

PORTRAIT OF SOUTHPORT

Andy Stansfield

The pleasant seaside resort of Southport has long been synonymous with forms of leisure which can only be described as refined: exercising horses along the beach, a leisurely stroll along the Pier, window shopping along Lord Street's world famous shopping boulevard or a round of golf on the renowned Royal Birkdale course, one of five in Southport. It is a gentle, sophisticated town with humble beginnings, a cluster of hamlets which combined to form a genteel resort to balance boisterous Blackpool a few miles north.

It was in the early eighteenth century when local innkeeper William Sutton built the first sea-bathing house on the beach; the gradual additions of a railway, marine lake and municipal gardens increased the town's attraction to visitors. And speaking of floral attractions, the annual Flower Show is an event which draws huge crowds from all over the north-west, while the Botanic Gardens Museum is a popular venue which also includes a fine collection of porcelain, local water-colours, plus a section devoted to British birds. Five miles away, at Martin Mere, the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust bird sanctuary provides a haven for hundreds of species of domestic and migratory birds while wildlife enthusiasts can also see red squirrels in the pinewoods of the area, one of a handful of places left in England where our native squirrel survives.

Through more than 140 superb colour images, Andy Stansfield explores the unique atmosphere of this special coastal resort, from the ripples on the sand to those created by some of its famous and occasionally contentious residents.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Stansfield is a Lancashire-based photographer and author who specialises in travel, outdoor leisure and events. He has written and illustrated numerous titles for Halsgrove, including *Perfect Bowland*, as well as a number of photography books.

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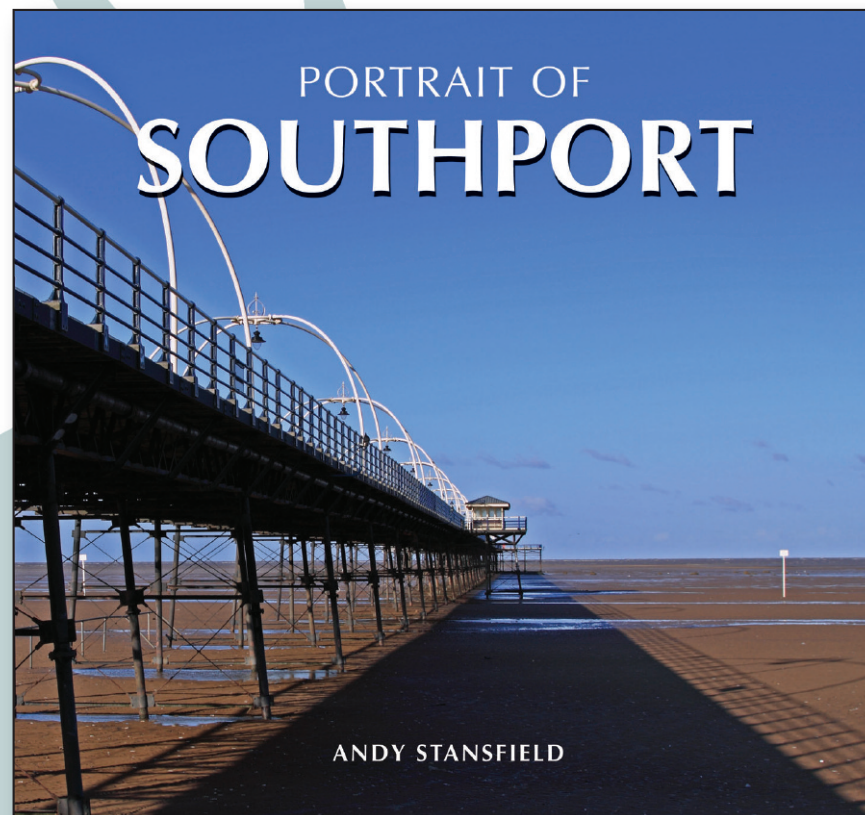
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Lord Street. It is often assumed that boulevards were originally a French design, but Southport was equally responsible for developing the idea.



Above: The gaudy exterior of Pleasureland is certainly eye-catching and not what might be expected of genteel Southport.



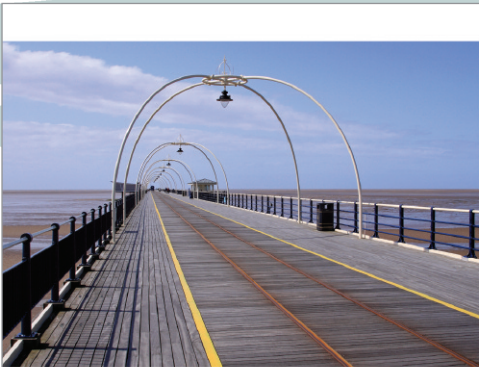
Top right: A couple take a break from shopping, dwarfed by the pillars of the War Memorial.



Right: High dive. One of many sculptures along the seafront.

Below: Royal Birkdale. The clubhouse of this world-famous golf course nestling among the sand dunes.

Example of a double-page spread.



Vanishing point.
The pier seems to go for ever, much like the sea at low tide as it disappears out into Morecambe Bay.



Architectural jumble.
Looking back towards the town centre from the beginning of the pier.

