

## **BRIGHTON WEST PIER TRUST**

### **Newsletter to Members**

Despite continued delays to the start of i360 construction, the last few months have been busy. The focus of activity has been on developing the educational profile of the Trust and preparing for i360 construction by sifting and sorting pier material currently stored in the pier compound.

#### **Education**

The Trust has been working with schools running sessions either in the form of seafront walks, taking in the West Pier exhibition at the Fishing Museum or in the classroom where activities can be tailored to specific National Curriculum topics. Take-up for these sessions is good and they are led by our long-term guides and local history experts, Jackie Marsh-Hobbs and Geoffrey Mead. Recently we have been approached by a Punch & Judy company with a great deal of experience of working with schools and local museums in the Midlands. We are planning to organise joint sessions for 2011 including some at the Fishing Quarter in May.

#### **Oral History**

The memories gathering event held on 12<sup>th</sup> September as part of Heritage Open Day went well and we have started transferring our audio archive from cassette to computer. In due course this material, which was mainly acquired during Fred Gray's research for his history of the pier, *Walking on Water*, will be edited and available to listen to on the Trust's website. It will also be integral to the exhibition at our proposed heritage centre, details below.

#### **West Pier Heritage Centre**

The land either side of the West Pier site is owned by Brighton & Hove City Council. As part of the i360 scheme the areas will be landscaped in keeping with the rest of the regenerated seafront but with a strong West Pier theme and containing original pier material. At the eastern point (near the base of the ramp) it is proposed that an original 1866 West Pier octagonal kiosk be restored and re-erected as a West Pier heritage centre. This element of the scheme will be managed entirely by the Trust and a fundraising campaign and Lottery bid will be necessary to realise the project. The proposal is still being developed but since it is a relatively small structure (its diameter is less than 9m), it will not contain pier artefacts. Instead the exhibition will be an audio visual experience using archive and new material to explain the history and significance of the pier. Included in the exhibition will be a virtual tour of the pier and the material in the kiosk will be supported and developed through our website. Meanwhile, the Trust's links with the Fishing Museum continue to build and it will still be possible to view an exhibition of pier artefacts at that site.

#### **Pier Artefacts**

As part of the process to create the heritage centre described above, during the summer material critical to the proposal was meticulously sorted and removed from the compound to safer storage. In addition to securing an original kiosk and spares, other key elements of the pier rescued in the 1990s were identified and removed. There remains in the compound pier material that will not be needed in the Trust's proposals and which, when a start date is announced for i360 construction, will have to be disposed of within a fixed

timescale. In anticipation of this and not wishing to undertake the exercise under pressure, the Trust has decided to offer for sale a limited amount of the material which is definitely surplus to requirements. As a gesture of appreciation of the valued support of Trust members we would like to offer members the first opportunity to purchase these West Pier fragments. The available pieces are not critical to the Trust's heritage proposals but nor are they scrap. For example, there are small pieces of ornamental cast iron which would originally have been part of the pier balustrade. Whilst we are working with the Trust's consultant engineer on how the pieces should be priced we would like to gauge members' interest. Please contact me on [rachel@westpier.co.uk](mailto:rachel@westpier.co.uk) or 01273 321499 to register your interest and I will organise viewings over the next few weeks.

## **DVD**

At the AGM last month, member Bryan McAlley showed his West Pier compilation dvd. Earlier in the year Bryan gave the Trust a great deal of his time and skill to create this invaluable record. Using the Trust's film archive, it traces the story of the pier and includes some fascinating old footage. It runs for about 13 minutes. Several members asked if it could be made available to buy. In response I have burned some copies which are now on sale for £5 including p&p. Please email or call me if you would like to buy a copy.

## **Email Addresses**

When I recently changed computers I lost some email addresses which means you may be receiving this by post when you'd prefer it by email. If so please let me know by sending your address to [rachel@westpier.co.uk](mailto:rachel@westpier.co.uk).

The continuing delays to the project make us appreciate the help of Trust members more than ever. Your patience and support are of enormous value to us. Just continuing as members despite the setbacks demonstrates your faith in the Trust and its aims. But I would like to express particular thanks to the many members who send us messages of encouragement and donations. At times, the delays and frustrations can become dispiriting. Your kindness and generosity really helps keep us buoyant and determined!

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