**Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley** (1797-1851)

**Place:** Sandgate, Hythe, Canterbury

**Publication of Interest:** The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck

“In the neighbourhood of Hythe a ravine, the bed of a stream, divides these acclivities, which on one side are abrupt, on the other softly rounded as they gradually disappear”

* The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck

**Article:**

In 1832, in order to escape the cholera epidemic in London, Mary Shelley moved to the small coastal town of Sandgate, situated between Hythe and Folkestone. It was said that the town was inexpensive and provided a healthy alternative to London for Shelley and her son, Percy. While in Sandgate Shelley offered to house her friend Edward John Trelawny’s daughter Maria Julia. Soon after her arrival Shelley realised, she was unhappy with the girl’s company and by mid-September she was gone. Shelley remained in Sandgate until the 10th September, however it is documented that she visited a friend for tea around the 26th September, therefore she may have stayed longer. [[1]](#footnote-1) Sandgate has been home to a host of influential authors, including [H.G Wells](20c-wellshg-biography), who like Shelley, was instrumental in the development of modern science fiction. [[2]](#footnote-2)

In 1830, a couple of years before relocating to Kent, Shelley published \_The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck\_. The novel follows the story of Perkin Warbeck, historically viewed as a pretender set on claiming the throne. However, the novel follows the consensus that he was in fact the Duke of York, Prince Richard. The novel tells of the adventures and tribulations of Richard, but also focuses closely on the female characters. In volume II chapter nine Shelley describes in detail the importance of Canterbury and Hythe’s position and pays particular attention to the beauty of Hythe and its surrounding areas. She also looks at the social position of Hythe and its residents highlighting that “the people of Hythe, fishers, or such poor traders as supplied the fishermen with a few coarse necessaries, were rouzed from the usual monotony of their lives by the aspect of this fleet.” [[3]](#footnote-3) She captures the importance of the south coast, whilst also drawing attention to its residence and landscapes.

**Bibliography**

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1. 525, Footnote 6, Shelley [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sherborne [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Shelley, Chapter IX [↑](#footnote-ref-3)