



Stepping Out to Shelters & Bandstands, Sunday 19th June 2:00pm

Welcome to the Stepping Out walk on Bexhill's Shelters & Bandstands. I'm Alex, one of the museum's volunteers for the Local History Study Group. We'll be assisted Maureen who will act as a backmarker so you'll always be kept in the group and won't miss anything.

During this 2 hour walk we'll be visiting the places where the public would take shelter from the weather, the venues they would have watched and listened to concerts and make an exclusive inside visit to Bexhill's *last remaining bandstand* which is set to open later this year by conservation charity Bexhill Heritage.

The walk is just over a mile one way, looking to finish at halfway along East Parade. It's all on the flat but as usual please be careful when crossing roads and be aware of other users along the busy promenade.

Introduction

There have been a surprising number of bandstands and shelters lost and replaced in Bexhill since the main town began in the Victorian period. Some elegant designs, some of controversial designs, some with form over function, and some with function over form. But I'll leave the debate of their practicalities with you to decide.

Route

Bexhill Museum – Egerton Park Lawn

① **Egerton Park Shelter Hall.** (1903 – 1914). [\[IMAGE 1\]](#) Our beloved Museum was once a refreshment room from 1903, known as the Egerton Park Shelter Hall. Teas, coffees, tobacco, newspapers, chocolates and children's toys were sold to any class of person. It wasn't until 1914 when the museum moved in, you see the lower arches in the photo were bricked in to protect and store the exhibits. The steps leading up on each side accessed the male and female toilets. It could be that our Curator Julian's office was once the ladies lavatory, but don't tell him I said that!

Egerton Park Bandstand. (1892 – 1972). [\[IMAGE 2\]](#) This was a raised, circular building which used to stand in the centre of the main lawn from 1892. It was used not only for bands but sermons during WW2. It was condemned in January 1956 but given reprieve in 1957 when the council gave it a new look, with repairs and rethatched the roof. By 1972 it had lost its battle for existence despite protests from local councillors and it was demolished.

Egerton Park Victorian Shelters. (1892 – 1972). [\[IMAGE 3\]](#) Let's take a moment to take in the elegance of the 1892 Victorian style shelters, their decorative finials marking the top of the roof ends, their gable roof trim, and windows allowing light and wind protection from any seating position. It's interesting to compare these features to these current 1972 replacements.

Scented Garden Shelter. (1952 – Present). The garden, wall and shelter were built in 1952, and I quote, "For the 800 sightless folk of Bexhill-on-Sea, by voluntary subscription among those who have the blessing of sight"; the shelter was to give rest and comfort to those blind persons visiting the garden.

Egerton Park Lawn – Opposite Clock Tower

② **West Parade Bandstand.** (1899 – 1977). [\[IMAGE 4\]](#) This once elegant Victorian structure was a functioning bandstand when it was built in 1899, then became a sole shelter from about 1920. Rumours have it that the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had his ladies sit in here to enjoy the sea air away from the common gaze of the local populace. By 1977 its decaying timbers and elaborate cupolas were rotting away, and it had to be roped off. Rother District Council had set aside £2,700 which was not nearly enough for the estimated £14,500 needed for repairs, and thus it was demolished. If only Bexhill Heritage were around then!

West Parade Edwardian Shelters. (1904 – 1977). [\[IMAGE 5\]](#) It seems at least one 1899 Victorian shelter from West Parade (back of image 4) was moved into Egerton Park. You can see the Edwardian architecture in these buildings from the rounded roof and intricate arch details. A Mr Philip Howard of the York Hotel, London Road was sitting in one of these sea-front shelters in 1975 when his “friend” Mr Peter Ball was speeding down the road in his Jaguar sports car. Ball lost control and crashed into the shelter, causing Mr Howard to be transported to Hastings Hospital with back injuries. The shelter had to be demolished; and the others were subsequently taken down in 1977. I do not know if Howard and Ball remained friends.

West parade Round Shelter. (1962 – 2010). [\[IMAGE 6\]](#) Moving on to a relatively modern shelter from 1962 some of you may remember. Located at the other end of West Parade, It was unique in its round style and had a very social internal seating arrangement.

West Parade Shelters. (1977 – 2010). [\[IMAGE 7\]](#) You may remember there were three of these shelters along West Parade. This one in the photo is what replaced the West Parade Victorian Bandstand in 1977, very similar to the existing practical designed shelters in Egerton Park. These lasted until 2010 when the £5.1 million Next Wave West Parade Improvement Project came in...

