

I'm a bruised man.
Sand-buffed, storm-seared.

Through Black Midden wrecks, heavy gears,
I've seen it all, I've shed my tears.

Brigantes to Roman garrisons,
Rivet-catchers to Great North Runners:

a cache of memories ramshackled
under the vast bile of earth.

Peel away brick and slate,
fold up the tatty fields,

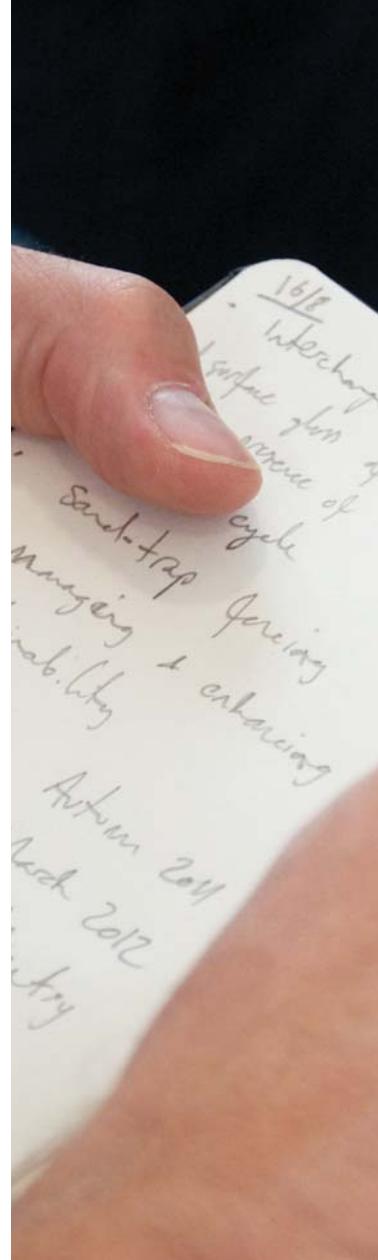
walk my course, from Herd Groyne
to Trow Point.

Pry open my kinks and niggles;
tweeze out stories, slipped down the folds.

SO SHIELDS

SOUTH SHIELDS SEAFRONT RESIDENCIES 2010-12





JAKE CAMPBELL

STUART MUGRIDGE

JO RAY

ALISON UNSWORTH

DAMIEN WOOTTEN

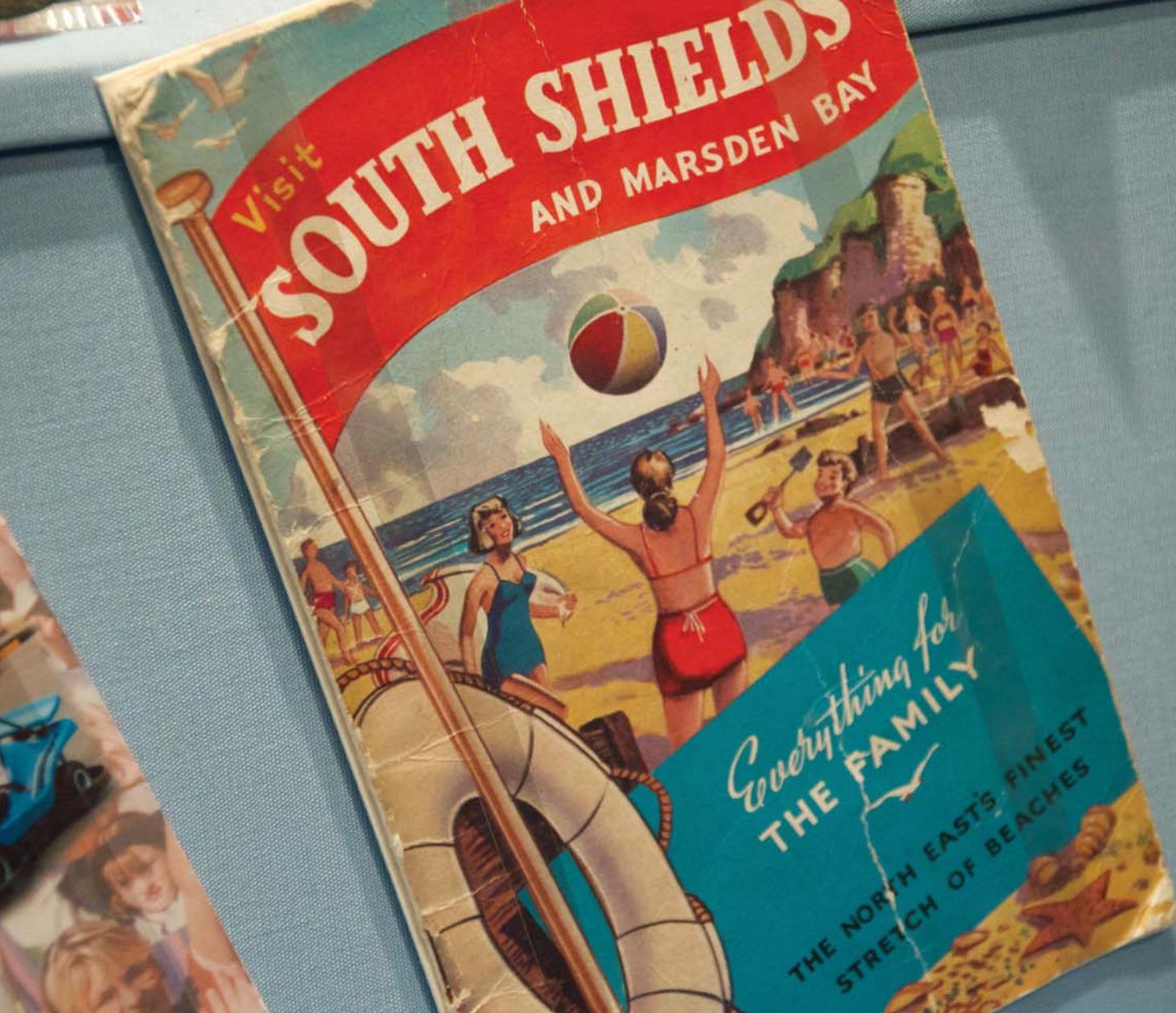
SO SHIELDS

SOUTH SHIELDS SEAFRONT RESIDENCIES 2010-12

GRIT & PEARL







SO SHIELDS

On the 24th March 2010, South Tyneside Council announced it had secured £1million of funding from the Government's Sea Change programme, which aimed to regenerate England's seaside resorts by investing in arts, public space, cultural assets and heritage projects. Joint-funded by a further £1million contribution from South Tyneside Council, the £2million project saw significant enhancements to the promenade at South Shields and a summer season in which the seafront played host to all the equipment, labour and materials of a construction encampment.

Also present that season was Newcastle-based artist Alison Unsworth, appointed to the project team as artist-in-residence, and tasked with exploring the unique character of the seafront. Highly regarded for her explorations of the 'regeneration sector' – its unique language, the product catalogues, the black and gold colour palette of mock-Victorian street furniture – through prints, sculptural installations and temporary interventions into public space, Unsworth's first responsibility was simply to be *present*, to bear witness to the location and the activity.

The resulting project was *Promenade*, an animated drawing exhibited for several weeks in a specially-fitted shipping container on the beach itself. In simple pen and ink on a plain white ground, *Promenade* captured the details of the seafront, the small stories and moments overlooked in the bigger story of the highly-visible regeneration scheme dominating the space at that time. A seagull scavenges for chips. A couple sit immobile on deck chairs, looking out to sea with endless patience. A man lies on the beach, his head covered with cloth to escape the sun. Children ride a toy panda at the funfair. To many these would seem unimportant moments, but they are all vital parts of what makes up a shared experience of a place. If *Promenade* celebrated such small details, it also took care to place them into the context of a very recognisable seafront. Mapping a linear journey along the seafront, the animation endlessly scrolls across the landscape from the natural beauty of Trow Point to the activity of Ocean Beach pleasure-park, and situates human moments within the structure of the space and the various eras of seaside development and regeneration.

