

Pier Review

SOUTHEND PIER MUSEUM FOUNDATION TRUST LTD

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 802105



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Tim Watts

I'm delighted to be able to report that the museum was able to reopen in late July and we welcomed visitors on weekends for three months before closing for the winter. Visitor numbers weren't all we hoped for but it generated some much needed income and the feedback from those who did visit was overwhelmingly positive. The new displays were popular and the working slot machines have been a regular favourite.

We were delighted to support the HMS Leigh event and entertained several hundred children during the school days. Two exhausting days but very satisfying! We have also accommodated school trips and special interest group visits to the museum.

Some new volunteers enabled us to provide a warmer welcome to our visitors as well as getting involved with practical repairs and enhancing our audio visual displays.

We are still progressing the project to add one of the current pier trains to our collection over the winter, as well as exploring some new displays for the 2022 season.

AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at 2pm on Monday 17 January at the Civic Centre, Victoria Ave, Southend on Sea SS1 9SB. All members are cordially invited to attend. We will also set up a Zoom link for those who would like to observe the meeting online. If you would like to attend personally or via Zoom please RSVP to The Chairman, Southend Pier Museum, Western Esplanade, Southend on Sea SS1 1EE or by emailing chairman@southendpiermuseum.co.uk

AGENDA

Welcome

Minutes of the last meeting

Chairman's report

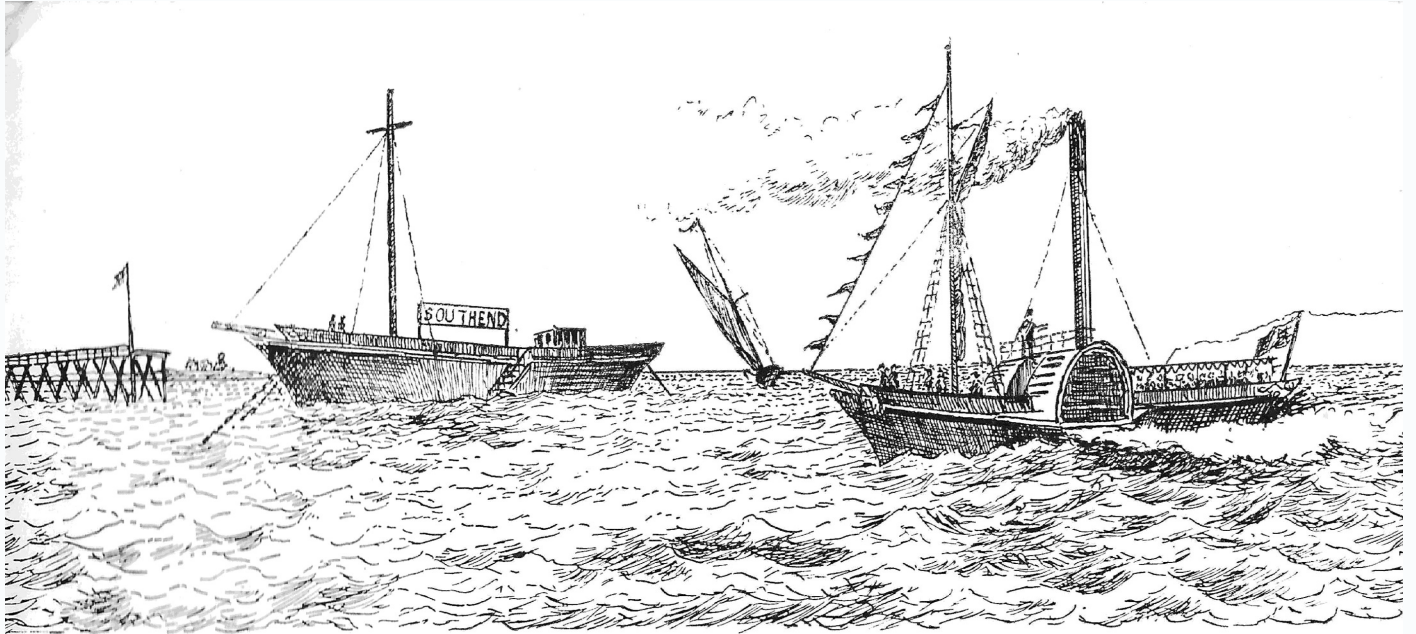
Treasurer's report

Election of Officers

Directors' appointments

Forward plans

FROM THE ARCHIVES by Richard Brown



1842

Before the days of photography, we had to rely on artists impressions to tell us what the Pier was really like. Here's one of the first Pierhead, an old ship called the 'Clarence', which was permanently moored and on which someone had placed something like a station name-board so you knew where you were.

As you can see, the problem was that there was rather a large gap between the Pier and the Pierhead—a gap that was up to a mile at one point. This picture dates from about 1842, when the Pier had nearly got to its full length. Depending on the state of the tide, travellers had a number of options for getting to the Pierhead from the Pier. You could use a gravel path across the mud if the tide was low, and there would be rowing boats to ferry you across to the Pierhead. Whatever you had to do, it was inconvenient and muddy, but despite all this, 20,000 visitors to Southend used the Pierhead in the first five years of the Pier's existence (1829-1834).

ALL ABOARD THE NEW PIER TRAINS



Not long to go before the new trains will be in service—they certainly look smart and bring back the old traditional green and cream livery which so many people remember from days gone by.

I was privileged to get an early viewing and explanation of the first train to arrive—they are high tech, eco friendly and comfortable and although I know it is every little boy's dream to drive a train, I couldn't resist the temptation to be one of the first to sit in the new cab and get the driver's eye view.

