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# Birnbeck Pier, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset: An Historical and Architectural Assessment

Allan Brodie and Johanna Roethe

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# BIRNBECK PIER, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, NORTH SOMERSET

## AN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

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Cover image: Birnbeck Pier emerging from the mist. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218547]

## SUMMARY

Birnbeck Pier was constructed between 1864 and 1867 to a design by the engineer Eugenius Birch, which uniquely uses an island as its pier head. During the Victorian and Edwardian periods, two lifeboat stations were constructed on the island and numerous amusements and rides, many of them early examples of their use in Britain. During the Second World War, the pier contributed to the war effort under the name of HMS *Birnbeck*. It closed in 1994 and is on the Heritage at Risk Register. This document contains an overview of the development of Birnbeck Pier and places it in the historical context. A gazetteer provides more detailed information about the 16 extant structures associated with the pier.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Fieldwork and research were undertaken by Allan Brodie and Johanna Roethe. Johanna Roethe wrote the section on Hans Price and the gazetteer entries; Allan Brodie the remainder of the report. Photography is by Steven Baker, James O. Davies, Patricia Payne, Allan Brodie and Johanna Roethe and aerial photography by Damian Grady.

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## ARCHIVE LOCATION

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Firefly Avenue, Swindon SN2 2EH

## DATE OF RESEARCH

Birnbeck Pier was visited on 15 May 2018. Additional desk-based research was undertaken for this report between December 2021 and January 2022.

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Figure 1: Aerial Photograph of 1920 showing Birnbeck Pier and a paddle steamer. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001051]

## INTRODUCTION

Birnbeck Pier was built at the north end of Weston-super-Mare in 1864-7 to designs by the renowned Victorian pier engineer Eugenius Birch. It was created primarily to allow the landing of visitors arriving by steamers from across, or along, the Bristol Channel. It also served as a destination for holidaymakers from the centre of the resort and by the beginning of the 20th century, it was home to a number of structures and features to entertain and amuse visitors, as well as two lifeboat stations.

The pier is unique in England as it has an island to serve as its pier head (Figure 1). This had advantages and disadvantages. It allowed the construction of many substantial stone buildings and large fairground rides that would not have been possible on other piers; however, it also required the construction of additional lengthy jetties to allow steamers to moor safely.

Birnbeck Pier may be the sum of the best of all elements of England's seaside piers. It is an elegant work of Victorian engineering masterminded by Birch, designed to land passengers arriving by steamers. It was also a place of fun and games with large structures to entertain holidaymakers. It had fairground rides, some as large as any

found in seaside resorts in their day, and boasted two lifeboat stations. No other pier in England delivered, or delivers, all these.

This report describes the history of Birnbeck Island, Birnbeck Pier and its various structures; it also places the pier in its wider context. It examines the pier's role in the development of Weston-super-Mare as a town and a seaside resort, and it reviews its place in the works of the celebrated and prolific local architect Hans Price. Birnbeck Pier is also examined within the context of the history and development of seaside piers, and consideration is given to its subsidiary functions in the story of amusement parks and fairground rides, as well as in the development of lifeboat stations.
A gazetteer provides more detailed information about the 16 extant structures associated with the pier.

Figure 2: Birnbeck Pier and the causeway from the mainland in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218653]

## WESTON-SUPER-MARE'S PIERS

### A Pier at Birnbeck in the 1840s

Before a pier was constructed, stepping stones provided a causeway out to Birnbeck Island at lower states of the tide. Higher states of the tide prevented fishermen from dealing with the fishing nets they placed between stakes running from the mainland to the island and therefore fish were often left exposed and eaten by seagulls. During the fishing season, two men lived on the island and were known as 'gull yellers', as they were paid to scare birds away from the nets.[1] There is still a causeway at the north side of the pier, linking the mainland and island at high tide (Figure 2). Fishing weirs appear at the north side of the causeway on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1887, 1903, 1931 and 1952 and can be seen in an Aerofilms photograph of 1949.[2]

Weston-super-Mare's first pier was a short-lived and never-completed suspension-bridge-type design on the site of the current Birnbeck Pier. Inspiration for the scheme came from two chain piers constructed a quarter of a century earlier. An alternative to piled jetties, such as the pier at Ryde (1813-4) and the first jetty at Margate (1824), a suspension bridge design was a visually more ambitious approach to pier design pioneered by the civil engineer and naval officer Captain Samuel Brown (1776-1852).[3] In 1816, he had installed the first machine for testing chain cables in his own workshops and the cables for the steamship *Great Eastern* were manufactured at his works in Pontypridd. As a result of his expertise, he became involved with the construction of suspension bridges, including the Union Bridge across the Tweed near Berwick, completed in 1820, and in the following year he erected the Chain Pier on the coast between Granton and Leith near Edinburgh.[4] In 1823, Brown constructed another pier with a suspension structure at Brighton (Figure 3). Two other examples of this type of pier were erected at Greenhithe on

Figure 3: The Chain Pier at Brighton in a 19th-century photograph by William Henry Goodburn Mason. [Source: Historic England Archive, BB85/01743b]

the Thames during the 1840s (demolished in 1875) and at Seaview on the Isle of Wight in 1880.[5] The latter pier survived into the 1950s, but the chain piers at Leith and Brighton were destroyed by storms in 1898 and 1896 respectively. The apparent sophistication of the superstructure of the chain piers at Leith and Brighton should not disguise the fact that they were constructed using driven wooden piles, the mainstay of pier construction until the 1850s.

The frontispiece of the 1847 *The Visitor's Companion in Rambling about Weston* shows the design of Weston's proposed chain pier connecting Birnbeck Island to the mainland (Figure 4).[6] It was to be 335m (1100ft) long with a central span of 166m (545ft) carried on substantial, stone piers that stood a short distance into the sea on either side of the channel. The side spans were to be 83m (272½ft) long, though the

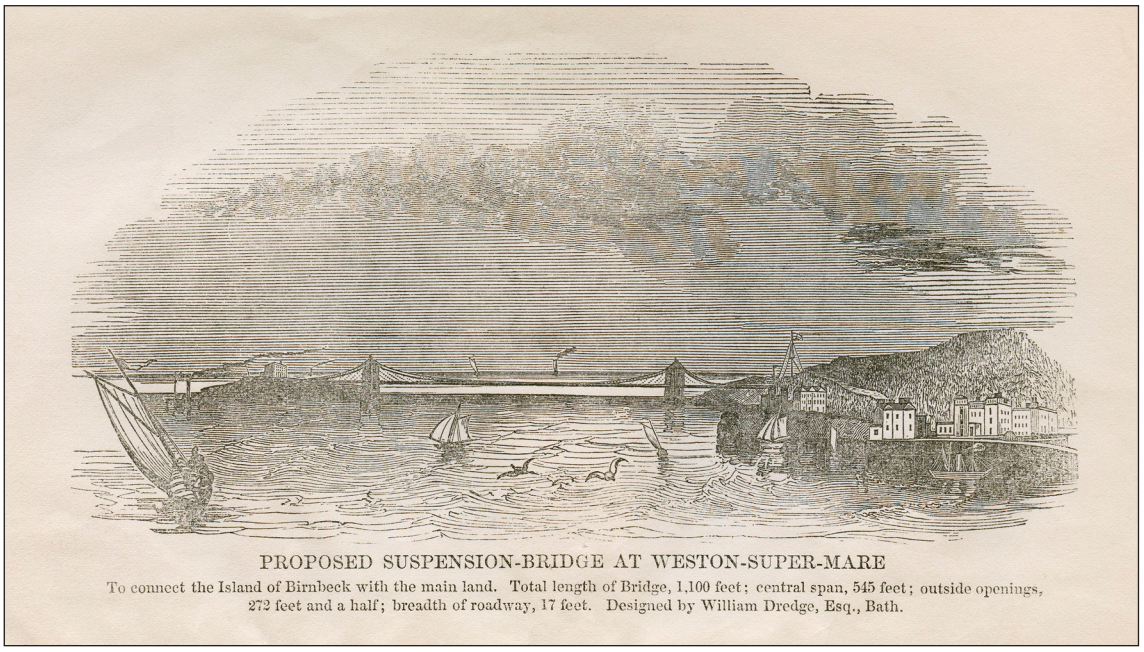


Figure 4: Frontispiece to *The Visitor's Companion* of 1847 showing the proposed chain pier. [North Somerset Studies Library]

1847 engraving shows them to be shorter than this; the deck of the pier was to be 5.2m (17ft) wide. The same view that lovingly records the elegant profile of the pier shows only a single, small cuboidal block on Birnbeck Island, suggesting that the landing of passengers and any promenading across to the island was initially to be more important for the project than the island as a destination. The pier as depicted in 1847 was envisaged only to be the first stage of the construction; it would have been later 'supplemented by a pier constructed in a similar manner and jutting out seawards some 1,200 feet (366m), so as to enable steamers to land passengers easily at any state of the tide.'[7]

In April 1845, a public meeting was held and a committee was formed to promote the construction of the pier under the chairmanship of Francis Hutchinson Synge, chairman of the Town Commissioners. A company was registered in May 1845 and shareholders were sought to provide the necessary capital of £20,000 through the issue of 1,000 shares of £20 each. The company registration papers reveals that most of the initial backers of the scheme were local or from Bristol.[8] An Act of Parliament received its Royal Assent on 18 June 1846 and it listed Synge, as well as John Hugh Smyth Pigott, the Lord of the Manor, and Thomas Tutton Knyfton of Uphill among the leading promoters of the scheme.[9]

There appears to be some confusion about the identity of the designer of the pier. The 1847 *The Visitor's Companion in Rambling about Weston* attributes it to the Wiltshire engineer William Dredge (1764-1849), but other sources, more plausibly, suggest it is a work by his son James Dredge (1794-1863) who had been responsible for the Victoria Bridge over the River Avon at Bath in 1836.[10] There may also be some uncertainty about its intended form. It is described in 1847 as a suspension-bridge, but if it was a work by James Dredge, it may have been designed as one of

Figure 5: The edge of the south side of a stone upright from the 1847 pier visible in the left foreground. [Allan Brodie © Historic England]

his taper suspension bridges, a type that seems like a hybrid between a suspension bridge and a cable-stayed bridge.[11] Work began on the vertical supports of the pier in 1847. However, a major storm later in the year swept away the first stonework of the uprights.[12] An 1883 newspaper account recalled how: 'one night when the first pillar was but half erected a gale of wind blew, and by the next morning the pillar had disappeared.[13] There were no funds to continue work, James Dredge was declared bankrupt and the pier company was wound up.

The only surviving evidence of this initial project is the base of a support for the structure at the mainland end of the pier. This consists of two lines of stones forming the north and south edges of the support, located on the rocky shoreline, beneath, and on either side of, the truss of the later pier. These remains can only be seen at low tide (Figure 5). One scathing newspaper report a few years after the storm described the failed scheme as 'Dredge's Folly' and all that was left behind was 'an insignificant heap of trimmed stones'.[14] An 1883 newspaper feature noted that: 'The foundation stones of the pillar that was washed away may yet be seen at low water by the curious, and gazed upon as interesting archaeological remains by anyone having a bent that way.'[15]

In 1849, Mr J. Maggs junior of Bath proposed a new bridge-type design for a pier at Birnbeck but nothing came of this proposal.[16] However, this area was still a destination for at least some tourists without a pier linking the mainland to the island. On 2 June 1849, 1,600 workers from the Great Western Cotton Factory in Bristol assembled at the works at 6am and marched carrying banners and playing

music to the railway station, where they boarded a train consisting of 16 carriages. On their arrival at Weston, the procession reformed and marched through the town towards Birnbeck 'where the party broke up and dispersed in various directions – some taking to the field, others to the sands, and others again to boating in the channel.'[17] Although some tourists made it from the heart of Weston, this area in the mid-19th century was highly desirable for wealthy residents in search of a good view. The large villas erected at this date on Upper Kewstoke Road were among the largest and most elegant being built in the town at that date. It is unlikely that such substantial houses would have been constructed if their owners had realised the seaside pier would be constructed in the centre of their view.

## A Proposed Pier in Central Weston-super-Mare

Birnbeck was chosen as the location for the abortive first pier because steam ships would be able to moor alongside the island for more hours of the day than anywhere else nearby. Due to Weston's high tidal range, any pier built further south would have to be much longer to land passengers at lower states of the tide. In the 1840s, steamers would have probably been expected to deliver as many trippers and holidaymakers as the newly arrived railway, but by the 1860s the railway was well established as the primary means of arriving at seaside resorts around the country. The logical location at any resort for a seaside pier was often the shortest practical distance from the railway station. For instance, at Blackpool the first pier was built at the end of the road directly leading from the town's first railway station; a second station opened in 1863 and five years later, Blackpool's second pier opened a short distance away. Other examples of piers exhibiting this type of geographical proximity to stations being constructed in the 1860s include Southport, Brighton's West Pier, Aberystwyth, Bognor, Lytham, Eastbourne, New Brighton, Rhyl, Saltburn and Hunstanton.

In 1861, Richard Jones, a fisherman, advocated the construction of a pier where 40 years later the Grand Pier would be constructed, almost the shortest route between the railway station and the sea, and at the end of a well-established thoroughfare through the town.[18] On the reverse side of the letter, Jones drew a plan of his pier, starting from the beach opposite Regent Street at Whereat's library (later Huntley's restaurant) and running straight out to sea. There would be a floating breakwater at the end of the pier parallel to the shore. He explained in a side note that on the south side of the end of the pier there were to be many moorings for boats. Nothing came of this scheme; did the proposer and any potential investors realise the difficulties that such a project would face due to the high tidal range? However, it indicates that discussions were taking place in Weston-super-Mare about the desirability of providing a pier, which would culminate soon in the construction of Birnbeck Pier.

## Birnbeck Pier

As well as Richard Jones's highly speculative scheme, there were two more serious ideas to provide Weston-super-Mare with a facility that would allow steamers to land holidaymakers.[19] The Brean Down Harbour Company was established to create a commercial deep-water harbour at the western end of Brean Down, to

the south of Weston-super-Mare. The scheme did not come to fruition, but a rival attempt to create a pier for steamers was more successful, leading to the creation of the pier linking the mainland to Birnbeck Island, in the same location as Dredge's unsuccessful project.

The Weston-super-Mare Pier Company, registered in January 1860, was largely a creation of the Smyth Pigott estate, Weston's largest landowner, but it also attracted investment from businessmen in the town and some interest from investors in South Wales.[20] An initial Act of Parliament was obtained in 1862, with a view to completing the project within three years; as this did not occur, a second piece of legislation with enlarged powers received its Royal Assent two years later.[21] By 2 August 1862, a third of the money had been raised for the project, which at this date was expected to be a stone structure.[22] During the first two weeks of the same month, plans of the pier were on display at the public library.[23] By September 1862, 'the engineer and his staff, in company with Mr Waller, Cardiff contractor, visited the site of the Birnbeck Pier, with a view to calculate the cost of the structure'.[24] An article in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* of 1 November 1862 noted that the amount of capital already subscribed 'was sufficient to warrant the immediate commencement of the works' and that 'if the necessary preliminaries could be fixed by that date, the first sod should be turned on Monday, the 24th of November instant'.[25]

However, the foundation stone of the existing pier was only laid on 28 October 1864.[26] An article celebrating this event described briefly the previous design, its necessary abandonment being the cause of the delay: 'The scheme of 1861, it may be remembered, proposed to connect the island of Birnbeck with the mainland at Anchor Head by a solid embankment, to be faced with masonry.'[27] It would have been a crescent-shaped embankment, something akin to the Cobb at Lyme Regis or the pier at Margate around the harbour, providing both a promenade and a sheltered anchorage. However, engineers advised against this scheme as it was likely to silt up very quickly.

In its place, an iron pier was designed by Eugenius Birch (1818-84). When Birch became involved with the project is unclear, but the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* on 15 October 1864 noted that: 'We are pleased to hear that Mr Birch, the engineer for the Birnbeck pier, is now in Weston, and that arrangements are in progress for laying the foundation stone in the course of the next fortnight.'[28] Presumably he became involved in the immediate weeks or months before, once a new Act of Parliament was drafted to revive the project. Eugenius Birch is now often described as the most celebrated pier designer but, as will be described later, he was still relatively new to this branch of engineering when selected to design Birnbeck Pier.

Birch spoke at the dinner to mark the laying of the foundation stone.[29] He prophesied that the venture would be a success because the pier would be both a passenger pier as well as a place of recreation. Two years earlier at Blackpool, he had been asked to erect a simple landing pier, but instead convinced the promoters to create a pleasure pier at almost double the cost. This resulted in a first dividend of 7½ per cent after opening in 1863 and for the six months prior to October 1864 it had yielded a 50 per cent return.

Figure 6: Birnbeck Pier's support structure in 2018, looking eastwards [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218668]

Birnbeck  Pier, with its unfinished pavilion, was officially opened on 5 June 1867 by Master Cecil Hugh Smyth Pigott, the eight-year-old son of the Lord of the Manor.[30] An article in the *Illustrated London News* described the ceremony, which was also attended by John Hugh Smyth Pigott, Lord of the Manor and R. L. Jones, Chairman of the Weston-super-Mare Pier Company. During the first three months of operation, 120,000 people passed through the turnstiles and receipts during this period totalled £5,000. Most of these customers probably arrived on steamships coming down from Bristol or across the Severn from South Wales.

