

Bournemouth and an Aspect of British Tourism

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Introduction

Bournemouth is a seaside resort on the south coast of England. It is located about 105 miles southwest from London.⁽¹⁾ I don't think many people know about Bournemouth in Japan. I went to Bournemouth to study English in the summer of 2005. It was the first time to go abroad for me, and everything was new and very exciting. I stayed in Bournemouth for five weeks from 1 August to 5 September; the time passed very quickly.

Before I went there, I had a typical image about the city; I thought Bournemouth was a city for blue-eyed and blond haired people who speak English. However, I found Bournemouth is a multi-cultural city, and many different people from different countries live there. Also I heard many different languages spoken there. I went to the Anglo-Continental International Language School, where there are many people from all over the world learning English. In such a multi-cultural atmosphere, I realized how useful English was for multi-cultural communication. I thought it was wonderful that I could talk with people from different countries in a common language, English. We also taught our own languages to each other and I made a lot of friends from other countries.

I stayed at an English family's house. My host mother was English but her husband was Italian, and they had a son and a daughter. The son lived near the house, and his wife is Chinese. At first, my host family had three guests including me and two girls from Turkey and Korea. Later, only the Korean girl and I stayed there. The Korean girl was the same age as I was. We went to the same English school, and we were good friends the whole time. We went to school together everyday, and went shopping in the center of the city. After school, we often went for a walk then some other people said to us, "Ni hao" in Chinese because they thought we were Chinese. I found out we looked very similar for many people even though we were from different countries, Japan, Korea and China. During my first trip to Bournemouth, the people around me recognized me as an Asian rather than Japanese. It was not what I expected because I had hardly been conscious of being Asian before.

As a Japanese or Asian girl who went abroad for the first time, I tried to explore the brave new world as much as possible. Bournemouth is at the seaside and has a beautiful long beach and the Bournemouth Pier. In summer, they are crowded with people playing with beach balls, playing on the sands, swimming in the sea, sunbathing, and enjoying the seaside in other ways. Also in summer, many events take place on the beach. For example, I saw a big slide, which is open only to children. Some people build sand sculptors on the beach copying some famous characters such as Harry Potter. Every Friday at 10 p.m. during the summer season, five-minute fireworks were displayed in the sky near the Pier. It was sponsored by a local radio station.⁽²⁾ I don't think it was as interesting and impressive as Japanese ones partly because, in England, the sun sets much later in summer, even at 10 p.m. it is not dark enough to enjoy fireworks. However, I like the Bournemouth seaside much better than Japanese one. In Bournemouth, you can see a perfect beautiful deep blue sky on a sunny day.



The Bournemouth beach (Photo by Mariko Sato)

More than a year has already passed since I went to Bournemouth, but the memories are still vivid in my heart. In this paper, I would like to revisit my favorite city, Bournemouth, reviewing its geography and history. First, Bournemouth as a tourist's favorite will be overviewed. Next, we will see how Bournemouth has been developed. The railway is closely related to its development. Third, how the railway was developed in England and introduced to Bournemouth, and how the city changed with the railway. We can hardly write about the development of the railway and tourism in England without mentioning Thomas Cook's tour. Thomas Cook might be familiar with the modern tourists as a name on the travelers' check. Actually he played a very important part in the tourist industry of England. I hope my exploration of the historical background of my favorite city will show you an aspect of the British culture.

I . Bournemouth, the Tourist's favorite

As a beginning, I would like to explain Bournemouth's location. The city is next to Poole in the west and Christchurch in the east, and overlooks Poole Bay. In this part of the south coast, you can enjoy the warmest, driest, and sunniest weather in England. Bournemouth is one of the most popular tourist destinations on the English south coast, because of its fine long beach, the wide range of accommodation and entertainment, the mild climate, and an easy access to the New Forest, the Jurassic Coast, Devon, and the Dorset and Hampshire countryside.

The main shopping streets in the centre of the city are just behind the seafront on either side of the small Bourne River; a footpath leads down to the sea from The Square through the Bournemouth Central Gardens.⁽³⁾ The Central Garden is a well-kept, wonderfully beautiful place. When I visited there, I saw many kinds of pretty flowers and big trees in the garden, and there are always lots of people sitting on the grass and enjoying the peaceful view. I have to mention the Bournemouth Eye, which is a very big balloon set in the garden. The balloon goes up to the sky, and you can ride on the balloon and see the wonderful view of Bournemouth from up above. The Bournemouth Eye is a landmark in central Bournemouth.



The Bournemouth Eye in the Central Garden (Photo by Mariko Sato)

Furthermore, Bournemouth is one of the major English language centers in England and has lots of English language schools that attracts thousands of foreign students every year. If you are thinking of learning English abroad,

I'll definitely recommend Bournemouth. I promise you will have a good time learning English with lots of fun in this beautiful city.

