

# **Crown & Wise-Marcus Funding Proposal**

**Reversing the Tide**

**“Declining Local Tourism in Britain: Can a  
Small Coastal Town Make a Comeback?”**

**A Multi-Media Journalism Project  
Broadcast Journalism/International  
Relations  
Spring 2014**

## Project Mission:

The goal of my capstone project is to investigate the changes currently gripping the British coastal tourism industry.

Coastal tourism is facing significant decline, especially in one of Britain's most desolate seaside towns, Great Yarmouth. I will use video, written articles, photographs, and modern social media such as Facebook and Twitter to document how people in the Great Yarmouth tourism industry are adapting to significant change.



Great Yarmouth, England On a Map

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Marine Parade, Great Yarmouth,

“Great Yarmouth depends on the tourist trade to survive. You have to make the town attractive to tourists first of all.” (John Kendall, of Leicester, comment made to *BBC Talk*).

“I think Yarmouth is a great place - it may seem tacky and cheap, but I have been going there for many years and it is great fun. I must admit that some things could be improved!” (Becky Coleman, of Norwich, comment made to *BBC Talk*)

“The trouble with Great Yarmouth is that it doesn't know what it wants to be - a holiday resort or a hive of port activity?” (Steve Peterson, of Great Yarmouth, comment made to *BBC Talk*)



Great Yarmouth Main Boardwalk (1950)

-Tourism has been part of Great Yarmouth's Culture for over 60 years

## Background:

One of the hardest things for a country to accept is dramatic change, especially when it involves part of its national identity. For years Great Britain has thrived from “tourism culture” in its seaside towns and has considered them a source of pride. In fact, just after World War II Britain's tourism-based seaside towns were generating around 15% of the country's GDP. Now, they account for only 9%. Those high-end Bed and Breakfasts' and lively boardwalks that once

attracted vacation-goers are not so common nowadays as the world becomes more globalized and more Britons can afford to vacation overseas, resulting in a drastic loss of revenue for many of these seaside businesses. Coastal towns are economically and socially crumbling in what some Britons view as an irreversible trend. My project will illustrate this by focusing on the significant decline occurring within Great Yarmouth. [According to a report from a London-based think tank](#), the Center for Social Justice, Great Yarmouth is suffering from high unemployment, poor health, and poor education – more so than other coastal towns and all due to a slow decline in tourism revenue, limited alternate tourist attractions (other than the sea and gambling) and its relatively isolated location on the east coast away from any industrial centers other than Norwich 22 miles away. Great Yarmouth (also known as Yarmouth) is part of a national pattern in which many seaside towns must receive millions in aid from the government just to stay financially afloat. Many hotels in Yarmouth have been converted into welfare housing, there are higher rates of teen pregnancy and alcoholism, and excessive graffiti can be found in public areas. A vicious cycle is formed as declining tourism creates poverty and poverty further deepens the decline in tourism- making it hard for small business owners to make a living. My goal is to document this struggle in a personal and compelling way.

The deep passion I have for telling this story and telling it well comes from my family background. From 1973 to 1981, my father lived in Great Yarmouth. His parents bought an old house near the town's main boardwalk with every last penny they had. They converted into a bed and breakfast that was successful during the peak years of tourism. However, four years ago my father returned to Great Yarmouth after living in the U.S. for over 30 years only to see what was once a tourism hotspot struggling to stay afloat. My research so far has found that despite economic setbacks, locals are making a strong effort to revive what's left of British coastal tourism, mostly through community-organized initiatives like creative ad campaigns and development projects. They are fighting to hold on to an industry that has defined their community for more than sixty years. Although my coverage will pertain specifically to the people of Great Yarmouth, I expect the themes of adversity, adaptation, and recuperation to resonate with any audience, no matter where they come from.

## **Project Methodology**

Questions I Plan to Answer:

- 1.) Does a decline in tourism mean the decline of Great Yarmouth as a prominent coastal town?
- 2.) Can new industry, like green energy, provide the necessary financial boost to improve the lifestyles of local residents?
- 3.) How are local participants in the tourism industry coping with the crisis personally? In what ways has this affected their lifestyle – socially and economically?