If there is one thing that can be gleaned from *Promenade*, it is that South Shields seafront's essential character lies not in one thing, but in its unique and diverse mix of things. Neither a 'kiss me quick' resort like nearby Whitley Bay, nor naturally isolated beauty like Northumberland's beaches, South Shields offers something of both and other things beside. What did we take away from that first season's experience? Firstly, that no single aspect of that unique mix is any more important than another. All have value, all have relevance. Secondly, that in the hands of a creative team such minutiae can be revealed and given fresh prominence. Thirdly, that the projects can only ever relate to a moment in time – after all, even Unsworth's *Promenade* celebrated a public space that was being radically changed even as the artwork was exhibited. Above all though, was the knowledge that there was so much left that had not been – could never have been – explored by one artwork or by one artist. And so for the 2011 summer season, with funding support from Arts Council England and South Tyneside Council, a second phase of artists' residencies was developed. This season saw a team of four artists – poet Jake Campbell, artists Stuart Mugridge and Jo Ray, and photographer Damien Wootten – build upon Unsworth's project.

Ray's researches started in the local history archives, drawing from John Trotter Brockett's *Glossary of North Country Words* (1846), E.C Talbot-Booth's 1963 guide to merchant ships and a 1963 South Shields Gazette article *Visiting Students Spend £100,000 A Year In Town*. The resulting *Semaforks* project placed local dialect – BLATHER, CLAWVER, LOUP, LOUSE, PLODGE and ROUT – and its definitions on one side of wooden chip-forks, and illustrated their semaphore equivalents on the reverse. The similar *Shipforks* series provided a handy guide to ship identification, and both sets were distributed by fast-food outlets on the seafront.

Also searching the archival resources with a watchful eye for the intriguing and the surreal, Mugridge unearthed and stitched together a broad range of heritage and scientific facts to create two editions of *The Sandpaper*. The newspaper format accommodated – even celebrated – the idiosyncratic: a visit to South Shields by painter JMW Turner, elephant rides along the seafront, the use of French sand in the town's glass industry, children chewing the roots of the Common Restharrow for its liquorice taste, the twenty year's





worth of fires sparked from the coal slag (the culm) dumped in the seafront area to name but a few.

If the local archives were the hunting ground for Mugridge and Ray, then the beach itself was the only possible location for photographer Wootten to base himself. In a powerfully direct and straightforward way, Wootten's portrait series *The Visitors* captures the unique blend of visitors to South Shields – local, regional, national and international – over one summer season. It is, in a very real sense, a portrait of the summer season and a new historical document within South Shields' rich heritage. His work, including many of the images that illustrate this publication, is direct evidence of a set of meeting points between the creative team and the people of South Shields. Whilst each member of the creative team has rightfully taken their own route and developed their own responses, such moments of connection between the creative team and the traders, local people and tourists, have been essential to the development and direction of the overall project, and have often been the spark that led to the final projects.

Also located conceptually and spatially on the beach, is Ray's second project *A Common Treasury*. Significantly depleted in recent years due to human trampling, the dunes at Sandhaven beach provide a vital coastal defence made all the more significant in the light of climate change patterns. In such a state the dunes would not provide an adequate coastal defence, leaving the foreshore area susceptible to flooding. Supported by a £300,000 grant from the Environment Agency, South Tyneside Council has enhanced the existing dune system with the use of sand trap fencing and the planting of more dune grasses. A regrettable impact of the project is the need – for the first time – to control public access to the dunes, which whilst done for 'the greater good', has been a significant change for some people. A photographic series in which a set of miniature models drew attention to specific plant species – Birdsfoot, Groundsel, Wall Rocket and Yarrow – found in the delicate dunes ecosystem, *A Common Treasury* makes an important contribution to the public understanding of the dunes project and their appreciation of what is at stake.

One strength of *A Common Treasury* is its clever juxtaposition of the plant species with the visual language of fairground signage (from current funfair attractions and archive images of South Shields held in the National

Fairground Archive, Sheffield). It promotes a vision of South Shields where its natural and man-made attractions remain in dialogue. Also exploring the varied spatial characteristics of the seafront – and in some ways echoing *Promenade's* physical scope and ambition – is Campbell's poem *The Coast Will Wait Behind You* which makes specific reference to many locations on the seafront. But the poem also tracks through time – from roman forts through to beach dances; from a beached vessel in 1963 to the poet's own more recent memories of a day trip to the pleasure park on Good Friday of 1998 (Campbell was born and lives in South Shields). As Campbell writes:

*Through Black Midden wrecks, heavy gears,
I've seen it all, I've shed my tears.
Brigantes to Roman garrisons,
Rivet-catchers to Great North Runners*

The poem only existed in public space through a limited number of readings, and *Semaforks*, *Shipforks* and *The Sandpaper* were quietly distributed in local cafes, food outlets and information points over the summer season. Transient in nature – in fact, when distributed with the printed chip-forks *The Sandpaper* was quite literally tomorrow's chip wrappers – these freely-issued artworks were direct yet quiet points of interaction with the public. To create a larger audience for these ephemeral projects, nine images (including extracts of poetry written on postcards) have been selected for display as billboards on the promenade wall of Ocean Beach pleasure-park – a literal meeting point between the natural and the recreational – forming a kind of summary of the wider project. In so doing, a project that largely focussed on the hidden and human elements of beach life whilst the physical regeneration was ongoing, has taken its place alongside that physical regeneration to make a substantial contribution of its own.

This evolution of the seafront continues, with the Council and its partners embarking on an ambitious civil engineering scheme to upgrade the coastal defences in the Littlehaven Beach area between the South Groyne and the South Pier of the river Tyne. Such regeneration creates another chapter in the continual evolution of South Shields seafront, and a fresh opportunity for artists.

Richard Hollinshead





rich in fuel
to cook it for gas.
n-heaps were good
catch fire on their
mouldering for at
ars, in defiance of the
poration.

in rows of dwellings
ilt on top of the culm.
e would break out and
t or two. The South
eano has been behaving
me years, but it is not by
proved to be extinct, and
break would cause much
at on the Tyneside.

., ROBERT WALKER

At Ease

would like to take issue with
rticle last month regarding
orphology of sand dunes. You
l that the angle of repose of dry
is 25° – this is incorrect and is
ally the angle of repose for
st sand.

e steepest angle of descent of the
pe relative to the horizontal plane
r dry sand is actually 34°.

hope that you will publish this
etter, so as to save any unnecessary
suffering to those basing their
efforts on your poor research.

Yours etc., MR. W. I. KIPPY

of terms at the true
with birds, one is amazed by their
feats of endurance – among this
group were a couple of the less
common roseate terns that will be
over-wintering in Ghana. For now,
though, they were enduring the
buffeting of an English summer!

If the rain wasn't enough to faze our
feathered friends, it wasn't
encouraging me to stay. I cut
through the dunes towards the
Donkey Track. It was a shame the
weather was as it was, as one could
lose one's self for many a happy
hour botanising this patch.

It holds nothing exceedingly rare
but is studded with colour and
variety of texture. Look closer and
you will find bird's foot trefoil,
cock's foot, red fescue and common
restharrow. More obvious are the
clumps of marram grass and the
blueish-hued lyme grass.

Historically the seeds of this latter
grass were milled to make flour, and
indeed the Vikings cultivated this
plant for just such a purpose when
they settled in Iceland. Cultivation
continued there up until the early
1900s. Maybe the ghosts of the crew
of the Viking ship lost on Herd
Sands come by night to gather the
seed heads. Next time you are down
that way, stop and listen.

