Issue 9 Autumn 2022

Pier Review

SOUTHEND PIER MUSEUM FOUNDATION TRUST LTD

REGISTERED CHARITY NO 802105

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Tim Watts

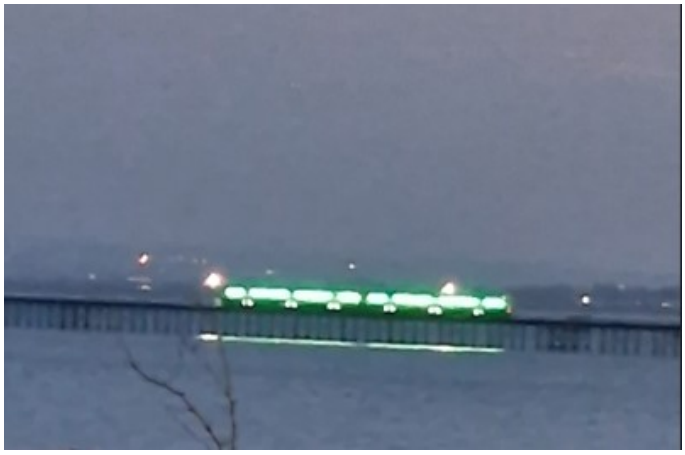
Hello all,

We have now closed for the 2022 season though private group visits can still be accommodated. We were delighted to welcome many interesting visitors over the summer and made some great new connections. However, it took until the end of the season to see the new trains working on a regular basis due to technical issues.

Several hundred school children were welcomed over the season. They enjoyed the museum, learning the history of the pier and engaging with the interactive elements. We have also started doing talks again, both inside the museum and elsewhere, for special interest groups. Those are going well and provide much needed additional income for the museum.

The main pier reception has started selling tickets for the museum. This increases the potential for people spotting that we are here. Efforts to further publicise the museum will continue as will closer integration with the main pier operation. We are now planning the changes we will make in the museum over the winter to create an updated customer offering for 2023 and will keep you informed.

HALLOWEEN—WHEN ALL THINGS GLOW IN THE DARK



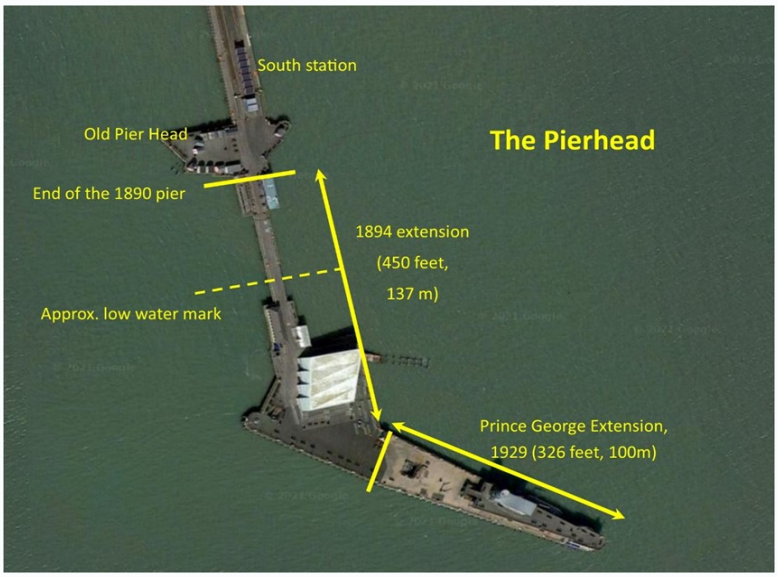
ALAN GADSDEN OBITUARY

Alan was a qualified Building Surveyor who had worked for Southend Borough Council Housing Department maintaining housing stock. Latterly he worked in Property and Estate Management as a Building Surveyor and Project Manager, managing the upkeep of the Council's 400 commercial buildings including listed buildings A likeable person with a wealth of knowledge and much respected. He was always up for healthy debate and office banter. He worked beyond normal retirement age and enjoyed traveling abroad, and more recently in retirement as a volunteer at the Museum assisting with maintenance and repairs and keeping visitors entertained, his commitment and friendship will be missed by us all.

