

Pier, Parks and Seafront Trail



Historic research and text: Chris Hare, www.historypeople.co.uk
 Design: Blacker Design | Photography: Sam Hare, Worthing Museum and Gallery, Judy Fox, Sonja Fox.
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Homefield Park

The 1851 census showed that, for the first time, England had more of its population living in towns and cities than it did in rural areas. Perhaps it was for this reason that, as English towns grew, so the local authorities created parks for their residents to enjoy. Worthing was no exception. In the 1870s, as a result of a bequest, land to the north-east of the town, close to the Teville Stream, was identified as the perfect place to create a 'people's park.' Medieval Worthing had three large common fields, divided into strips, each tended by one peasant family. There was the East Field, the West Field, and the Home Field (the one nearest the village), and it was after this latter field that Worthing's first park was named.

The original park was larger than the one you see today and much of the southern part was lost when Worthing Hospital was enlarged in 1970. There was also an ornamental lake, fed by the Teville Stream, although this had been drained and filled-in by 1930.

The park was, for many generations, a hub of community activities, with fairs, royal jubilees, and carnivals being held here. Today, families, and people of all generations enjoy the park and the facilities it has to offer.

If you want to know more about Homefield Park, Beach House Park, and Denton Gardens, please look at www.worthingvillagevoices.org.uk You will also find interviews with local people and 'then and now' slideshows.



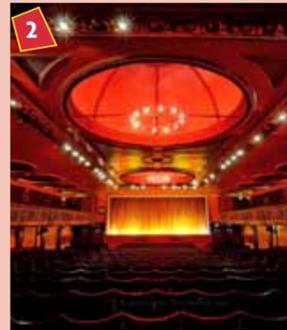
We hope you enjoy exploring Worthing's rich heritage. For details of other trails in this series, plus more local area information: timeforworthing.uk

1 Worthing's first pier was designed by Sir Robert Rawlinson and cost £6,500. However, it was a narrow deck pier with little space for promenading – so beloved of the Victorian middle class – and as a result the pier was widened and a sea-end pavilion added during the years 1887–89. On Easter Saturday in March 1913, a violent storm and high tide swept away the central section of the pier. (The isolated sea-end pavilion was accordingly nicknamed 'Easter Island'.) The reconstructed pier was opened amidst much local celebration by the Lord Mayor of London in May



From the Pier, cross Marine Parade at the pedestrian crossing, then turn right. Continue past the Dome to reach The Steyne.

2 The present **Dome** cinema dates from 1923, but the cinema was a feature of the building since it first opened as 'The Kursaal' – an Edwardian multi-entertainment centre – in 1910. Originally the cinema was situated on the first floor and the ground-floor auditorium was used for roller-skating and public meetings. In February 1913, a meeting organised



Gary Levett



were removed and the Steyne became a place of recreation. An attempt by Edward Ogle, the owner of Warwick House (to the north of the Steyne) to claim the field as his own private recreation ground was rebuffed by the angry townspeople, who broke down the fences he erected and threw down the signs that declared the land to be private property.

Continue on Marine Parade past the war memorial.

5 The current **Warnes** is an art deco style building of upmarket apartments, which replaced an earlier Warnes hotel gutted by fire in 1987. The first Warnes was named after a local businessman who was the first person in Worthing to own a motor car. During the early years of the twentieth century several motor car rallies were organised from Warnes and attracted a great deal of national media attention. In 1936, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia stayed for several months at the Hotel, following his country's defeat at the hands of Fascist Italy.



Continue past Warnes.

Turn left into York Road, then right into Alfred Place.

7 As you come to the junction with Warwick Road, notice the tall building to your left. This was once **Chapman's Brewery** – also known as the Tower Brewery. It has now been converted into flats.



9 **Splash Point.** Two hundred years ago there was a discernible point of land here, but the sea has eroded this away. The increased danger of severe flooding led to the construction of the present wall and the stone boulders as a defence. The ornamental features were added in 2012.



Turn right into Warwick Road until you reach Splash Point on the seafront, then turn left past the Rowing Club.

