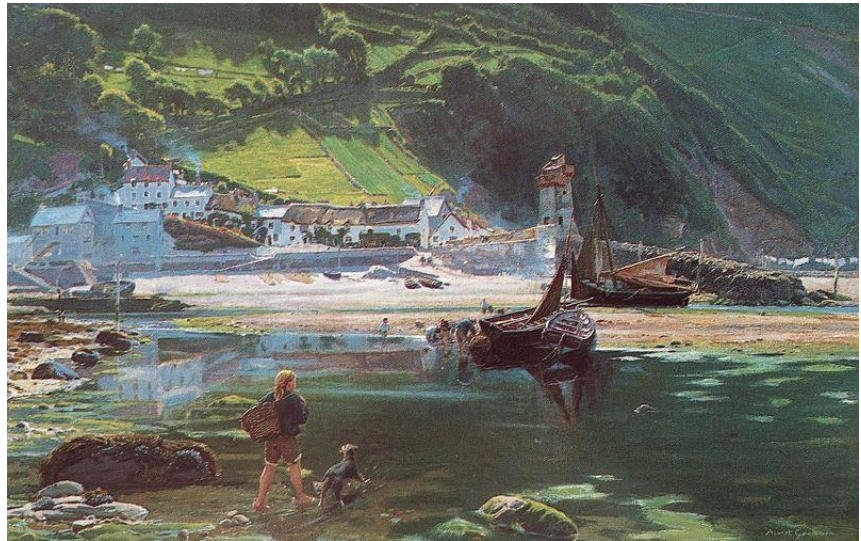


Maritime and Yachting subjects

Fig. 3.8. 'Shipping in the Solent off Hurst Castle' by John Wilson Carmichael. Signed and Dated 1860. Oil on canvas.

Private Collection. Photograph Courtesy of Richard Green Gallery, London.

4. The fourth and by far the largest category, *Topographical Art*, comprises coastal landscape paintings, watercolour drawings and prints. This is a rich resource and most of the British coast is very well illustrated in this respect. In fact, there was a great interest in the developing coastal towns and fishing villages located both on the open coast as well as on the tidal creeks, estuaries and harbours because artists could find a ready market for the sale of such subjects. There are, therefore, many works in this category that can inform us of what the coastal landscapes and environments were like at the time they were painted. So, such works were awarded four points out of a maximum score of five points.



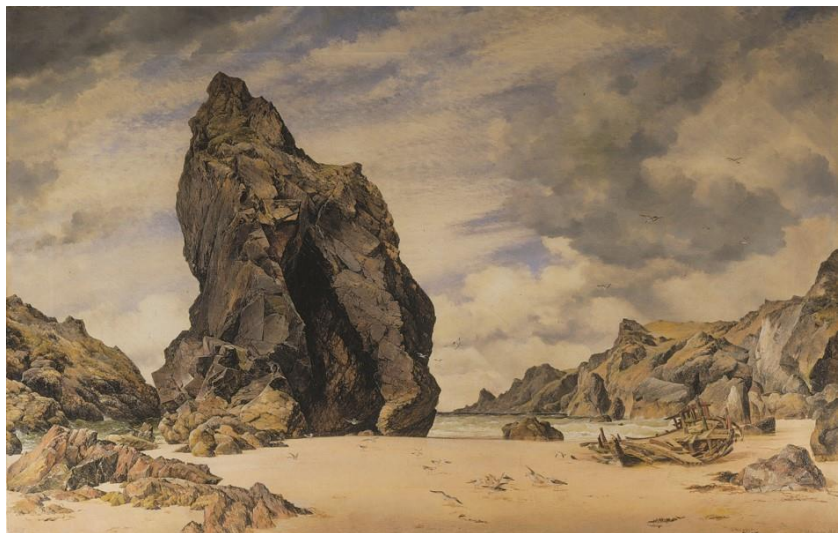
Topographical Art

Fig 3.9. 'Lynemouth and Countisbury Hill from the Shore at Low Water' by Albert Goodwin. 1877. Watercolour.

Image courtesy of Guy Peppiatt Fine Art/Watercolour World.