The pier consisted of a 317m-long main bridge structure between the mainland and Birnbeck Island, with originally a 12m-long timber jetty resting on iron piles extending westwards. The bridge structure consisted of 15 clusters (or trestles) of four cast-iron columns linked by rods, forming a substantial truss supporting continuous lattice girders beneath the deck (Figure 6). Each truss is screwed into the sea bed at an angle with an X-brace between adjacent pair of columns. The fitting of screw blades to the ends of the iron piles created a deeper and more resilient base support, a technique that Birch adopted from its inventor Alexander Mitchell (see later discussion). The original longitudinal members carrying the deck were wrought iron girders incorporating X-bracing; these appear to be substantially intact, though close inspection may reveal that many of the current members are faithful reproductions. The components of Birnbeck Pier were erected by Messrs Toogood and Laybourne from parts prefabricated at their Isca Foundry across the Severn in Newport (Monmouthshire) and the bridge section was completed by the end of 1866.[31]

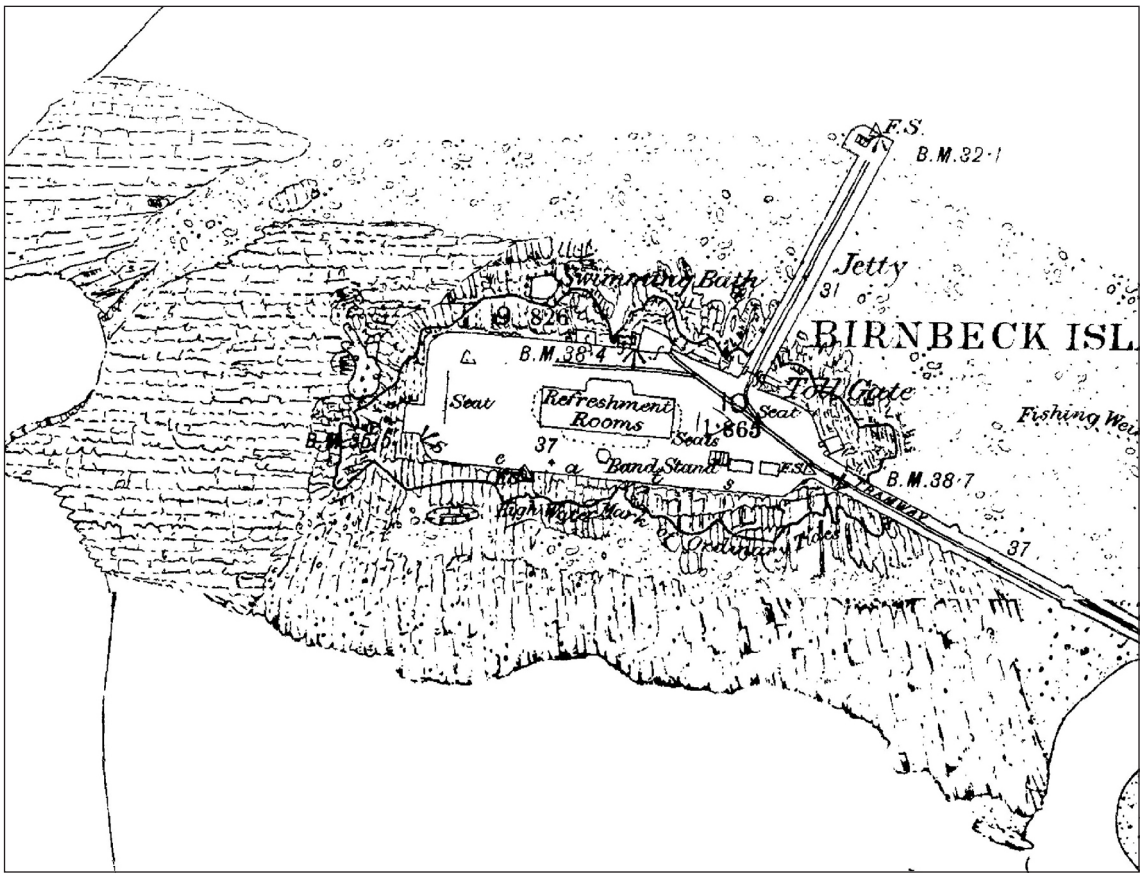


Figure 7: A detail from the 1888 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1884, published 1888). [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

A photograph dating from between 1867 and 1884 shows the buildings located on the island.[32] On the north-east side was a polygonal kiosk with a roof topped with a small finial, a design familiar from Birch's Brighton West Pier. This structure may be depicted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map though there appears to be some discrepancy between its location there and the photograph (Figure 7). In the centre of the island there appear to be three single-storeyed structures and to their left, at the south side of the island there are two, or perhaps three, square frames, with some cables suspended from one of the frames. Another photograph taken slightly earlier, at some point between 1867 and the erection of the north-facing jetty in 1872, shows less detail about the buildings, but demonstrates that the polygonal kiosk probably dates from the construction of the jetty in 1872.

The original timber jetty projecting westwards was dismantled in 1872 and replaced by another one, 76m long and facing north.[33] In 1881, a lifeboat was first stationed on the island, though a boathouse was apparently not constructed for another eight years; the building actually bears a datestone for 1888.[34] In 1902-3, a new lifeboat house was built at cost of £2,575 with one of the longest lifeboat slipways in country. The stone pavilion (described as the 'Refreshment Rooms' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888) was built in 1884 in stone. It was only possible to use such a heavy building material due to the presence of the island; the building contained a concert

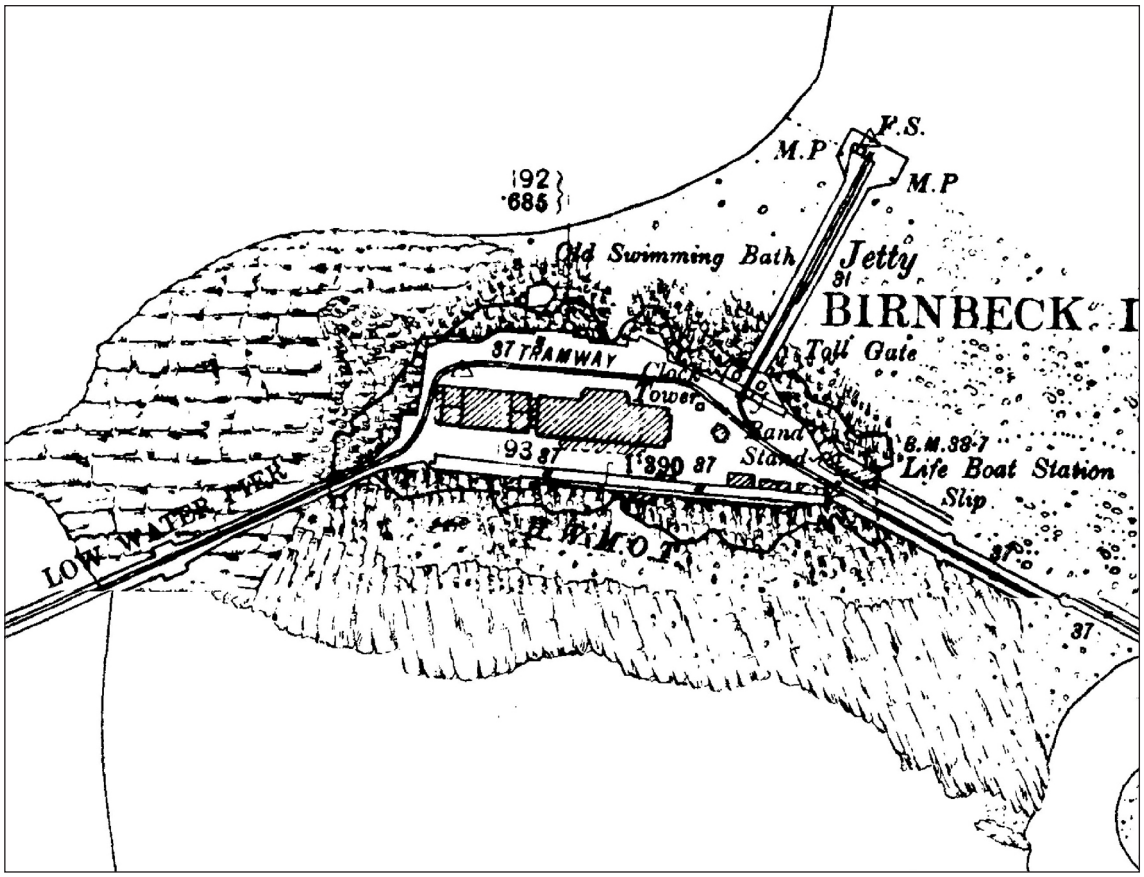


Figure 8: A detail from the 1903 Ordnance Survey map (revised 1902, published 1903). [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

hall and refreshment rooms (*see* Figure 7). This was designed by Weston's leading architectural practice, Price and Wooler.[35]

The 1888 Ordnance Survey map shows the large refreshment rooms in the centre of the island with a bandstand to the south and a small swimming bath cut into the rocks to the north. There were a number of seats on the island. There was a toll gate between the northern jetty and the island, as well as between the mainland and the pier. A tramway ran along the deck from the mainland to the island and then onto the jetty. According to an early photograph, this appears to have been a narrow-gauge, unpowered tramway, presumably predominantly used for moving luggage or small bits of cargo. However, it has been suggested to have been an electric tramway of 1883-4. If this was the case, it was among the earliest anywhere in Britain (*see* the discussion on The Rise of the Pier).

The stone pavilion was destroyed by fire on 26 December 1897 but was replaced; the new structure, again by Price and Wooler, opened for business in July 1898.[36] A low-water landing stage was added to the south-west of the island in 1898, but in September 1903, both jetties were badly damaged in a storm that also damaged the seafront. The low-water jetty not repaired until 1909-10 and was taken out of use

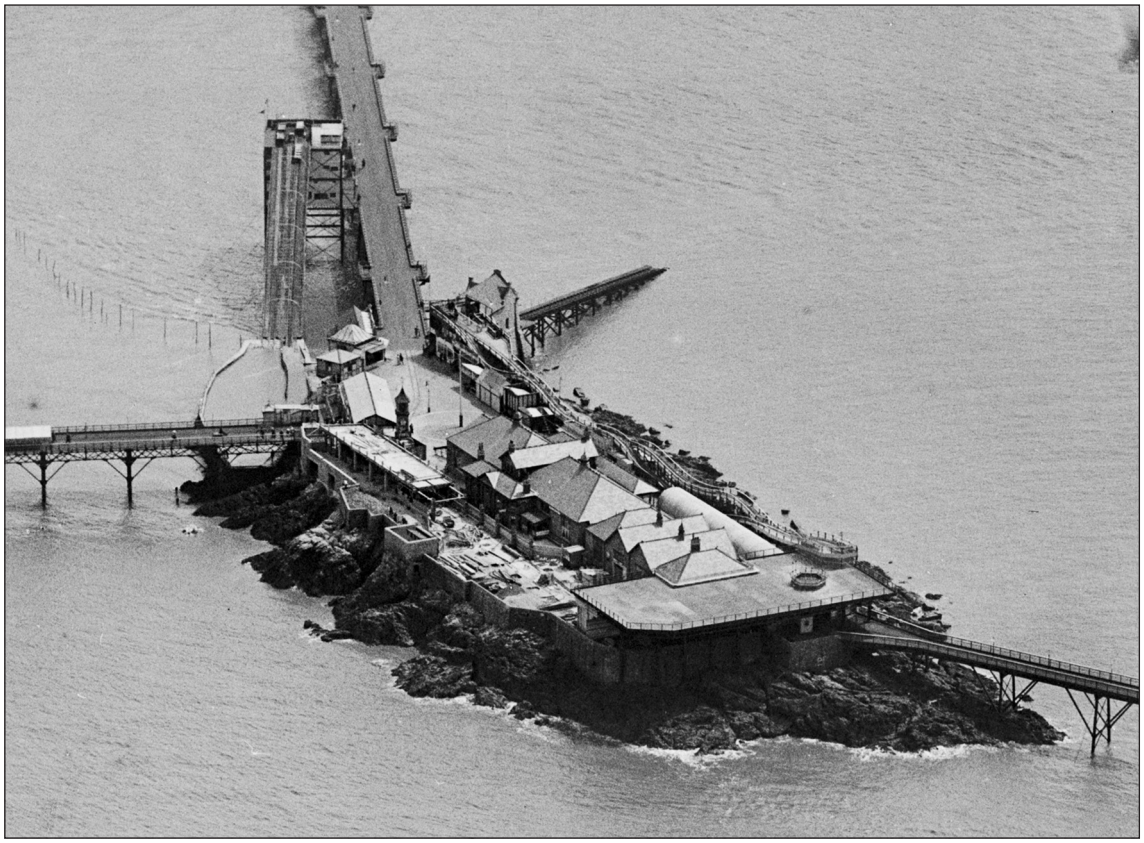

Figure 9: Detail of an aerial photograph taken in 1920 showing Birnbeck Pier. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]

permanently in 1916 and dismantled in 1923. The north jetty was rebuilt in steel and extended to 91m in length.[37]

The 1903 Ordnance Survey map shows the low-water jetty; the tramway had been extended to run along this structure too (Figure 8). The island was now dominated by the second pavilion, which occupied a similar footprint to the original building but with a large extension to the west. The bandstand was to the east of the pavilion by this date and the clocktower is shown to the north-east of the pavilion. The swimming bath was now referred to as being 'old' suggesting it was no longer expected to be used. Although published in 1903, the Ordnance Survey map is based on a survey of 1902, so it shows the 1888-9 lifeboat station at the east end of the island to the north side of the bridge section of the pier, but does not yet show the 1902-3 lifeboat station that would be constructed on the other side of the pier's bridge section.

The 1903 Ordnance Survey map also shows a number of small structures at the south-east corner of the island. Their function is not specified but may be associated with amusements and fairground features that would not be depicted on a survey due to their temporary character (Figure 9). However, as will be described later there were a number of substantial fairground rides at the beginning of the 20th century, made possible by the pier head being an island. The increasingly boisterous and commercial dimension of the island seems to have upset some local residents.

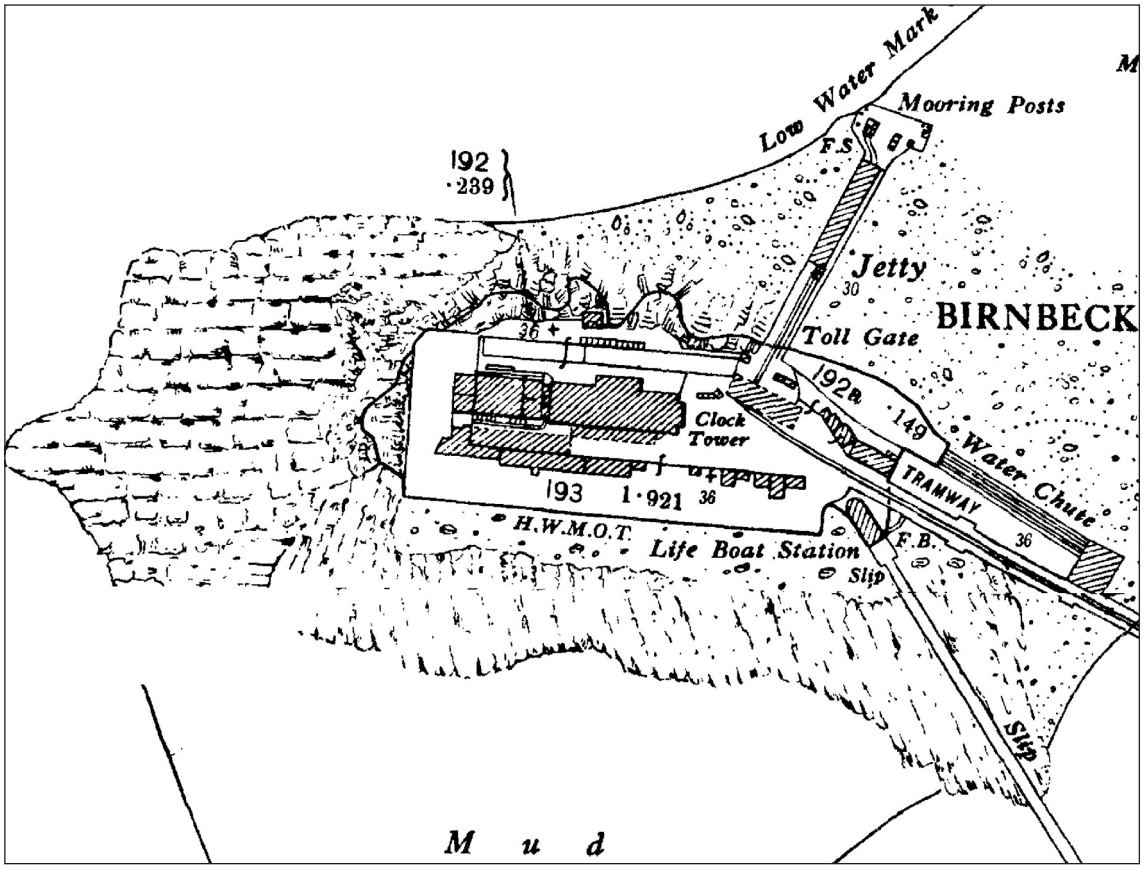


Figure 10: A detail from the 1931 Ordnance Survey map (revised 1929, published 1931). [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

Perhaps inevitably, they objected to the construction of a concrete platform to increase the size of the island. However, it was constructed on the south side of the pier, opening on 29 May 1909. It housed the theatre, a bioscope (cinema) and a roller-skating rink. In May 1912, the platform extension was found not to have been built to the correct specifications and had to be demolished.[38] It was replaced in 1932 by an extension of reinforced concrete on concrete stilts.[39]

The various entertainments and amusements helped the pier to achieve a profit of over £3,000 during the summer of 1913.[40] It also benefitted from having a monopoly of steamer services landing passengers from around the Severn Estuary and especially from South Wales. The construction of the Grand Pier in 1903-4 had threatened this monopoly, but difficulties with navigation and currents prevented all but three steamers ever successfully mooring alongside the Grand Pier.[41]

The 1931 Ordnance Survey map shows that the low-water jetty had been removed and that the usable surface area of the island was larger than in 1903 (Figure 10). This allowed a series of structures to be erected along the south side of the central pavilion though the function of none of these are specified. The 1902-3 lifeboat station is shown in the south-east corner of the island and there were new buildings to the east of the pavilion and behind the earlier lifeboat station. Although fairground rides are not illustrated on Ordnance Survey maps, the Water Chute on the north

Figure 11: Detail of an aerial photograph taken in 1949, showing Birnbeck Pier. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

side of the bridge section of the pier was substantial enough to be deemed permanent and therefore worthy of inclusion on the map.