CLASSIFIED

good boogie to
long shift and to meet new friends.
He continues, "when I get down to
the beach, the darkness of my day is
lifted".

Sometimes a live band is present to
perform the latest tunes and really
get the beach jumping. Betty, a clerk
at the Corporation, also sings in a
band. "Oh, yes" she says "our band
plays down here quite often – I
think they like us!".

Shields is beginning to get a name
for itself, and dancers from further
afield are coming along to join in
the fun. We met Joan from
Sunderland. She gets the bus along
with a group of friends and doesn't
mind mixing with the locals, or
'Sand Dancers' as they jokingly call
them. Careful Joan, aren't you now a
'Sand Dancer' too?!



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The South Shields



SandPaper

Stuart Mugridge - editor



Winter 2011/12

there's more than a grain of truth in every story

Free

GOLDEN SHIELDS

"North East's finest stretch of beaches"

South Shields is rightly proud of its sandy beaches, so we sent our correspondents out on to the Promenade to find out what makes this mile-long stretch of coast so special. Things didn't start too well though, as Darlington surveyor Richard Richardson gave us his view:

"Some of the land is occupied as a garden. This is very barren, being all sandy land and broken ground; in wet weather it keeps small sheep and young cattle."

We left Mr. Richardson to his

surveys and approached a more contented group of visitors. They were enjoying a drink or two at one of the sea-front hostielries and told us of their delight at how popular Shields has become "with all who delight in Old Neptune's salty embraces that ample facilities are provided to ensure extracting the maximum of health and happiness from the sea."

A group of doctors at the next table couldn't resist joining in the conversation adding that "the climatic and hygienic resources of the place are such as are calculated

to brace up and invigorate the frames of sojourners in the large towns and dusty interior."

Everybody was becoming quite merry by this point, so we made our excuses and left. Next we dropped into the Tourist Information Centre where they told us that South Shields has "Everything for the family" and "the North East's finest stretch of beaches." A bit biased perhaps, but confirmed by our next interviewee.

A group of businessmen were sat enjoying the view from the elevated walkway and one of their number was only too happy to offer that: "South Shields boasts a very active Corporation, who have done much to make the town what it is – the 'Brighton of Durham'."

We finished our ad-hoc consultation with the wise words of local man Billy Purvis, who told us not to forget that "North Shields is the sunny side, but South Shields is the money side". Well, today Billy, it was sunny here too!

GRIT SAND

This current edition of *The South Shields Sandpaper* was commissioned by Grif & Pearl for South Tyneside Council as part of the South Shields Seaford Interpretation Project 2011. Thanks to Seachange and Arts Council England for their support.

Thanks also to staff at South Tyneside Local Studies Library for their help with research and images.

All stories researched and edited by artist Stuart Mugridge.



© South Tyneside Local Studies Library

D GLORIE

uth Shields' Fine Grain



Oh dear! Some people can't seem to just relax and take it easy on the beach. I was enjoying some down-time on South Beach recently and couldn't help but notice a little group on their hands and knees peering intently at the ground. I was intrigued. Were they praying? Had they lost a contact lens?

I approached them and asked what up to and they introduced me to the East branch

in a Grain of Sand, And a Heaven in a Wild Flower, Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, And Eternity in an hour". Very poetic sir!

So, next time you are on the beach, don't take what's under your feet for granted, get a little closer and appreciate its finer side.

ANGLERS VICTORIOUS

Brigantes 'Dance'

Steps

With the continuing unpredictability of our climate, boffins have been consulted by the Corporation to devise a scheme that will protect the South Shield's foreshore from the worst ravages of the weather.

"It's about time!" said one local resident. "I walk my dog along here all through the year if I can, but last winter the sand had been blown, right up onto Sea Road, and had buried the old promenade, its balustrade, steps and everything."

The resident - who refused to be named - continued: "If it carries on like this we'll have no beach left and the sea will be lapping at the doors of businesses on Ocean Road!"

But this is where the boffins come in. They recognise the importance of the sand dunes as a sea defence and a spokesperson told the *Sandpaper* that a Dunes Management Plan is to be implemented to stabilise the dunes for at least the next 25 years.



Our walk starts at the Metro station, which was opened in 1984. From the bridge that carries the tracks over King Street, one can see east towards the sea-front which is where we'll head now.

Descend the station stairs to King Street and turn right. Pass the Museum and Art Gallery before you reach the crossroads with Mile End Road. Above street level, note the fine detailing of the buildings around you before continuing your walk eastwards to German Street.

This is a good place to stop if you need a bite to eat, as the stretch along here is resplendent with all manner of eateries.

Revivified, continue east through Night Fold and between the Marine Parks (which are, by the way, amongst the most beautiful in the North) until you reach the Union Workhouse on your left, and German Cottage Inn on your right.

From here we will shortly turn south along the Sea Banks but before we do this, let us pass some time in the seafront amusements and, between the dunes, get our first proper sighting of the German Ocean.

Now, let's continue south along the Foreshore. In the distance you will see the promontory of Trow Rocks, stretching between you and the mile of golden

ing the head...
enjoying the view back along...
route.

This promontory has always been an important defensive position for the Tyne area and has seen various military installations over the years, including an experimental gun that recoiled into a pit once fired.

Now, forget those times of conflict and head back to the foreshore for the end of our walk at the termination of the Shieldsheugh Estate.

HEAD TURNER

Much excitement was caused last week after word got out that Joseph Mallord William Turner was in town.

The renowned brush man was seen taking a pint in the German Cottage after a hard day's work in the area. It is believed that Mr. Turner was making sketches for his forthcoming painting entitled '*Shields on the Tyne*'.

The work is due for release early next year.

CORPORATION NOTICE

SSCA 1896 / VII / 58 - Power to make bye-laws for the protection of bathers

operation may from time to time...
the

skipping rope, and...
his sepia ankles.

Magnetised by the po...
ten pence piece of th...
the water had no ch...
but to retreat.

Dissipating from b...
him, the sand lost...
the way a sucked...
loses its syrup.

Wash lines jette...
from the imprim...
The sea was on...
and it couldn't

The thick mo...
reminded him...
unsteady as h...
in his father's

Twice he ha...
with neatly...
Staring at...
her shingl

As the tic...
on the N...
and whi...
your mo



The Coast Will Wait Behind You

We never fully forget; we only lose the root of memories...

Release your anchor.
Feel the pinch and tug
as it settles into seabed.

Where are you?

This is Sandhaven Beach
circa infinity.

Don't lose reach. All memory is
white noise
to the galloping surge
of people and tide.

The South Shields
There's more than a grain of truth in every dig
Sand Paper

Winter 2011/12

GOLDEN SHIELDS “North East’s finest stretch of beaches”

South Shields is rightly proud of its sandy beaches, as we sat one correspondence and one to the Press made us find out what makes this auto-long stretch of coast so special. Things didn't start too well though, as Darlington surveyor Richard Macfarlane gave us his view.

"Some of the land is occupied as a garden. This is very happy, being all sandy dard and looks ground, so we'll rather it keeps small sheep and young cattle."

We left Mr. Macfarlane to his

surveys and approached a more-orientated group of visitors. They were enjoying a drink or two at one of the sea-front bars, and told us of their delight at how popular Shields has become. With all the delight in Old Neptune's salty embraces that simple facilities are provided to ensure a relaxing time of health and happiness from the sea.

A group of divers at the most substantial resort joining in the conversation, asking that "the climate and physical resources of the place are such as are calculated

to brace up and improve the frames of seamen in the towns and dusty nations."

Everybody was becoming merry by this point, as the excuses and let-into the Tour where they had Shields has "Everlasting Gault" and "the North stretch of beaches" perhaps, but could not be more so.

