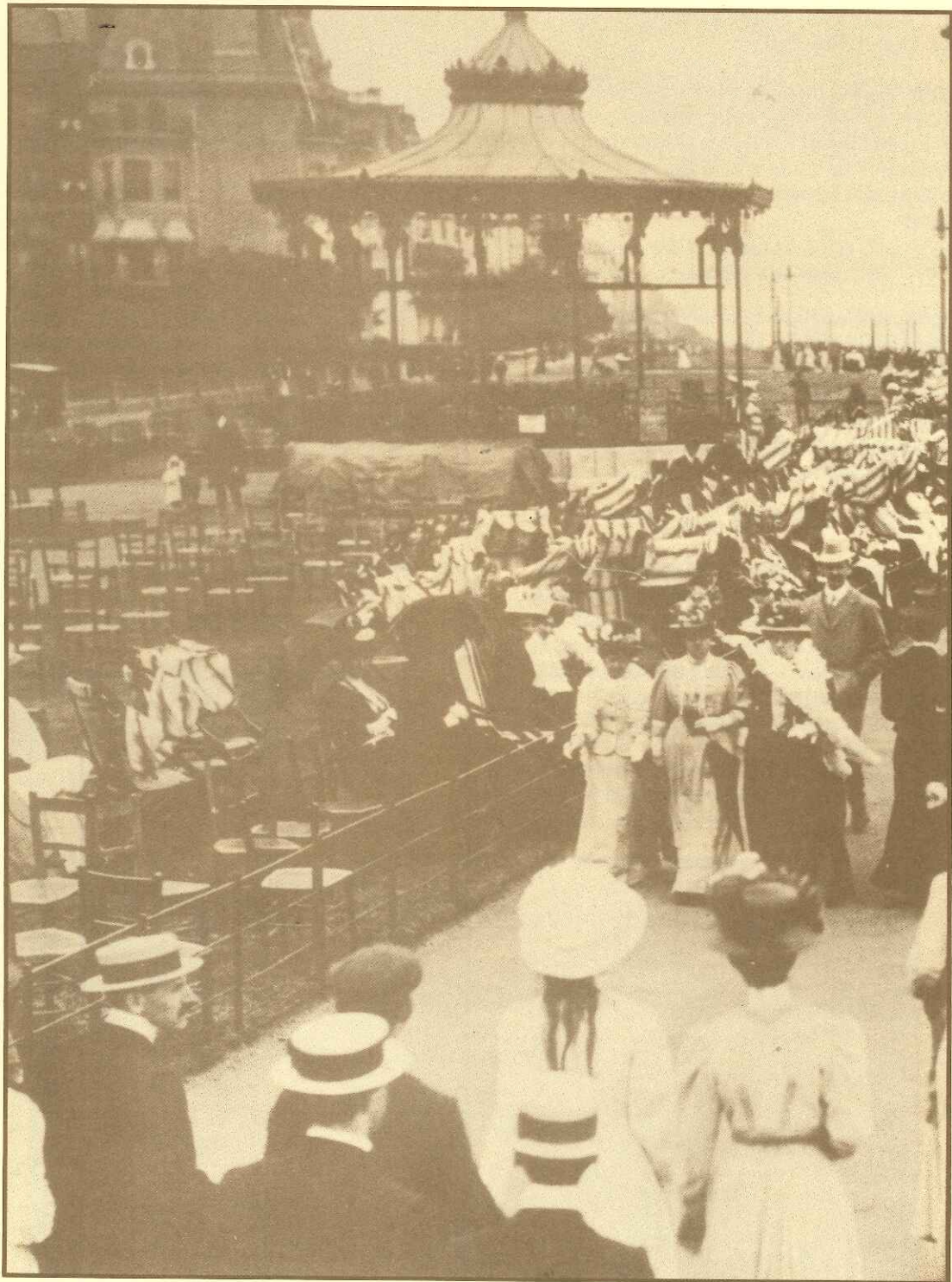


FOLKESTONE HISTORICAL WALKS

PROMENADING ON THE LEAS



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SHEPWAY DISTRICT COUNCIL

PROMENADING ON THE LEAS

This walk includes a ride on the Leas Lift, a cliff top promenade with fine sea views and a stroll along the Lower Sandgate Road through trees and lawns just yards from the sea.

The Leas and the Lower Sandgate Road gardens were created by Lord Radnor in the late 19th century to attract Victorian holidaymakers to the town. The undercliff gardens themselves were laid out in 1876.

When first opened the Leas were patrolled by Lord Radnor's own police force, complete with blue uniforms and gold braided peak caps.