During the Second World War, piers on the east and south coasts of England were breached to avoid them being used by enemy forces but the west coast was thought to be sufficiently far away from the continent for piers to remain open or be redeployed to aid with the war effort. The Grand Pier remained open for business but Birnbeck Pier became HMS *Birnbeck* and was used for testing of a number of new weapons for the Royal Navy. The Department of Miscellaneous Weapons Development (DMWD), known colloquially as the 'Wheezers and Dodgers', had offices in London but it also took over the pier in February 1941 at an annual rent of £375.[42] Some of the better-known weapons trialled at Weston were a seaborne bouncing bomb, designed specifically to bounce to a target across water to avoid torpedo nets. They also worked on the anti-submarine missile AMUCK and an expendable acoustic emitter designed to confuse noise-seeking torpedoes.[43] The pier was not breached but nevertheless, after the war it was not in good condition though steamers began to land passengers there again (Figure 11). The local council considered buying the pier for £95,000 in 1946 but were advised that the cost of repairs would be in excess of £40,000.[44]

As with so many other features and attractions at the English seaside immediately after 1945, investment was limited and from the 1960s onwards the pier passed through the hands of a number of private owners, none of whom were able to make it into a successful business. In 1962, the pier was purchased by the steamer company P. & A. Campbell Ltd but as passenger numbers dwindled they withdrew their passenger services.[45] In 1963, they began a brief experiment using a hovercraft ferry between Weston and Penarth in South Wales, but it was never a success despite the

journey only taking twelve minutes and costing £1.[46] During the 1960s, in line with national trends, a growing percentage of Weston's tourists came by car, with fewer arriving by train than before the war. Steamers and their successors along, and across, the Severn were also in sharp decline, due to the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966 and the relaxation of licensing laws in South Wales. John Critchley bought the pier in 1972 for £50,000 and reinstated the amusements including a music hall, his collection of vintage cars and a National Museum of Penny Slot Machines. Other ideas floated to make the pier economically more viable included a helicopter landing pad, a marina and a hotel, but none of these came to fruition.[47]

In 1974 the pier was listed Grade II*, an early and clear recognition of its historic and architectural significance but in the following year it was put up for sale again.[48] On this occasion, the guide price was £400,000, but the highest offer received was considerably less than half that amount. On 19 October 1979, MV *Balmoral* sailed from the pier for the last time. Concern about the structure and the safety of the pier was mounting and in 1984, the pier was seriously damaged. Three years later, there was a fire on the pier head and in 1988, the 'Victorian arcade' building, perhaps the pavilion, was also gutted.[49] The pier was purchased by Philip Stubbs in 1989 who announced his plan to make it a 'Village on the Sea' with berths for 600 boats. Objections were raised by the Nature Conservancy Council due to its proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The following year saw severe storms and gale force winds damaged the lifeboat slipway meaning that it was put out of use.[50] In 1994, the pier was in such a dangerous condition that it had to close. Four years later, it was put up for auction and sold, but the new owners, White Horse Ferries, proved unable to make it a going concern. It was put on the Heritage at Risk Register in 1999, where it still remains today.[51] The pier was purchased in 2006 by Urban Splash, who drew up plans to regenerate the promenade and the island, potentially through a development of 12 luxury apartments and a 50-room hotel, but they were hit by the general economic downturn.[52] In 2012, CNM Estates, a firm of developers, announced that it was acquiring the pier for an unknown sum, with a view to incorporating it in a major leisure scheme involving the site of the adjacent Royal Pier Hotel (demolished in 2010) and the building of luxury apartments on the site of the car park.[53] North Somerset Council issued CNM Estates with a compulsory purchase order for the pier in September 2020.[54]

## The Grand Pier

The idea of a pier at the western end of Regent Street had been floated as early as 1861 and in 1883 it was revived by the Weston-super-Mare Town Commissioners who approved plans for a new promenade pier, over a mile in length, which would cost £70,000.[55] It would form a central part of the scheme for a new seafront, and while new sea walls and the promenade were created, the pier's construction was delayed. In July 1884 *An Act for incorporating and conferring powers on the Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Company and for other purposes* received its Royal Assent.[56] The first prospectus of the Weston-super-Mare Grand Pier Company Ltd was soon in search of capital totalling £90,000 in 9,000 shares of £10.[57] Despite enthusiastic local meetings, no work took place.

Figure 12: An aerial photograph of 1928, showing the Grand Pier. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW024071]

During the 1890s, this idea was revived and an Act of Parliament received its Royal Assent in 1893.[58] However, there was no progress immediately and as the powers in the Act were time-limited, further Acts were obtained in 1897 and 1899 to extend the duration of the project.[59] People in Weston and Cardiff were the largest contributors to the £200,000 subscribed and work finally began on 7 November 1903 to designs produced by Peter Munroe.[60] By summer 1904, the contractors, Mayoh and Haley of London, had completed the pavilion and the first stage of the pier, and these opened on 11 June 1904 (Figure 12).[61] Initially 329m long, a narrow low-water landing stage was added taking the pier to a total length of 786m, less than half the anticipated length of the original design.[62] Only three steamers attempted to use the pier and once the approach channel had rapidly silted up, other pleasure steamer captains refused to call there.[63] During the First World War, the low-water extension was demolished, leaving the pier at its current length.

Without income from steamers, the pier had to focus on raising revenue from entertaining visitors. A 1910 guidebook described how it was famous for its high-class instrumental music and entertainments. At the end of the pier was a pavilion in which musical entertainments and vaudeville parties were staged for audiences of 2,000, and there were concert parties on the new stage behind the pavilion.[64] A 1913 guidebook described how: 'The interior of the Pavilion is tastefully decorated in white and gold, and has a blue-tinted panelled ceiling.'[65] There was also a bandstand

Figure 13: An aerial photograph of 1930 showing the fire-damaged Grand Pier. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW033286]

in front of the pavilion and the pier also offered roller skating, confetti carnivals and many other seasonal attractions.

In January 1930, a fire destroyed the Grand Pier's pavilion (Figure 13). Construction of the new pavilion began in the autumn of 1932. The pier head was enlarged and strengthened to support the larger building, which was designed by John Darby and the new building opened during 1933. A cafe and ballroom were added in 1935.[66] The relative remoteness from mainland Europe meant that the Grand Pier, like its neighbour, was not breached during the Second World War, but it was guarded round-the-clock.

In 2008, the Grand Pier was sold to Kerry and Michelle Michael. On 28 July 2008, the Pavilion caught fire and was destroyed. The Michaels acted decisively and quickly and a new pavilion housing a range of attractions and facilities opened on 23 October 2010 (Figure 14).[67]

Figure 14: The Grand Pier in 2019. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP236227]

## EUGENIUS BIRCH

Eugenius Birch (1818-84) is celebrated as the most prolific and successful Victorian pier engineer, but this aspect of his career only began to emerge from the mid-1850s onwards. Born in Shoreditch, on 20 June 1818, Birch's obituary in the *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* describes how he was fascinated by construction programmes taking place near his home in North London; he watched the cutting of the Regent's Canal and the construction of the Primrose Hill Tunnel of the London and Birmingham Railway.[68] At the age of 16, he went to work at Messrs Bligh's engineering works at Limehouse and he joined the local Mechanics' Institute. On 19 February 1839, he was elected a Graduate Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers in which class he remained until he became a full Member on 5 May 1863. Soon after becoming a Graduate Member, he entered into a partnership with his older brother, John Brannis Birch; he worked on various types of project until 1845 when the Railway Mania came to dominate their business. When the domestic bubble burst, the brothers became involved in laying out the East Indian Railway from Calcutta to Delhi, designing all the bridges, viaducts and other structures. Eugenius Birch also designed bridges in Nottinghamshire and various other engineering works on railways, harbours and at a waterworks. He was also responsible for the design of Brighton's aquarium of 1869-72, the first practical aquarium at a seaside resort.[69] He would also design the short-lived aquarium at Scarborough a few years later.[70]

The obituary concluded by saying that: 'Mr Birch was a pleasant and genial companion, and a thoroughly honourable man.' It then went on to say: 'He died

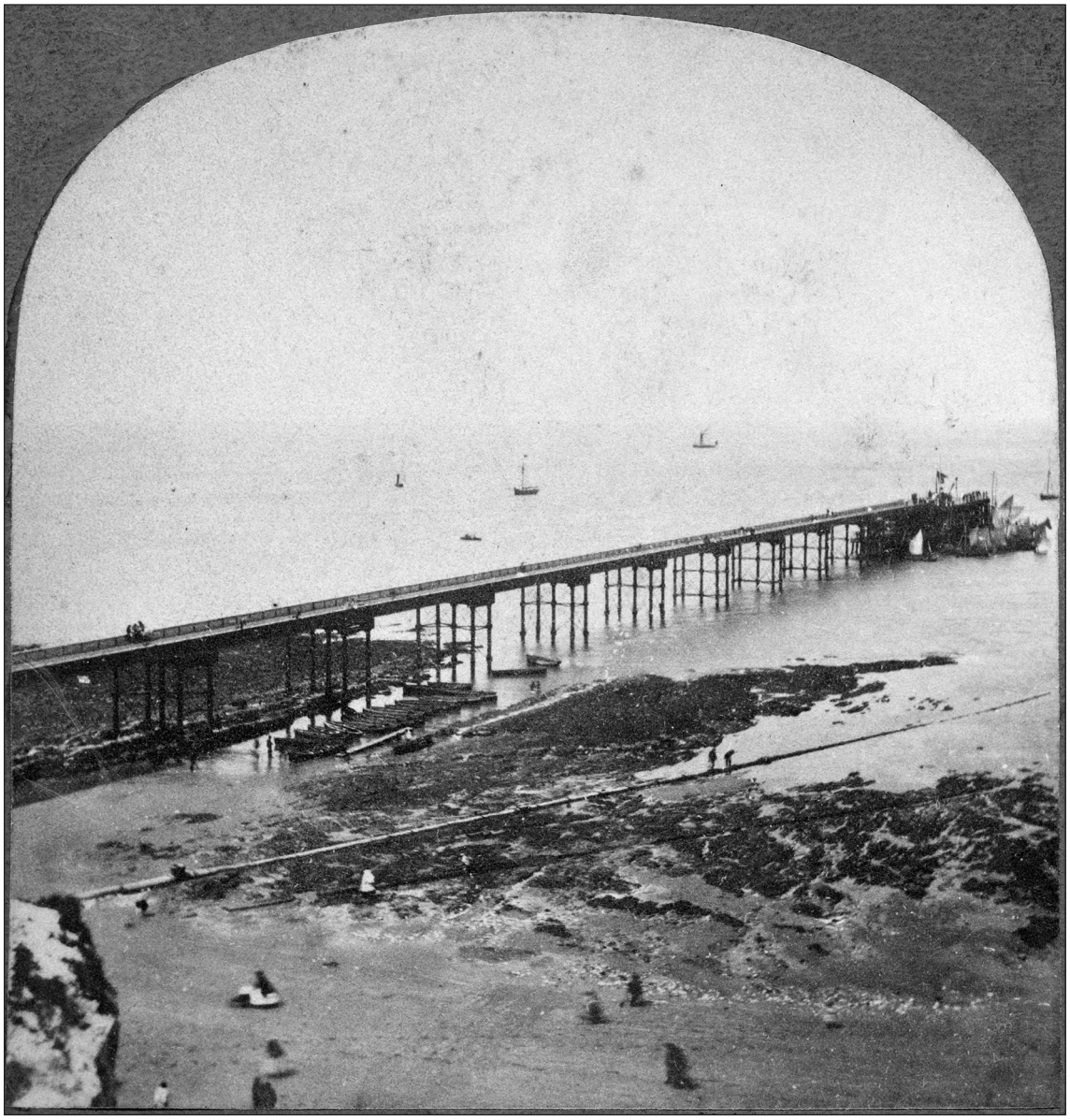

Figure 15: Margate Jetty, in a photograph taken between 1856 and 1875. [Source: Historic England Archive, BB88/04260]

after a long and painful illness on the 8th of January 1884.' His obituary rightly proclaimed that his great talent and success lay in the design of seaside piers: 'Mr Birch's claims to recognition are chiefly based upon the system of promenade-piers which he and his brother initiated, and which now form a feature of nearly every watering-place on the English coast.'

The new jetty at Margate (1853-6) was the first pier that Birch was asked to design and eventually he would be responsible for 14, a career that helped to define the essential characteristics of a pleasure pier (Figure 15).[71] No other engineer would come close to that number. Sir James Brunlees (1816-92) erected four piers (Southport, Rhyl, Llandudno, Southend), Joseph William Wilson (1829-98) also designed four piers (Bognor, Teignmouth, Hunstanton, Westward Ho!), while J. J.


Figure 16: Blackpool Victoria Pier, now South Pier, in a photograph taken between about 1890 and 1910. [Source: Historic England Archive, OP00487]

Webster of Westminster was responsible for three piers in the 1890s (Dover, Bangor, Minehead).

Birch's first contribution to pier engineering was to select the screw pile, patented by Alexander Mitchell (1780-1868) in 1833, as the means of creating the structure of piers; this was a technique using a screw on the end of an iron rod to fix the pile into the sea bed.[72] Mitchell first employed this technology in 1833 and used it in a number of lighthouses before constructing his first jetty at Courtown Harbour in County Wexford in 1847. Other engineers explored alternative techniques, sometimes to overcome particular local problems regarding the character of the sea floor. For the construction of Southport Pier in 1859-60, the civil engineer Sir James Brunlees employed a jetting technique, in which water was pumped down the centre of the hollow pile to clear the sand, allowing the pile to sink deep into the sand, which then held it in place.[73] Each pile took around half an hour to sink in 20ft (6m), meaning that all 237 piles were in place in six weeks. An alternative technique developed by John Dixon involved driving piles using wood and rubber to reduce the shock to the brittle metal.[74]

Margate Jetty led the way in the use of iron for seaside piers; like others being built during the 1850s and 1860s, it originally had a fairly plain superstructure to maximise the area for promenaders and passengers disembarking from steamships. This sparseness can still be experienced today in a walk along the piers at Saltburn-by-the-Sea and Clevedon, both of which opened in 1869. However, before their construction, changes were underway in the presentation of the seaside pier. At

Blackpool, Eugenius Birch erected the town's first pier, which opened in 1863, and he included a series of kiosks on its deck. Three years later, Birch completed Brighton's West Pier using a similar formula, but he included the first hint of exotic detailing inspired by the nearby Royal Pavilion. This oriental-inspired vocabulary would come to dominate the detailing of piers for several decades and culminate in the extravagance of Eastbourne (as revamped at the end of the 19th century), Blackpool's Victoria Pier (1893), Brighton's Palace Pier (1899) and the Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare (1903-4) (Figure 16).

Birnbeck Pier was another product of the main part of Birch's career, and while it visually and structurally resembles other contemporary piers, it is unique as it makes use of an island to create its pier head. The advantage of this was that substantial structures could be erected on it, but the slight disadvantage was the necessity to provide a series of satellite landing stages, as the island would be dangerous for any ships trying to moor alongside the rocky shore.

## HANS FOWLER PRICE AND BIRNBECK PIER

Hans Fowler Price (1835-1912) was the pre-eminent architect in Weston-super-Mare from the 1860s until his death.[75] He and his successive partners in practice were responsible for several hundred buildings in the town, ranging from private houses to industrial, educational, religious and public buildings. His contribution to Weston's architecture and character was marked in December 2018 by the installation of a commemorative blue plaque at the former School of Science and Art.[76]

Price was born in Bristol and trained with the architect Thomas Denville Barry in Tranmere, Birkenhead.[77] By January 1860, he was living in Weston-super-Mare, then a fast-growing seaside resort, with ample opportunities for a young architect.[78] After a few lean years supplemented by commissions in Bristol and Clevedon, Price came to the notice of the Smyth Pigott family, the lords of the manor and main landowners. This connection was probably made through his father-in-law, Samuel Baker, the Smyth Pigotts' solicitor. Price was appointed their consulting architect and surveyor, being responsible for the design and layout of a number of Smyth Pigott ventures including the new developments to the north of the town, such as the Grove Town Estate around Landemann Circus and the new axis of the Boulevard and Waterloo Street.[79]

This led to Price's involvement in other estate developments, including the Whitecross Estate to the south of the town centre, the British Land Company Estate, the Sunnyside Estate and the densification of the Shrubbery Estate.[80] Many of Weston's best-known buildings were designed by him or his practice, including the School of Science and Art, Walliscote Road School, the former West of England Sanatorium, the remodelled and extended Town Hall, the former Hospital (now Hans Price House) and the former Baptist Chapel (now Blakehay Theatre).[81] He designed most of the buildings along the Boulevard and Waterloo Street, including the former Library and Museum, several places of worship, two masonic halls, and the offices of the *Weston Mercury* newspaper.[82] Price held many public positions, including being a founding trustee of the School of Science and Art, a director of the Weston-super-Mare Gaslight Company, a town commissioner, and architect to the local school board.[83]

Hans Price had several connections to Birnbeck Pier. In the 1860s, he was a member of the Sixth Somerset Company of Rifle Volunteers and marched with them to Birnbeck Pier on the day of its opening in 1867.[84] During the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s he took a close interest in the Weston-super-Mare Pier Company, the company responsible for Birnbeck Pier. The Company was largely a creation of the Smyth Pigott Estate. John Hugh Smyth Pigott, the lord of the manor, and his agent, R. L. Jones, were founding directors of the company and his solicitor, Samuel Baker, was secretary.[85] Price regularly attended the annual general meetings and between the 1860s and 1880s was elected several times as the company's auditor.[86]

In 1884, Price and his partner Walter H. Wooler designed new refreshment rooms and a concert hall for the pier; over time the latter came to be used as a waiting room

Figure 17: The refreshment rooms and the clocktower in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218686]

for steamer passengers.[87] When these were destroyed in a fire in December 1897, Price & Wooler designed a replacement building, comprising refreshment rooms, a waiting room and manager's accommodation.[88] These buildings survive today, albeit in a derelict state, making them the only confirmed work on the pier by Weston's most significant Victorian architect (Figure 17). The piermaster's house of *c.* 1864-7 and the late 19th-century clocktower have been attributed to Price but at present there is no firm evidence for his design of either.[89]

It seems likely that the attribution of the piermaster's house to Price is inspired by his design of a similar structure at the entrance to Clevedon Pier in Somerset: in 1869 Price designed the tollhouse, which was also the residence of the toll collector at Clevedon.[90] This is a castellated structure, whose style is described in the List entry as 'Scottish baronial', very different to the relatively plain and domestic piermaster's house at Weston. Price also remodelled the hotel beside Clevedon Pier.[91]


Figure 18: A postcard dating from between 1905 and 1915, showing Birnbeck Pier and the various rides and entertainments. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48002]

## BIRNBECK PIER AS A FAIRGROUND

As early as 1876, Birnbeck Pier provided its customers with swings and by the early 20th century it hosted a range of entertainment facilities as the pier included an island in its structure.[92] The large area and the stable footings provided by the island allowed substantial fairground rides to be erected; among the attractions by the early 20th century were a water chute, a switchback railway, a shooting gallery, a merry-go-round, the flying machine and the Hurry Scurry, a serpentine-shaped slide, which was in existence by 1906 (Figure 18).[93] The island was also home to a skating rink and a Bioscope theatre, an early form of cinema. Other less substantial piers might also contain rides, such as Ramsgate Pier where a switchback filled most of the deck from 1888 until 1891. There was also a short-lived water chute attached to Southend Pier in 1901 and the spinning Joy Wheel had been added to Hastings Pier by 1911.

The 1888 Ordnance Survey map does not show any fairground rides as none were substantial enough to be deemed to be permanent and therefore included in the survey (*see* Figure 7). An advertisement in the local newspaper in August 1888 describes the pier pavilion and refreshment rooms as being 'built on most approved principles, and afford every accommodation for large & small parties.'[94] There is no suggestion in this advertisement of any other activities on the pier head, apart from the fact that yachts and pleasure boats will be available for hire. This does not mean that amusements were not available and by 1891 an advertisement described 'The Pier and Birnbeck Island' as 'The place to spend a happy day! The world's fancy fair'.[95] Among the attractions listed were 'SWITCHBACK RAILWAYS! AERIAL FLIGHT! PHOTO STUDIOS! GRAND BAZAARS! SHOOTING

GALLERIES! SWINGS, &c. &c.' There was also a first-class band and places to eat, 'ADMISSION TWOPENCE'. Similar attractions were apparently available during the following summer.