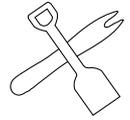
A group of the surveyor's workway and the surveyor was only too happy to offer "South Shields Beach" a well Corporation, who have a to make the town what Brighton of Durbach."

We finished our ad-hoc examination with the wise words of local man Billy Pearce, who told us not to forget that "North Shields is the sunny side, but South Shields the sunny side!" Well today Billy, it was sunny here too!

GRIT SAND

This current

The South Shields



SandPaper

Stuart Magridge - editor



Summer 2012

there's more than a grain of truth in every story

Free

END OF A GOLDEN ERA? Analysts to Study Our Sands



few people for their thoughts: One seafront businessman, who didn't want to be named, felt that this was a "dumbing down of the sands" and that people ought to appreciate the massive variety of colours that the sands contain. Finally, Mr. Turner, visiting from London, offered enigmatically "light is therefore colour".

This study is set to continue stirring up a lot of discussion locally but you will have to wait until the new year to discover the final results of the research and what colour sand you'll be walking on. 'The Purple Sands of Shields' anyone?

HIGHWAYS NEWS

The cinder path at Tyne Dock will be closed for re-surfacing work the week commencing 23rd May. Travellers are urged to find an alternative route whilst this essential work takes place.

The work is part of wider townscap improvements and...

project has come about due to the proliferation of this nation's beaches that are, these days, assuming the title of 'golden sands'. It is hoped that this study will help South Shields rise above the masses with a new epithet for our lovely sands.

One of the anal...

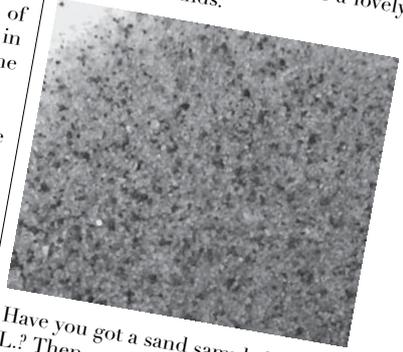
Visitors to the town's beaches this summer have been bemused to see huddled groups of figures animatedly discussing what's under their feet.

We've had several reports of these strangers in town and their suspicious goings-on so we thought it was time to dig deeper. Our beach correspondent takes us to...

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE Sandpaper. Factory clearance. All grades available and in bulk quantities. Don't delay contact us today. Call Pete Emery on Shields 839

FREE TO A GOOD HOME Back numbers of *The South Shields SandPaper*...



Have you got a sand sample like Mrs. L.? Then send it in and share your experience.

The first in a new Sandpaper column sees a lovely sample sent in by Mrs. L. of Westoe. Here's Mrs. L. to tell you in her own words:

"I collected this sample on a lovely sunny day last August. I found it near the old first aid post up at the far end of the sands. The day was quite breezy but even so the sand was warm to the touch.

"When I got the sample home and looked more closely I was amazed by the variety of the grains. The colours range from almost black, through oranges and peaches, to almost clear. The grains are striped, green, smooth, rounded... really varied and between 0.3 and 0.6mm across. This is a really good reminder of a lovely day on the sands."

NATURE DIARY

High summer on the sands and the flocks of waders have been replaced by crowds of plodgers, sunbathers and fun-seekers. On quieter days the lucky ornithologist may just spot a late kittiwake heading out to ocean but otherwise we might be best finding other entertainment.

For me, summer is a time to concentrate on things closer to hand, or closer to foot to be precise. The northern dunes and pier area is alive at this time of year with a carpet of flowers - the immediate reward is in the collective rather than the individual specimen.

There is nothing particularly rare here although there have long been rumours of narrow-leaf pepperwort, evening primrose, the deadly thorn apple and other aliens that have sprung up from seed brought with the foreign ballast, and which are elsewhere unknown in this county. Common or not, these plants deserve our attention.

As we focus in on this pointillist's masterpiece we can pick out a variety of grasses studded with the white of clover; the blushing yellow of bird's foot trefoil and the pink of common restharrow. This latter was once a great treat for local children who chewed on the liquorice-tasting roots.

As I raise my head and adjust my eyes to the distance I catch a glimpse of a harbour porpoise a little way out to sea. Binoculars...



...or see a measure of sand conveyed as a length. In your last edition you reported Sandhaven as being a 'mile-long stretch' of coast.

As a former council operative regularly responsible for clearing the promenade of storm-strewn sand I can assure you that the correct measure of sand should be expressed in 'tons'.

Yours etc., GEORGE RAIN

Thank You

SIR, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the friendly folk of South Shields who attended my recent lecture on psammophiles.

There was a packed house at The Captains Suite and I found the audience a very enquiring and knowledgeable one. Just a reminder that my new book, *Fine Grain*, will be published in early October.

Yours etc., SAMUEL MOSS

SAND ON THE RUN

The annual 'Sand Race' was held on Herd Sands last Saturday. There was a 500-strong field competing for the trophy and £20 first prize.

Conditions were ideal for the thirty-seventh running of the event, which takes in one lap of a clockwise circuit on the beach from north to south.

The early jostling for position gave way to a four-man lead group who pushed home their advantage until the cat-and-mouse tactics kicked in near to the finish line. First man home in a time of 19min 02sec was Andy Taylor from Whitley Bay Wanderers, followed two later by Shields...

DINING OUT

German Cottage Inn



First of a new feature our food dependent visits the German Inn on Ocean Road:

visited this externally possessing hostelry one day night last month. It was getting a table - I hadn't - but I was able to use my with the friendly of-house staff and was soon at a little table with a sea view.

promising Ann Metcalfe and her W are currently running the A lively atmosphere was present I'm guessing that not everybody here to eat. An excellent glass of e white helped me digest the u.

locally sourced I started my meal an exquisite terrine of rabbit 'wild dune salad'. The rabbit ed in the mouth and the salad

GREYHOUND RUNS AGROUND

Local pilot Timothy Hogg has run into trouble with the Ministry of Defence for guiding one of their warships onto the sands at South Shields.

Mr. Hogg of Sea Way was piloting The Greyhound into The Tyne last Tuesday morning when the accident happened. It is understood that there was insufficient water under the keel as he led the 424-ton vessel over Herd Sands leaving it stranded on a sand bar.

Many local people were present on the sands when the incident occurred and were able to help evacuate the ship's crew. Several local men, including James Bushell, have been credited by the MoD for their part in saving the ship's 42 guns.



TAKING SAND TO SHIELDS

We've all heard the old idiom of 'taking coals to Newcastle' but how about 'taking sand to South Shields'? I think we will find most folks in agreement that the town has a goodly supply of the grainy stuff. Or has it?

Many readers will be staggered, I'm sure, to learn that the town's glass industry frequently imports silver sand from Fontainebleau in France.

A group of locals got wind of this trade and asked local MP James Cochran Stevenson to challenge this seemingly pointless activity.

Mr. Stevenson has got right behind the campaign and is petitioning local glass manufacturers to answer his plea of 'what is wrong with our golden sand?'

There was nobody available for comment at any of the companies we contacted but we hope to bring you news of developments in the next edition of *The SandPaper*.

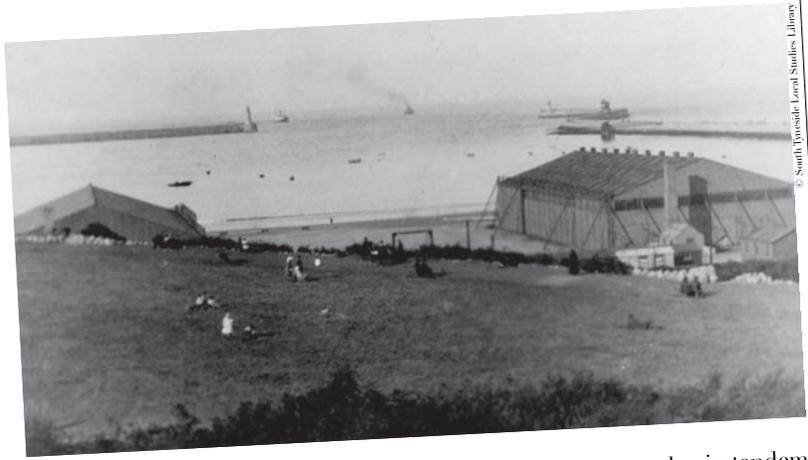
TOP IDEA

A local businessman has come up with a unique solution to those changeable days on the beach.