Topographical subjects such as these merit four points in the art ranking system on account of the detailed coastal information they provide.

5. The final 'Style Accuracy' category comprises *Topographical Paintings, Drawings and Prints, which exhibit Pre-Raphaelite detail*. Artists such as William Dyce RA HRSA (1806-1864), John Brett ARA (1830-1902), and Edward William Cooke RA (1811-1880), and in Scotland Edward Hargitt RI (1835-1895) and Waller Hugh Paton RSA RSW (1828-1895), and Followers such as Charles Robertson ARWS RPE (1844-1891), Henry Moore RA RWS (1831-1895) and Frederick Williamson RWS (fl.1856-1900) have provided us with precise images of coastal scenery in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. On account of the detail and accuracy of the subjects, with artists seeking to depict nature in a very exact manner, these works form a particularly valuable resource, and were, therefore, awarded the maximum score of five points.



Topographical Paintings, Drawings and Prints, which exhibit Pre-Raphaelite detail

Fig. 3.10. 'Steeple Rock, Kynance Cove, Cornwall at Low Water' by Edward William Cooke RA. 1873. Oil on canvas.

Photograph courtesy of Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.

3.2.2. Most Advantageous Medium

The second ranking category considers the most advantageous medium used for illustrating coastal zones. Four categories were identified – first, ‘Copper Plate Engravings’; second, ‘Oil Paintings’; third, ‘Oil Paintings exhibiting a Pre-Raphaelite Influence’ together with ‘Aquatints and Steel Engravings’, and, finally, ‘Lithographs, fine Pencil and Watercolour Drawings’. By their nature each of these artistic techniques allow differing levels of detail to be achieved in the completed artwork.

1. The origin and development of engraving has been described in detail by others (Williams, 1926⁸; Russell, 1979⁹). Although some publishers and artists achieved remarkable success with copper plate engravings, for example John Boydell (1719-1804) produced nearly four and a half thousand engraved copper plates, generally the softness of the copper plates meant that this technique was less suitable for recording fine detail. As a result, copper plate engravings were awarded a ranking score of one point. Some early engravers with an architectural training were able to successfully produce more detailed views of buildings and street scenes within the limitations of the copper plate medium – these examples are awarded two points.



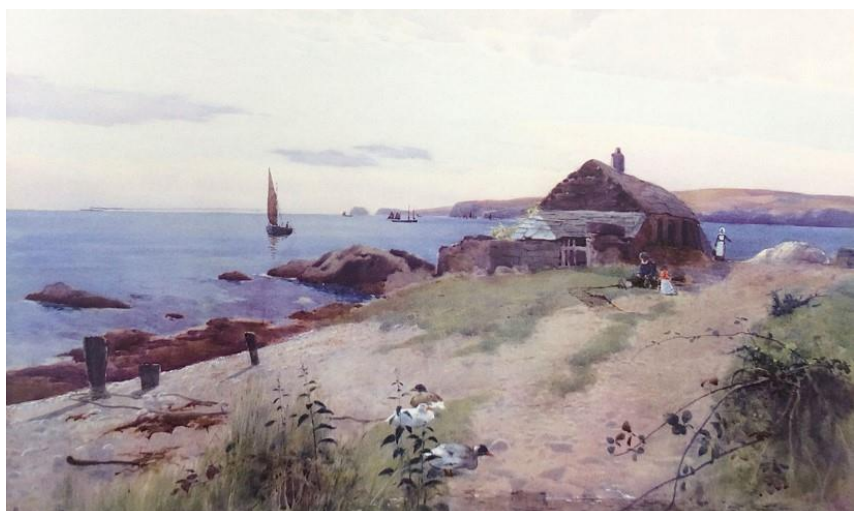
Engravings

Fig. 3.11. ‘The Isle of Boo-Sha-La near Staffa’. English School. Copper Plate Engraving. c.1810. Private Collection.

It is less easy to obtain fine detail when engraving on relatively soft copper plates. As a result, these engravings score one point in the ‘Artistic Medium’ category of the art ranking system.

2. Oil paintings were considered to be rather more helpful as they could provide a greater level of detail and were ranked with a score of two points.