Garry Stickland

THE PIER IS TOO SHORT

There have been many embarrassing episodes in the history of Southend Pier, but the discovery that the brand new Iron Pier of 1890 was not quite long enough must have given rise to many a red face. But it was true, at some states of the tide, and also due to the unpredictable nature of the sandbanks in the Thames Estuary, there were times when the tourist ships could not safely dock at the end of the Pier. The Council considered dredging as an alternative to more expensive pier building, but in the end there was no alternative – the Pier needed to be extended.



It took only four years for the extension to appear, but it was necessary for the Pier to function properly. The contract was initially awarded to John Brunlees, son of Sir James Brunlees, designer of the 1890 Pier, but delays ensued and Sir John Wolfe Barry was drafted in to complete the extension. Barry was one of the best known architects of the time, and he had just finished building Tower Bridge, at that point the lowest crossing point of the Thames. Although the Pier was extended, the railway never has been, and the south station stayed where it has always been.

That solved the problem of the tide, but the continuous traffic of ships wanting to dock at the Pierhead was always challenging for the limited space available, so another extension was planned which improved the length of the dock from 214 feet in length to 540 feet, allowing two large ships to dock at the same time, as well as a number of smaller ones. This one had to wait – a World War intervened, and the final extension to the Pier was opened by Prince George in 1929, and named after him. (Prince George was the youngest brother of both King Edward VIII and King George VI. He was the only royal to be killed in action since Henry V in 1485, dying in an air crash in 1942.)

In time, both extensions acquired upper decks (in addition to the lower decks which were only used at low tides), allowing a large amount of promenade or deckchair space. In more leisurely times, a day on the Pier watching the boats come and go was a much appreciated relaxation.

The Pierhead in its heyday, full of happy people, and showing all three decks – the upper promenade deck, the main deck, and the lower deck, which was usually only used by the boats when the tide was low.

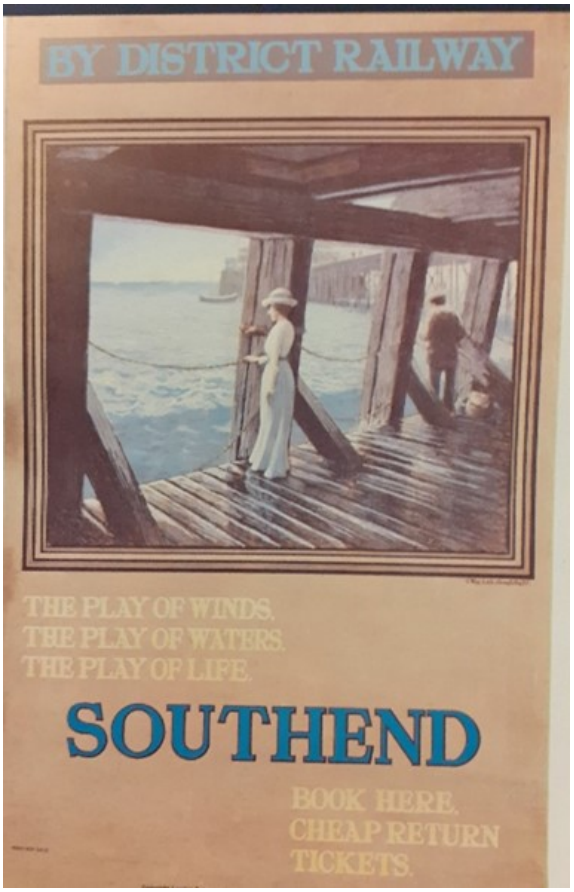
MEMBERSHIP FROM DEREK JARVIS

Since July I have taken over as Membership Officer, to give our Chairman Tim more time to concentrate on future strategy and management. This year we have gone from strength to strength and re established our position as one of the most important cultural and heritage elements of the City of Southend alongside those in Leigh and the military history of Shoeburyness and the Garrison.