Mr. Elliott of Market Place, South Shields is offering for sale waterproof silk hats. They look set to

PLANE SAILING

Award for Town Airport?



The town's seafront airport is in the running for a design and excellence award being promoted by the government's architectural advisory board.

A spokesperson for the airport's developers, Furious LLP, said, "We are delighted to finally receive recognition for what we believe is a ground-breaking model of sustainable transport built in partnership with the regional development agency.

We are through to the final round of the competition but there are some very strong contenders in the short list as we are not home and dry yet."

commercial partners who, in tandem with local businesses, offer the traveller all they might need before their flight.

DON'T BE A NELLY



...atometric came to South

PLODGING

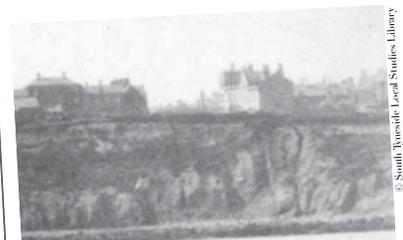
A 'How To' Guide

The SandPaper has received several letters of confusion from visitors to South Shields due to an article in its Winter Edition.

It seems that the term 'plodging' has left many folks scratching their heads rather than enjoying the German Ocean lapping and splashing round their ankles. To clear up this muddle we asked the Corporation's Officer for Leisure to give us a lesson in plodging:

"First you need some shallow water, this could be a puddle in the street but the sea shallows of the beach are best. If on the beach (and once you have checked for rocks and other submarine hazards) remove any footwear and socks and, if required, roll trouser legs up to knee-height.

"Next proceed into the water to about mid-shin depth and walk to and fro in the water. If you wish you can walk arm in arm with a companion. There is no time limit to plodging but just be alert for any hypothermic sensations if the conditions are particularly bracing. Happy plodging!"





I'm a bruised man.
Sand-buffeted, storm-seared.

Through Black Midden wrecks, heavy gears,
I've seen it all, I've shed my tears.

Brigantes to Roman garrisons,
Rivet-catchers to Great North Runners:

a cache of memories ramshackled
under the vast bile of earth.

Peel away brick and slate,
fold up the tatty fields,

walk my course, from Herd Groyne
to Trow Point.

Pry open my kinks and niggles;
tweeze out stories, slipped down the folds.

I've seen Hadrian's spearmen feed the frontier,
salt-panners radar-ripple from riverside works.

Schelles popped up like bird boxes; docks hollowed
into mud, pregnant with industry, fat with berths.

If you could roll these fields up like carpet displays
and stack the houses in domino boxes;

if you could put them all away you'd be left
with me: the bruised man, Semper Paratus

alone with his great comforts: the North Sea,
the Tyne, hefts of land scattering out beyond Durham.

I'd be blank again, but on the inhale,
always ready, waiting the marks...

The South Shields

September 2011

SandPaper

Free



GOLDEN SHIELDS "North East's finest stretch of beaches"

South Shields is rightly proud of its beaches, so we sent our correspondents out on to the Promenade to find out what makes this mile-long stretch of coast so special. Things didn't start too well though, as Darlington surveyor Richard Richardson gave us his

"Some of the land is occupied as a garden, and is very barren, being all sandy land, and broken ground, in all weather, and keeps small sheep and young calves."

surveys and approached a more contented group of visitors. They were enjoying a drink or two at one of the sea front bistros and told us of their delight at how popular Shields has become with all who visit. "The sea, the sun, the views, the friendly atmosphere and the maximum of health and happiness provided for everyone, extracting the best from the sea."

A group of doctors at the next table couldn't resist joining in the conversation adding that "the climate and hygienic resources of the place are such as are calculated

to brace up and invigorate the frames of soporifers in the large towns and dusty interior."

Everybody is becoming quite excited by this point, so we made our excuses and left. Next we dropped into the Tourist Information Centre where they told us that South Shields has "Everything East's finest family and "the North's finest stretch of beaches". A bit broad perhaps, but confirmed by our next interviewee:

A group of businessmen were out enjoying the view from the elevated walkway and one of their number was only too happy to offer that "South Shields boasts a very active Corporation, who have done much to make the town what it is - the 'Brighton of Durham'."

We finished our all-day consultation with the wise words of local man Billy Purvis, who told us not to forget that "North Shields is the sunny side" "Well, today, Billy, it was sunny here too!"

RACE DISGRACE Ring Leaders Seized

Police are hunting a gang of criminals who are thought to be responsible for a string of last year's robberies in the sands. The gang are thought to be responsible for a string of last year's robberies in the sands. The gang are thought to be responsible for a string of last year's robberies in the sands.





Latitudes and seasons away,
programmes written skeleton-deep
gathered them on telegraph poles:
hundreds of wings paired for shift snap.

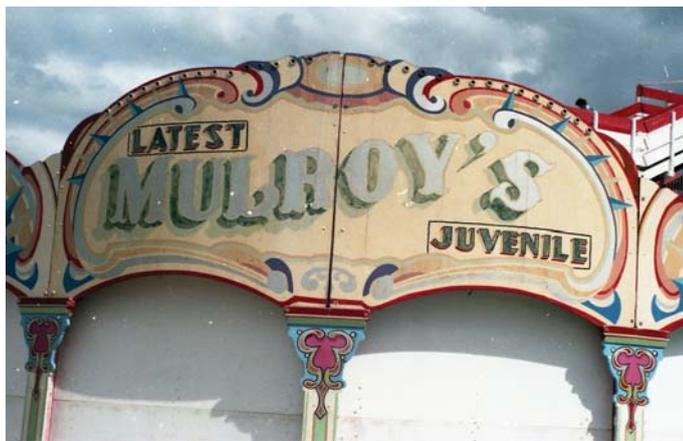
Alone, birds are glitches, dead pixels
in the monitor of the atmosphere.

Flocking, body as arrow,
they've fired themselves
into binoculars of watchers
whose own nests
have long been empty.

Sleeping bag swathed on the South Pier,
she searches the surf
watching Roseate Terns stammer
and glide on the wind's puppet-strings.

If you can ignore the spray doing its best
to handcuff the pier;
if you can let the rain drum
on your skull and not rise
wormlike to its death-rap

then you can sit here a while
as Terns spin the globe with their shadows
honing in on warmth.





perennial

perennial
Wall-Rocket

perennial



SENECIO

GROUNDSEL

VULGARIS





Adelfotis II at Little Haven Beach, 1963:

This was not what the beach had planned
but what could it do?

Once she'd lost it, chin first into Little Haven,
the Volunteer Life Brigade whirred back to life
to save the 23 strong crew and their dog.

They brought cranes and scrap dealers;
carried out an autopsy live on the shore.

So we kept coming back all summer to watch –
set our tents up, brought bat and ball,
mussels and boiling water from a fish wife.

They stripped it slowly, paring back panels
to reveal more squares of sky

till the hull became small enough to shift.
All the seaweed and limpets left squashed into shore

were steel-pressed stamps on letters
from other sides of the globe.

POST CARD

BRITISH MADE

Correspondence

Address



I still see us tramping through Marram grass and Yarrow flower
in the last week of September, '98.