I plan to travel to Great Yarmouth to document these personal accounts first hand, a task that will require funding from the Crown/Wise Awards Program. Using the multi-media skills I have learned as a journalism student in the Newhouse school as well as an intern and employee for local and network news stations around the country, I plan to illustrate the tourism decline in Yarmouth using photography and videography. I will produce narratives which will eventually be placed on a professional website designed by myself with the help of my capstone advisor,

Seth Gitner. With the goal of providing focused and meaningful coverage, I will explore the tourism decline through five main interviewees:

**Liz Coates** – a local newspaper editor for the [Eastern Daily Press](#)

Mrs. Coates has been reporting from Yarmouth for over 10 years and has seen the community transform dramatically. She interacts with local residents on a daily basis and knows first hand what problems they face as tourism brings in less and less revenue. I plan to shadow Mrs. Coates as she goes about her daily routine and document the types of stories she reports on as well as her personal experience reporting on a coastal town facing a dire financial situation.

**Albert Jones** - the owner of “[Pleasure Beach](#)” (the local amusement park)

Mr. Jones owns one of Yarmouth’s largest and most well known tourist attractions – the Pleasure Beach Amusement park. In a preliminary interview, Mr. Jones tells me that it has been difficult for him to afford the upkeep of his park and attract out of town customers. This amusement park has been in his family for generations and he does not want to see it close. Mr. Jones is currently working on trying to bring a casino into town to help boost tourism.

**Peter Jay** - the owner of a local circus called [the Hippodrome](#)

The Hippodrome is Britain’s only surviving total circus building. It puts on a variety of shows – everything from magic to water spectacles. Mr. Jay describes the Hippodrome as a traditional tourist attraction and remains concerned about its ability to survive. Mr. Jay has had to get extremely creative with how he promotes his shows and has had to take on a more diverse pool of acts.

**Ian Scott** – the owner of Pub on the Prom and manager of a nearby hotel

Mr. Scott owns a popular local pub that he is very proud of. However, the tourism decline has changed the type of customers he is used to serving. Mr. Scott says an influx of foreign laborers into Great Yarmouth has boosted crime and has made many locals feel unwelcome. Mr. Scott is concerned how the overall perception of Yarmouth throughout Britain and hopes he can retain the few local regulars he still serves.

**And one character** who will be determined upon my arrival (enterprised) and after I’ve done some investigation.

In addition to interviewing these individuals, I will creatively capture them going about their diverse daily routines. This will help the viewer understand and relate to the struggles and triumphs of each interviewee. I plan to speak with them about the changes they have seen within Great Yarmouth and how declining tourism has altered their lifestyle and business strategy. **I have established contact and confirmed interviews with each of these four locals.** In addition to the video and photo portion of this project, I plan to conduct interviews with local officials at the forefront of the recovery attempt, such as those from the Great Yarmouth Tourist Authority and the Great Yarmouth Heritage Partnership, in order to collect information that will be used in written articles and blog posts. These expert interviews will be used to substantiate and provide context for the claims of my five core interviewees. After I gather all of my media material, I plan to produce a total 5 feature videos (one about each interviewee), 5 in depth articles about

each interviewee that include input from local authorities, 3 articles about the tourism decline in general and how Great Yarmouth compares to other coastal towns, at least 10 blog posts about my day to day experiences and process of information gathering (to increase transparency), as well as a gallery of at least 60 photos taken during my time in Great Yarmouth. This project is partially data driven, meaning statistics that demonstrate the decline of Yarmouth, like the increasing unemployment rate over a span of 10 years, will be a significant component of the final website and will be incorporated into my articles.

To execute the written article portion of my vision for this project, I plan to speak with local officials that are experiencing the difficulties a decline in tourism has brought to Yarmouth first hand. I have established contact with three experts that I plan to interview:

**David Helsdon:** Great Yarmouth Borough Council Tourism Department.  
Site Supervisor & Event Administration for Great Yarmouth

**Alan Carr:** [Great Yarmouth Tourist Authority](#) CEO  
Event & Finance Management

**Bernard Williamson** – [Great Yarmouth Borough Council](#)  
Head of the Transformation and Regeneration

### **General Funding Use:**

Most of the funding would be used to cover my travel to and from Great Yarmouth as well as lodging and meals while I am over there. I plan to spend a day or two speaking with and filming each interviewee so as to provide as detailed coverage as possible. This will result in expenditures on bus fare and/or entry in parks/museums affiliated with the interviewee as well as three meals daily. I am able to obtain all the video and editing equipment necessary for the project through the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. The funding would be spent on logistics and making my travel to and within Great Yarmouth run smoothly, which will result in better video and better story telling. I can focus my attention on the project completely if I have enough money to afford sufficient accommodations and enough food to eat.