1914. A fire in September 1933 gutted the southern pavilion and much of the decking. The current Art Deco pavilion was opened in 1935. During the Second World War the central section of the pier was removed to prevent it being used as a landing stage by enemy invaders. Today the pier is considered one of Worthing's biggest assets and is in a far better state of preservation than many neighbouring piers on the Sussex coast.

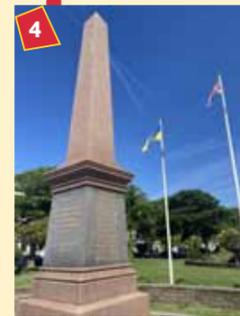
Cross Marine Parade at the pedestrian crossing, then turn right.

The building on your right – one either side of Marine Place – were known as Little and Great Terrace, and were built as boarding houses for the early visitors to Worthing when it became popular as a seaside resort from the 1790s onwards.

by local Suffragettes ended in a riot, as protesters threw bags of flour and soot and waved football rattles. The name 'Kursaal' was dropped during the First World War as it was considered to sound too Germanic. The name 'Dome' was chosen following a public vote.

You now come to The Steyne.

3 Worthing's first purpose-built hotel was the **Steyne Hotel** – today's Chatsworth Hotel, which in 2012 celebrated its bicentenary. The name 'steyne' means stony field. There are also 'steynes', with slightly different spellings, at Brighton and Bognor Regis. Here fishermen mended their nets and gutted their fish. By the time the Steyne Hotel was opened, such practices were deemed vulgar and offensive, and in time, the fishermen



4 At the southern end of the Steyne is a **war memorial**, built in the style of a 'Cleopatra's Needle', to the Worthing men who lost their lives in South Africa during the Boer War of 1899–1902. Just to the north of the memorial you'll find a small sensory garden.



6 In York Road, notice the 'Dutch gables' of the houses to your left – a most unusual architectural feature in the town.

In **Alfred Place** you will see another singular architectural design – the 'boat porches' of the cottages in this street. It is said that they were built to mimic upturned fishing boats, although this may be just a quaint local legend.



8 Continue southward down **Warwick Road**. The terrace on the left is one of only five Regency terraces to survive in the town, and is remarkably unaltered.



10 The **Rowing Club** is a 1930s building which replaced a late Victorian building used for the same purpose. The buildings to the left were once known as 'Greville Terrace', and were the scene, in 1850, of a famous case of 'rough music'. The lady of the house – a new arrival to Worthing – had caused offence locally and was party to an action for slander against another society lady in the town. A mob with disguised faces and rattling old tin cans and kettles filled with beach pebbles, assailed the house, letting out 'loud groans' and shouts of disapproval. They ended their demonstration by raining a shower of stones against the windows of the house, breaking every pane. This was one of several instances of 'rough music' that took place in Worthing during the mid-nineteenth century.