Thank you all for renewing your subs due on 31 May 2022 and for your many donations. For a small number of you subs are due on 31 December 2022 and I will send out a reminder shortly. If you know of any former Members that have not renewed since before Covid please let me know and I will re establish contact with them.

I am conscious that we used to arrange Members events and over the winter period we will be considering ways of reinstating these. I am happy to have your thoughts on this before 31 December so that we can decide how best to proceed. Please email me at:- membership@southendpiermuseum.co.uk.

POSTERS OF THE PIER



A famous Southend poster of about 1910, showing the lower deck of the Pierhead, which was often wet and slippery, but usually the only place for a bit of solitude.

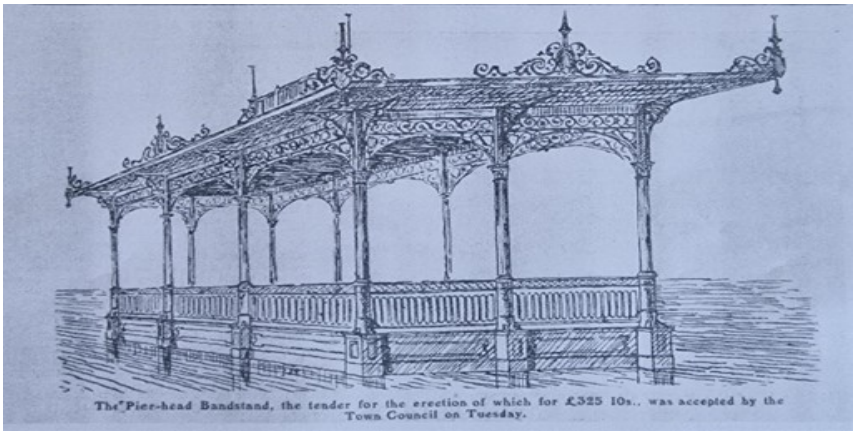
These posters advertised the now-forgotten railway service from Ealing Broadway to Southend Central – when railway carriages were hauled by an electric engine through underground tunnels as far as Barking, where a steam engine took over.

This service carried on up to the outbreak of war in 1939, when one of the two remaining electric engines was destroyed by a bomb, and subsequently the underground lines were disconnected from the main line, so this service could never happen again.

Some of the platforms at which this service stopped still exist between Barking and Upminster on the c2c main line. The Museum has copies of this and other posterS for sale.

AND THE BAND PLAYED ON

There were large audiences at both performances at the Pier Pavilion on Sunday on the occasion of a visit from the band of the King's Colonials. The music rendered was unusually attractive, and proved very popular. The artistes were Miss May Haysack, soprano; and Miss Gladys Haysack, elocutionist.



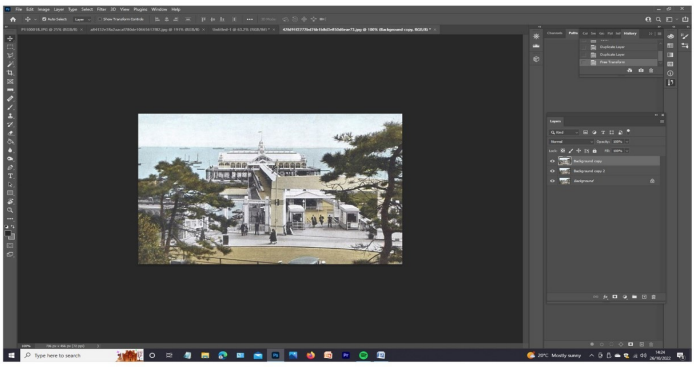
The Pier-head Bandstand, the tender for the erection of which for £325 10s., was accepted by the Town Council on Tuesday.

