

Abstract

Cultural constructions of the Isle of Wight: Perception, Creation and Consumption.

A cultural evaluation of the Isle of Wight has not been addressed in relation to mainland Britain. Strategically and economically significant, it was often disregarded; however, its unique situation offers a microcosm of social and cultural development, which so far appears to have received little attention.

From an island subjected to the will of outsiders, to a cultivated venue, which attracted and fostered cultural tourism, the purpose of this regional study is to trace the evolution of this vulnerable part of England and identify influential factors, which contributed towards its cultural constructions.

The hypothesis considers that the construction and consumption of the island was, throughout its history, driven by external forces. This theme is developed by relating cultural and social notions to island circumstances and identifying variables which contribute towards its unique situation.

An interdisciplinary approach utilizes mainland Britain as a historical matrix to illustrate cultural development; emphasizing determining circumstances, geographic, social, economic and aesthetic, to establish how the island was used, abused and ignored. Research is island focussed, though with corresponding allusion to metropolitan influence and middle-class cultural aspirations, which contributed to the island becoming a popular tourist destination.

By taking a broad historical overview it is apparent that due to location, the island was always an integral part of the British Isles, more significant than other outlying islands due to its relative proximity to the capital, the short distance to the mainland and its strategic importance both militarily and territorially. The progression of a connected narrative allows for an identification of features such as changing attitudes to the countryside and the sea which indicate an increasing consciousness, realized during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in cultural tourism, landscape art and relocation. This narrative structure is critical to establish the context for the primary focus of investigation, the period 1770- 1900

enabling an evaluation of the impact of visitors as consumers, landscape artists as interpreters, and the intertwining of these concepts to give an account of the evolution of cultural tourism on the Isle of Wight.

This is central for an appreciation of the ideas, tastes, and affinities expressed aesthetically in prints and paintings, physically in mansions and marine villas and conceptually in cultural conventions such as the notions of travel. It is a significant area for research, since the dynamics of cultural forces are universally relevant for an appreciation of social, historical and economic influences in the cultural domain. On a local level the cultural constructions examined within this study are areas which can be appraised to determine and develop constructive tourism and respond to future cultural needs.

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Abbreviations

AWOS	Associate of the Old Watercolour Society.
BI	British Institution.
BL	British Library.
BM	British Museum.
C.C	Cope Collection, Southampton University Library.
C.C.M	Carisbrooke Castle Museum.
FS	Free Society of Artists.
IOW	Isle of Wight.
I.O.W. C.R.O	Isle of Wight County Record Office.
IOW.M	Isle of Wight Museum..
Lincoln	Lincolnshire Archives.
NE	New Society Art Club.
NA	National Archives.
NAL	National Art Library.
NWS	New Watercolour Society.
N.P.G	National Portrait Gallery.
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.
OWS	Old Watercolour Society.
P.H.F.C.A.S	Proceedings the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society.
P.I.W.N.H.A.S	Proceedings Isle of Wight Natural History Archaeological Ass.
PC.	Private Collection.
RA	Royal Academy of Arts.
RB	Roy Brinton.
RI	The Royal Institution of Painters in Watercolours.
RWS	Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours.
SA	Society of Artists of Great Britain.
SS	Royal Society of British Artists.
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum.

Illustrations

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