Opposite Clock Tower – West Parade Shelter No.1

⑤ **West Parade Shelters.** (2011 – Present). [\[FIGURE A\]](#) Rother District Council held a competition in 2010 for architects to design a set of shelters for West Parade, there were 140 entrants and a final 10 submissions ranging in concept designs described as “sea shells”, “spiral tides” and “raindrop golf balls”. The shelters we see here today by Duggan Morris Architects actually came in second to Michael Tite and Tom Ebdon (centre image), who walked away from the job due to RDC imposing “potentially punitive conditions” on their appointment. I bet someone here can anyone tell me what the hole in the roof was originally going to be for...? Yes, that’s right a tree!

West Parade Shelter No.1 – Behind The Colonnade

④ **Central Parade Temporary Bandstand.** (1910 – 1911). [\[IMAGE 8\]](#) Before The Colonnade was built in 1911 we had a temporary wooden bandstand which was set into the cliff behind what was then the Coastguard Cottages. This cliff was known as The Horn and former site of Martello Tower No.46.

The Colonnade Bandstand. (1911 – 1949). [\[IMAGE 9\]](#) A raised bandstand once stood in the centre of The Colonnade designed by local architect Joseph Barker Wall, an outside walkway projected over the beach with windbreaks protecting those who came to see the performances. Having made it through the dangers of WW2, the bandstand and screens were demolished 1949 to, and I quote, “Enable persons (at The Colonnade) to have magnificent views of the sea, which is denied to them at present”.

5 **De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v1.** (1945 – 1950). [\[IMAGE 10\]](#) Music was relayed to behind The Colonnade from 1945, giving the De La Warr Pavilion its first bandstand and familiar summer holiday views of wooden deckchairs and beach umbrellas.

De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v2. (1950 – 1980). [\[IMAGE 11\]](#) The second generation in 1950 sees a more robust structure and the inclusion of temporary windbreaks which become a permanent feature in 1963.

De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v3. (1980 – 2001). [\[IMAGE 12\]](#) Generation 3 was built in May 1980 and designed by resident council architect Anthony Bird. It accommodated bands up to 25 people and cost £11,000.

De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v4. (2001 – 2022). [\[IMAGE 13\]](#) Young British Architect of the Year 1998, Niall McLaughlin won the competition to design the 4th generation of bandstand to sit on the De La Warr Pavilion's terrace, he was shortlisted from 35 other applicants. At a cost of £30,000 met by grants including one from the Old Town Preservation Society, design began in 2019 with help from local school children and opened for use in December 2001. Most of you are aware Storm Eunice took it away from us in February of this year. There are no current plans for a 5th bandstand.

Behind The Colonnade – East Parade Bandstand

6 **East Parade Jubilee Bandstand.** (1895 – present). [\[IMAGE 14\]](#) This was the first structure to be built on the parade in 1895, it was originally enclosed with a fence to protect the audience from wind and outside noise. It was converted to a shelter in around 1906 once the Kursaal (located where the Sailing Club is) became the premier entertainment venue. The Kursaal in turn was replaced by the De La Warr Pavilion in 1936. In November 2020, Bexhill Heritage took partnership with Rother District Council to do a complete restoration of the shelter and return it back into a bandstand. May I introduce chairman of Bexhill Heritage Steve Johnson who will be taking you about the ongoing work.

[Steve: talk about the current status of the ongoing Bexhill Heritage restoration]

East Parade Bandstand – Shelter No.2

7 **East Parade Shelter No.2.** (1896 – 1940). [\[IMAGE 15\]](#) There were once two Victorian cast-iron shelters on East Parade, only the more distant one remains. The one between the lawns to the west was removed in WW2 and replaced by an Observation Post, disguised as a seafront shelter. It's worth mentioning that all four shelters along East Parade are Grade II listed, and this one is the most original with its ironwork supports. By looking at the plaques at the bottom of the supports you may be able to read it was built by Henry Young & Co Engineers London. Young worked on the Sackville railway bridge upgrade from a cattle arch; he built Bexhill's first pavilion the Kursaal (mentioned earlier); and cast the sphinxes for Cleopatra's needle in London.

Shelter No.2 – Shelter No.3

⑧ **East Parade Shelter No.3-4.** (1921 – present). Rectangular shelters No.3 and No.4 were built in 1921 by Frederick William Parker, a builder and undertaker in Bexhill who took over the family business established by his grandfather. Parker’s workshop and house was on Belle Hill at the junction with Barrack Road, the site is now underneath King Offa Way. His larger projects include the Cemetery Chapel, Cemetery Lodge and the New Club, Marina (now Pebbles on the Beach). It is of note that Parker carried out the last burials at St. Peter’s churchyard and Barrack Road cemetery, and undertook the first funeral at Bexhill Cemetery when it opened in 1902. In September 2019 Bexhill Heritage began work to renovate this shelter, after 2,500 volunteer hours it reopened as you see it now in August 2020. Simon is Bexhill Heritage’s Project Coordinator who will give you some more insight to the work done.