From the Southend and Westcliff Graphic March

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR PIER MEMORIES AND PICS FOR FUTURE EDITIONS OF PIER REVIEW

PRESERVING THE PAST – PART 2

In the last edition of Pier Review I explained how pictures from prints, negatives and slides can be scanned in various ways to 'digitise' them into computer files which can be stored, printed, or shown on a computer or on a TV. They can also be imported into a video editing program and become part of a DVD. Pictures can be improved before saving them and I use the most common computer program for doing this - Adobe *Photoshop*. This is a name most people have heard of when a film star is made to look a lot younger for her years. She is said to have been 'Photoshopped'!



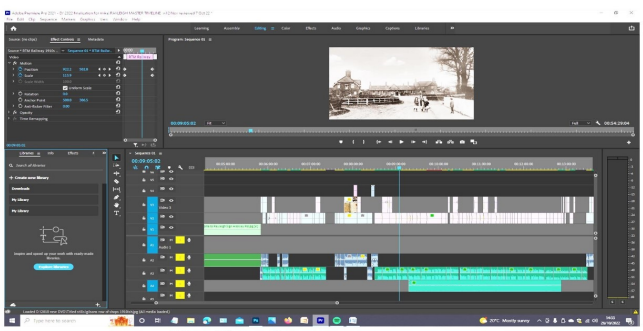
The Photoshop screen

As well as making people look younger, it can reduce or increase elements of a picture – so the camera does sometimes lie! It works on a layers principle which allows elements of one picture to be added to another, adding movement and scale and other effects. It's too involved to discuss here but is used a lot in preparing pictures for our pier videos.

This is a good point to make a plea. If you are 'filming' with your phone, always turn it sideways so that the picture is letterbox shape, not upright. Remember the shape of your TV screen - it's wider than it is high. So if you see something exciting happening on the pier, please film it....letterbox style, and let us have a copy.

I also explained last time how films and videos are scanned or copied to put them into the video file which becomes the DVD. This time the program is called 'Premiere'. Initially all the photos and movie clips we have prepared are 'imported' into it. This works on the principle of a timeline, a sequence of picture shots across the screen. A bit a timeline. Again it's a complicated process, using layers like Photoshop but here they are in tracks running in parallel (a bit like the Pier Railway).

You can shorten shots to cut out the bits you don't need. A shot of a person walking down the pier with a wobbly bit at the end, can be chopped off. (The film clip I mean, not the pier!) It's really a lot more sophisticated than that, but you get the idea? Sometimes the shot has its own sound to accompany it. It might be the actual background sound – the train passing that person, or more importantly someone talking. This has its own sound track. There are other tracks for music and the 'voice-over' and other added sound effects.



The Premiere screen

So when this is all done the film can be run in the 'Premiere' program to look like the final thing but in can't be copied onto a DVD straight away. People are increasingly using USB memory sticks to look at this kind of film and the film can be saved onto the memory stick and shown on a computer or 'Smart TV' directly. There are various ways to make the DVD but my method is to make new single file of the whole movie, this time the 'dot bit' is called 'mp4'.

I use another program called 'DVD Styler' to make the DVD. It can also add a menu if the film is to be split into several chapters. The mp4 file is imported into DVD Styler and after a simple set up, out comes a DVD which can be duplicated for the audience to see. I also produce a sleeve for the box and disc label using 'Photoshop'.

I hope you aren't asleep by now, but I tried to cover the process as concisely as I can. If members would like to, I could arrange a demonstration at the museum one afternoon during the closed season. Let us know on the museum email.
And don't forget, all that work can be demonstrated and enjoyed by buying a copy of 'A Long Story'.

THE PIER—ITS BEEN A LONG STORY

'A Long Story' is the history of Southend Pier from 1829 to the new millennium and the delivery of the 'Culture Centre', aka Royal Pavilion, and beyond. You can arrange purchase of the DVD (cost £12inc p+p) by either contacting sales@southendpiermuseum.co.uk or by writing to Southend Pier Museum Foundation Trust at Western Esplanade, Southend-on-Sea SS1 1EE . Cheques payable to Southend Pier Museum Foundation Trust