

BLACKPOOL: "Here solitude is merely a state of mind"

## They Do Like To Be Beside the Sea

AT this season New Zealanders are thinking of seaside holidays and preparing for them. How different our seaside holidays at popular resorts are from those in England, JOAN AIREY, of Wellington, tells us in this article, written in London in October.

NEWS from home, which, like all New Zealanders in England I devour avidly, is filled with indications of spring. Here we are conscious of the opposites—the autumn nip in the air, the morning mists, the falling leaves that crackle under our feet. We are stacking the wood and gathering in what coal we can preparatory to digging ourselves in for the winter; we are considering (not without a shudder) whether it's going to be as bad as last year. Even if it is there will at least be some who for a long time will have warm memories of the wonderful week they spent at Brighton or Blackpool or Bognor Regis, at Bournemouth, Clacton, Margate, Hastings, or wherever they went in their thousands for a holiday by the sea. Such a holiday is different from the New Zealand variety.

The English have an infinite capacity for enjoying themselves in the open air when the weather is fine. I cannot say that their idea of a day at the seaside is altogether what I consider enjoyment. For me there are too many people. In New Zealand I have always sought the solitary places; and I think that is a fairly typical New Zealand attitude. Here, you might have the same attitude, but it would merely be a state of mind. Of course, I admit that solitude might also be hard to find on the long stretches of New Zealand beaches if there were more than 40 million people living behind them.

My first meeting with the English holiday-by-the-sea was at the celebrated Bognor Regis on the south coast. Although it was so different from home, Bognor was very much as I had expected it to be from descriptions and pictures I had seen. There was the promenade along the sea-front with its seats and chairs for hire (4d for 3 hours), its bandstand, its pebbly shore with wooden groins running at right-angles into the calm waters of the English Channel. There were the little dressing-sheds on wheels—bathing machines—which are taken to the tide's edge. They put me in mind of earlier and more modest days, when neck-to-knee was the rule for bathing suits and bathing meant bobbing up and down near the water's edge. There was, of course, that important piece of English seaside scenery—the pier. All the appurtenances of its amusement pavilion had not been restored since the war, but what the pier may have lacked the promenade had in good measure. Here, if you came to the seaside to ride on merry-go-rounds and dodgem cars, throw hoop-la quoits over trinkets from Birmingham, wear paper hats bearing the motto "Kiss Me," give up your sweets coupons for big bags of candy floss, insert your sixpences in slot machines, have your fortune told on a printed card, indulge your appetite for prawns and winkles, the scope of your diversions was unlimited. In spite of the pebbles, children on the shore were

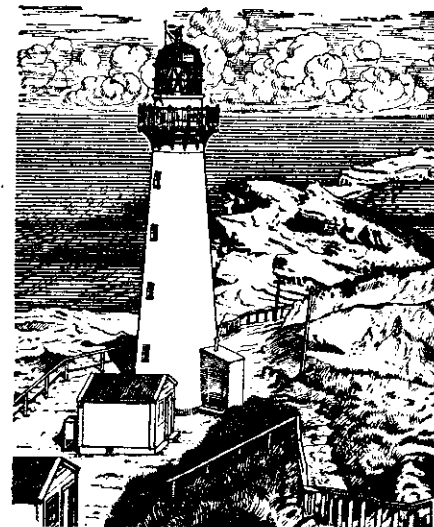
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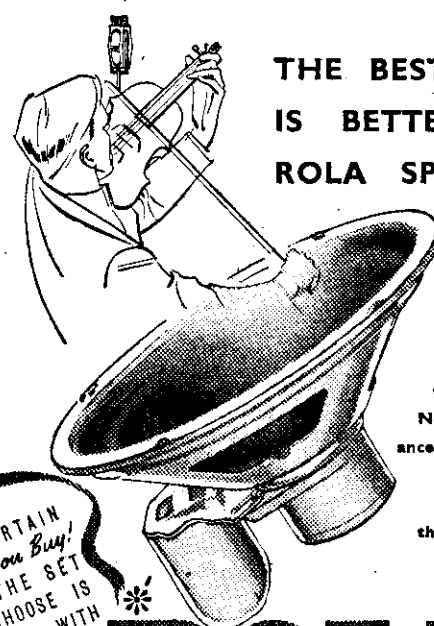
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