The attractions listed in this advert are significant for two reasons. The first is that people wishing to enjoy these attractions were charged 'twopence' for admission to the site. This appears to be for access to the island and due to the geography; it inevitably enjoyed a captive audience once the fee was paid. This is potentially significant as it predates Britain's first enclosed amusement park, Blackpool Pleasure Beach of 1905 and even one of its immediate inspirations, the amusement parks at Coney Island at New York. In 1895, Captain Paul Boyton opened Sea Lion Park, the first enclosed amusement park with an admission fee, named because it included a performance area for sea lions.[96] The obvious model for this new venture seems to have been the exhibition at Chicago in 1893, which featured rides in a brightly-illuminated electrical landscape.[97] By the early 20th century, three vast parks had been built along the seafront of Coney Island; Steeplechase (opened in 1897), Luna Park built on the site of Boyton's first, unsuccessful park (1903) and Dreamland (1904).[98] The three parks established a blueprint for the contents of an early amusement park, containing 'mechanical rides, panoramic spectaculars, disaster re-enactments, 'native' villages, dance halls, and, above all, a wide variety of the latest rollercoasters'.[99]

The site of Britain's first enclosed seaside amusement park at Blackpool evolved from the mid-1890s onwards on a stretch of the shoreline at the south end of the rapidly growing resort. The men behind the creation of the Pleasure Beach were William George Bean (1868-1929), a Londoner who had become involved with the emerging American amusement business in Philadelphia, and John William Outhwaite (*c.* 1855-1911) from Shipley (Yorkshire) who had family connections to the American amusement industry.[100] They initially let out plots of land on which small-scale rides, fairground booths and stalls were created as concessions. The title of 'The Pleasure Beach' first appeared on advertisements in 1905, indicating that the process of consolidating the ownership of the plots and rides into a single business was under way.[101]

If the amusements and attractions on Birnbeck Island are only considered as forming a self-contained amusement park, then it would predate Blackpool by many years. However, although Coney Island was the main, direct inspiration for the Pleasure Beach, another, domestic inspiration was the practice of creating enclosed pleasure gardens in London, major cities and at spa towns and seaside resorts and charging a fee for admission. This was a Georgian phenomenon that continued into the 19th century and at some pleasure gardens, fairground rides were introduced during the late 19th century. At Blackpool, Raikes Hall Gardens opened for its first full season in 1872 and it provided its customers with fireworks, circus acts, dancing, acrobats and a range of other lively spectacles.[102] In 1873, the local newspaper ran an advertisement for Raikes Hall describing its many joys: 'These beautiful Gardens, 40 acres in extent, with their broad Walks, Drives, Fountains, Statuary, Terrace (600 feet in length), extensive Serpentine Walks, render them the most fashionable and agreeable place of resort in Blackpool.'[103] During the next 25 years, a series of new

Figure 19: Detail from an aerial photograph of Birnbeck Pier taken in 1920, showing the large rides, with the switchback railway to the right and the water chute top left. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]

attractions were added including a tricycle track, a camera obscura and a switchback railway.[104]

The second reason that the 1891 advertisement is significant is because this is a relatively early reference to a switchback railway, which according to early photographs was located on the south side of the island (Figure 19). First patented in 1884, this was the earliest recognisable type of rollercoaster.[105] Riders climbed up to the top of the track and boarded the car. This was pushed out of the station and slid down the track over some slight undulations. At the other end, the car was emptied and raised to a second station, from where it was again occupied and pushed back to the start of the ride. These switchback railways were built of wood. This early type of ride was not particularly thrilling and required much effort by its operators to complete the journey. Thirty were built in Britain, and three of these were operated in more than one location. The earliest in Britain was at Skegness in 1885. None survive; the last of these was probably demolished in the late 1930s.

The switchback railway on Birnbeck Pier was seriously damaged by fire in June 1895; a newspaper report described it as follows: 'its length is – or rather was prior to the fire – 500 or 600 feet, and was substantially built.'[106] It had been erected about

seven or eight years ago and as a result of the fire a 'large portion' was demolished. Therefore, the switchback railway, or gravity railway as it was also known, seen in photographs taken in about 1900 represent a reconstructed version of the original ride.

An advertisement in the local newspaper in May 1901 implored visitors not to 'miss seeing the amusements on the pier', which included the 'GRAVITY RAILWAY (Exciting)', 'SWINGS (Exhilarating)' and 'THE SHOOTING JUNGLE (Good Sport)' amongst more than a dozen attractions.[107] In the first decade of the 20th century, further substantial rides were constructed. An advertisement in August 1905 proclaimed that visitors could enjoy the switchback, the motor track, a helter-skelter and perhaps most significantly the fact that 'the water chute is now open'.[108] It was located on the north side of the bridge section of the pier beside the island and was only possible once the earlier lifeboat station had closed when the new building opened on the other side of the pier in 1903 (*see* Figure 19).

The first water chute appeared in 1893 and log flumes and a range of water splash rides are still popular in amusement parks today.[109] In 1903, a water chute was created at Southport and at Blackpool Pleasure Beach another was erected in 1907, propelling 55 boats per hour, each with their own gondolier, down a long chute.[110] Birnbeck's water chute, shown on the north side of the bridge section of the pier in the 1931 Ordnance Survey map, ranked among the earliest constructed in Britain. It does not appear on the 1949 aerial photograph (*see* Figure 11) and presumably was removed when the pier was used for military purposes during the Second World War.

A postcard dating from 1907 shows a recently constructed flying machine in action on Birnbeck Pier.[111] The flying machine consisted of a tall metal pylon from which hung gondola-shaped seats that swang out as the machine rotated.[112] It was in operation by the summer of 1906 when is described in a local newspaper advertisement:

> How does it feel to travel in an air-ship over the ocean?
>
> Try the Traver's practical flying machine, which is now in operation at the Birnbeck Pier.
>
> One mile a minute over the ocean.[113]

Swings of various types had been features of pleasure gardens from the 18th century, as well as at travelling fairs. Chairoplanes were patented by John Inshaw from Birmingham in 1888, while in 1904 Rudy Uzzell patented in Colorado a set of swinging chairs.[114] In 1904, the opening of 'Sir Hiram Maxim's Captive Flying Machine' at Blackpool Pleasure Beach saw the swings being changed into gondolas and a few weeks later he opened another at Southport.[115] Sir Hiram Maxim's Captive Flying Machine, the oldest ride in continuous use in Europe, first operated on 1 August 1904 at Blackpool, actually predating the foundation of the Pleasure Beach.

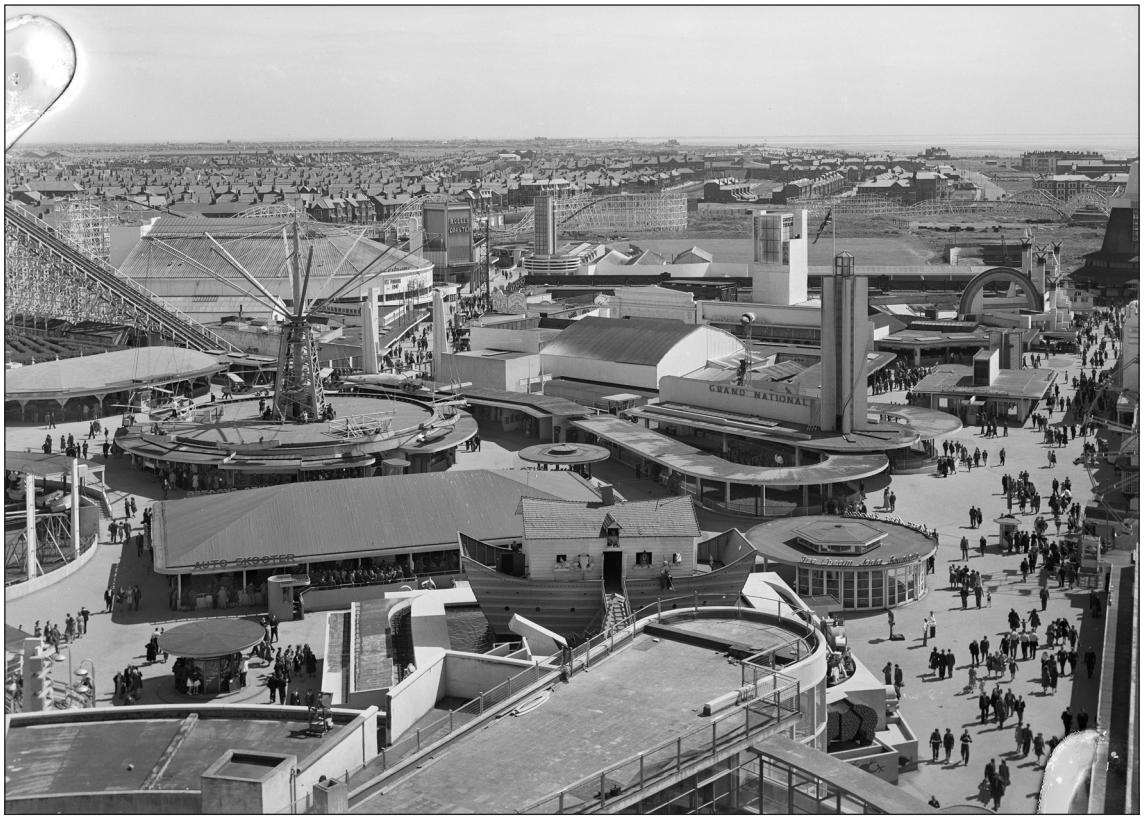


Figure 20: A photograph of Blackpool Pleasure Beach, showing Sir Hiram Maxim's Captive Flying Machine, taken after the 1930s alterations and before 1952. [Source: Historic England Archive, AFL03/lilywhites/blp45]

Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim (1840–1916) was an engineer and inventor of the Maxim machine gun and was experimenting with steam-driven flight.[116]

The Captive Flying Machine devised in 1902 was a spin-off from this research. It was first shown at the Earls Court exhibition in 1903 and was rebuilt at Blackpool, while subsequent examples were built at Southport, Crystal Palace and New Brighton.[117] It consisted of ten steel arms, from which cables hung to support cars in the shape of boats holding several people each (Figure 20). The arms rotate around a central 30m high vertical driving shaft, allowing the cars to fan outwards as they turn and they could achieve a terrifying maximum speed of 65mph. The original gondolas were replaced in 1929 by aeroplanes and rockets replaced these in 1952, updates designed to keep the ride at the forefront of contemporary new technology.[118] It is still a popular ride today.

Figure 21: A photographic postcard showing the lifeboat being launched from the first lifeboat station, taken between 1889 and 1903. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48004]

## LIFEBOATS ON BIRNBECK PIER

In 1881, a lifeboat was first stationed on the island. Originally, the boat was slung from davits until a boathouse was constructed eight years later, though there was mention of an 'old boathouse' in 1889, which the Pier Company wanted to acquire from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).[119] The new building actually bears a datestone for 1888 but was opened in 1889 (Figure 21).[120] In 1902-3, a new lifeboat house was built at cost of £2,575 with one of the longest lifeboat slipways in country (Figure 22).[121]

The earliest dedicated lifeboat was based at Formby in the 1770s, but the first purpose-built boat for lifesaving was constructed by Henry Greathead at South Shields in 1790 and was stationed there until 1830.[122] Scarborough's lifeboat station may be the oldest in existence in Britain; in 1801, a Greathead boat was housed near the Mill Beck underneath the present Spa Bridge and in 1826, it was transferred to a site beside the West Pier where it remained for almost a century.

Leaving the provision of lifeboats to local communities led to a haphazard deployment of boats around the coast. Therefore, in 1824, The Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life was established in that year, its name being changed to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution 30 years later.[123] By 1851, there were 95 boats located around the coast, many of which were in a poor state of repair and in need of buildings to house them. In 1858, Charles Cooke was appointed as the RNLI's first architect, leading to the creation of a distinctive

Figure 22: The 1902-3 lifeboat station on Birnbeck Island in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218729]

building type resembling a church hall with large doors.[124] As the first lifeboats were relatively small and unpowered, the buildings housing them did not have to be very substantial. A number of these early lifeboat stations dating from the 1860s survive, including at Teignmouth, Lytham St Annes, Blackpool and Skegness.

Although many lifeboat stations have ceased to be used or have been rebuilt, some still occupy their original building, including the 1862 lifeboat house at Teignmouth.[125] Swanage's station was built in 1875 and had been kept in continuous use through adaptations, though a modern station was completed in 2016 to house a new lifeboat. Minehead's station was constructed during 1901 and remains in use today now as the base for two inshore lifeboats due to an extension in 1950 and recent modifications.

The first steam-powered lifeboat was introduced in 1890, followed by petrol engines added to existing boats in 1904 and purpose-built, internal combustion-engined boats in 1908.[126] Changes in boat design and their increasing size had a major impact on seafront lifeboat houses, rendering smaller ones redundant or requiring major alterations.

In 1958, the first self-righting boat was introduced and in the 1960s a new class of lifeboat, the inshore lifeboat, began to appear.[127] With the appearance of these smaller, inshore lifeboats a new life for old lifeboat stations was secured. At Teignmouth, the 1862 lifeboat house had been forced to close in 1940 and was sold off for use as a cafe, but in 1991 the RNLI re-acquired and renovated it to house a new inshore lifeboat.

Today, the RNLI has over 400 boats in its fleet, consisting of various all-weather lifeboats and smaller inshore lifeboats, the different classes of lifeboat within each category being a response to the location and the type of rescue likely to be needed. Hovercraft are also located at a number of sites around the coast.[128] A number of lifeboat stations sit on purpose-built modern jetties, such as at Barrow, Bembridge or Padstow, while at Cromer the building is at the end of the pier. It takes advantage of the pier to reach further out to sea for launches, much as occurred Birnbeck Island.

# ENGLAND'S SEASIDE PIERS

## Numbers and Definitions

Sources generally agree that in 1914 there were around 100 seaside piers in England. The absence of a precise figure is due to a problem of definition, namely when can a landing jetty start to be classified as a seaside pier? The answer is partly functional and partly geographical; a jetty can be considered to be solely for the landing of passengers, whereas a seaside pier was also used for promenading and as the location for entertainments. In terms of geography, a seaside pier or a pleasure pier must of necessity be at a location where tourists are present. For instance, in the story of the development of seaside pier technology, there are two very significant early iron jetties at Gravesend. This was a location for riverine tourism from London when they were constructed in the mid-19th century, but they were simply a means of landing passengers, with no indication of any leisure dimension.

Today, England has 41 piers of pre-1914 origin, Wales has five and the Isle of Man one. Scotland has a number of piers but vast majority of these are dedicated transport facilities with little or no leisure dimension. Of England's 41 piers, the structure and character of six have been very substantially altered or rebuilt; a further four have undergone significant changes and reconstruction. In addition, very little survives from 19th-century piers above the decking; the buildings erected on seaside piers were insubstantial and have proved prone to the power of the sea and fire.

## The Origins of Seaside Piers

On 26 July 1814, the pier at Ryde on the Isle of Wight opened to boats landing passengers, but it was also used by promenading holidaymakers.[129] Its simple wooden deck was carried on brick arches at the shoreward end and with driven wooden piles further out to sea. It was, therefore, very different from the fully developed, iron pleasure pier that would become so familiar later in the 19th century.

Ryde is celebrated as the first seaside pier, but it was also a confirmation of a practice that had been taking place at some resorts since the first visitors arrived. Most early resorts were ports, some of which had jetties and harbours with stone piers that visitors could walk along; at Scarborough the harbour was improved and enlarged in the 1730s, the same decade in which the first documented influx of sea bathers occurred. In the late 18th century, a stone pier at Weymouth separated the mouth of the harbour from the beach. A 1789 drawing suggests that it had been extended and was becoming a place for well-dressed visitors to promenade.[130] The Cobb at Lyme Regis, which was rebuilt during the late 18th and early 19th century, offered shelter for working boats; it also served as a walk for visitors, including Jane Austen while on holiday there in 1804, and it was immortalised by her in *Persuasion* in 1817.[131] Some resorts had timber jetties that were also used for promenading; on the beach at Great Yarmouth there was a wooden jetty for small boats to moor alongside, though it was also used by visitors.[132]

Figure 23: An aerial photograph of 1920, showing Margate Harbour, with the promenade around the outside of the harbour arm. The landward end of the later jetty can be seen above. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW000162]

These structures were primarily for commercial use and were adopted by holidaymakers as a fashionable promenade, but at Margate the new harbour pier was constructed between 1810 and 1815 specifically with visitors in mind. By the early 19th century, the town's timber pier may have been reclad in stone, but even this reinforcement did not prevent it from being damaged by the devastating storm of 1808. A replacement stone pier, constructed by the engineers John Rennie (1761-1821) and Josias Jessop (1781-1826), was completed in time for steamers to begin to ply the Thames in 1815 (Figure 23).[133] It has a raised promenade around its seaward side that visitors paid 1*d*. to walk along, though the introduction of this toll sparked a near riot.[134]

The new stone pier at Margate, despite having facilities for landing passengers from steamers, still could not cope with ships at low tide and therefore a timber jetty was erected. Jarvis's Jetty, also known as Jarvis's Landing Stage, was named after Dr Daniel Jarvis, Chairman of the Pier and Harbour Company. It was constructed in 1824 at a cost of £8,000.[135] Although it was over 1,000ft long (305m), it still proved too short to allow steamers to land their passengers at low tide and therefore sometimes holidaymakers still had to land, as before, by rowing boat.

Figure 24: Town Pier, Gravesend, Kent, in 2017, seen from the west. [Patricia Payne © Historic England Archive, DP217461]

As has already been discussed, a visually more ambitious approach to pier design was pioneered by the civil engineer and naval officer Captain Samuel Brown (1776-1852).[136] In 1821, he erected the Chain Pier on the coast between Granton and Leith near Edinburgh, followed two years later by another pier with a suspension structure at Brighton (*see* Figure 3).[137]

As well as providing promenades, piers were critical for resorts wanting to attract larger numbers of visitors arriving by steamer in the years before railways. In 1802, a jetty was erected by Sir Thomas Wilson for boats to land passengers at Southend-on-Sea, and in 1821, people wishing to disembark from steamers at low tide had to use 'two gravelled causeways, the one begun, and the other finished' to reach the shore.[138] In 1829, construction began on a wooden pier and the 600ft-long (183m) structure opened in June 1830.[139] However, it proved to be too short for steamers and was first lengthened to 1,500ft (457m) in 1833 and then to a mile and a quarter (2km) in 1846.