3. Oil paintings by Pre-Raphaelite artists and their Followers were ranked more highly on account of their precision and the level of detail captured, and, therefore, such works achieve a score of four points (e.g. Fig. 2.6).

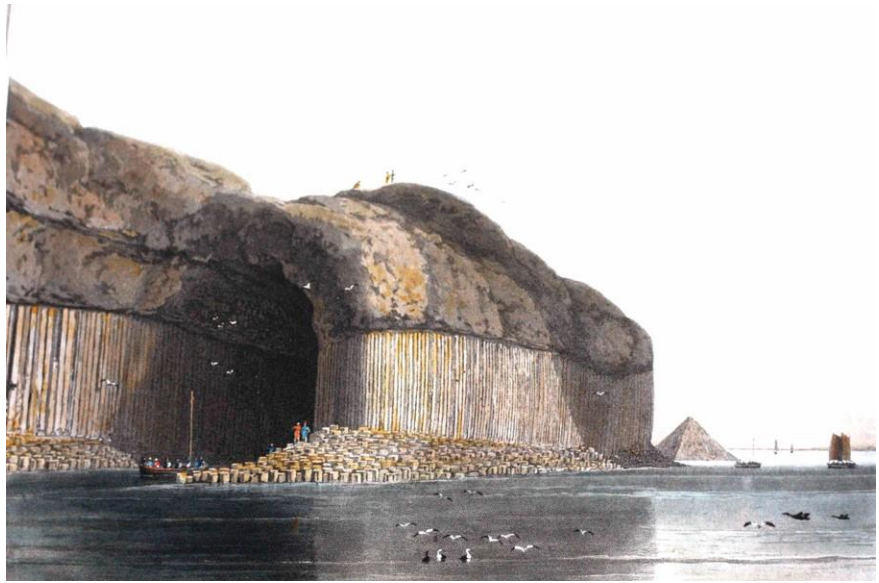


Oil Paintings

Fig. 3.12. ‘On the Conwy Estuary’ by Carleton Grant RBA. (fl.1885-1899). Watercolour. Private Collection.

Topographical oil paintings such as this achieve a score of two points as they provide generally more detail than the copper plate engravings.

4. *Steel engravings and aquatint engravings* were often published individually or as sets; others were contained in topographical books in the pre-Victorian period in particular. The British coast benefits from a wealth of such works, for example the views by Daniell (Daniell & Ayton, 1814¹⁰), the Finden Brothers (Finden, 1838¹¹) and William Westall (c.1828¹²). In view of the richness of this resource and the fine detail that could be achieved, combined with the benefits of colouring of some of the views, three points were awarded for this category.



Steel Engravings and Aquatints

Fig. 3.13. *'The Island of Staffa'* by William Daniell RA. 1818. Aquatint. Private Collection.

Oil paintings by the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers, steel plate engravings and aquatints such as the views by Daniell are awarded a score of three points in this category as these media allow a greater level of detail to be achieved.

5. *Lithography* was a technique capable of achieving extremely fine detail. There are excellent examples produced by artists such as Robert Carrick RI (fl.1829-1904), George Elgar Hicks RBA (1824-1914) and Michael Bouquet (fl.1840s-1850s). The quality of some of the hand-coloured lithographs equates almost to that of watercolour drawings; as a result, lithographs achieve a ranking score of five points, the same score as for watercolour drawings.



Lithographs

Fig. 3.14. *'Llandudno'* by J. J. Dodd. Lithograph. c.1856. Private Collection.

Lithographs such as this view often provide very fine detail and are, therefore, awarded a score of five points (as are watercolour drawings – see overleaf).

5. There is an extensive resource of fine watercolour drawings covering most parts of the British coast. The detail that may be achieved using this technique can provide a wealth of information on cliff and slope geology, the nature of beach conditions, coastal vegetation patterns and the extent of coastal development more widely at the time the artworks were painted. Those watercolours by Pre-Raphaelite artists and their Followers score a maximum ranking of six points on account of their often even more detailed contents.



Fig. 3.15. *'Start Point, Devon'* by George Wolfe (1834-1890). Watercolour.

