

Brighton West Pier Trust

Newsletter to Members

1. Introduction

Although we are still not able to announce the start of i360 construction, the atmosphere is more upbeat than last year and we are hopeful that there will be good news before long. As a consequence the Trust has been raising its profile with a range of new activities, outlined below.

2. Website

The Trust's new website was launched in January. It was designed by Mark James who has been looking after all our IT needs on a voluntary basis for many years. The new format allows for it to be managed in-house and so can easily be kept up to date. Monthly hits on the site have increased by thousands and thanks to the easy to use contact page we are receiving much more feedback than before, allowing closer engagement with the public. Another positive result has been an increase in book sales.

3. Concert Hall Wreckage Removal

Early in February, taking advantage of good spring tides, the remains of the Concert Hall were removed. The collapsed structure was accessible to the public at low tide and was becoming increasingly hazardous. The work was carried out by specialist demolition and salvage contractor Dorton Demolition and project managed by the Trust's consultant engineers, Hemsley Orrell Partnership. The removal was a requirement of the i360 planning permission and had the full support of Brighton & Hove City Council and English Heritage. Historically important items were salvaged for safe keeping by the Trust. The Pavilion island presents no hazard; it will remain in situ, an essential part of the Brighton seafront.

4. Pavilion Illumination

On 10th February, days after the removal of the Concert Hall and in dramatic blizzard conditions, the Pavilion was spectacularly illuminated with lasers courtesy of Tiger Beer, in celebration of Chinese New Year of the Tiger. Photographs on our website: <http://www.westpier.co.uk/news/pavilion-illuminated-for-one-night-only/>

5. Heritage Centre

The Trust is proposing to restore and re-erect an original 1866 octagonal kiosk as a West Pier heritage centre. This will be part of the i360 scheme but funded and run by the Trust and will be the subject of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

The kiosk is just under 9m in diameter and will be too small to house pier artefacts; these will continue to be exhibited at the Fishing Museum. Instead the centre will contain displays and screens presenting the story of the pier using film and video footage and a virtual tour of the pier in its heyday. These AV shows will be supported by monitors to access the further developed website, allowing for more in-depth study of the pier and its history.

The centre will also act as a base for educational activities and events for schools and the wider public. Whatever the future holds for the pier, it is vital that its exquisite architecture and rich story are not forgotten.

6. Fishing Museum

The Fishing Museum, situated between the piers in the Fishing Quarter, tells the story of Brighton's fishing industry. It also has an arch dedicated to the West Pier. The exhibition contains artefacts rescued from the pier and interpretation; it plays a crucial educational role and keeps memories of the pier alive. There are plans to upgrade the exhibition later this year.

7. Tours

Piers, Proms and Palaces – the West Pier and Brighton Seafront Tour will resume from 11th April. Tours are at 11am every Sunday and cost £5, but only £3 to members. Children under 12 go free. Meet on the upper prom (Kings Road) outside the West Pier Rock Shop. Stroll the prom and hear the fascinating story of our finest pier in the context of the history of the Brighton seafront. Tours are led by well-known local historians Jackie Marsh-Hobbs and Geoffrey Mead. **On 25th April at 11am, Jon Orrell, of Hemsley Orrell Partnership, the Trust's consultant engineer and pier expert, will be conducting a special tour on the engineering of seaside piers and the West Pier in particular.**

8. Activities for Schools

The Trust would like to work with schools. We can provide talks, tours and activities at the West Pier site or on school premises. These can be tailored to the needs and requirements of the National Curriculum. Contact us on 01273 321499 or info@westpier.co.uk for more information.

9. Photos, Films and Memories

The Trust has launched a new drive to build up its archive, with the aim of creating as full a picture as possible of the operating West Pier. We are especially interested in personal photographs, film and memories. Do you have any photos or film taken on or near the West Pier which you would be happy for us to publish on our website? Or could you send us a written account of your memories of the pier? We also wish to create an oral history of the pier and are looking to interview people who used the pier up to its closure in 1975. If you would like to participate in this archive programme please get in touch info@westpier.co.uk or 01273 321499. We are also planning a special, one-off memory collection event as part of the Heritage Open Day celebrations on 12th September – more news on this later in the year. Meanwhile, Trust member Bryan McAlley has very generously given his time and expertise to create a compilation video of some of the best bits of our existing film archive. We will show this on a monitor in the Fishing Museum and use it to illustrate our schools talks and activities.

10. West Pier Market

The West Pier market has started to trade again on the West Pier beach. Goods for sale are sourced from all over the world and include second hand books, hats, jewellery, original clothing, artwork and sunglasses. The market trades at weekends, bank holidays and seven days a week during the summer months. It is a lively and popular seafront attraction and it raises essential funds for the Trust.

11. Criminally Good Brighton & Hove – Fiction & Fact

International best-selling local crime writer Peter James is a long-term supporter of the Trust and has generously offered to give a talk at a fundraising social event at Alfrescos on 23rd June. Peter sets his novels in and around Brighton and an atmospheric photo of the pier often features on the front covers of his books. He will give a reading from his latest novel, "Dead Like You" and talk about his research behind the scenes with Sussex Police and the darker side of his beloved city. Tickets will cost £15 for members and £20 for non-members. The price will include generous canapés and a glass of wine – an informal meal. This will be a great opportunity to meet Peter and fellow Trust members in a convivial setting with wonderful views of the pier. To book tickets complete and return the form below or contact me at info@westpier.co.uk or 01273 321499.

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Rachel Clark
Chief Executive
6th April 2010
www.westpier.co.uk

Criminally Good Brighton & Hove – Fiction & Fact Wednesday 23rd June 2010 7pm at Alfrescos, King's Road, Brighton

I would like to buy _____ tickets at the special members' price of £15 each

TOTAL £

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL ADDRESS

Please make cheques payable to Brighton West Pier Trust and send to Rachel Clark, West Pier Trust, King's Road, Brighton, BN1 2FL