



NEWSLETTER

September 2023

Dear members,

The last few months have proved to be a busy and productive time.

It was good to see so many members enjoying the Bexhill Day afternoon concert. We were treated to the Battle of Britain Memorial flypast and superb performances from our good friends – The Albatross Ukulele Band, the Shady Ladies and The Fog. Claire Baldry, Bexhill's very own performance poet, rounded off a very pleasant afternoon.

Look out for more Bandstand events on our website and on our new seafront Coronation Bandstand noticeboard.

This year, we've inaugurated trips and visits for members. Our recent bus tour of Bexhill revealing our town's many hidden secrets proved very popular and the September De La Warr Pavilion guided tour was highly praised. Demand has been high so, if you missed out this time, please try again for a place next year when we may be expanding the programme. Sadly, though, the Camber Castle trip had to be cancelled at short notice due to unanticipated safety concerns at the site. We'll try again in 2024. Thanks to Keith Rhodes for his enthusiastic leadership of our visits' programme, to Alexis Markwick for his enthralling revelations about our town and the Bexhill Community Bus team for giving us use of their vehicle.

Meanwhile, our project co-ordinator, Simon Allen has been hard at work restoring the RNLI coin collection box near the seafront War Memorial. All traces of rust have been removed prior to a full restoration with marine-quality materials. We're also busy with a 'facelift' for Shelter No.3 (the one with the music). Restored by Bexhill Heritage in 2020, it's time for a new coat of paint and a few cosmetic repairs. An exposed coastal environment poses challenges for wooden buildings and without planned maintenance, there's an all too rapid deterioration. Completion is anticipated at the end of September by which time we'll be planning a winter work programme for Shelter No.4 (the one with the boarding). We've also asked Rother District Council to work with us to fully restore Shelter No.2 (the one opposite The Sackville) and have invited their officers to a site meeting to begin that process.

Steve Johnson

Steve Johnson
Chairman

Restoration of the Disused RNLI Coin Collector

Those of you going for a walk along the prom may have noticed this rare cast-iron pedestal undergoing restoration.



This metre-high Royal National Lifeboat

Institute Coin Collector is one of only 30 left in the country. It was installed at the Colonnade in 1935 and then moved to East Parade in the 1960's.

In 2017 it came to the attention of local history duo Dr. Paul Wright and Dave Hatherell who decided to research its history with Bexhill Museum and restore it to its former glory by painting it a special 'RNLI blue'.

Bexhill Heritage has since taken custodianship of the box and we thought it was time once again to give it some much needed care and attention.



Our first step was to seek help from a local specialist called Blasted Bare who prepared the surface by removing all the old paint, rust and grime through sandblasting.

Once the bare metal had been exposed we were quick to put on the first undercoat to protect the iron from the effects of sea air.

A couple of days later we were back to examine the inside for any signs of corrosion. Simon carefully drilled out the locks on the north door and Alexis applied considerable leverage before the door popped open in a cloud of brown dust. At first all that could be seen at the bottom of the box was a pile of sand, but upon further inspection we could feel coins, many coins. In fact we've managed to pull out almost 7.5KG of coinage, some of which is pre-decimal!

From a brief inspection looking at dates on the coins, we believe the pedestal must have been sealed up in the early 1980s.

We'll keep you updated on what else we may find.



Architecture Spotlight



Oceania, West Parade

Seen here behind the Clock Tower, the house was designed by Arnold Mitchell and built by William McCormick in 1903.

Some have wrongly associated the name of this building to the sinking of the P&O Oceana, the ship was wrecked off Bexhill en route to India in 1912 - a few years after Oceania was built.

This digitally coloured photograph is courtesy of Bexhill Museum. It shows Motor Car Races & Battle of Flowers in August 1904.

Come and discuss local heritage issues and the planned work of the charity at our **Information Point** on the last Friday of every month (except December) at the Coronation Bandstand, 10:00 – 12:30.

Next **Members' Meetings** will be held on the following dates:

Thursday 12th October 2023, 7pm

St. Barnabas Church
Our speaker will be Dave Hatherell giving a lecture on 'Emily Wilding Davison & Her Bexhill Connections'.

Thursday 30th November 2023

Time, location and details TBC.

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If you like what we are doing then please encourage your friends to join with us and strengthen our society.

Coronation Bandstand Noticeboard



It's hard not to *notice* our new double-sided information board along East Parade with its gold finials. The east side describes the history of the Bandstand, the restoration and a background on the charity; the west side is for promoting all upcoming events and is updated weekly.

Bexhill's Hidden Secrets Bus Tour



Thanks to everyone who came along on our first heritage tours. We had a lot of fun putting them together and receiving your positive feedback.

You can find all the locations and photos used on the Hidden Secrets Bus Tour on Alexis' website: <https://bexhill-osm.org.uk/?T=thennow>



Director of the De La Warr Pavilion, Stewart Drew (far right) and his team skilfully pulled off a factual yet amusing presentation exclusively for members of BH.

Bandstand Themed Postcards and Christmas Cards

The committee have created a limited number of cards showing various scenes at the Bandstand.

If you wish to purchase a pack, they will be available at our Information Point and next Members' Meeting.