Driven wooden piles remained the mainstay of pier construction until the 1850s. However, wood was prone to decay and to damage by small, wood-boring marine creatures; the new piers at Southend-on-Sea (1830) and Herne Bay (1832) both required significant repairs within a few years of their construction. To overcome these problems, pier and jetty designers turned to iron. The earliest surviving iron pier in the world, the Town Pier at Gravesend of 1834, was designed by the engineer William Tierney Clark (1783-1852) (Figure 24).[140] Another iron pier opened at Sheerness in 1835 and in 1842 the timber Royal Terrace Pier at Gravesend was replaced in iron.[141] However, the definitive shift to using iron piles only took

place in the 1850s with the construction of the new jetty at Margate (1853-6) by Eugenius Birch.[142]

## The Rise of the Pier

By the early 1860s, investors in seaside resorts around the country were beginning to recognise that a pier could be a significant contributor to the local economy. When Birnbeck Pier was being constructed, the population of Weston-super-Mare was approximately 9,000 inhabitants. The town had grown rapidly since the first visitors arrived at the beginning of the 19th century but was not one of the largest resorts in England. Other resorts investing in piers in the 1860s included Scarborough with a population of 21,000 people, Hastings boasted 29,000 inhabitants while Brighton was home to 80,000 people.[143] Size alone was not an indicator of ambition when it came to the construction of piers. Bournemouth, still without a railway station, was only home to 2,000 people; Bognor had 3,500 inhabitants while Blackpool, which would construct two piers during the 1860s, had around 4,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the decade and 6,000 when the second pier was constructed.

By the end of the 1860s, more than 20 piers had been built or were under construction and a similar number were constructed during the following decade, a boom based on a belief that there was money to be made from piers.[144] In 1875, Brighton's West Pier entertained 600,000 visitors and by 1890 Blackpool's Central Pier welcomed around a million visitors annually, figures that guaranteed profits for investors.[145] Blackpool's first pier of 1863, the one that Birch persuaded investors to risk a more ambitious design, yielded 12 per cent annual profits during most of the 50 years before the First World War and other piers regularly yielded between six per cent and ten per cent. Profits depended on local financial circumstances, especially the size of the resort's market, but some piers proved to be less successful, including perhaps surprisingly the pier at Scarborough, where the company formed in 1865 was wound up in 1889.[146] One problem facing promoters of new piers was the complexity of getting permission to erect the structure. As a pier straddled from the land over the beach into the sea, consent was required from Parliament and from the appropriate foreshore authority, which might be the Board of Trade, the Office of Woods and Forests, the Duchy of Lancaster and sometimes the Lord of the Manor.[147] Nevertheless, despite potential economic and financial problems and risks, most resorts of any size had a pier by the end of the 19th century.

Margate Jetty, like other piers being built during the 1850 and 1860s, had a plain, uncluttered superstructure that maximised the area for promenaders and passengers disembarking from steamships. However, changes were already underway in the detailing of the seaside pier. At Blackpool, Eugenius Birch erected the town's first pier, which opened in 1863, and he included a series of kiosks on its deck (Figure 25). Three years later, he completed Brighton's West Pier using a similar formula, but included the first hint of exotic forms inspired by the nearby Royal Pavilion. This 'oriental' vocabulary would come to dominate the detailing of piers for several decades and culminate in the extravagance of Eastbourne (revamped at the end of the 19th century), Blackpool's Victoria Pier (1893), Brighton's Palace Pier (1899) and the Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare (1903-4) (*see* Figure 12). Birnbeck Pier also

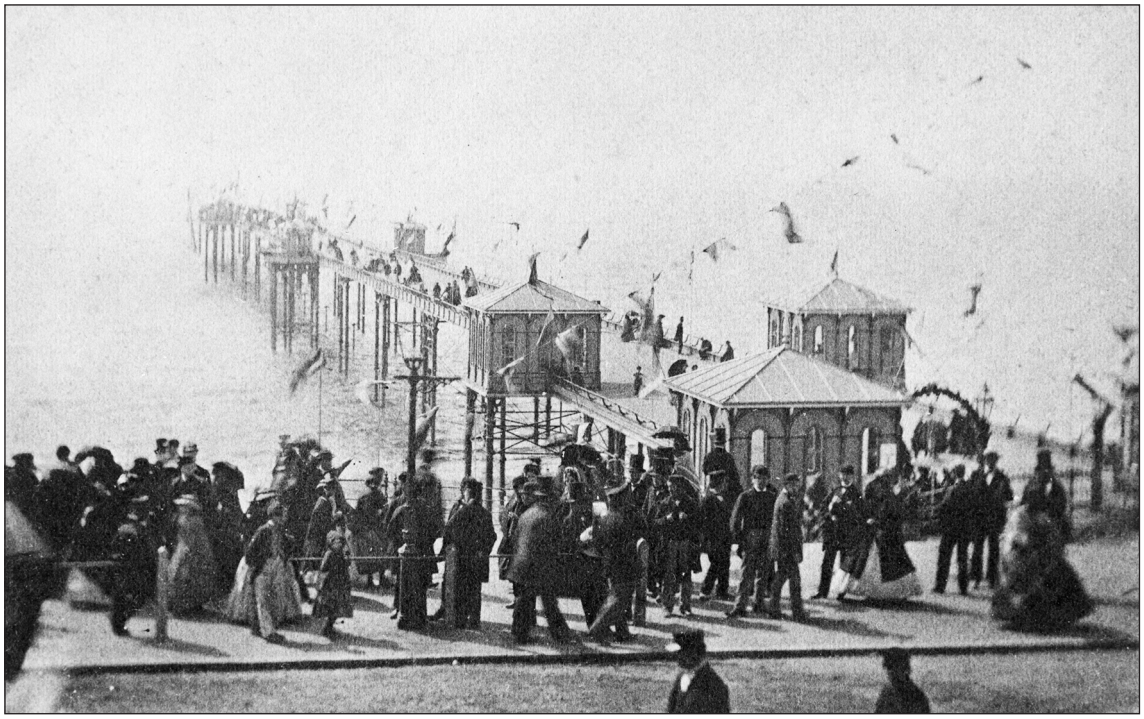

Figure 25: Carte de visite showing Blackpool North Pier in the 1860s or 1870s. [Source: Historic England Archive, BB88/00110]


Figure 26: Photographic postcard showing the landward end of Birnbeck Pier between about 1901 and 1904. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48006]

enjoyed dashes of the oriental in some of its buildings at least after the reconstruction of the main pavilion by Price and Wooler and in features such as the oriental finial on the camera obscura (Figure 26).

Increasingly, piers sought to increase their income by offering more facilities and entertainments to their customers including, by the 1870s, some large pavilions. Hastings Pier opened in 1872 on the first ever August Bank Holiday and incorporated a pavilion able to seat 2,000 people.[148] Existing piers were also expanded and extended to include large venues. In 1874-7, the Indian Pavilion was constructed at the seaward end of Blackpool's North Pier, an extravagant building apparently inspired by an Indian temple.[149] Due to the use of an island as its pier head, Birnbeck Pier was able to consider creating substantial venues with a pavilion envisaged in the 1860s and refreshment rooms included in the 1880s revamping. Some piers, including Birnbeck Pier, also included fairground rides and today some are largely dedicated to them.

Some of the longer piers incorporated miniature railways to shuttle their customers and their luggage to the ends of the piers. Herne Bay's pier in the 1830s led the way with a sail-powered car for transferring luggage, which had to be pushed when the wind was light; inevitably, Southend Pier at more than a mile long, and Southport Pier, which was almost as long, had to provide rail links to the pier head.[150] By the time that the Ordnance Survey map was published in 1888, Birnbeck Pier had a tramway running along the deck from the mainland to the island and then onto the jetty. This may date from 1884, when the Pavilion was built.[151] According to an early photograph, this appears to have been a narrow-gauge, unpowered tramway, presumably predominantly used for moving luggage or small bits of cargo.[152] However, it has been suggested to have been an electric tramway of 1883-4.[153] If this was the case, it was among the earliest anywhere in Britain. At the 1879 Berlin Trade Fair, a small electric railway transported 90,000 visitors around a 300m long track and by 1881 the world's first practical service with overhead wires was in operation in the city. In 1883, Volks' Electric Railway opened on the seafront in Brighton, the oldest electrically-driven service still in use, and later in the year a service from Portrush to the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland was inaugurated. Blackpool became the first town in Britain to have an electric tram service in 1885 and has operated trams along its seafront ever since.[154] It is difficult to imagine a powered tramway at Birnbeck and it is difficult to envisage how power could be provided for this transportation when electricity only came to the town of Weston-super-Mare in May 1901, a decade after powers had first been granted for its provision.[155]

By the outbreak of the First World War, Britain had more than 100 piers, ranging from the quiet, plain promenade pier to the fully developed pleasure pier with pavilions, rides and amusements. A small number of new piers were constructed or rebuilt during the 20th century, with steel and concrete usually replacing iron as the main structural materials. Burnham-on-Sea's pier, which opened in 1911 and was therefore the last pier erected before war broke out, was built using concrete piles and like the 1939 Pier Bandstand at Weymouth, which also employed concrete, it scarcely projected into the sea.[156] After the Second World War, Deal Pier, which opened in 1957, was designed by Sir William Halcrow using concrete piles, while the

piers at Boscombe and Bournemouth were also rebuilt in the same material.[157] There was also a shift from exuberant, oriental-inspired Edwardian detailing, drawing ultimately on the exoticism of Brighton's Royal Pavilion, to Art Deco detailing of the mid-1930s, such as in the pavilion on the Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare prior to the major fire in 2008.

Despite some additions and replacements, the 20th-century history of piers is generally dominated by loss, through fire, the power of the sea and neglect. Although piers have substantial and largely inflammable structures, the deck and the superstructure are predominantly wooden and easily succumb to fire. Since their creation, piers have suffered from fire damage, stretching from the era when open flames and gas lighting inevitably caused problems, to modern times where electrical fires have struck buildings on piers. Perhaps most spectacularly, the pavilion on Southsea's South Parade Pier was destroyed by fire during the filming of the Pinball Wizard scenes for The Who's rock opera *Tommy*, footage that was included in the final film.[158] Piers have also proved susceptible to damage from storms and boats colliding with them, but the most systematic programme of damage took place in 1940 when sections of many piers on vulnerable coastlines were removed, often with explosives, to prevent use by the enemy. As with other aspects of seaside resorts, some piers have suffered in recent years from economic difficulties, under-investment, neglect, theft and vandalism. These are all issues that Birnbeck Pier has experienced.

## CONCLUSION

When Birnbeck Pier opened in 1867, it had a profound impact on the development of Weston-super-Mare as a seaside resort. It meant that the resort could compete with other resorts in terms of providing the vital entertainment facilities of the period. However, while its distance from the centre of the town undoubtedly deterred some visitors, its key function of delivering trippers and holidaymakers from across, and along, the Severn Estuary would have more than compensated for this. Its location meant that many arriving trippers could be lured to stay on or near the island, and from an early date investment occurred to achieve this aim. This led to the provision of large refreshment rooms, bands and other entertainments, and by the late 19th century various forms of fairground ride. Birnbeck Pier would boast an early switchback railway, water chute and captive flying machine, substantial structures made possible by the presence of the island. As Weston-super-Mare endured such a high tidal range, the launching of boats at all but high tide could be problematic. The presence of the island lying a short distance out to sea meant that steamers could land passengers for more hours of the day than elsewhere on the coast nearby. It also meant that this was an ideal place to base a lifeboat station. Therefore, the 1902-3 building replaced the earlier 1888-9 structure and would remain in use for almost a century.

This document has outlined the colourful history of Birnbeck Pier and demonstrated that it is significant to the history of Weston-super-Mare, the story of England's piers and the history of the English seaside resort. The varied uses of the pier over the past 150 years may also provide inspiration for the pier's future.

Some aspects of the pier's history, notably the role it played during the Second World War as HMS *Birnbeck*, are less well understood and would form a suitable subject for a future research project. This might explore the pier's use by the Department of Miscellaneous Weapons Development.[159]

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Newspaper articles have predominantly been consulted using the British Newspaper Archive (https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/). For simplicity and consistency, the title *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* is used in notes, but this newspaper has been variously known as:

1845–56 *Weston-super-Mare Gazette, and General Advertiser*

1855–68 *Weston-super-Mare Gazette, and Clevedon Journal*

1868–1910 *Weston-super-Mare Gazette, Clevedon Journal and East Somerset Gazette*

Similarly, *Weston Mercury* is used in notes but this newspaper has been variously known as:

1843–55 *The Weston Mercury*

1855–69 *The Weston Mercury & Central Somerset Herald*

1869–1911 *The Weston Mercury & Somersetshire Herald*

# APPENDIX: GAZETTEER OF EXTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

This gazetteer provides a detailed inventory of the main structures comprising Birnbeck Pier, including at the landward side, the pier's bridge section and on the pier head. This draws on photographs taken during a site visit in May 2018, historic mapping and readily available archival and secondary sources.

The gazetteer contains further information about the history and development of the extant 16 buildings and structures (Figure 27). A phasing plan provides an overview of their relative dates (Figure 28).


Figure 27: Modern Ordnance Survey (OS) map showing the numbering used in this gazetteer for the surviving structures. [Background map: © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.]


Figure 28: Phasing plan of the pier and related structures. [Background map: © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.]

## 1 Entrance gates and turnstiles

Figure 29: Left: the entrance gates and turnstiles in 2009. [James O. Davies © Historic England Archive, P083542] Right: the northern turnstiles, gatepier and post in 2018. [Johanna Roethe © Historic England]

NGR: ST3084962401

NHLE: 1137491

Designation: Listed Grade II

Date: *c.* 1864-7

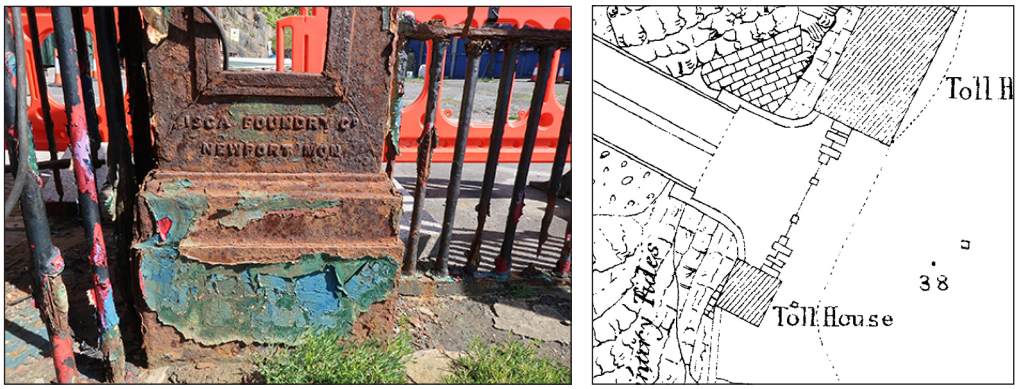


Figure 30: Left: detail of the Isca foundry mark on the northern gatepier. [Johanna Roethe © Historic England] Right: the entrance to the pier on the 1886 OS Town Plan. [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

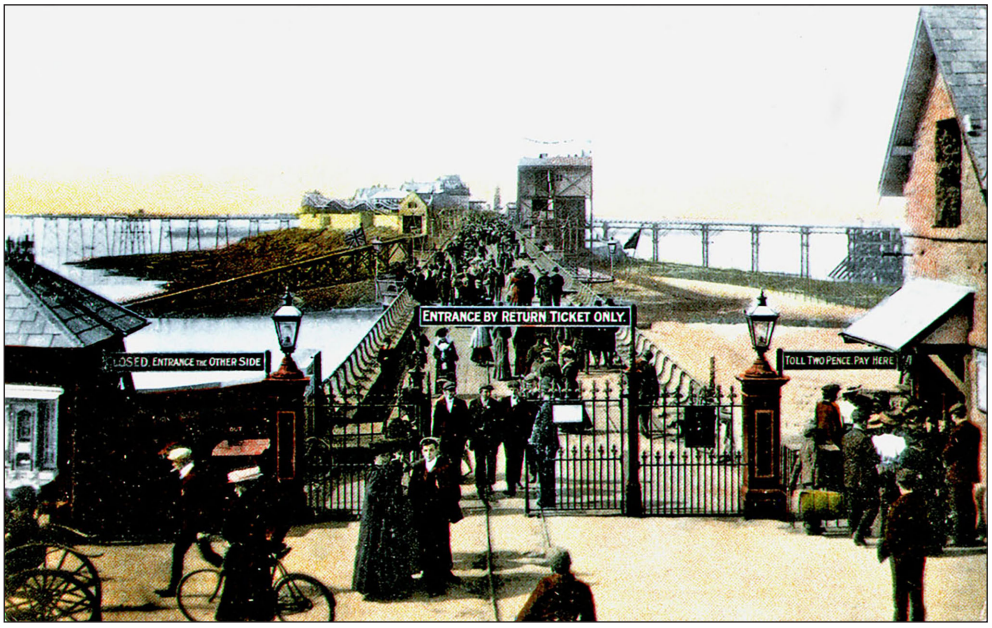


Figure 31: The entrance in a postcard of 1907. [Source: http://www.birnbeck-pier.co.uk/gallery.html (accessed 15 December 2021), reproduced with permission]

Description:

The remaining elements of the entrance to Birnbeck Pier consist of two square gatepiers made by the Isca Foundry of Newport, turnstiles between the gatepiers and the flanking toll houses, one taller post and a stretch of railing between the post and the north gatepier (Figures 29-30). The taller post is described in the List entry as a 'lamp post' but it is clear from historic photos (Figure 31) that lamps were affixed to the gatepiers and that the two taller posts flanked the central gate. The gates do not survive.

History:

The entrance gates and turnstiles date from the construction of the pier in 1864-7 and, like the pier bridge and parts of the refreshment pavilion, were made by the Isca Foundry of Newport, Wales. As part of the opening ceremony on 5 June 1867, Master Cecil Hugh Smyth Pigott, the eight-year-old son and heir of the lord of the manor, passed through the turnstiles as the first person to pay toll to the Weston-super-Mare Pier Company.[160] The square gatepiers formerly had gas lamps on top.