II. The Development of Bournemouth

In this part, I would like to explain about Bournemouth's geography and history. First, let's see how Bournemouth has been populated. In 1880, it had about 17,000 people, and the population was increased into 60,000 by 1900 and reached 150,000 by 1990. In the latest census, there were 163,441 people. Bournemouth is a part of a built-up area known as the South East Dorset conurbation which includes Poole and Christchurch. The combined population is 383,713, so the whole area is being sufficiently populous to be one of the major retail and commercial centers in the south of England.⁽⁴⁾ What is immediately apparent is that the city grew up quickly. The development of railway is deeply related with the rapid development of the city.

How did Bournemouth start to develop? Some historical background should be shown. Originally, Bournemouth used to be a place of solitude. The Queen Mother's ancestor, Mary Eleanor Bowes, then the richest heiress in England, lived at Pokes down in the 1790s to escape the clutches of her second husband. This set the tone of a select retreat in Bournemouth, where the wealthiest people in society came to escape from the busy world. At that time, some land owners who were not sure what to do with their estates planted pine tree, so later people called Bournemouth a pine city by the sea.⁽⁵⁾

The development of Bournemouth is possibly found at the start of the 19th century. Until the early 19th century, the Bournemouth area was a heath land with a maze of pathways and streams, and the only known inhabitants were cows and maybe a few groups of gypsies.⁽⁶⁾ When retired army officer Lewis Tregonwell visited in 1810, he found only a bridge crossing a small stream at the head of an unspoilt valley that led out into Poole Bay. An inn had recently been built at what is now called The Square (The centre of Bournemouth), catering both for travelers and for the smugglers who lurked in the area at night. There is a story about Captain Tregonwell and his wife, who were poor, and fell in love with the heath and wanted a house there. They were so impressed by the area that they bought several acres and built their home, which is today a part of the Royal Exeter Hotel. Tregonwell also planted pine trees, providing a sheltered walk to the beach.⁽⁷⁾

By 1840, Bournemouth could boast of a few residents and actually became known as a village. By 1850, the first shops were being built as well as a few Inns, and soon Bournemouth had its first police force and local government.⁽⁸⁾ By 1890, Bournemouth was recognized by Queen Victoria, who granted it the status of a Borough, complete with its own Mayor. The citizens of the town were able to take firmer control of their own destiny. An Under Cliff Drive was laid out along the beach, a Pavilion was built and Bournemouth's parks were laid out with drives and golf courses. A municipal orchestra was established at the Winter Gardens. Hospitals, schools, libraries and houses were provided by the local efforts of the people of Bournemouth.⁽⁹⁾

As located along the sea, the pier is one of the most important landmarks in Bournemouth. The first pier consisted of a short wooden pier that was completed in 1856. It was soon damaged by the sea water. This was replaced by a much longer wooden pier, designed by George Rennie, which opened in 1861.⁽¹⁰⁾ However this also suffered from the damage caused by the wild sea. In 1878, this was replaced by iron one. Although it was closed during the World War I and II, the pier was reopened in 1950. Ten years later, a theatre was opened, the following reconstruction work was done, and a new theatre and leisure centre were opened in 1981. This pier still stands today.⁽¹¹⁾



The Pier in Bournemouth (Photo by Mariko Sato)

Just after the turn of the century, bathing machines became popular. This sounds very strange now, but ladies and gentlemen at that time didn't want to show their body in bathing suits, so they need tented wagon to enjoy sea-bathing secretly. Those for ladies and for gentlemen were built separately on the east side of the pier.⁰² A familiar sight on the beaches was the bathing machine in which ladies were able to disrobe as they were pulled out to sea. The privacy offered by the machine was not kept for a long time, because in deeper water the ladies were helped into the water by the bathing machine attendants while, from the shore, gentleman peeped the scene through spyglasses. Men were bathing on a different part of the beach, where, it is surprising to discover, they bathed naked (28).⁰³

III. The Railway

As I mentioned above, the development of Bournemouth is closely related with the invention and development of the railway. According to Shigeru Koike, the "railway" is one of the most important keywords when we talk about the English culture and the society in the 19th century England. Koike points out that the railway became a big system which supported the industrial revolution (4).⁰⁴

On 15th September, 1830, England started the railway service between Liverpool and Manchester, which was called Liverpool and Manchester Railway (L.M.R.). Before, the city traffic resource was the toll roads or waterway, but the railway quickly became the main one as soon as it appeared. The railway evidently helped the city to develop the financier's idea. Not only offering a traffic road, it also succeeded in offering more service, for example, the safety, the high speed, and the exact time. The visitors preferred the railway even though the fare was a little more expensive.⁰⁵

Let's see the development of the railway in Bournemouth. The railway played a very important part in the development and popularity of the towns and villages along the South Coastal areas. At that time, Bournemouth was just a small village and had no need for a railway station, but by 1856 the village was expanding so quickly, and there were plans of extending the railway to Bournemouth. However, these plans were turned down by Parliament as being too expensive. Finally, it was agreed to extend the line from Christchurch, and in 1867, a plans to build a station at Bournemouth was being prepared. There were many setbacks to this route, mainly financial, but finally, on 14th March, 1870, the first train with passengers arrived at Bournemouth.