START: The Leas Cliff Hall

The Leas Cliff Hall – Opened by Prince Henry in 1927 on the site of the Leas Shelter, a concert venue with seating for 300 people which was built in 1894. Three highly ornate air vents which are relics of the Leas Shelter may still be seen to the Leas Cliff Hall's roof top terrace.

Facing the sea, walk to your right . . .

William Harvey Memorial – This bronze statue was sculpted in 1881 by A.B. Joy. Harvey, widely held to have discovered the principle of the circulation of blood, was born in 1588 in Mercery Lane, (now Church Street) Folkestone. Harvey's left hand holds a human heart while the right hand points to his own heart.

Continue to the Leas Bandstand . . .

The Leas Bandstand – Built in 1895, the tent-shaped canopy is supported by cast-iron columns decorated with a "honeysuckle" motif based on ancient art forms. In the 1900's the Leas and undercliff boasted three bandstands. The Leas Bandstand now stands alone, presenting concerts throughout the Summer. Of the other bandstands, one was built in Marine Gardens in 1893, and another in the grounds of the Metropole Hotel in 1897. Hotel guests complained about the noise and in 1902 the Metropole bandstand

was moved to a site in front of the hotel which is now marked by a circular flower bed.

Continue to Clifton Crescent . . .

Clifton Crescent – This mid-19th century crescent features communal gardens fronting onto The Leas. A break in the centre of the crescent affords a view through to Holy Trinity Church in Sandgate Road, erected by Lord Radnor in 1868.

The Manor House – Built for the Earl of Radnor in about 1900 the house has a Scottish baronial style turret with a conical roof. The Manor House was used as a military hospital during the 1914-18 War.

Continue to the Grand and the New Metropole Hotels . . .

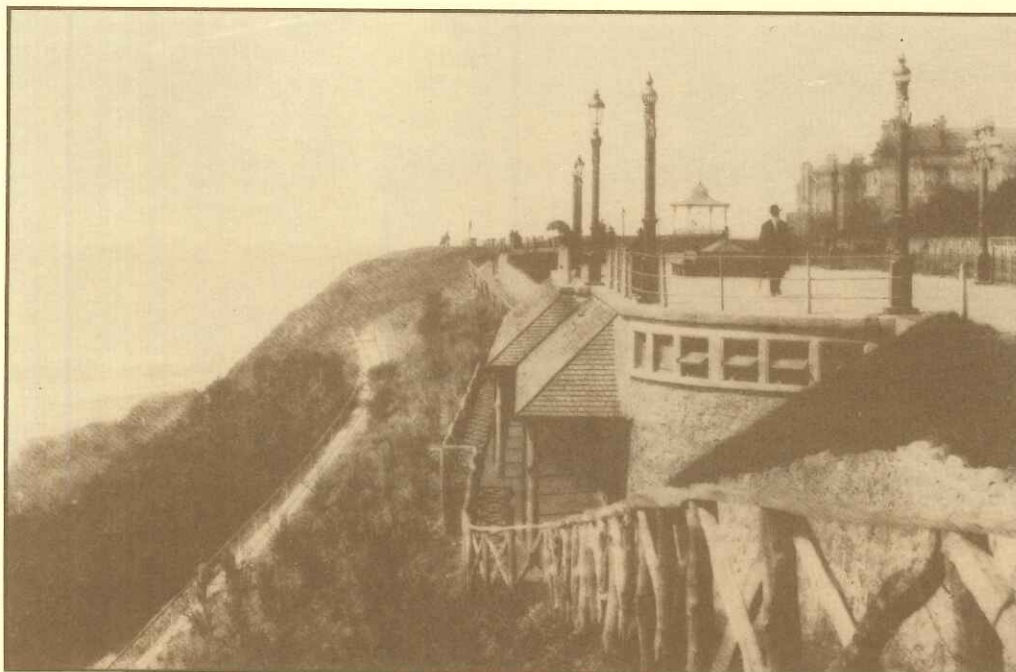
The Grand and The Metropole – Built as hotels, these buildings share similar designs with very rich frontages and reflect the prestigious position held by Folkestone as a major south coast resort. The Grand was built between 1899 and 1903 by Daniel Baker of Folkestone while the Metropole, begun in 1895, was designed by T.W. Cutler. The Metropole now houses an art centre, restaurants, a bar and a concert room.

Descend the cliff steps to the Lower Sandgate Road then turn left . . .

The Toll House – The Lower Sandgate Road was opened as a toll road by the Lord Radnor in 1828. A board on the Toll House wall shows the charges to be paid for various forms of transport.

Continue to the Grotto Zig-Zag Path . . .