## 2 Northern toll house/piermaster's house

Figure 32: Left: the piermaster's house from the south-east in 2018 [Johanna Roethe © Historic England]. Right: in an aerial photograph taken from the west in 2018. [Damian Grady © Historic England Archive, 33488_048]

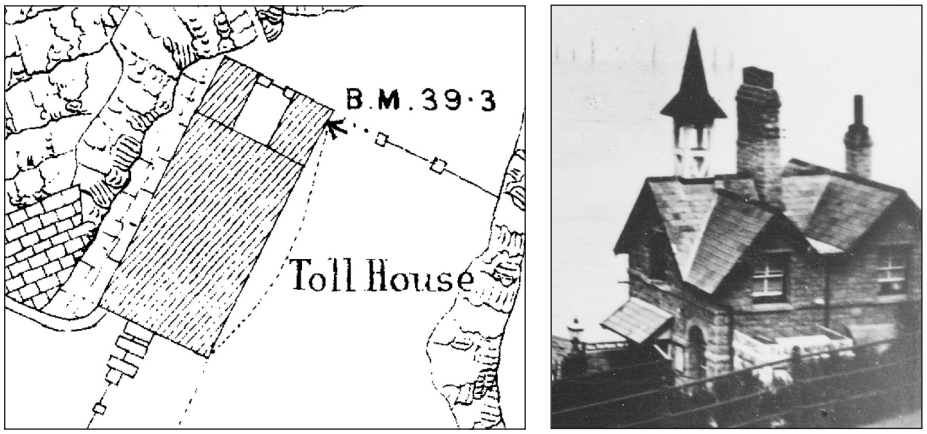


Figure 33: Left: the piermaster's house on the OS Town Plan published in 1886. [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024] Right: from the south-east in a detail from an early 20th-century postcard. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48005]

NGR: ST3085562412

Designation: curtilage listed structure

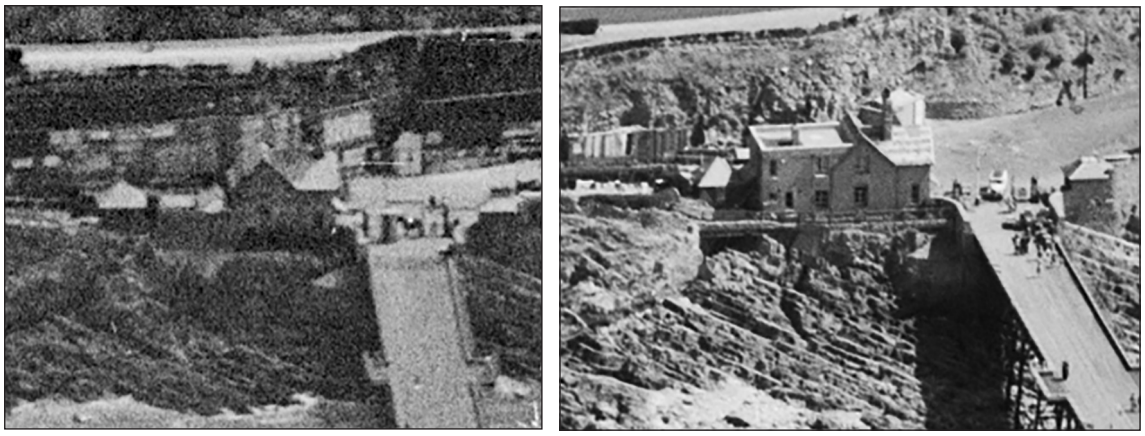

Figure 34: Left: from the west in a detail from an aerial photograph of 1920; right: in a detail from an aerial photograph of 1949. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050, EAW025154]

Date: *c.* 1864-7; *c.* 2002 (extension); pre-1903 (square building to the north)

Description:

This is a one-storey plus attic house of coursed rubble stone, with gables over the attic windows (Figure 32). The west elevation is rendered. To the rear (north) are single-storey extensions. The roof is of slate with clay ridge tiles. The interior was not visited for this project.

History:

Now generally known as the piermaster's house, it was described at the time of the pier's opening in 1867 as 'a residence for the toll-collector'.[161] Labelled 'toll house' on the OS map of 1886, the ground-floor room facing the turnstiles was presumably used for toll-collecting purposes (Figure 33, left). The building originally had a timber bellcote with a bell, which was used to give a two-minute warning that a steamer was about to depart (Figure 33, right).[162] The building's design has been attributed to Hans Price, although there is no firm evidence for this.[163] The house may be that named 'Pier Lodge' in the 1871 and 1881 Census.

There is said to have been a 'tea garden' to the north of the building.[164] By 1903, a small square building had been erected to the north; by 1952 it had been linked to the house and it may survive today in the northernmost part of the rear extensions (not inspected). The original timber bellcote had been removed by 1949. During the post-war period the tall chimneystacks were removed.

By 1949, a two-storey, flat-roofed extension had been built to the north (Figure 34, right). This extension was demolished with planning permission granted in November 2000 and June 2002 and it was replaced with single storey structures under hipped roofs (*see* Figure 32, right).[165] The ground floor was to be used as the harbourmaster's office.

## 3 Southern toll house

Figure 35: Left: the southern tollhouse in 2018. [Johanna Roethe © Historic England] Right: in 2009. [James O. Davies © Historic England Archive, DP083542]

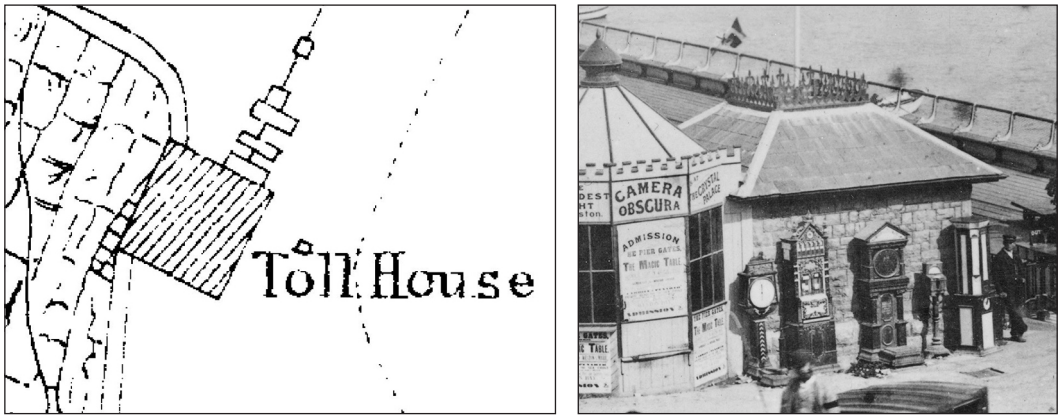


Figure 36: Left: the southern toll house on the OS Town Plan published in 1886. [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024] Right: in a detail from a postcard of about 1901-4. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48006]

NGR: ST3084562395

NHLE: 1129719

Designation: Listed Grade II

Date: *c.* 1864-7

Description:

The southern tollhouse is a small, single-storey building of coursed rubble stone on a square plan (Figure 35). The north elevation has a two-over-two sash window beside

a door. The roof is of slate with clay ridge tiles. The rear elevation abuts the sea wall. The interior was not visited for this project.

History:

The building was part of the original entrance arrangements of 1867, housing one of two toll houses flanking the entrance gates (Figure 36, left).[166] The postcard of 1901-4 shows that its hipped roof had a central square area with crested ironwork, which may well be original (Figure 36, right). Against its east elevation were set various penny slot machines. Since then, the building has been reroofed and the ironwork on the roof removed.

## 4 Former shop attached to the southern toll house

Figure 37: Left: in 2018. [Johanna Roethe © Historic England] Right: in an undated postcard dating from between about 1903 and 1920. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48005]

NGR: ST3084362390

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: built sometime between 1903 and 1920

Description:

This is a single-storey building, with an entrance door in the east elevation, flanked by windows (Figure 37, left). The roof is of slate with clay ridge tiles. The rear elevation abuts the sea wall. The interior was not visited for this project.

History:

By about 1901, this was still the site of a camera obscura with a canted bay window to the east and a pyramidal roof.[167] Between about 1903 and 1920, the current building, originally a souvenir shop, had been erected in its stead, with a hipped roof and two shop windows on either side of a central door (Figure 37, right).[168] It

sold 'Art, Pottery, Shells, China and Fancy Goods'.[169] The windows have since been replaced, the sill of the right-hand (north) window raised and the roof covered in new slate.

## 5 Pier View

Figure 38: Left: the south elevation of the pavilion in 2019. [Allan Brodie © Historic England] Right: the pavilion from the north-west, in a detail from an aerial photograph of 1949. [Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

NGR: ST3084762378

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: built sometime between about 1903 and 1913

Description:

This is a single-storey timber pavilion with a pyramidal roof (Figure 38, left). It is accessed from the higher-level Marine Parade to the south. To the north it cantilevers over the retaining wall, overlooking the forecourt to the pier entrance (Figure 38, right). The windows are of plate glass, with smaller-paned clerestory lights above them. The central window on each elevation is of two-lights, with a segmental clerestory window above. The door to the raised promenade is a later conversion of an original window opening. The interior was not visited for this project.

History:

Before 1903, the lower part of the site, just north of the promenade wall and at the level of the pier entrance, was occupied by a small refreshment stall whose pyramidal roof abutted the promenade wall.[170] This was replaced between about 1903 and 1931 by the pavilion now known as Pier View.[171] It was probably originally used as a tea room, offering elevated views of Birnbeck Pier. It may have been the Birnbeck Café mentioned in a 1914 local directory.[172] In a postcard from the inter-war period, the lower floor had an awning with the inscription 'Refreshment Buffet'.[173]

Originally, there was no access from the raised promenade into the building and the upper floor was presumably accessed via a stair from below. This was changed later in the 20th century, when the central window in the south elevation was converted to a door.

In 1998, lead was stolen from the roof of the building, which was replaced with an alternative material.[174] Most recently it has been used as a shop and information centre by the Birnbeck Pier Regeneration Trust and the Friends of the Old Pier Society.

## 6 Pier bridge

Figure 39: The pier bridge in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218730, DP218664]

Figure 40: Left: the pier deck in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218733] Right: detail of a postcard of about 1901 showing the original semi-circular recesses with lampposts. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48006]

NGR: ST3080362425

NHLE: 1129718

Designation: Listed Grade II*

Date: *c.* 1864-7, with later alterations to the pier deck

Figure 41: Left: detail from an early 20th-century postcard, showing the seating and tramlines. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48002] Right: detail from an aerial photograph of 1920, showing the oblong recesses. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]

Description:

The pier bridge is of iron with timber decking (Figures 39-40). Fifteen iron piers (or trestles) support the structure, each consisting of four splayed, tubular legs, which are linked by braces. The deck is flanked by a continuous row of cantilevered seats behind which originally ran the gas pipes to the island; of the seats only the iron structure survives (Figure 41, left). Only eight of formerly 14 oblong projecting recesses survive.

History:

The pier bridge of 1864-7 was designed by Eugenius Birch and the ironwork was made by the Isca Iron Foundry of Newport (Messrs Toogood and Laybourne).[175] At the time of its opening in 1867, the bridge was described as follows:

> The bridge, which is nearly 1,100 feet long, extends from the mainland to the island of Birnbeck. It is supported at the east and west ends by two strong buttresses, and rests on 15 iron piers bound together by massive girders. Extreme care has been taken to render these piers very secure, and they have been morticed in holes in the rock to a depth of some three or four feet. All along both sides of the bridge are seats, the accommodation thus afforded being, we should think, enough for fifteen hundred people. The back of the seat is formed of the main gas piping, which is supported by elegant brackets, and the interstices are filled up with wire-work. At equal intervals in the length of the bridge the monotony of the straight line is broken by the introduction of semi-circular recesses, there being seven on each side, each of which would comfortably seat from 10 to 12 persons. Gas-lamps are placed in these recesses ... The principal tint is a dark chocolate, which is relieved occasionally by the introduction of a fawn colour, which affords a very pleasing contrast. The facial boards are thus lightened in effect and the east girders – those immediately surmounting the piers – are bordered in the same way.[176]

When the volunteers marched in step across the bridge during the opening ceremony it was swaying 'so violently that they barely escaped being precipitated on to the rocks below'.[177] When in August 1886 artillery volunteers marched on the bridge, it swayed again. As a result, extra tie rods were introduced and marching banned.[178]

By the 1880s, a tramway ran along the centre of the bridge, leading to the north jetty.[179] By 1903, this had been extended to the low-water pier (built 1898, rebuilt 1909, removed 1926) to the south-west.[180]

By 1920, the 14 semi-circular projecting recesses had been changed to oblong recesses (Figure 40, right, and Figure 41, right).[181] By 1948, small oblong pavilions had been constructed in four of them (since removed).[182] Six recesses have been removed or collapsed.

The pier was seriously damaged by a fire in 1984; further fires followed on the pier head in 1987 and in the pavilion in 1988. In 1994, it was in such a dangerous condition that it had to close.[183]

## 7 The pier head/island platform

Figure 42: Left: the pier head in an aerial photograph of 2018, looking east, with an arrow indicating the junction between the old platform and the 1932 extension. [Damian Grady © Historic England Archive, 33488_048] Right: the concrete extension of 1932 in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218672]

NGR: ST3051562562

Designation: curtilage listed building

Date: *c.* 1864-7, 1932

Figure 43: The north side of the island in 2018 from the north-east, showing the 1860s sea wall. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218662]

Figure 44: Left: detail from an aerial photograph of 1920, before the 1932 southern extension, seen from the north-west; right: detail from an aerial photograph of 1949, after the extension (indicated by an arrow), seen from the north-west. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050, EAW025154]

Description:

On the north side of the island the pier platform is bounded by masonry walls, while on the south side the concrete extension is supported by concrete piers (Figures 42-3).

History:

The pier of 1864-7 made use of the natural rocky island of Birnbeck on top of which a platform was built with a stone sea wall. An account of the opening described the construction of the pier head on the island:

> The island has undergone a complete transformation. All the stone quarried out from the road-cutting has been conveyed by trains to Birnbeck, and used for the purpose of levelling it and enlarging the area. Large walls of very substantial masonry – some of them 4 ½ feet in thickness – have been built round; and the result is that a considerable space will thus be rendered available as a promenade.[184]

By 1886, the perimeter of the island platform was ringed with seating, much like the pier bridge, with a small projecting recess for the flagpole on the south side and a larger projecting recess to the west. The island was asphalted in about 1900.[185]

There have been many minor changes to the platform, with small-scale extensions to the north. In 1909 an extension, 114m long and 30m wide, supported on iron supports opened to the south on which the roller skating rink and a 'luxurious drawing room shooting range' were built.[186] It was planned to open the skating rink in late May but this had to be delayed to later in the summer.[187] The overall cost was estimated to have been over £10,000.[188] In May 1912 the platform extension was found not to have been built to the correct specifications and had to be demolished.[189]

It was replaced in 1932 by an extension of reinforced concrete on concrete stilts.[190] This had been first proposed in 1928, when it received permission from the Weston-super-Mare Urban District Council, on the condition that it was not used 'for any noisy or offensive trade or business or for the exhibition of advertisements, so as to disfigure the natural beauty of the surroundings', all things which local residents had long complained about in connection with the pier.[191]

## 8 Northern lifeboat house

Figure 45: Left: the lifeboat house and slipway in 2018, from the east. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218681] Right: in a detail of an aerial photograph of 2018, from the west. [Damian Grady © Historic England Archive, 33488_048]

Figure 46: Left and centre: plaques on either side of the oriel on the east elevation in 2018. [Johanna Roethe © Historic England] Right: south elevation in 2018. [Allan Brodie © Historic England]

NGR: ST3057062560

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: 1888-9

Description:

The lifeboat station of rock-faced, coursed stone has an oblong plan with a canted apse-like end towards the island (Figure 45). It is of two storeys, with a partial upper floor within the boat house. The roof is of clay tiles; it has one dormer on the northern slope (and possibly two, if the collapsed section towards the west formerly was one) and a roof window at the west end.

The short, east elevation has a canted timber oriel window above the former boathouse door and slipway, from which the lifeboats were launched. On either side of the oriel window are terracotta plaques with the emblem of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution ('RNLBI' under a crown) and the date '1888' below a depiction of a lifeboat surrounded by oak leaves (Figure 46, left and centre). To the left (south), the gable sweeps up to a square finial with four small pediments and a squat ball finial. The boathouse door has been blocked up with textured concrete blocks and a metal window.

The north elevation has three shallow, recessed arches on the ground floor which follow the slope of the modern slipway to the north of the building (*see* Figure 45). Above them are three similarly stepped windows with segmental heads. The south elevation has four windows and two doors onto the pier bridge (Figure 46, right). At the west end the south elevation terminates with another square finial similar to that at the south-east corner. The entrance door to the boathouse is at the centre of the canted west end.

History:

In 1882, a lifeboat station was first added to the island and initially the lifeboat was hanging 'in davits underneath the pier'.[192] By 1889, there seems to have been a lifeboat house, although it may not have been purpose-built; on the construction of

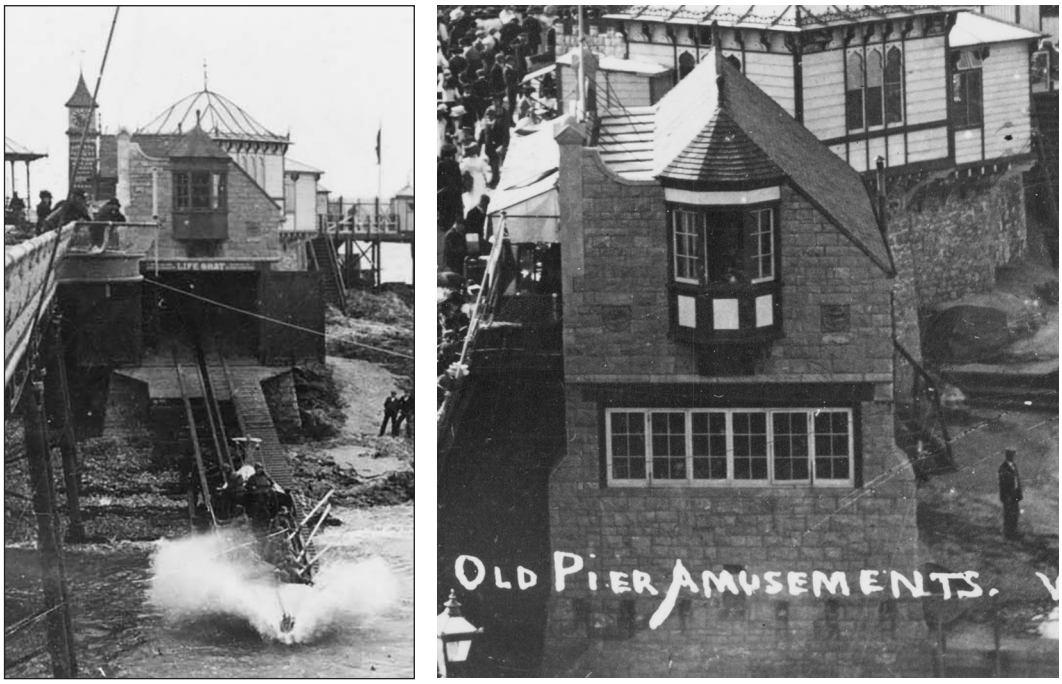


Figure 47: Left: the lifeboat station in a pre-1903 postcard, with a lifeboat on the original slipway. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48004] Right: the station after 1903 in a postcard. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48002]

the present northern boathouse, the Pier Company asked if they could acquire the old boathouse.[193]

In 1888-9, the northern lifeboat station was built for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, 'at great outlay'.[194] On 3 August 1889, the boathouse and the 100ft slipway were opened and the new lifeboat was christened *William James Holt II*, after its predecessor boat. The boathouse was built by the local contractor, John Palmer, for £700 and it was described as being 'replete with all the latest improvements and gear'.[195] Its architect is not known; it may have been designed by the RNLI's engineer William Tregarthen Douglass (1857-1913).[196]

In 1903, this building was superseded by a new lifeboat station on the other side of the pier bridge and by the inter-war period the boathouse opening had been blocked up with matching rubble stone and a row of six small-paned windows (Figure 47, right). However, the original slipway is still shown on OS maps of the 1950s. At some point during the post-war period, the boathouse opening appears to have been reopened and then blocked up again with a smaller metal window. During the second half of the 20th century, the gap between the building and the pier bridge appears to have been infilled, to provide direct access to the upper floor. It is not known what the building has been used for since 1903.