Image courtesy of the Maas Gallery, London.

This is a detailed work and merits a score of six points.



Watercolour Drawings

Fig. 3.16. *'Babbacombe Bay, Devon'* by Samuel Edward Kelly. Watercolour. c.1910.

Private Collection.

The watercolour by Kelly demonstrates the exceptional detail that can be achieved in watercolour drawings by the Pre-Raphaelite Followers and scores a maximum of six points.

3.3.2. The Value of the Subject Matter

This third art ranking category is obviously of prime importance to those interested in studying all aspects of the coastline. As a result, a Weighting Factor of x2 was applied over three categories.

1. First, *General Coastal Views*, which contribute to an overall appreciation of the coastal geomorphology and character of the landscape scored one point.

2. Second, *More detailed works* providing information on the nature of the beach, the cliffline and hinterland, as well as information on land usage, heritage and environmental conditions, score two points.

3. Finally, the highest scoring category was for those *Works Providing a Detailed Appreciation* of many aspects of the coastal zone, including the geology, geomorphology, environment and coastal development, which scored three points. As a result of the weighting in this category, a maximum of six points could be achieved.



General Coastal Views

Fig. 3.17. *'The Bass Rock and Canty Bay near North Berwick'* by Michael Bouquet. 1849. Private Collection.

This category of the art ranking system assesses the level of detail provided by coastal artworks. As this is such a significant aspect the scores in this category are weighted and are multiplied by two. Views such as this by Bouquet provide a general appreciation of the physical coastline and its environment and are awarded a score of one point (x2) = two points.



More Detailed Coastal Views

Fig. 3.18. *'Bognor, Sussex'* by William Daniell RA. 1824. Aquatint. Private Collection.

This view by Daniell provides a lot of information on the nature of the beach and the coastal defences and is, therefore, given a score of two points (x2) = four points.

Fig. 3.19. *'Yarmouth, Isle of Wight'*
by Charles Robertson RWS. 1891.
Watercolour. Private Collection.

This is a very detailed watercolour by Robertson, who was a follower of the Pre-Raphaelites. The extent of the estuary at Low Water, the relationship between the sea, the estuary and the town, and even the plant species are all clearly visible. Such works merit a total score of three points (x2) = six points.



Highly Detailed Coastal Views

3.2.4. Value of the Time Period

The final ranking category represented the relative value of the time period in which the artist was working. Three time periods were identified, 1770-1840 (scoring one point); 1840-1880 (scoring two points), and, finally, 1880-1930 (scoring three points). The rationale behind these scores is that the early works are generally of slightly less interest to coastal scientists than the Victorian landscapes contained in the second category, which illustrate the coastline immediately before the start of, and through much of the seaside development period. Whilst there may be some information that can be gained from works of the earlier period in terms of depicting the undeveloped and unaltered coast, it is believed that the works covering the period 1840-1880 and, even more so from 1880-1930, where major coastal development changes were taking place, are of greater significance for users. As a result, a maximum of three points was awarded in the category for the time period 1880-1930. Thereafter, artworks tended to lack detail and following the Second World War aerial photography became more widely available. (A more detailed consideration of the role of photography in support of understanding of coastal change in its broadest sense is provided in the 'CHERISH' study report prepared for Historic England (see <http://cherish.maritimearchaeologytrust.org>).

Fig. 3.20. *'A Shipwreck below Scarborough Castle'*, a *'Picturesque'*
view by Francis Nicholson. 1793.
Watercolour over pencil.

Photograph Courtesy of John Spink.
This watercolour is from the earliest time period (1770-1840). Pre-Victorian works often show the coast prior to development, which can be interesting for those wishing to understand how the local environment has evolved over time.

However, generally these early works provide less detail and sometimes, as here, the topography is exaggerated, hence a score of one point is applied.



Early Time Period 1770-1840

Fig. 3.21. *'The Fishing Village at Luccombe, Isle of Wight'* by William Gray. 1855. Watercolour with bodycolour. Private Collection.