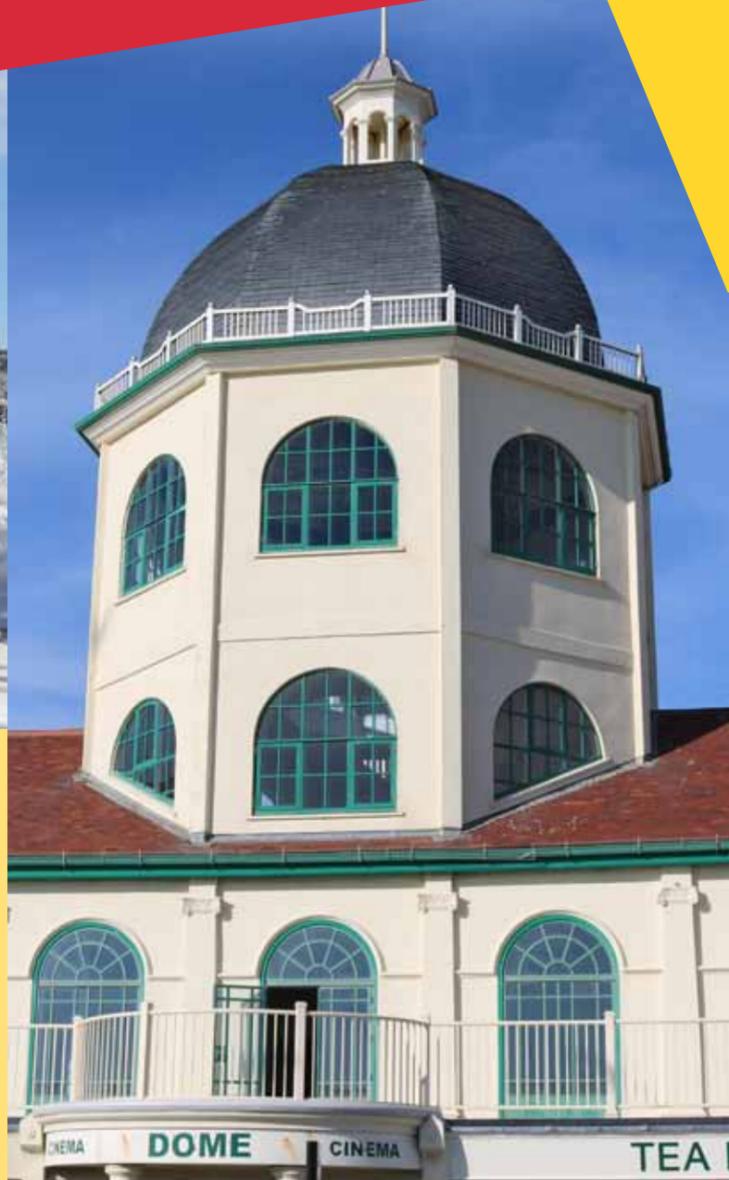
Pier, Parks & Seafront

Uncover Worthing's historic past and explore the local area with a choice of five trails:

- Worthing Town
- Cissbury Ring
- Pier, Parks & Seafront
- Highdown Gardens & Hill
- Tarring



Photo: © Sonja Fox



For more local inspiration and information, events, plus accommodation, shopping, eating and drinking & more... timeforworthing.uk



Introduction to Pier, Parks and Seafront

This walk includes three parks and Worthing's award-winning pier. There are two route options to follow, one including Homefield Park and the surrounding streets and a shorter route which focuses on the town centre. As well as the history of the parks and the pier, you will also read about the town's social history and the impact of the Second World War on Worthing.

Civic pride was very evident in Victorian and Edwardian Worthing. In a single lifetime a small fishing and farming village that was not even big enough to be a parish in its own right had grown to be one of the largest and most prosperous towns on the south coast. On this trail you will see how civic pride manifested itself: in the pier, the parks, and the town's first cinema. You can choose to take the extended route through Homefield Park – Worthing's first park – or take the shorter route via Brighton Road. The longer route also includes mention of the Second World War and its impact on the town.

Duration: The route including Homefield Park is about 2.25 miles (3.5 km), the route excluding Homefield Park is about 1.75 miles (3 km).

Terrain: The route is on paved ground and involves the crossing of four roads by pedestrian crossings.

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Walking briskly can help you build stamina, burn excess calories and make your heart healthier. Getting out in the open air and in nature has many health benefits for everyone.

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There are five trails in total:

- Worthing Town
- Cissbury Ring
- Tarring
- Pier, Parks and Seafront
- Highdown Gardens & Hill

19 Farncombe Road (to your right) is today in a conservation area and boasts some of the best surviving examples of mid-Victorian villas to be found in the town. The street is lined with mock-Victorian lighting columns, but the lamppost on the roundabout at the junction with Farncombe Road and Church Walk is an original.

Make your way along Homefield Park Road. Carry on past the hospital on your left until you come to the red brick wall surrounding Homefield Park. You will see the entrance through the wall into the park. Follow the path through the Park and turn left down Park Road.

20 Homefield Park was opened as Worthing's first recreation park in 1881. Initially known as the 'People's Park', it covered the entire area from Lyndhurst Road



to Chesswood Road. The hospital stood in the south-west corner. From the 1960s onwards, as the hospital expanded, large tracts of the park were given up for this necessary development. One of the most impressive features of the Victorian park was a lake, fed by the Teville Stream. A decorative bridge spanned the water at its narrowest point. These features were removed in about 1930.

