"Unbroken Towards the Sea:" The National Trust and the Rise of Coastal Preservation in Late 19th and 20th Century Britain

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, a movement to protect Britain’s natural beauty commenced with the founding of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. Established in 1895, the Trust became an organization devoted to preserving the natural landscape of Britain from increasing urbanization and environmental disfigurements from unrestrained industrial development. While the Trust’s acquisitions included areas of outstanding natural beauty, coastal preservation was at first an afterthought. The debate surrounding the coastal acquisitions that took place between 1895 and 1938 was pivotal in the Trust’s development of a specifically coastline ethic, which led to the Coastal Preservation Committee and, ultimately, a new environmental policy agenda with the founding of Enterprise Neptune in 1965.