The Grotto Zig-Zag Path – The Path and Grottoes were opened in 1924. The seating areas were originally illuminated. The path is fairly steep and can be avoided by continuing along Lower Sandgate Road to the Leas Cliff Lift.



Site of Leas Cliff Hall early this century.



The Grottoes mid 1920's.

Turn right at the top and walk on to the Leas Pavilion . . .

The Leas Pavilion – The Pavilion was opened in 1902 as Tea Rooms with a ladies string trio providing musical entertainment. Music soon became the main attraction with twice daily concert parties. One troupe, "The Gypsies and their Jester", was particularly popular between the Wars.

Continue to the Leas Lift . . .

The Leas Lift – This water balance lift, only the third to be built in England, was opened in 1885 at a cost of £3,000. The lift rises 100 feet from the Lower Sandgate Road to the Leas Promenade and works in the following way:-

The cars being full, the toll collector at the foot of the tracks signals the brakeman at the top. The brake is released and the top car's ballast tanks are filled with water from cisterns set in the cliff top. The top car becomes heavier than the bottom car, descends, and through and pulley system raises the lower car up the track to the top of the cliff. The water in the

descended car's ballast tanks is then pumped up to the cisterns ready for the next trip.

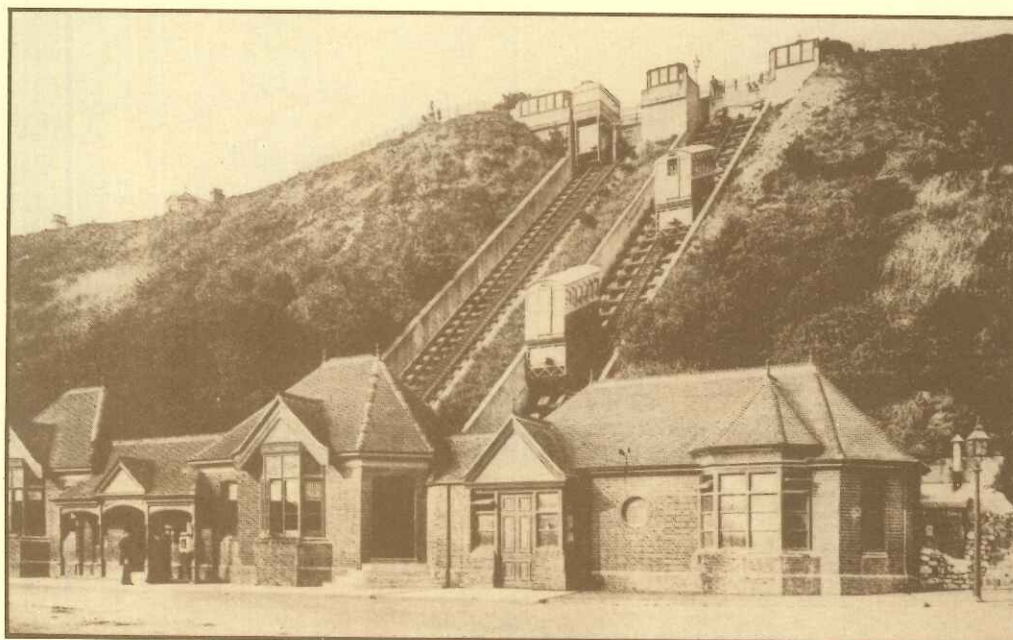
Folkestone once boasted two other such cliff lifts, one at the Metropole which opened in 1904 and closed in 1940. The other connected the west end of the Leas with Sandgate opening in 1893, but closing in 1918.

An information leaflet explaining the lift more fully is available at the Lower Sandgate Road Ticket Hall.

At the lift top turn right . . .

The War Memorials – There are three war memorials at the top of the Road of Remembrance, once called the Slope Road. The Road of Remembrance memorial was built using setts from the original Slope Road. The memorials remind us of Folkestone's role as a port of embarkation and return for soldiers and of the town's home front position in two World Wars.

At this point you can finish the walk, returning to the Leas Cliff Hall, or continue into The Bayle and The Old High Street walk.



The Leas Lifts early this century.

Other "Walks Through Old Folkestone" available are:-

- THE BAYLE AND THE OLD HIGH STREET
- THE HARBOUR, STADE, AND THE EAST CLIFF

The walks lead into each other taking you from The Leas to the East Cliff. The walks have been compiled by Shepway District Council Planning Department with the assistance of the Folkestone and District Local History Society, and Kent County Council's Museum and Library at Grace Hill, Folkestone. The museum is close to the old town centre and houses interesting displays featuring the history of the town.