In 1872, an extension line was built in Bournemouth, and the first direct service from Bournemouth to London was opened. In 1885, a second station opened in Bournemouth, called Bournemouth West, with routes up to the

Midlands and Bristol. However, this station which is still used today was demolished in 1965. In 1893, another station was built, called Bournemouth Central. It was built with typical Victorian grandeur and boasted a fantastic glass roof. In 1980, plans were put forward to destroy the station but they were rejected because the station was listed as one of the most historically important building. However, during storms in the 1990's, the roof suffered severe damage and eventually in the late 1990's remodeling of the station began.⁶⁶



Bournemouth Central Station (Photo by Mariko Sato)

Thanks to the railway, Victorian people could easily have access to some destination in England, and holidays and days out at the seaside became more and more popular. The railway allowed people to enjoy the long vacation or day trips (234).⁶⁷ In the early 19th century, the trip to famous resort areas such as Bath and Brighton were only for rich people. Afterward, in the middle of 19th century, people of lower middle class could go to some resort places such as Margate and Ramsgate. Any kinds of workers could enjoy holiday, and after 1844, people who joined a Thomas Cook's tour appeared one after another (235).⁶⁸

IV. Thomas Cook's Tour

We can hardly understand the development of the tourism in Britain without mentioning Thomas Cook's tour. Thomas Cook was born in 1808 in Melbourne, Derbyshire; it was also the year when Richard Trevithick invented the railways, on which Cook later launched his excursion business (9).⁶⁹ Thomas Cook was a manager of a printing office when he moved to Leicester in 1841, and he made his first venture into the excursion business for profit by arranging a trip to the seaside in Liverpool in 1845. He had to negotiate with four railway companies, the Midland, the Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Manchester, and Manchester and Liverpool (28). The trip consisted of 15 first classes and 10 second classes. This first seaside trip gathered 350 people, and then he wrote a guide book, *A Handbook of the Trip to Liverpool*. In the succeeding years, from 1846 until 1865 when he opened his first office in London, he had to work hard to make his excursion business a success (30). According to Edmund Swinglehurst, the railway companies were not to give him concessions because they were not sure that they could operate the excursions themselves or that enough passengers could be found to make special services worthwhile. However, Cook's task was to convince them that he could find the passengers (30). So far Cook had group tours and the issues of guide books, and he came up with the new idea of the "traveler's check", which made it possible to change the paper check into money everywhere; hotels, exchangers or banks (236).⁷⁰

Conclusion

I went to Bournemouth just once, so before I went there, I didn't know anything about its history or culture. Through this research, I have discovered new points of view about Bournemouth. I was surprised at the amount of

information accessible on the internet. It was quite new to me that Bournemouth used to be just a small village with 17,000 people. However, it suddenly grew up into a city with 150,000 people during 19th century. Thanks to the pier and Bournemouth station, many people started to visit there, live there, and started some businesses. Today, Bournemouth is one of the famous seaside resorts and attracts tourists from all over the world wide, especially in summer. I would like to go to Bournemouth again and stay there longer than I did the last time. When I go there next, I will look for the pine trees planted by the old land owners around the sea. Can you imagine what Bournemouth looks like after reading this paper? Would you like to visit this city? Do go to Bournemouth one time and you will surely have a good time!

My first trip to England taught me how wonderful it is to express myself in English. I am very happy to introduce my favorite city, Bournemouth, to you in English. Now I really think learning English is wonderful. I'll try to learn more, and it will help me explore another brave new world.

Notes

- (1) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bournemouth> (September 25, 2006)
- (2) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/bmouth.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (3) http://www.vrbournemouth.co.uk/bournemouth-tour/source/bourne_07.html (November 13, 2006)
- (4) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bournemouth> (September 25, 2006)
- (5) http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Council/Council_History/default.asp (September 25, 2006)
- (6) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/bmouth.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (7) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bournemouth> (September 25, 2006)
- (8) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/bmouth.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (9) http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Council/Council_History/default.asp (September 25, 2006)
- (10) <http://www.theheritagetrail.co.uk/piers/bournemouth%20pier.htm> (December 18, 2006)
- (11) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/bmouth.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (12) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/bmouth.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (13) Swinglehurst, Edmund, Ed. *The Romantic Journey*
- (14) Referred to Masaie Matsumura.
- (15) Author translated.
- (16) <http://www.highcliffevillage.co.uk/history/railways2.htm> (December 11, 2006)
- (17) Referred to Christine Hughes.
- (18) Author translated.
- (19) Swinglehurst, Edmund, ed. *The Romantic Journey*. Great Britain. 1974
- (20) Author translated.

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