There appears to have been a slipway alongside the building by about 1903 but the current concrete slipway appears to date from the late 20th century.

## 9 Southern lifeboat house

Figure 48: Left: the southern lifeboat station in 2018, from the south. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218729] Right: in an aerial photograph of 2018, from the west. [Damian Grady © Historic England Archive, 33488_048]


Figure 49: The lifeboat station and slipway in two early 20th-century postcards. [Source: Historic England Archive, PC48002, PC48003]

NGR: ST3056962538

NHLE: 1137515

Designation: Listed Grade II

Date: 1902-3

Description:

Like its predecessor to the north, the plan of the southern lifeboat station is oblong with a canted apse towards the island (Figure 48). It is also built from rock-faced, coursed stone with a tiled roof, with two roof windows. Above a tall base is the boathouse with an attic above. The east elevation has what appears to be the original

boathouse door with small-paned windows in the upper part. Above this is a four-light window with a segmental head. The gable has double kneelers on each side and a date stone with '1902' in the apex, under a small triangular pediment. The south elevation has three, deeply recessed windows with segmental heads. Above the easternmost is a cross gable with a stone plaque inscribed 'RNLBI', a rainwater hopper with the date '1902' and a chimney with a flagstaff. The pedestrian entrance to the boathouse is, as in the earlier building, in the centre of the canted west elevation.

The north elevation has three, tall windows to the boathouse, which also have segmental heads. The cross gable in the eastern bay has a square finial to match the chimney on the southern gable, another hopper with '1902' and a flagstaff. Below the gable is the former entrance door to the upper floor, which originally was accessed from the pier bridge via a gangway (Figure 49) which has since been removed. The slipway has concrete piers and iron girders.

History:

By 1902, the northern lifeboat had to be replaced and the RNLI opted to build a new boathouse, rather than spending large amounts of money on altering the existing one.[197] In 1902-3, a lifeboat station was built on Birnbeck Pier, funded largely by a bequest by Mrs Anna Sophia Stock.[198] The new building, then 'the most modern' erected by the RNLI, was constructed by Mr H. Pollard of Bridgwater.[199] It may have been designed by the RNLI's engineer, W. T. Douglass.[200]

In July 1903, the new lifeboat, of the 'Watson sailing type', was christened *Colonel Stock* and launched.[201] The slipway of timber construction was said to be 'the longest in England, and will enable the lifeboat to be launched at any state of the tide'.[202] The cost of the building was £2,575 and the new lifeboat over £1,000, bringing the total to nearly £4,000.[203]

In 1933, the new lifeboat, *Fifi and Charles*, was the first motor lifeboat on the Somerset coast.[204] The lifeboat station was adapted in 1961 for a new lifeboat.[205] During the post-war period, the slipway was rebuilt on concrete piers. The slipway had to be repaired after storm damage in the winter of 1991 and again in 2007.[206] The lifeboat station remained in use until 2014.[207] The freehold is still in the ownership of the RNLI.

## 10 Clocktower

Figure 50: Left: the clocktower in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218718] Right: in a photograph of 1960 [Copyright: Richard John Collins. Source: Historic England Archive, RBO01_01_OP15691]

NGR: ST3052462580

NHLE: 1320709

Date: built sometime between about 1889 and 1903

Designation: Listed Grade II

Description:

The clocktower of coursed rubble stone has a square plan (Figure 50). Below the clock stage is a decorative red brick band of eight courses of bricks. The four circular openings for the former clockfaces are also edged with red brick. The tower has a pyramidal roof of slate with a lead apex and a slightly concave profile. The entrance door opening is in the south-west elevation.

History:

The clocktower was built between about 1889 and 1903.[208] The architect remains unknown. The building has been attributed to Hans Price but evidence is lacking. Historic photographs show that the brick band appears to have had originally a shallow lean-to roof on brackets surrounding the tower. In the first decade of the 20th century, the south-east face featured a board painted with advertisements, including for the baker E. W. Perrett in Weston's High Street (*see* Figures 18 and

21). The last remaining clockface was stolen in January 2018 and two men were prosecuted, although the clockface was not recovered.[209]

## 11 Refreshment Pavilion and Waiting Room (East Pavilion and West Pavilion)

Figure 51: Left: the pavilion's south elevation in 2018; right: the north elevation from the north-west in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218689, DP218716]

Figure 52: Left: a detail of the ironwork behind the kitchen block; right: view of the former refreshment hall, looking towards the manager's accommodation on the upper floor. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218715, DP218692]

Figure 53: Left: the waiting room in 2018, from the south-west; right: the interior of the waiting room from the north. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218696, DP218705]

Figure 54: Left: a detail from an aerial photograph of 1920 [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001051]; right: the pavilion in 1960. [Copyright: Richard John Collins. Source: Historic England Archive, RBO01_01_OP15690]

NGR: ST3049162577

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: 1898

Description:

The building consists of two main oblong ranges, the refreshment pavilion to the east and the waiting room to the west (Figures 51-3). The two-storey kitchen block projects to the north of the refreshment pavilion. Only the outer walls of these buildings are still standing and most of the roofs have collapsed. The main outer walls are of rubble stone, with the internal walls and the gables of the refreshment pavilion of red brick with limestone dressings. The walls of the kitchen block are of engineering brick with courses of red brick. In front of the south elevation of the refreshment pavilion is a projecting verandah of arcaded, decorative ironwork made by the Isca Foundry, who also made the ironwork for the pier bridge, the entrance gates and turnstiles; similar ironwork survives behind the brick wall of the kitchen block (*see* Figure 52, left). Something of the oriental-inspired character of pier architecture around the English coast in the late 19th century is clearly displayed in this ironwork.

The main spaces in the refreshment pavilion and waiting room were open to the roof, except for an area in the middle of the refreshment pavilion, supported on iron girders, which formed part of the manager's accommodation, together with the upper floor over the kitchen. All the main spaces have a dado of red-painted plaster. None of the windows retain any glass and many are boarded up. The cellar and most of the interior were not inspected for this project.

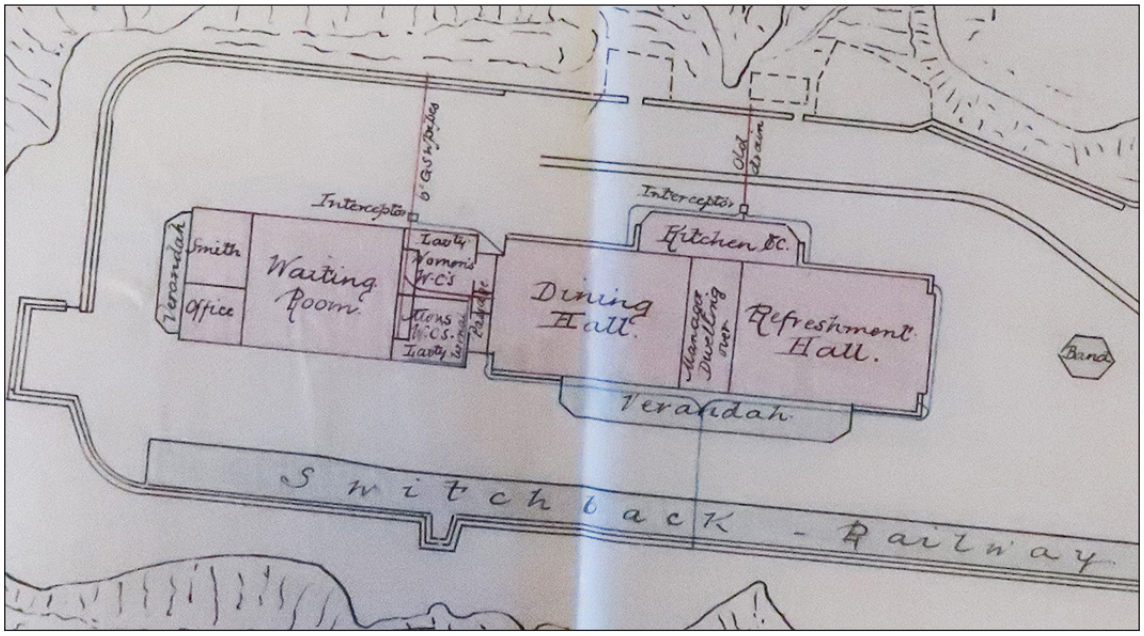


Figure 55: A block plan of 1898 by Price & Wooler. [Original held at Somerset Heritage Trust, SHC D/B/wsm/24/1/629]

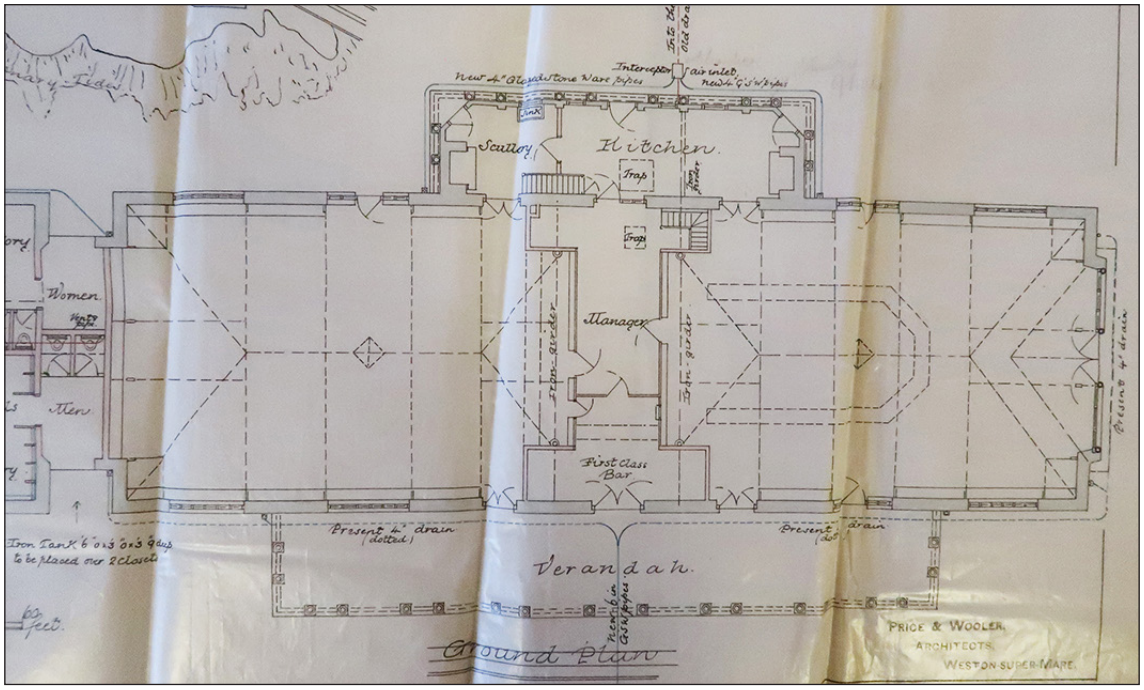


Figure 56: Ground-floor plan of the pavilion with the dining hall to the left, the refreshment hall to the right, and the kitchen and scullery to the rear, 1898, Price & Wooler. [Original held at Somerset Heritage Trust, SHC D/B/wsm/24/1/629.]

## History:

This is the third pavilion on the pier. The first of 1867 was described at the opening, when it was still under construction, as being intended for 'refreshment and music rooms'. It was to have a flat roof which:

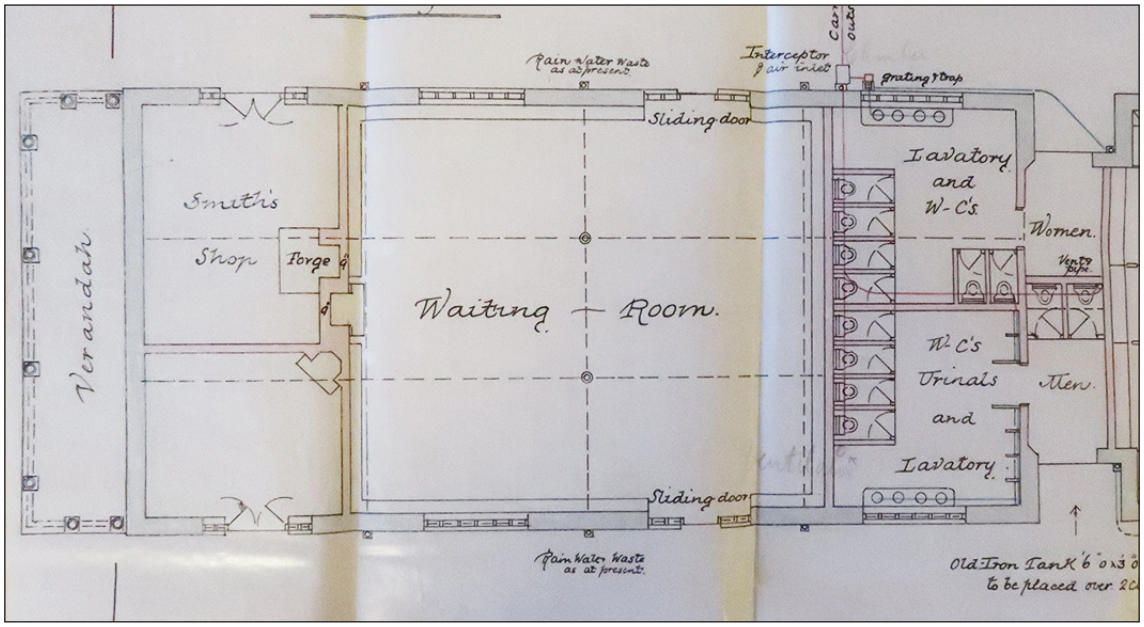


Figure 57: Ground-floor plan of the waiting room to the west, with lavatories to the east, a waiting room, a smith's shop at the north-west and an office at the south-west, Price & Wooler, 1898. [Original held at Somerset Heritage Trust, SHC D/B/wsm/24/1/629]

> will be seated all round exactly similar to the bridge, so that every available spot seems to have been made use of by the engineer. The pavilion is about 180 feet in length, and a verandah will run round it supported on iron entablatures and pillars. Beneath the middle part of the building there will be commodious cellarage. All the stone used in the erection of this building has been obtained from the cutting, only the inferior qualities of it having been applied to the levelling of the island.[210]

Some of these features, like the verandah and the stone construction, were perpetuated by the successor buildings, which also used the original cellar.

This was replaced in 1884 by a new pavilion designed by the local firm of Price & Wooler.[211] It had a refreshment bar, a coffee room, accommodation for the lessee, and a detached building that was intended as a concert hall but came to be used as a waiting room for the low-water pier.[212] After only eight months, the pavilion developed problems with its roof.[213]

The pavilion and the concert hall burned down on 26 December 1897 and were replaced by a new pavilion and waiting room by the same architects, which opened in July 1898 (Figures 54-9).[214] The pavilion contained on the ground floor a dining hall, a refreshment hall and a first-class bar, with a kitchen and scullery to the north.[215] Under the centre of the building was a small cellar, probably one that had been excavated for one of the previous pavilions on the site. On the first floor was accommodation for the manager, consisting of three bedrooms, a sitting room and a bathroom. The waiting room to the west contained lavatories, the main waiting room, an office and a smith's shop. The main pavilion had a projecting verandah to the south, and the waiting room had one to the west. The plans are not quite as

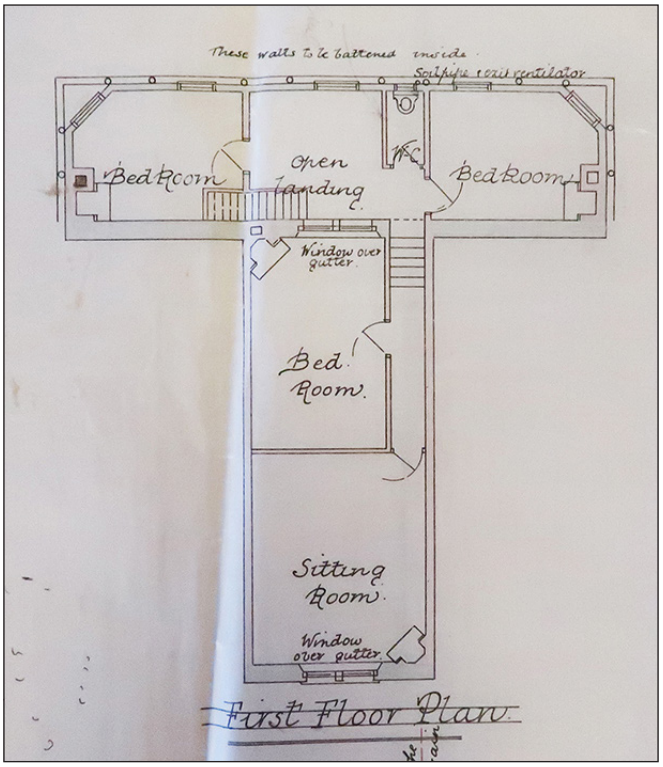


Figure 58: First-floor plan of the manager's accommodation, 1898, Price & Wooler. [Original held at Somerset Heritage Trust, SHC D/B/wsm/24/1/629]

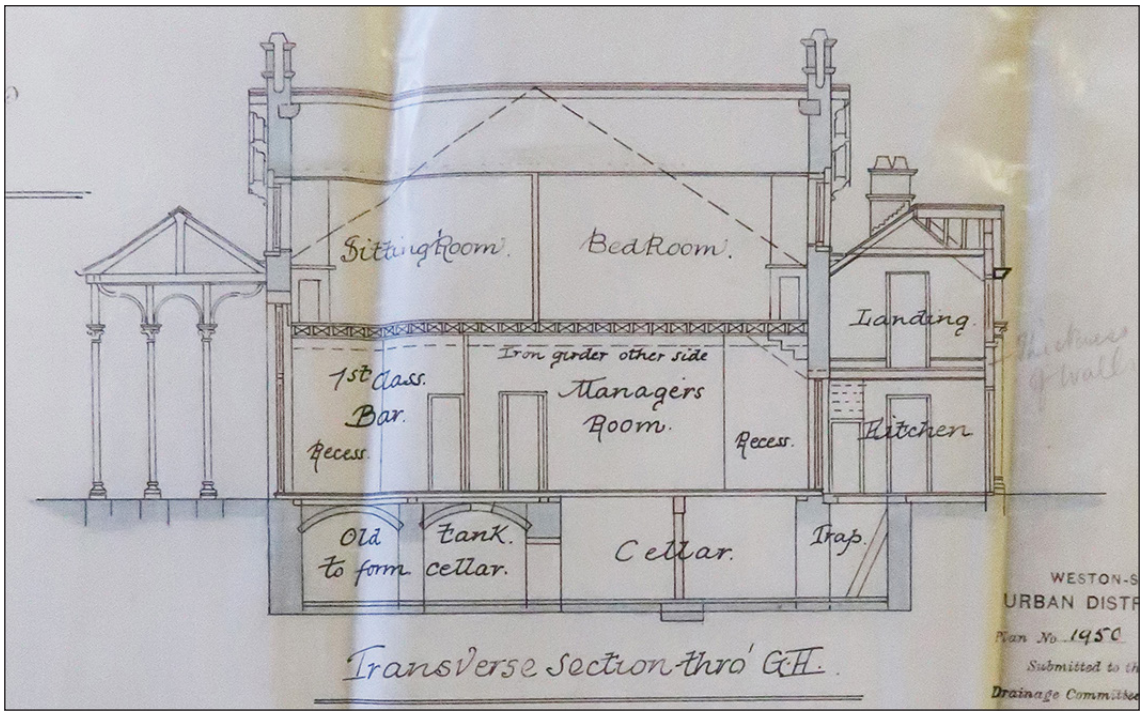


Figure 59: Section of the main pavilion, showing the cellar, 1898, Price & Wooler. [Original held at Somerset Heritage Trust, SHC D/B/wsm/24/1/629]

executed; for example, the iron verandah extends in front of the full length of the refreshment pavilion, not just the central five bays as shown on the plans.

