



# The Pier At War:

July 28th 1914 saw Europe plunged into conflict with the outbreak of World War One.

For five years the battle was fought in trenches across Europe. Back home the Pier went on with life as usual, entertaining the public and keeping morale high.



Acts like the 'Worthing Whimsies' and sad Pierrot clowns were popular, regular acts that could be seen at the pavilion.



AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany

# 1914-1919



By the end of  
the war the  
pier boasted  
its own  
skating rink.

Though many still  
stuck to simply  
relaxing and  
bathing on the  
beach.



Enjoying the views  
along and off of  
the pier  
as well as the  
promenade.



# The Pier At War:

## 1939-1945

As of September 1st 1939 Europe was again at war, and this time it had a much larger impact on Worthing and its pier. No longer confined to the continent the South Coast was now within enemy sights...

### SCENES ON THE BEACH

Worthing beach has never seen so many children—who are having the time of their lives! The Beach Inspector, Mr. Gilbert Wood, who was formerly in the Marines has been called up. His deputy, who is also a naval man, expects to be called up shortly. He remarked good humouredly that life at sea would be a holiday in comparison with his task on Worthing beach! However, no casualties of importance have occurred so far, and the St. John Ambulance hut is staffed at all times to deal with casualties. The children are of all ages—some well dressed, others obviously from the poorer quarters of London. Many of the latter are lucky in finding a home among strangers, who are treating them as if they were their own children and completing their limited wardrobes at their own expense. One elderly lady, who had the charge of two big girls, was seen pointing out the local objects of interest, including the Old Town Hall. The girls tried to be interested, but were evidently not impressed with this relic of former civic grandeur of Worthing! Another householder was so delighted with the sample of London that she received that she came round to other houses asking for more! Everywhere there are reports that people are carrying out their obligations with courage and cheerfulness.

With London, and other large cities, at risk of being bombed children were evacuated to safer places, like Worthing, where they got to experience the sun, sea and shingle beach.

With Worthing thought to be a possible invasion site many were evacuated somewhere safer once more.

AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



# ON THE HOME FRONT

At a special meeting of Worthing Emergency Committee last Wednesday the decision was taken to ban bathing from the beach. When the town became a defence area the whole of the beach was closed to the public, but later a concession was made permitting bathing from certain stations between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. This relaxation was much appreciated by bathers, especially this month, but, war being war, the wisdom of the decision now taken will not be questioned. It is presenting a tempting and quite unnecessary target for any enemy airmen to have a considerable number of people congregated at any one spot where casualties could be inflicted with a quick escape before the defence had an opportunity to get going. Why ask for trouble? There remain many amenities for health and recreation in our parks and other open spaces, the baths, the children's paddling pool, and the boating pool.

Despite the war many still flocked to the beach to take in the sun and sea.

However it was decided that this would create an easy target for enemy bombers.

This would lead to the use of the beach being limited to set times of day for the public's safety.



# The Waverly

The Waverly is a steamer built in 1946 to replace one sunk in during the second World War. After undergoing major restoration work between 2000 and 2003 it is now the last seagoing passenger carrying paddle steamer in the world.



*"Hundreds of passengers were turned away from a pleasure cruise on a famous paddle steamer after it caused serious damage to a pier as it docked."*

On the 15th September 2008, the Waverly collided with the end of the pier when docking to pick up passengers. Although the ship itself was not damaged, a 6ft length of timber was detached from the pier.

AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



# The Worthing Belle

The Worthing Belle was built in 1885 as a company ship before being bought by a Mr J Lee, of Shoreham, in 1901.



He employed her on short sea trips from Brighton's West Pier to Worthing, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis, and east to Eastbourne and Hastings.



Operating as a gun ship during the war she was sunk, but was later salvaged and restored to continue her work of ferrying passengers until being scrapped in 1926

# Construction Of The Pavilion Theatre

*When Worthing Borough Council purchased the pier in 1921, they set about making developments and improvements*



*Starting in 1925 the construction of the Pavilion Theatre took a year to complete, opening in June 1926.*

AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



*The new concert hall would be capable of seating 1000 people in front of its flat, proscenium style stage.*



*A new souvenir shop was built next to the building; selling photographs of the seafront.*

# FIRE!

## 1933

**September 10th 1933:**  
A fire destroys the southern pavilion of Worthing Pier

The smoke could be seen as far away as Selsey Bill and Beachy Head



Within 30 minutes all that remained of the pavilion was a pile of ash.



300 holiday makers helped tear up planks to help stop the flames spreading whilst a car was driven onto the pier and a human chain formed in an attempt to save valuable items of furniture from the raging flames.



**July 1935:**  
The new southern pavilion opens to the public.

**AUG  
1914**

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



# 2015

**June 13th 2015:  
6 fire engines and 2  
lifeboat teams from  
Shoreham were called  
to attend a fire at  
Worthing pier**

**Starting around  
20:30 the fire was  
caused by a  
carelessly discarded  
cigarette butt near the  
southern pavilion**

**Thanks to emergency  
services quick  
response the fire  
was contained  
to a confined areas  
and was put  
out by 22:00.**

**The pier was safe,  
with minimal damaged  
and there  
were no injuries**





# ORANGES & LEMONS



In March 1901 the SS Indiana sank off the Worthing coast. Its cargo of tens of thousands of oranges and lemons would end up washing up onto the beach. Residents flocked to collect the fruit - a rare and valuable commodity at the time.



Some tried throwing them back into the sea, giving rise to a local tradition...

AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



# FLING-A-THON



At the start of March, come rain or shine, residents gather to see who can throw their citrus fruit furthest along the beach.



The Flingathon has been running for 14 years and is always a popular event.





# The Ice Prince Cometh

## January 2008

On January 14th 2008, under stormy conditions the 328 foot Greek cargo ship 'Ice Prince' sank off the Devon coast.

Whilst the 20 crew members were rescued the same couldn't be said for its cargo.

Over 2,000 tonnes of timber and around 550 tonnes of oil were lost to the sea.



Though the wood did indeed resurface. Over the course of the next few days it would wash up along the Sussex coast. Worthing was hit hardest with 6ft piles of wood stacking up along the shore for as far as the eye could see.

AUG  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany



## Wood Washes Up At Worthing



The public made  
the most of the  
situation and  
built all manner  
of structures  
from the wood.

Until the wood  
could be salvaged  
and sold a night  
patrol put into  
action to prevent  
theft and looting.



# Worthing 2008 - 2016 Birdman

Arriving from Bognor in 2008, the Birdman competition took Worthing Pier to new heights.

Taking place over one weekend each summer, with its origins in 1971, the goal is for competitors to fly the furthest off of the specially built scaffold on the pier in their man powered machine in the hope of winning £30,000.

Simply jumping off however is strictly taboo!



AGE  
1914

Britain  
declares war  
on Germany





Those magnificent  
men in their  
“flying”  
machines

There are three Classes under which you can enter:

Leonardo Da Vinci Class - self/team-designed built  
and innovative craft.

Condor Class - modified hang-gliders and similar crafts.

Kingfisher class - fun flyers and charity fundraisers.

In 1984 Harold Zimmer flew 57.8 meters winning the  
top prize of £10,000.

The prize money now stands at £30,000 for  
successfully reaching 100m.

**8 YEARS... TIME TO  
HANG UP OUR WINGS.  
IT'S BEEN FUN. THANK YOU  
WORTHING, WE LOVE YOU.**



2016 saw the  
announcement  
that the bird  
had flown  
bringing an end  
to Worthing-  
Birdman