We were three Kings giggling on the high dunes
and by the donkey track
Mam was cross-legged on a towel, eyes loisted over us.

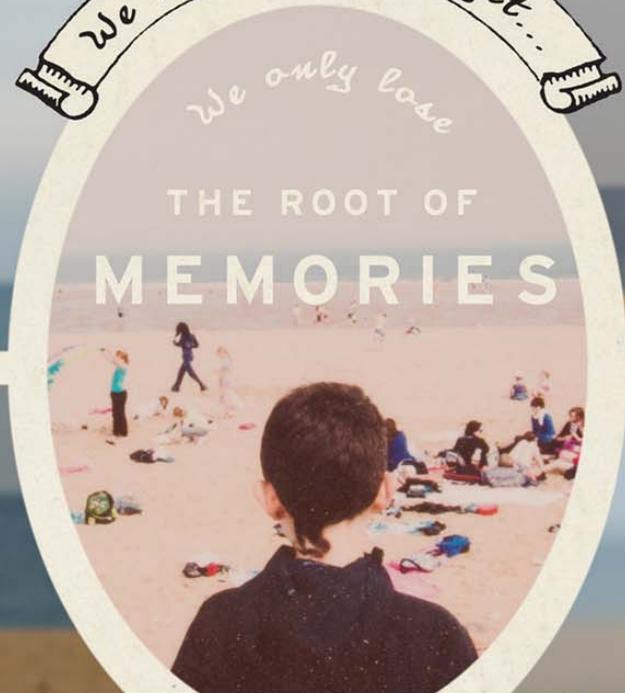
There was something in her thirty yard gaze that plucked
all life from the beach; set currents dizzy in reverse.
This was the year before the troubles at the school;
how the new millenium must've lain
ahead, vague and tough as an unsolved Rubik's cube.

She shouted us over, breaking the hex. As we ran
she closed the shutters of her eyelids,
developed the photo
in the dark-room of her mind.

It's still planked in the cold coast,
safe and tight as ground water
hushed to the old world where
we'll always tramp
through marram grass and yarrow flower



We never fully forget...



We only lose

THE ROOT OF
MEMORIES

**THE COAST WILL WAIT
BEHIND YOU...**



POST CARD

We were Skye-enders and Tyne pilots -
those who knew the size and distance of a ship
from its light show. We breathed with the river:
felt tidal swells and jagged rocks sailing our aqualungs.
We'd wait. Try not to fall asleep.
The old man
said he'd rip our gizzies out if we so much as yawned.
So we mumbled patterns and signals
till the sea's vanishing point became an illusion.
When a ship appeared, we weren't sure
if it had fallen from the sky
or risen from the sea.

ADDRESS ONLY

We kept the pilot cutter tied up like a
sleeping dog,
ready to creak into water darker than soil.
We listened to trawlers hook and gut at the quay.
These were the sounds you didn't know in town;
a siren of seagulls; Llay's hailing station
declaring 'what's your business?'
And beyond the lot, Herd Grove lighthouse
slicing spokes of light through Tyne's night





POST CARD

ADDRESS ONLY



were Skynet - orders and Tyne pilots -
se who knew the size and distance of a ship
its light show. We breathed with the river,
tidal swells and jagged rocks sailing our aqualungs.
I wait. Try not to fall asleep.
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had rip our gizzies out of us so much
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These were the sounds you didn't hear in town;
a of seagulls; Lloyds' hair
de 'what's your business'
d the lo
of light th
s right

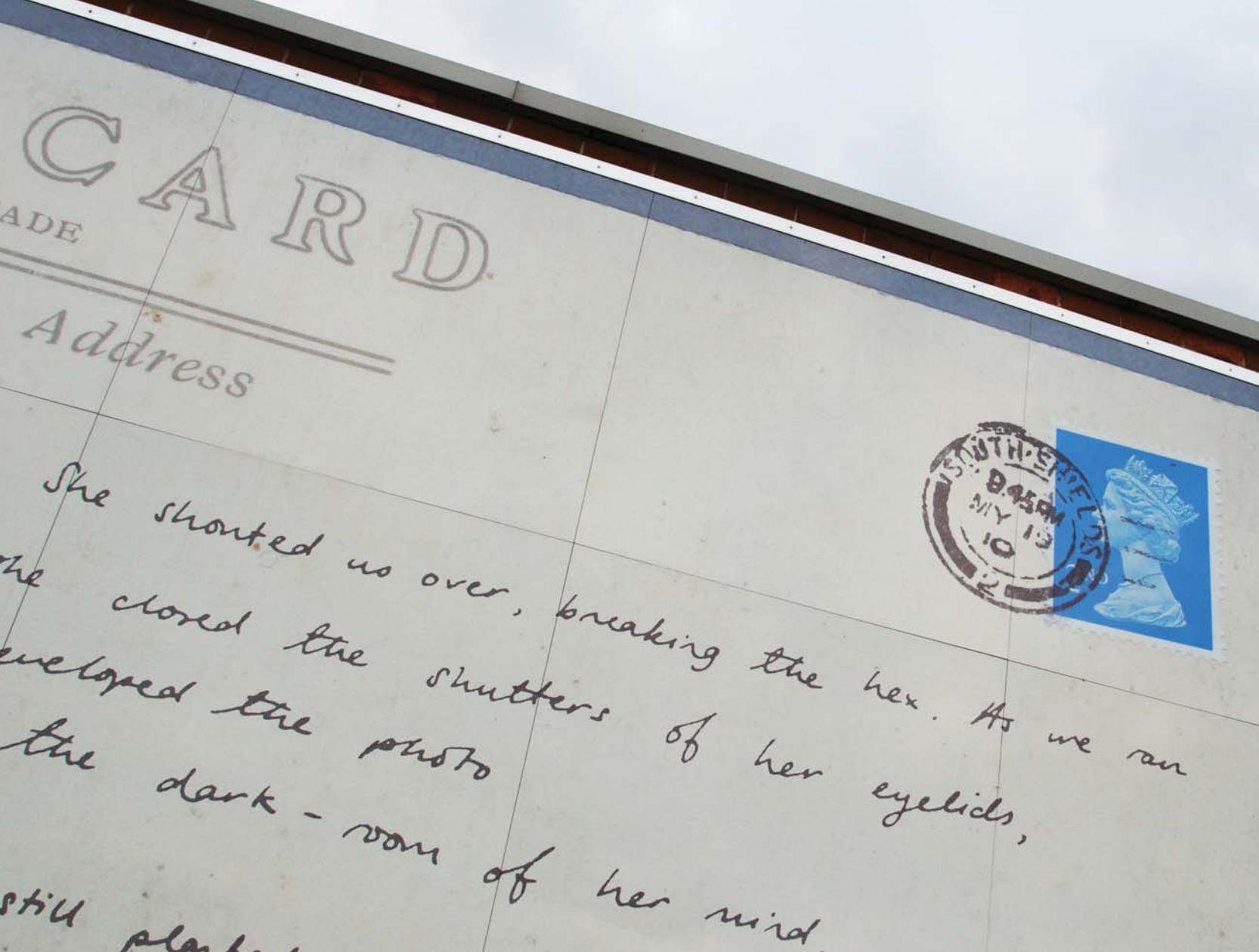
The car park had flooded that morning;
a careless sea muscled into disabled bays,
issuing ticket machines and bollards
with their own reflection.

My Grandson asked what we'd do,
our way forward broken.
I took a pebble from the sand dunes,
curled it over the makeshift lake.

Ripples throbbed out as it bounced
like a diagram of the solar system;
a loading bar across the screen of the pool
shedding layers of momentum as it slowed.

From the grasses he brought a dinky clot
the size and shape of a sweet potato.
I told him it wouldn't do; find a coaster,
something smooth, a skimmer.