Continue across Lyndhurst Road into the oldest part of Park Road, where several properties date back until at least the early nineteenth century. On reaching Brighton Road turn right and continue to stop 14.

Homefield Park Detour
Walk through Beach House Park via Palm Court Café until you come to Lyndhurst Road. Cross at the pedestrian island, taking care of traffic – this is a very busy road – and turn right to the crossroads.

You will soon come to two buildings (one on either side of Lyndhurst Road) very much associated with the events of World War Two in Worthing.

18 The buildings on the north-eastern corner of Homefield Road and Lyndhurst Road were once a single house called 'Reydon'. During the Second World War this was the home of Dr Marjorie Davies. On the evening of 9 August 1942 a German Heinkel III bomber clipped the roofs of houses in Madeira Avenue, then crashed through the flint wall in front of **Candia**, skidded across Lyndhurst Road and ploughed into Reydon. In the resulting fireball, all five of the crew were killed, as were three Canadian soldiers billeted in the house. Two women threw themselves from upstairs windows into the back garden, receiving only minor injuries.

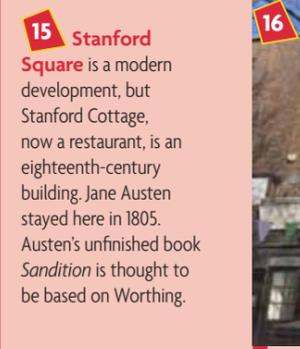


At the time of the incident described above, Candia was the headquarters and armoury stores of the Home Guard. Had the German bomber crashed into Candia a considerable explosion would have followed, leading to major loss of life. Home guard soldiers stationed in Candia during the war claimed the property was haunted.

16 No. 25 Warwick Street was once a printers that published some of Percy Bysshe Shelley's earliest poetry. His father was the first chairman of the Worthing Town Commissioners (forerunner of the present council).



15 Stanford Square is a modern development, but Stanford Cottage, now a restaurant, is an eighteenth-century building. Jane Austen stayed here in 1805. Austen's unfinished book *Sandition* is thought to be based on Worthing.



Continue on Warwick Street. On the left is Stanford Square, then on the right No. 25.



17 Bedford Row was built between 1803 and 1806 and is a grade II listed building. The bow-fronted architecture, so typical of the Regency period, is in its earliest form here. The style allowed the maximum light into the rooms, and reached the height of its popularity in the 1820s when it was replicated across much of Brighton. No.7 Bedford Row, originally Bloss's Boarding House, was refronted in Victorian times, breaking the continuity of the Regency terrace. The naturalist, W.H. Hudson, was believed to have stayed at No.8 towards the end of his life.

There are now two options, see below.

Continue on Warwick Street. On the left is Stanford Square, then on the right No. 25.

Turn left into Bedford Row. Continue slightly left on Bedford Row until you reach Marine Parade and the Pier.

11 Denton Gardens were laid out in 1922 at the expense of Alderman James Gurney Denton, four times mayor of Worthing. The water features have been replaced with a sunken garden.



12 Designed by John Rebecca, **Beach House** was built in 1820. For many years it was the home of the town's MP, Sir Robert Loder. Many influential guests visited the Loders at their seaside residence, but none more distinguished than King Edward VII,



Turn left into Denton Gardens. Turn right on Brighton Road. Beach House and Garden is on the right. Cross the Road into Beach House Park.

who twice stayed here during his reign. Following Sir Robert's death, the house passed to his son Edward. The American playwright Edward Knoblock became the next owner. In 1927 the house and its grounds were purchased by Worthing Town Council. Twice, in 1947 and in 1976, the Council sought to have Beach House demolished, and twice the Secretary of State intervened to preserve the building. It is now divided into luxury apartments.



At this point you can either continue north through Beach House Park towards Palm Court Café and join the 'Homefield detour' (see right), or retrace your steps back to Brighton Road, and turn right. You will pass The Steyne again (on your left) before coming to Warwick Street.

14 Warwick Street was built in the early nineteenth century to accommodate the town's growing middle-class population, only later in the century were the properties converted into shops. Some of the buildings on the south side of the street date back to the eighteenth century and represent the earliest phase in the development of Worthing as a seaside resort.