

# 'THE STATE OF THE BRITISH COAST STUDY'

## Observable Changes Through Imagery 1770-Present Day

What lessons can we learn from observations of changes affecting the British coast over the last 250 years? How and to what extent have our coastal landscapes, natural 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 alongside these tools we can now also take particular advantage of the wisdom of hindsight by interrogating a vast additional resource of historical artworks that are becoming increasingly available online.

This new year long study, which is being led by Coastal & Geotechnical Services, working in partnership with a wide range of coastal management and art-related organisations, aims to bridge the disciplines of science and the arts and improve our understanding of 250 years of coastal change.

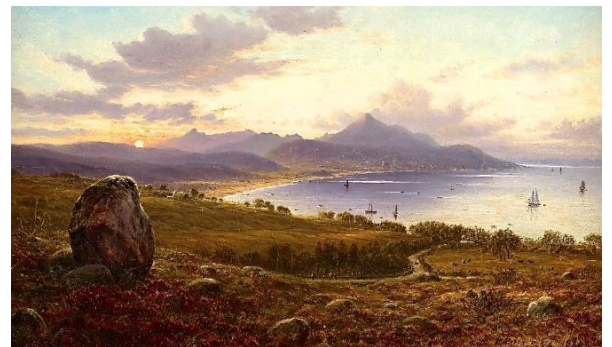
Over the last decade the Public Catalogues Foundation (PCF), a registered charity, in collaboration with public art galleries, museums and other owners of artworks, arranged the photographing of all the nation's 212,000 oil paintings; these are now available for research and interrogation on the ArtUk website (<https://artuk.org/>). In 2016 a new charity, *The Watercolour World* ([www.watercolourworld.org/](http://www.watercolourworld.org/)), under the joint patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, will create a visual online topographical record of the world through uploading watercolours spanning the period from 1600-1900.

*The Watercolour World* is collating and will display 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 private collections; these will be indexed geographically on its website. In view of the fine detail of the watercolour painting technique, this medium also provides the opportunity to reappraise not just the physical changes affecting the British coast but also changes to the natural environment and our rich cultural heritage over time.

The *State of the British Coast Study* will be undertaken by *Coastal & Geotechnical Services*, which has a long-standing experience of both coastal management and the interpretation of historical artworks and other imagery following studies supported by The Crown Estate, the European Commission and Historic England. Importantly, this previous



1. 'Ventnor, Isle of Wight' by Randolph Schwabe, c.1933. Watercolour. Private Collection



2. 'Brodick Bay, Arran' by Waller Hugh Paton RSA RWS. 1884. Oil. Courtesy: Patrick Bourne

3. 'Sidmouth, Devon' (detail) by Hubert Cornish. Coloured Engraving. c.1815. Private Collection





research allowed the development and refining of an art ranking system, which enabled the preparation of a short-list of those artists and their works that are deemed to be most accurate in their depictions of the coast.

The year long study will commence in June 2018 and will be undertaken through close collaboration with a wide range of coastal organisations, interest groups, museums, art galleries, arts charities and other stakeholders in England, Wales and Scotland.

In order to ensure that the study results are most informative and of real practical value to end users, Coastal & Geotechnical Services is anxious to work with a wide range of key statutory bodies, groups, networks and cultural art heritage interests throughout the project. These include those with interests in environment protection, nature conservation, coastal planning and management, cultural and art heritage. The project will also work with selected schools from England, Wales and Scotland and a summary of the best students' project work will be included in the Final Study Report.

For further details and future newsletters visit [www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com](http://www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com).



4. 'Dunrobin Castle, Sutherland' by William Daniell RA. 1820. Aquatint.



5. 'Mullion Cove, Cornwall' by David Addey. Watercolour. 1988. Private Collection



6. 'Pegwell Bay, Kent' by William Dyce RA. 1858-60. Oil. Courtesy © Tate Images. 2018



7. 'Llandudno' mid-19thc lithograph. Private Collection

### Can you assist this study?

As this year long study develops we will be searching for more highly detailed artworks of the coastline of Great Britain, painted between 1770-1930. If you have an artwork or other art image of the coast that shows the coastal zone, cliffs or shoreline in great detail, do please contact us by email at [rgmcinnes@btinternet.com](mailto:rgmcinnes@btinternet.com).

For more information about this study visit [www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com](http://www.coastalandgeotechnicalservices.com).



8. 'Tenby, South Wales' by Alfred Robert Quinton. c.1920. Watercolour. Courtesy: Salmon's



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