Images from this second time epoch (1840-1880) record the expansion of our coastal towns and villages, often in considerable detail. They show some of the first habitations on the coast as well as early sea walls and esplanades. They also record the patterns of development during the reign of Queen Victoria; as a result, they score two points.



Middle Time Period 1840-1880

Fig. 3.22. *'Aberystwyth'* by Alfred Robert Quinton. Watercolour. An early 20th Century image courtesy of Salmon's.

Views such as this watercolour by Quinton can form valuable records often illustrating the chronology of coastal defences and other developments. A score of three points is awarded for this category.



Late Time Period 1880-1930

Fig. 3.23. *'Lulworth Cove, Dorset'*, also by Quinton, provides details of the nature of the beach as well as the steep, unstable cliffs. It also scores three points.

Image Courtesy of Salmon's. Early 20th Century.



Late Time Period 1880-1930

1. <u>Accuracy of Artistic Style (Maximum 5 Points)</u>		
1.1	Caricaturist/Genre subjects	1 point
1.2	Picturesque landscapes	2 points
1.3	Maritime subjects	3 points
1.4	Topographical/beach and coastal scenery	4 points
1.5	Topographical/beach and coastal scenery with Pre-Raphaelite influence	5 points
2. <u>Most advantageous medium for illustrating coastal change (Maximum 6 points)</u>		
2.1	Copper plate engravings	1 point
2.2	Oil paintings; architectural copper plate engravings	2 points
2.3	Steel plate engravings/Aquatints	3 points
2.4	Oil paintings by Pre-Raphaelites and Followers	4 points
2.5	Lithographs, Fine pencil and watercolour drawings	5 points
2.6	Watercolours by Pre-Raphaelites and their Followers	6 points
3. <u>Value of the subject matter in supporting understanding of long-term coastal change (weighting x2 and Maximum score of 6 points)</u>		
3.1	General coastal views which assist overall appreciation of the coastal geomorphology and landscape character of the coastal zone	1 point
3.2	More detailed views of the beach, backshore, cliff and hinterland including some appreciation of the natural environment and heritage	2 points
3.3	Detailed appreciation of shoreline position, beach profile, geology, geomorphology, coastal environment, coastal defences and heritage	3 points
4. <u>Value of the time period (Maximum of 3 points)</u>		
4.1	1770-1840 (early)	1 point
4.2	1840-1880 (Victorian coastal development period)	2 points
4.3	1880-1930 (Late Victorian, Edwardian and later coastal development period)	3 points
<u>Compiling the scores for ranking artists and their works</u>		
1.	Accuracy of artistic style	Maximum 5 points
2.	Most advantageous medium	Maximum 6 points
3.	Value of subject matter	Maximum 6 points
4.	Value of the time period	Maximum 3 points
	Total maximum score	20 points

Table 3.1. Summary of the ranking system for establishing the accuracy and usefulness of coastal artworks to support our understanding of changes (physical, environmental and heritage) in coastal zones.



Fig. 3.24. 'Dover from the East Cliff' by Thomas Charles Leeson Rowbotham. 1854. Watercolour and Pencil, heightened with bodycolour. Photograph courtesy of Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, London.