Hunching behind him, I wound back his arm,
showed him the point and angle to aim at.
I didn't tell him to hold it like the hand of a lover,
knowing my heart would beat back in its skin-box
to that Friday night when I'd first shown
his Gran the sharp cruise of stone through gravity.



Ocean Beach Pleasure Park, Good Friday 1998:

I was there with a head of coppers in a carrier bag
guzzling twos into the luck-pusher
after waddling off the waltzer, whitey in a bin.

My kid won a goldfish for clacking soup tins
with a BB gun. The attendant unpegged
a plastic pouch, the orange glob mantled
to the core of its own world.

As the safety bar on The Energizer clamped
her shoulders, I felt the first button
of rain on my cheek and watched her rise,
begin to whirl through pop and neon.

Parents' faces smudged by the Gs,
she let her hands wave like antennas.
Clouds slung over sky were slept-in hammocks;
I watched her prod them, hoping they'd tip.

*Catch an itch;
a grain of sand in the palm
of your retina.
Remember: there is only one way
from here.*

We were Skye-ers and Tyne pilots -
those who knew the size and distance of a ship
from its light show. We breathed with the river:
felt tidal swells and jagged rocks sailing our aqualungs.
We'd wait. Try not to fall asleep.
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said he'd rip our gizzies out if we so much as yawned.
So we mumbled patterns and signals
till the sea's vanishing point became an illusion.
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POST CARD

ADDRESS ONLY



We kept the pilot cutter tied up like a
sleeping dog
ready to creek into water darker than coal.
We listened to strainers hole and gut at the quay
There were the sounds you didn't know in town,
a siren of seagulls, Lloyd's having strikes
declaring 'what's your business?'
And beyond the lot, Herd Grove lighthouse
slicing spokes of light through Tyneworth's night



They brought rough boards and gramophones.
Arranged makeshift dance floors on Herd Sands.
The time signature of the day fractured
as they swayed – comatose of rhythm.

Manic gannets followed land-starved schooners;
women waved as they flailed
hoping the sea had carried their husbands
safely on its zephyr breeze.

The din of trombone and cymbal crackled
and clashed the air. From the Sally Bash
bandying a tune at Gandhi's Temple,
the whole lot helter-skeltered
round rows of beach huts clattered
in a slurry of mad-dashed sand.





Holidaymakers from Sagamihara

Family day trip from Darlington

Mother and daughter Twi

'T Shields beach over one summer season

At Trow Point, colliers anchored
at the river's back lane, where tonnes
of chippings and spoil hunkered the foreshore.

In thicker winds
everything goes horizontal
yanking the pane of sand
away like a tablecloth –

a magician's cape, showing
all along things had been hidden.

We glimpse tracks cast
by industries past:
the flying boat ramp
snatched by the sea,
geoglyphs carved from railway lines
and salt roads, desire paths
coiled over and round
this crush-buckled ground.