They are going to be great and a real boost to wonderful changes that will be happening on the Pier and in the Pier Museum in the coming months.

With an influx of new blood in the volunteers we are working well and have made vast improvements to the Museum and there are more to come. Thanks to everyone who is taking an active part and to our supporters.

Carole Mulroney

THE ROYAL DAFFODIL by Chris Taylor

As a boy in the 50s, I loved going to Margate or Clacton on one of the Eagle Steamers from the end of the pier. My first trip abroad was on a school trip to Boulogne on the Royal Daffodil. and having made various ships' models, including ocean going, in the past, during lockdown I made a model radio controlled Royal Daffodil. Until recently it sat on a shelf, until on a lovely day, with batteries charged and the model 'Daffodil' ready to go into the water at last, we set off for Southchurch Park. It's a simple ride from Ashingdon, so no problem putting the yard-long boat in the boot, complete with the Waitrose (we're posh and go to Waitrose you see.....I wish!) bag containing the control box. There's even a parking space so it's an easy trek across the cricket pitch to the lake.

The lake is so green and weedy you could walk across it. The ducks are in a state of deep depression and steam is coming out of my ears. So I go back home for large Shiraz.. Next day dawns and the weather is still OK so let's go to Maldon – the Council clear lakes there but shout at one another! This time we'll take the 'Ocean Modela' cruise ship too. Two boats on one pond that'll be great fun. So off we go with two yard-long boats, complete with stands out of the boot and put them on the bank ready for the launch. All we need is the Waitrose bag for the Daffodil controller and the Tesco bag with the 'Modela' controller in it. Oh thing, and other expletives again. They are still at home in the hall.

Back home all the way to Ashingdon and another large...cup of PG Tips (driving again you see) and off to use another couple of un-green litres of petrol back to Maldon. Success, not even a terrified duck in sight, just a couple of bemused little boys hoping for a crash which didn't happen. That was a bit of luck because when the controller told the Daffodil to turn right, it turned left!

Latest news! Back to Southchurch Park to reconnoitre last week, without the boats. Eureka! No weed! Steering corrected, I'll bring the boats next week as the forecast is lousy over the weekend. Tuesday....the weather's better so off to Southchurch Park again.....the lake looks murky and phew! There has been a sewage spill over the weekend, so I'll have to go home again. Oh sh..! literally!

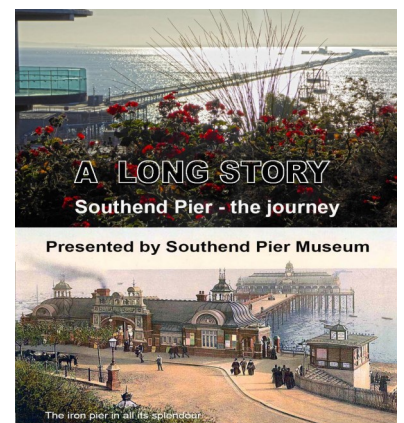


THE PIER—ITS BEEN A LONG STORY

'A Long Story' tells the history of Southend Pier from its beginnings in 1829 until the days of the new millennium with the delivery of the 'Culture Centre', aka Royal Pavilion, and beyond.

Along the way are the many ups and downs in but we can share glorious days in the heyday of the 40s and 50s and the special one-off visits of tall ships, Princess Anne, to say nothing of 'Alf Garnet' –Warren Mitchell.

As a special offer to members the boxed DVD can be purchased for £12 inc p+p by contacting sales@southendpiermuseum.co.uk. For those not on email please make cheques payable to Southend Pier Museum Foundation Trust and send to the Trust at Western Esplanade Southend-on-Sea Essex SS1 1EE.



HMS LEIGH—A FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE BRAVEST PIER IN THE WORLD

“For six long years the good people of Southend and Westcliff, to say nothing of the many visitors to the town, have become accustomed to the comings and goings of the Navy and the WRNS, who have worked among them and have kept anxious vigil over the gateway of the busiest estuary in the world in the dark and hazardous days, as well as in the hour of triumph. Today “like snow upon the desert’s dusty face,” They have lighted their little hour and are gone. How long, we wonder, will they and their works, be remembered?” Southend Standard October 15th 1945

In the spirit of those men, women and children who lived through a turbulent world war – the HMS Leigh project team kept moving forward, adapting to what was right and safe during a pandemic. Without the help of Southend Pier Museum Trust this four-day event that finally took place in September would not have been so successful. Students from schools all over Southend learned semaphore and other vital skills from actors portraying the men and women who lived and worked on HMS Leigh during WW2. We are extremely grateful to Tim Watts and his team of volunteers who supported the school days so brilliantly, often at very little notice!



HMS Leigh has engaged with thousands of people from Southend and beyond. Led by the SEN Southend Trust it has connected special needs adults and children to history and their community. Old and young have come together to make sure that the Navy and the WRNS who kept anxious vigil are not forgotten through exhibitions, games and performances. With ribbons and bunting decorating the 1.3mile length of the Pier and the Endeavour sailing up to meet everyone at the Pier Head it was a real celebration of this extraordinary structure.

What is particularly poignant to all those who attended is that it is the last time that many of us were to see Sir David Amess who was there to share the WW2 and Centenary of the Royal British Legion Service on the Sunday. With over 150 Scouts and carrying the standards to the wonderful sound of a full Salvation Army band, veterans, Southend’s Mayor and supporters it was a very special hour to round off the celebrations. We are also very proud that the HMS Leigh Memory Garden has been allowed to commemorate his life until November 25th 2021.

Beth Hooper, HMS Leigh