

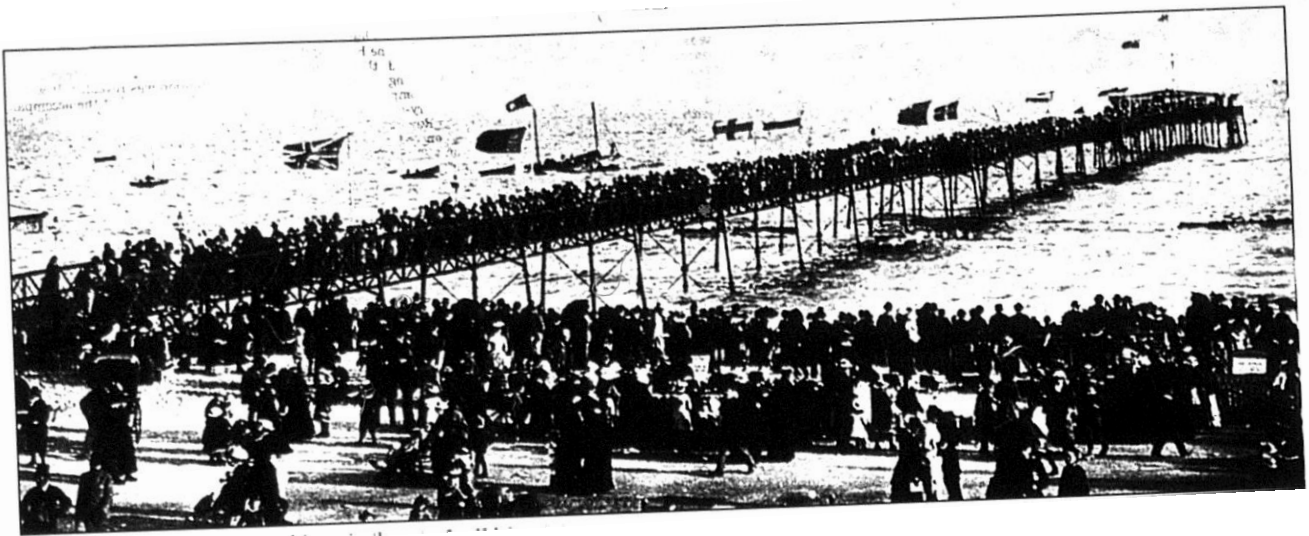


Newspaper reports featured in the *Worthing Herald* between 1960 and the late 1980's.

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## Pier Onlookers at Early Regatta



VICTORIAN crowds throng the promenade and pour on to Worthing's precarious-looking first pier to watch an early Regatta.

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the ensuing Sunday and that must certainly be considered a greater offence."

Finally the Regatta committee collectively took up the offensive, chiding the vicar for visiting the drinking and dancing booths and describing his action as "an escapade."

They bitterly added: "Mr Power, accompanied by his curate, was bent on re-living Don Quixote's famous exploit with the windmill, and made his way amongst the boozers and dancers to preach to them on their sinful pursuits."

"It would have been better if he had quietly drawn a veil over the matter but his pamphlets show that amongst the various studies — profane as well as sacred — with which he occupies his

leisure is the art of self-defence." Perhaps this hints that at one point the row was close to coming to physical blows.

Paper must have been cheap in those days, for both protagonists continued the pamphlet war for weeks.

The Rev Power saw in the horse races that accompanied the Regatta "the risk of the betting habit spreading in Worthing".

In best Victorian idiom the next sheet of paper he published demanded: "Is there one in our community who would wish his son to become a fast man?"

"Is there one who would wish his daughter to marry a horse-racing betting man?"

And in a postscript he ominously threatened: "Numbers of people are like-

ly to leave Worthing if things go on as they have done in 1859," noting that he had discovered "a poor widow who subscribed her hard-earned half-crown for the Regatta without knowing it was to help horse racing."

The Regatta committee reported they had heard a very different version from the same lady "which rather spoiled the effect".

One can hardly imagine how shocked that Victorian vicar would be about today's betting, football pools and lotteries.

Worthing, on the other hand, seems to be surviving them, just as the town survived the "fast men and betting" that went with the evidently very enjoyable regatta-cum-race meetings of 142 years ago.

For more resources visit: [www.worthingpier.org.uk](http://www.worthingpier.org.uk)