### **Fieldwork Execution:**

On the evening of May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, I will fly out from Hancock International Airport (Syracuse, NY) and arrive at Norwich International Airport (Norwich, England) mid-morning on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Once I arrive in Norwich, I will take a 40-minute bus to the Bed and Breakfast I will be staying at ([The Marina Guesthouse](#)). I will then prepare all of my camera gear, establish an Internet connection and conduct an interview with a local official at the Great Yarmouth Borough Council (David Helsdon). I will finish the day by blogging about my first impressions. In the following 12 days, I will produce a feature story on each of my interviewees, take photos, and conduct interviews for my written articles. I will travel throughout Great Yarmouth by taxi, bus, or by walking (the entire town is only 5 miles long). On the evening of May 21<sup>st</sup>, I will take a bus/ taxi back to Norwich International Airport and fly back to Syracuse, NY to start uploading and organizing my media material. The footage will be consolidated onto a special hard-drive dedicated to this project and I will begin the editing process. I will work closely with my project advisors and Newhouse professors Seth Gitner and Randy Wenner, to ensure that my scripts and narratives flow well and tell compelling stories for each character. Professor Gitner will then help me design a professional website on which my video, photographs, written articles, and blog posts will be uploaded and managed in a way that makes sense to the general viewer.

Having designed my own personal website (XXXXXX), I will play a major role in the creation of a website for this project.

### **Project Vision**

The overall vision for this project is to tell the story of Great Yarmouth residents who have faced with tough time, especially as the world economy attempts to rebound after the 2008 financial crisis. Official Great Yarmouth Borough Council statistics show over thirty five percent of Great Yarmouth residents have no job qualifications in addition to facing a myriad of problems like poor health and high unemployment. Each interviewee I have chosen has had to face the economic challenges of declining tourism in their own individual and unique ways. My goal is to make the stories of people in a town like Yarmouth, which many people in the world likely haven't heard of, resonate with any audience. Although one aim I have for this project is to foster universal understanding and help my audience relate to my interviewees, I also seek to portray what makes Yarmouth unique. The people of Yarmouth are facing a situation in which they must change or face the consequences. After preliminary interviews, I am confident each of interviewees has a captivating story to tell.

I am confident in my ability to plan, organize, and execute this project based on my past experiences as a reporter and videographer from a small station in Illinois to a production assistant at ABC News in Washington D.C. This project has been something I've been looking to do since my first semester at Newhouse after I spoke with an honors student who had just completed a similar project. This project holds deep historical and familial relevance for me. However due to nonexistent personal funding, I can't make this project a reality without financial aid from the Crown/Wise awards.

## **Capstone Timeline:**

**November 2013-January 2014:** General research on Great Yarmouth demographics, history, economy, and social sphere

**January 2014:** Compile excel chart of relevant statistics that help illustrate project, solidify 5 main characters and do a preliminary interview over email or by phone.

**February 2014 –March 2014:** Compile list of all questions I plan to ask each character, map out addresses of each location in Great Yarmouth I plan to shoot film or conduct an interview, compile preliminary shot list of all video I plan to gather

**April 2014:** Arrange times/place for interviews with each character, Arrange to check out a still photo camera, a video camera, 2 wireless mic sets, 1 lav mic set, a tripod, and an SD card from Newhouse equipment center for project, ensure all camera gear works. Create Twitter and Facebook account for project.

**May 8th-May 20<sup>th</sup>:** Travel to Great Yarmouth and conduct fieldwork: gather footage, conduct interviews, write blogs, and take photographs.

**May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014:** Return to Syracuse, NY to upload and organize field material.

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 – August 2014:** work with capstone advisor to plan and design final project website, finish writing and edit travel blogs, select best photographs, finalize and compile all statistics about Yarmouth for website, write narrative video pieces and select soundbites fro interviews, write reflection paper.

**August 2014 – November 2014:** Edit all narrative stories together, generate and organize final website, upload all media (blogs, photos, video, Facebook posts, tweets).