The pavilion was damaged during the gale of 1903, when 'massive steel girders supporting the portico [were] being snapped off right and left, their fragments lying amid heaps of debris'.[216] By 1960, an additional space had been inserted at the west end of the verandah south of the refreshment pavilion, by inserting brick pillars between the ironwork pillars (*see* Figure 54, right).[217] In 1988, when the building was used as a store, it was damaged in a fire.[218]

## 12 Concrete shelter

Figure 60: Left: the shelter from the south-west in 2018 [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218694]; right: the north end from the south-east. [Allan Brodie © Historic England]

NGR: ST3043362563

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: built after 1949

Description:

The concrete shelter consists of a long narrow platform, which is raised by two steps and backed to the east by a wall with ten oblong openings (Figure 60). Between each pair of windows at the northern end are what appear to be rusted metal posts, which may relate to the adjacent structure visible in the aerial photograph of 1949 (Figure 61). At the south end is a low end-wall. The east elevation is supported by buttresses.

History:

Very little is known about the date or purpose of this concrete structure. It most likely was part of a west-facing shelter, like that which was on this site by 1949, although this appears to have been a more light-weight structure than the present one. There had been west-facing seats at this end of the pier as early as 1886.[219]

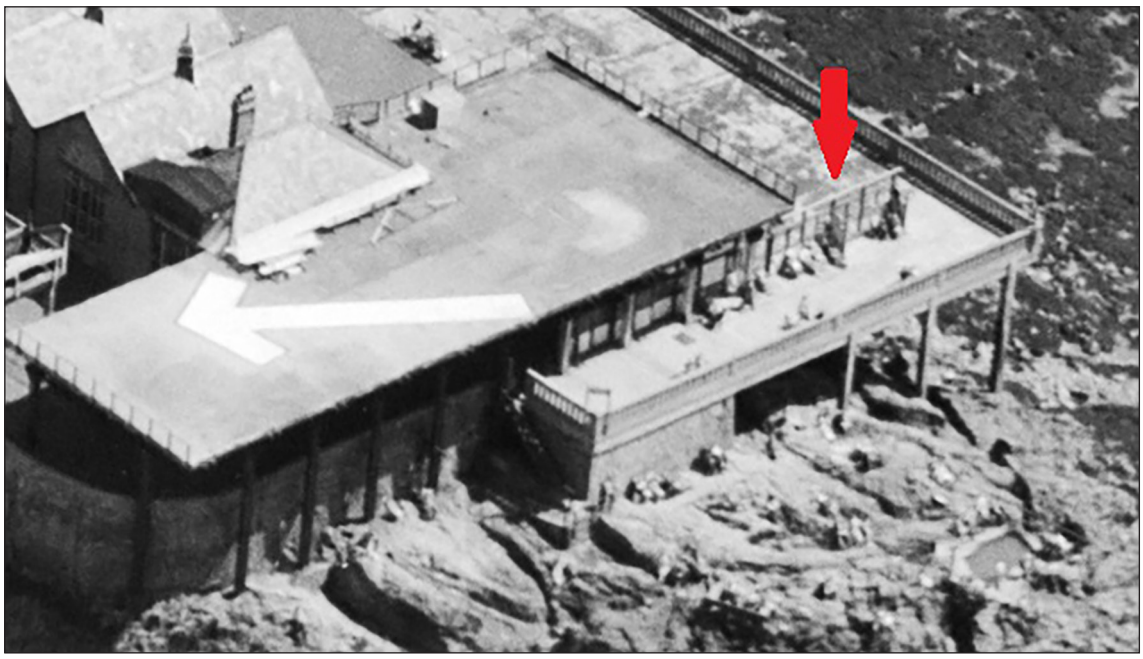

Figure 61: Detail from an aerial photograph of 1949, with the site of the shelter indicated by an arrow. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

## 13 Concrete viewing deck

Figure 62: Left: the viewing deck in 2018, looking east towards Worlebury Hill; right: the west end of the concrete deck, with the waiting rooms to the right. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218709, DP218697]

NGR: ST3049162590

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: under construction in 1920

Description:

The concrete viewing deck is a linear structure of reinforced concrete which is about 78.5m long (Figure 62). Supported by concrete pillars, it has a balustrade of narrow,

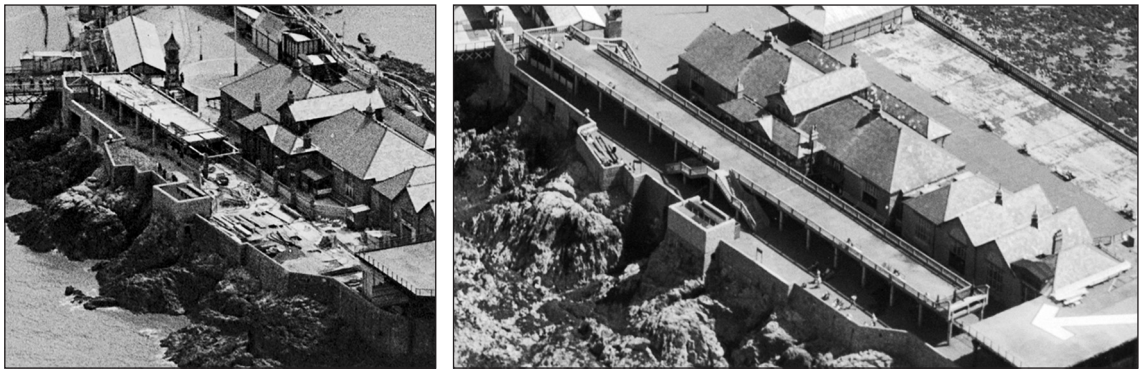

Figure 63: Left: a detail from an aerial photograph of 1920, showing the viewing deck under construction [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]; right: a detail from an aerial photo of 1949 showing the completed deck. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

arched openings, of which the western section is missing. There are two staircases: a quarter-turn stair behind the clocktower, on a substructure of red brick (possibly a later infill), and a larger stair of two flights at the centre of the north side. Beside the clocktower stair is a cast-iron lamp post. Part of the space underneath the deck has been filled in with concrete blocks, presumably to create storage spaces.

History:

Based on historic aerial photographs (Figure 63), the concrete deck appears to have been built in around 1920.

## 14 Gentlemen's lavatories


Figure 64: Left: the gents' lavatories in 2018, seen from the viewing deck stair [Johanna Roethe © Historic England]; right: a detail of the urinals, in 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218703]

NGR: ST3048662600

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: built sometime between 1903 and 1920

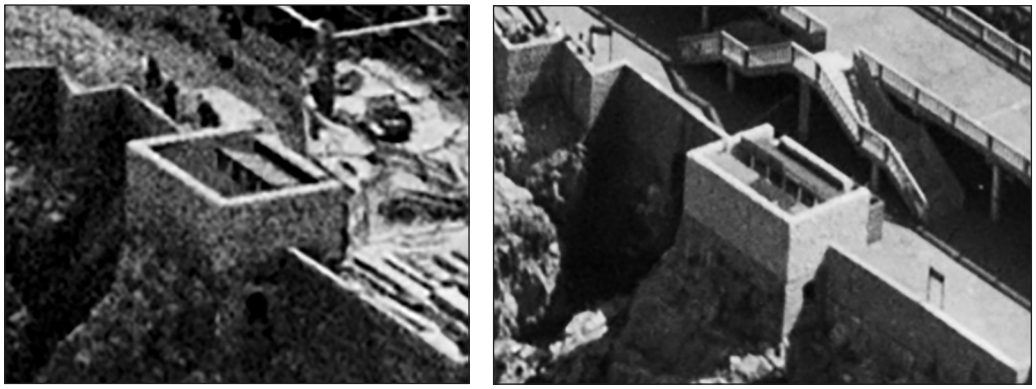

Figure 65: Left: a detail from an aerial photograph of 1920, showing the lavatories from the north-west [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]; right: a detail from an aerial photograph of 1949, showing the lavatories from the north-west. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

Description:

The lavatory block has an oblong plan and was built on a rocky outcrop of the island, projecting beyond the retaining walls on either side. The outer walls were built of coursed rubble stone (Figure 64, left). The structure was originally partly roofed; it has since lost all remnants of a roof. Along the north wall are ceramic urinals made by Shanks & Co. Ltd (Figure 64, right). The cubicles along the south wall are tiled with white glazed tiles. There are two entrances at either end of the south wall.

History:

The lavatories were built between about 1903 and 1920 (Figure 65).[220] The urinals were made by Shanks & Co. Ltd of Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, Scotland. Founded in 1853, the company has since 1969 been part of Armitage Shanks.[221] In recent decades the urinals have fallen into disrepair, with the roof collapsing.

## 15 Ticket booths/entrance to north jetty

NGR: ST3054462583

Designation: curtilage listed structure

Date: *c.* 1903-4

Description:

The two small timber ticket booths are flanked by metal turnstiles, with a third turnstile between them (Figure 66). Each booth has a door opening to the south and windows in all other directions. The windows have segmental heads and eight small panes in the upper half of the opening. The walls have diagonal timber boarding. Originally, both booths were covered by the same roof, which has since collapsed.

Figure 66: Left: the entrance to the north jetty in 2018, from the south; right: the inside of the right-hand (east) booth, 2018. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218723, DP218724]

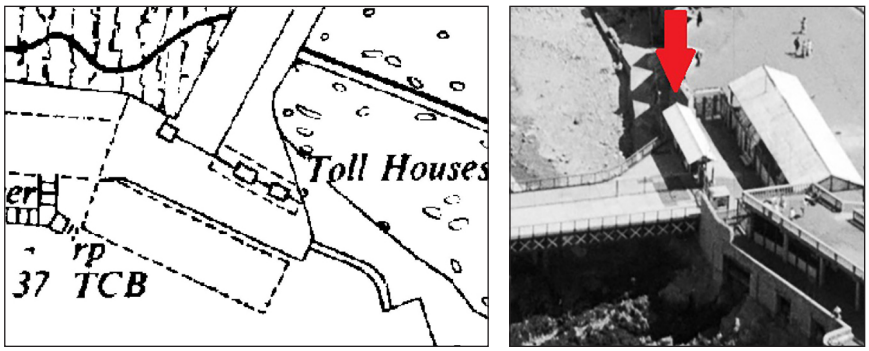


Figure 67: Left: a detail of the OS map published in 1952 (scale 1:1,250). [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024] Right: a detail of an aerial photograph of 1949, with an arrow indicating the ticket booths. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

History:

The 'toll gate' to the first north jetty of *c.* 1872 consisted of two structures on either side of turnstiles, which were aligned with the jetty. After the jetty's reconstruction in 1903-4, new turnstiles and ticket booths were located slightly to the east, presumably to accommodate the tramway lines (Figure 67).

## 16 North jetty

Figure 68: Left: the north jetty in 2018, from the south-west; right: the north jetty in 2018 from the east. [Steven Baker © Historic England Archive, DP218725, DP218663]

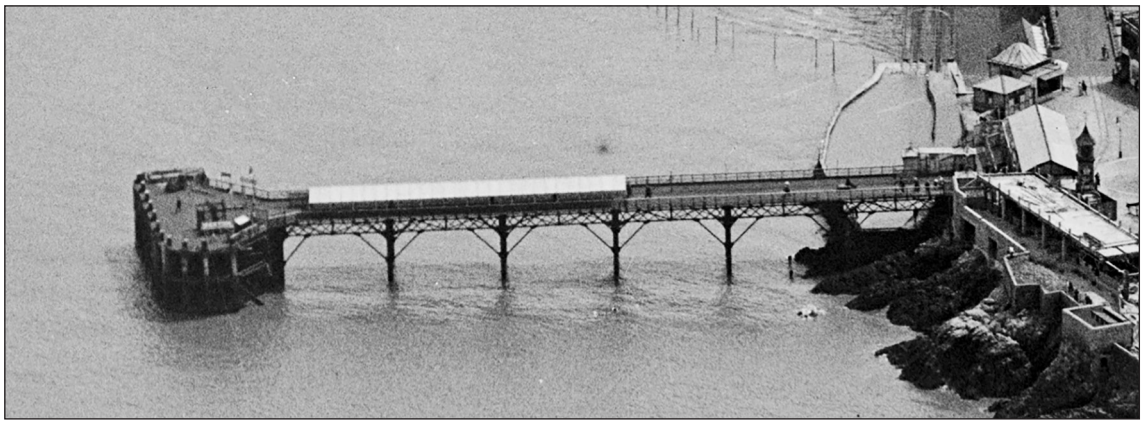

Figure 69: A detail of an aerial photograph of 1920, showing the north jetty from the west. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EPW001050]

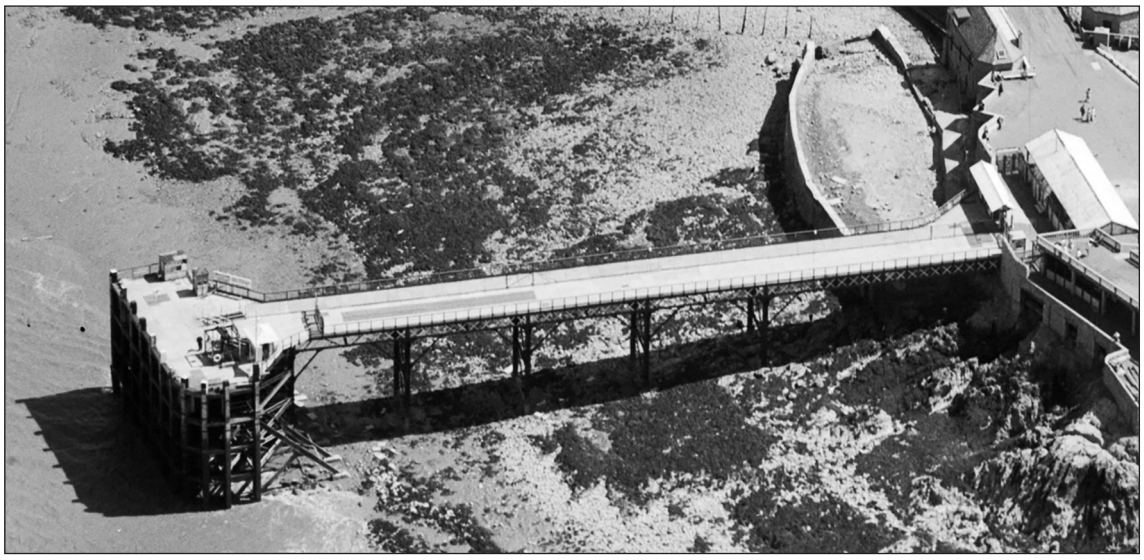

Figure 70: A detail of an aerial photograph of 1949, showing the north jetty from the west. [© Historic England Archive. Aerofilms Collection, EAW025154]

NGR: ST3055662622

NHLE: 1137504

Designation: Listed Grade II

Date: 1903-4

Description:

The north jetty is supported by five pairs of tubular steel shafts (or trestles) with diagonal braces and steel cross-girders (Figure 68). The landing stage has four different levels for different water levels and diagonal bracing on the south side. There is a small pavilion on the landing stage.

History:

Originally, the pier had a 12m-long west jetty which was soon found to be insufficient. By 1870, construction of a new jetty to the north was underway but it was destroyed in a gale in October that year.[222] A 76m-long wooden north jetty was constructed in about 1872, to replace the original 12m-long west jetty which was dismantled that year.[223]

After storm damage in September 1903 the north jetty was rebuilt in steel, with piles driven five feet into solid rock, 15m longer and 1.5m wider, resulting in a new length of 91m (300ft).[224] It reopened in time for the Easter season of 1904.[225] The plans were prepared by John McKaig of Newport and the works were overseen by the resident engineer, Ernest McKaig. Superintendent of works was the managing director of the Pier Company, Walton King, and the contractors were Messrs Horsley & Co., of Tipton, Staffordshire.[226] It featured improvements like separate stairways for embarking and landing passengers from the steamers, and a luggage lift.[227] It was also announced in 1904 that the 'tolls previously levied on passengers' parcels or luggage are to be abandoned'.[228]

There have been various structures on the jetty and its landing stage in the 20th century, including a long, roofed shelter on the jetty by 1920 which had been removed by 1949 and various small structures on the landing stage (Figures 69, 70). The current small pavilion appears to date from after 1953, as it is not shown on the OS map published that year.[229]

In 2016, listed building consent was granted for the partial demolition of the north jetty to remove the walkway and five trestle piers, while retaining the landing stage.[230] This was re-submitted in 2020 and approved in 2021.[231]

## ENDNOTES

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