**Israel Zangwill (21 January 1864 - 1 August 1926)**

**Holidays in Ramsgate, Margate, Broadstairs and Dover**

And a little to the left twinkled ‘The Green Man’—no friendly public-house, but a danger-signal from behind the [Goodwin Sands](/dickens/david-copperfield-goodwin-sands), likewise visible but by miracle.

And as we marvelled at these jewels of the night, that shamed the absentee stars, the brake stood still with a jolt and a shock that threw our gay company into momentary alarm. But it was nothing. Only a horse fallen down dead! One of our overworked wheelers had suddenly sunk upon the earth, a carcase. Dust to dust! Who shall tell of the daylong agony of the dumb beast as he plodded pertinaciously through the heat, ministering to the pleasures of his masters?

‘Without Prejudice’, 1893

Israel Zangwill’s first recorded encounter with Kent dates to a holiday in Thanet in 1881 when he was sixteen. The future author of \_*Children of the Ghetto*\_ ‘was wandering about the [Ramsgate](/19c/19c-ramsgate) sands’[[1]](#footnote-1) when he spotted a writing competition, advertised in an abandoned issue of \_*Society*\_ magazine. Years later he was delighted to be told by the judge that a number of well-known authors had entered against his winning story ‘Professor Grimmer’.[[2]](#footnote-2)

As an adult Zangwill was less enraptured with the town; in ‘Without Prejudice’, his regular column for the \_Pall Mall Magazine\_, he jocosely repeated a story going round the clubs in 1893 that an ill-starred [Henry James]( /19c/19c-jamesh-hever-castle) had gone there to find some ‘peace’.[[3]](#footnote-3) He was still less impressed by neighbouring [Margate](/19c/19c-margate):

Stand on [Margate](/19c/19c-margate) Parade and look seaward, and the main impression is Beecham’s Pills. Sail towards Margate Pier and look landward, and the main impression is Jeyes’ Disinfectant Powder.[[4]](#footnote-4)

He was however taken with [Broadstairs](/dickens/broadstairs-19th-century), ‘where [Dickens](/dickens/dickens-biography) might still look from [Bleak House](/dickens/dickens-fort-house) on as dainty a scene as in the days when he lounged on the dear old, black, weather-beaten pier.’[[5]](#footnote-5) Zangwill was there in July 1893 when a mysterious delivery of dynamite to a summer visitor, one Mr Richards, caused the death of the man and injured the builder constructing his new house.[[6]](#footnote-6) In true Dickensian style, Zangwill’s account of this incident positions the writer as honorary local (completely ignoring the fate of the hapless Mr Richards), ‘We were very proud of the Mystery, we of [Broadstairs](), and of the space we filled in the papers.’[[7]](#footnote-7) Nonetheless he may have felt safer at a distance from Kent, as his biographer Meri-Jane Rochelson places him in Devon with [Jerome K. Jerome](/19c/19c-jerome-biography) from August to September of the same year.[[8]](#footnote-8) Jerome was having a difficult time with the business arrangements for \_The Idler\_, the monthly he was editing with [Robert Barr](/19c/19c-barr-biography), and may well have felt in need of a holiday.

Zangwill was in [Dover](/19c/19c-dover) (with no dynamite incidents) in July 1904, working on his play \_Jinny the Carrier\_[[9]](#footnote-9). It was also from here that he wrote in November 1905 to thank the \_Labour Leader\_ for an article expressing ‘sympathy with me and my people’, which he had ‘received with sad pleasure’.[[10]](#footnote-10) It is indeed not always easy to remember that, in Zangwill’s own words, ‘a serious man may be humorous, still less that a humorous man is always serious.’[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Article by Professor Carolyn Oulton**

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1. ‘The Premier and the Painter’163. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘The Premier and the Painter’ 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘Without Prejudice’ 901. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘Without Prejudice’ 902. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ‘Without Prejudice’ 902. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ‘Supposed Dynamite Outrage at Broadstairs’. Zangwill refers in his ‘Without Prejudice’ column in 1893 to having been in Broadstairs at the time of the ‘dynamite mystery’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ‘Without Prejudice’ 902. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rochelson 85. Jerome wrote to his publisher Arrowsmith from London, on 15 August, saying that he could not get to Bristol, but would try to come for a day towards the end of the month. It is possible that he joined Zangwill in September. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Rochelson. Chronology. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ‘Swiss Second Ballot’. \_Labour Leader\_. 24 November 1905. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Preface to the sixth edition of *The Bachelors’ Club* (xii). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)