Artist	Accuracy of Style	Most Advantageous Medium	Value of Subject	Time Period	Total Score
Myles Birket Foster	5	6	6	3	20
Charles Robertson	5	6	6	3	20
Frederick Williamson	5	6	6	2	20
Peter O. Hutchinson	4	5	6	2	18
Alfred R. Quinton	4	5	6	3	18
George Wolfe	4	6	6	2	18
Samuel Bough	4	5	6	2	17
Michael Bouquet	4	5	6	2	17
John Brett	5	4	6	2	17
Robert Carrick	4	5	6	2	17
Edward William Cooke	5	4	6	2	17
Edward Duncan	4	5	6	2	17
William Dyce	5	4	6	2	17
William Gray	4	5	6	2	17
Charles Gregory	4	5	6	2	17
Charles N. Hemy	5	4	6	2	17
William Holman Hunt	5	4	6	2	17
John A. Houston	5	6	4	2	17
John W. Inchbold	5	4	6	2	17
Benjamin W. Leader	5	4	6	2	17
William L. Leitch	4	5	6	2	17
Horatio McCulloch	5	4	6	2	17
John Mogford	4	5	6	2	17
Henry Moore	5	4	6	2	17
Waller Hugh Paton	5	4	6	2	17
James M. Patrick	4	4	6	3	17
T. M. Richardson Jnr.	4	5	6	2	17
Thomas C. L. Robotham	4	5	6	2	17
Alfred Clint	4	2	6	2	16
Nicholas Condry	4	5	6	1	16
Walter Crane	5	6	2	3	16
William Daniell	4	5	6	1	16
George Gregory	4	5	4	3	16
Edward Hargitt	5	5	4	2	16
Alfred W. Hunt	5	5	4	2	16
J. McWhirter	4	4	6	2	16
W. Turner of Oxford	4	5	6	1	16
William W. Quatremain	4	5	4	3	16
William H. Bartlett	4	5	4	2	15
Charles Bentley	4	5	4	2	15
William H. Borrow	4	2	6	2	15
Robert Brandard	4	5	4	2	15
William Carpenter	4	5	4	2	15
David Cox	4	5	2	2	15
James F. Danby	4	5	4	2	15
A. V. C. Fielding	4	5	4	2	15
George A. Fripp	4	5	4	2	15
John A. Grimshaw	5	4	4	2	15
Alfred William Hunt	4	5	4	2	15
G. J. Knox	4	5	4	2	15
Clarkson Stanfield	4	5	4	2	15
William Westall	4	3	6	2	15
Alfred De Breanski	4	2	6	2	14
J. W. Carmichael	4	2	6	2	14
Peter De Wint	4	5	4	1	14

Alfred A. Glendening	4	2	6	2	14
J. Moore of Ipswich	4	2	6	2	14
William Parrott	4	2	6	2	14
William Payne	4	5	4	1	14
Paul Sandby	4	5	4	1	14
John W. Smith	4	5	4	1	14
Charles Tomkins	4	5	4	1	14
J. M. W. Turner	4	5	4	1	14
John Varley	4	5	4	1	14
Henry Wimbush	4	5	2	3	14
Duncan Cameron	4	2	4	3	13
Frederick G. Cotman	4	2	4	3	13
Stanhope G. Forbes	4	2	4	3	13
James W. Hamilton	4	2	4	3	13
Robert Houston	4	2	4	3	13
James Kinneer	4	2	4	3	13
William A. Knell	3	2	6	2	13
John Blake McDonald	4	2	4	3	13
Sebastian Pether	4	2	6	1	13
Sir Ernest Waterlow	4	2	4	3	13
Henry Bright	4	2	4	2	12
George Callow	4	2	4	2	12
John Callow	4	2	4	2	12
William Callow	4	2	4	2	12
George Cooke	4	1	6	1	12
William B. Cooke	4	1	6	1	12
Miles E. Cotman	4	2	4	2	12
Edward T. Crawford	4	2	4	2	12
Sir David Farquharson	4	2	4	2	12
John Nixon	2	5	4	1	12
Alfred Vickers	4	2	4	2	12
William Collins	4	2	4	1	11
John Sell Cotman	4	2	4	1	11
John Crome	4	2	4	1	11
Henry Redmore	3	2	4	2	11
Francis Nicholson	2	5	2	1	10
Thomas Rowlandson	1	5	2	1	9

Notes

1. Where an artist paints in more than one medium the score is based on the most commonly used medium for coastal art.
2. Where an artist spans two time periods the score relates to the period in which the artist was more prolific.

It is hoped that readers will have found this explanation of a ranking system for assessing the accuracy and usefulness of artworks to support our understanding of coastal change of interest. The succeeding chapters and case studies form a geographical review around the coastline of Great Britain. The tour commences in North-East England, continuing down the East Anglian coast before rounding the South-East coast and following the south coast to Cornwall. Thereafter the tour continues north-eastwards, past Devon and Somerset before considering the North-West coast of England. Finally, the coastlines art of Wales and Scotland are reviewed.

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Fig. 3.25. 'The Battery at the Mouth of the Tyne' by Charles Napier Hemy. 1863. Watercolour.

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