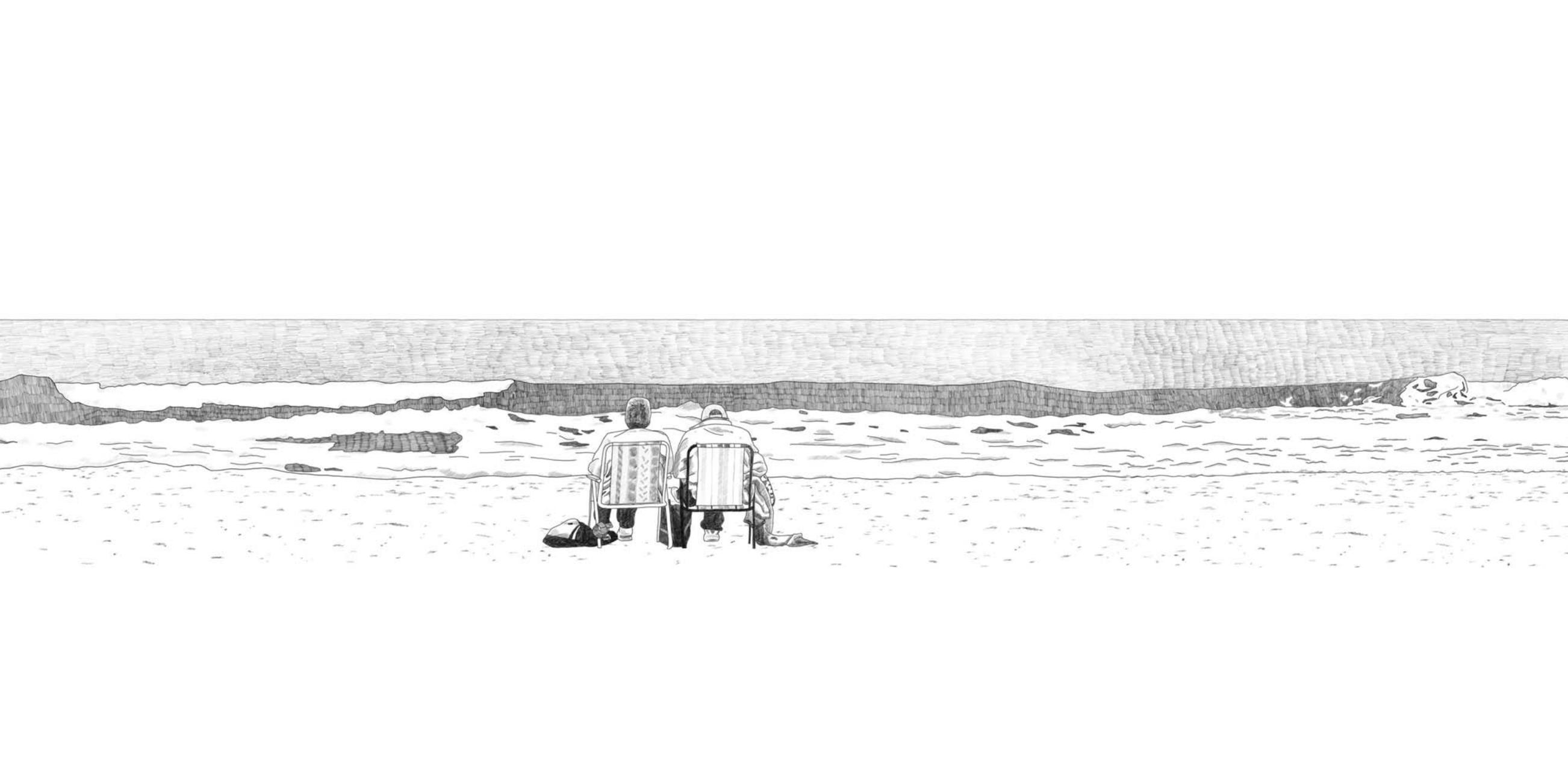


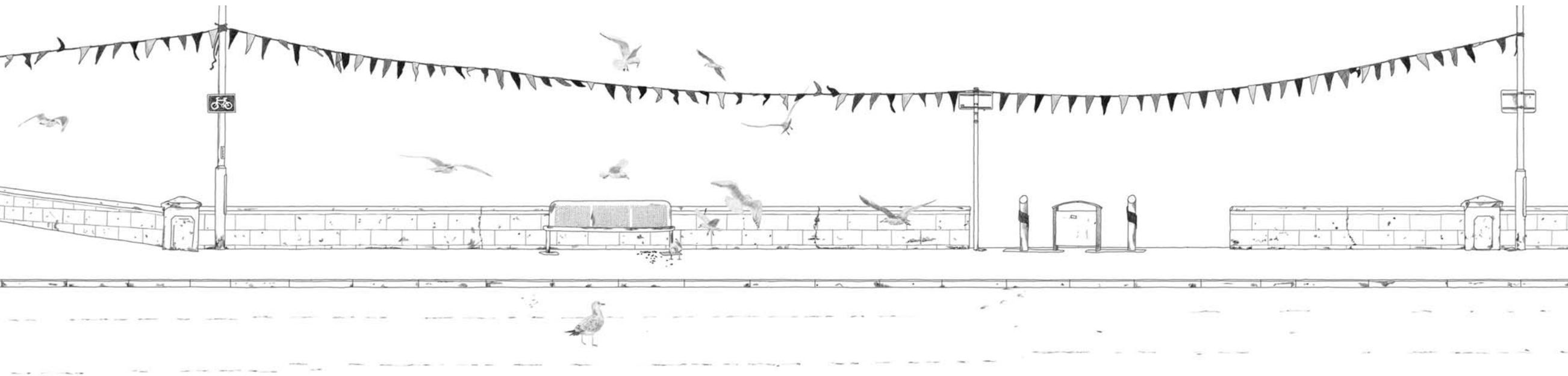




Damien Wootten



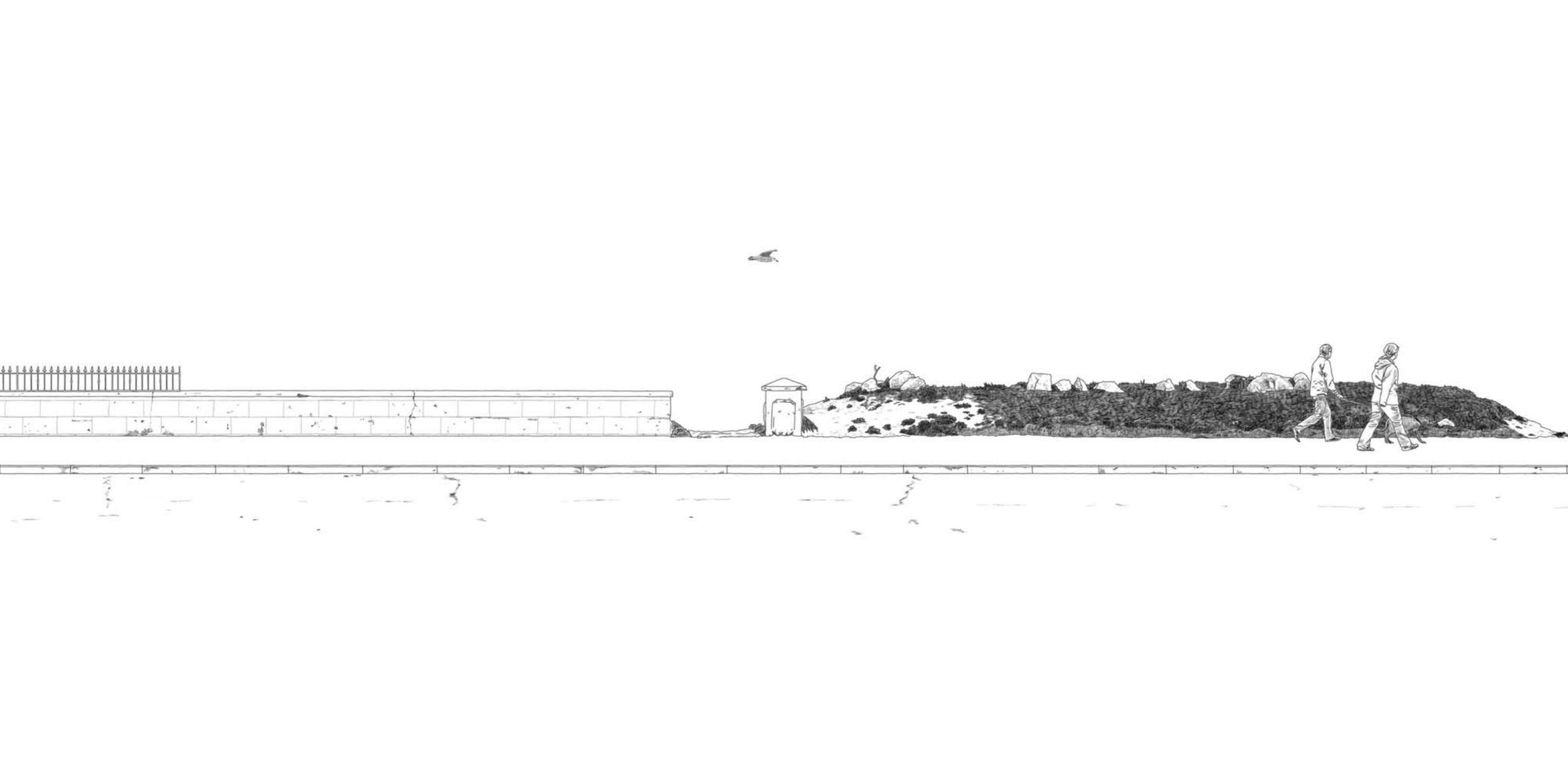




OCEAN BEACH

www. OCEAN BEACH









promenade

Alison Utterson's

a history of the walkway
at Sandhills Beach, North Shields



They knew us in the dance halls of Sunderland:

*There's sand all over the floor in the cubicles,
them lot must've come down from Shields!*

They knew us off St. Fergus and in the Irish Sea:

*Wherever there's water and a channel big enough,
a sailor from Shields will have ridden it.*

They knew us at Plymouth Sound and the Suez Canal:

*They're like tetherballs circumnavigating seas,
always spinning, always in the direction of home.*







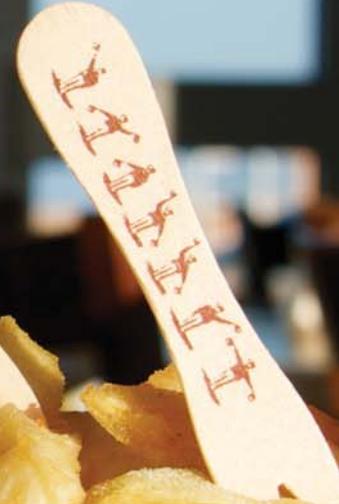
CLAYVER to clamber, to climb up.

LOWSE means, tree, to unshelved
to release, to leave off work

ROWT to make a hole
to raise, as the

Loup Sw. lépa, to run.
to leap.

BLATHER to talk a great deal of nonsense.
Tent, blatteren, Swed. blada



Helf
Russell



FIG. 20 (R.2)



Fig. 20. Curved and raking.



FIG. 19 (R.2)



Fig. 19. Raking or sloping.



FIG. 18 (R.1)



Fig. 18. Straight, vertical or plumb.



FIG. 19 (R.2)

BLATHER to talk a great deal of nonsense.
Teut. *blatern*, Swed. *bladra*



CLAVVER to clamber, to climb up.



LOWSE loose, free. To unbind,
to release, to leave off work



PLODGE to wade through water, to plunge.
Dut. *ploegen*.



ROWT to make a bellowing noise,
to roar, as the sea.



LOUF to leap.
Sw. *löpa*, to run.







From Lizard Point to Frenchman's Bay
the sea dushes the bumper of the coast.

At Trow Point Battery, they learned
to pray for the camouflage of land.

Holed up in a submergible canon,
hydraulics primed, shells and gunpowder

eager for the spark, they waited out the danger of dark.
The whole coast drew its breath;

beaches gagged by mines, pillboxes quaking,
barrage balloons charged by neurotic moonlight.

The sky could have split at any minute
spilling into reality the dreaded

Zeppelin, Heinkel, Messerschmitt, their bombs
falling as needles into the skin of the soil.

HAVE
A NICE
DAY

no
clowning
WITH
MACHINES



SO SHIELDS

ARTWORKS INSTALLED AT SOUTH SHIELDS SEAFRONT SUMMER 2010 AND SPRING 2012.
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