[Simon: talk about the Bexhill Heritage restoration]

Finish

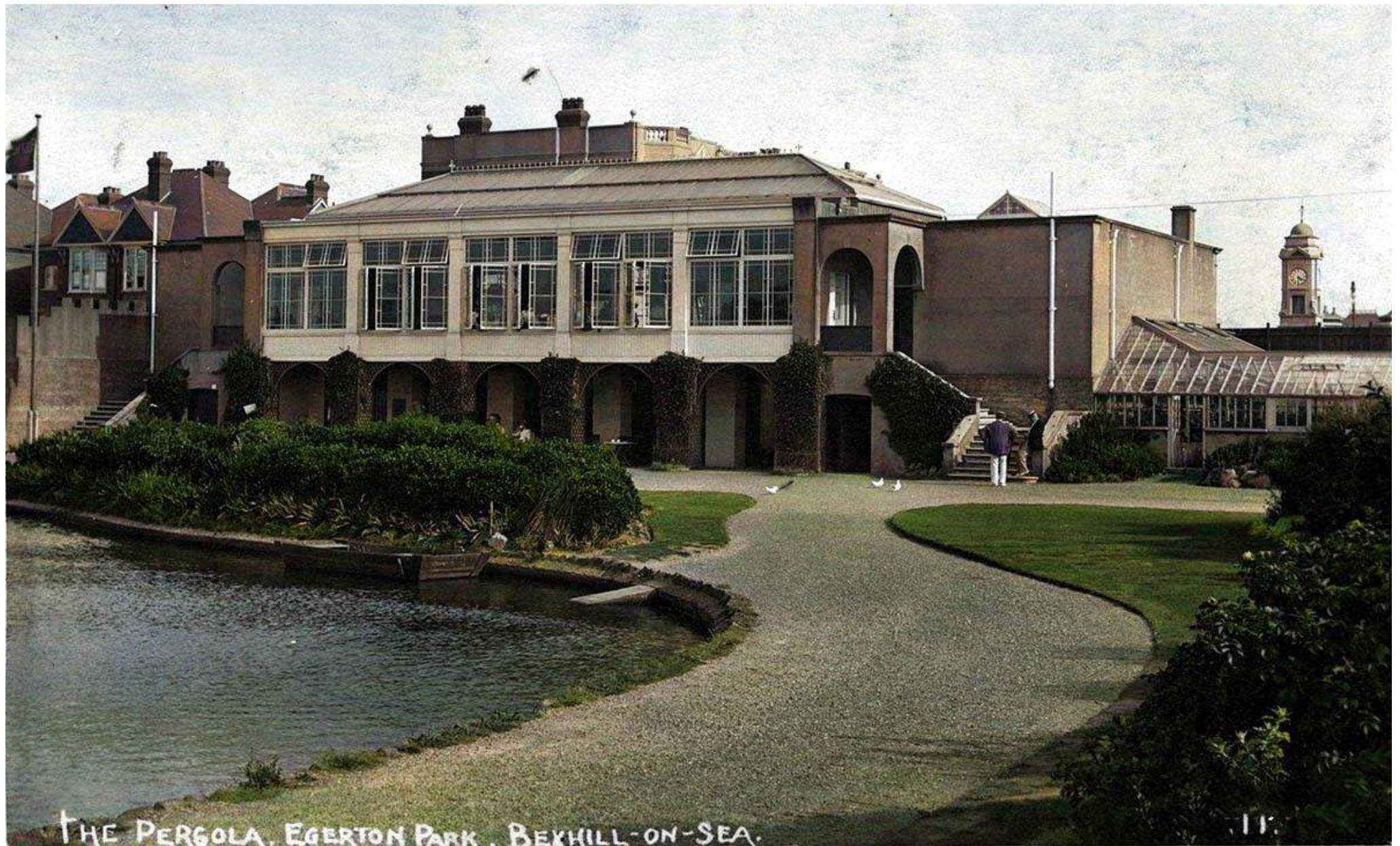
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Note: The tour was put together to raise funds for Bexhill Museum, so if you enjoyed it please consider sending them donation at <https://bexhillmuseum.org.uk>

#1: Egerton Park Shelter Hall (1903 - 1914)

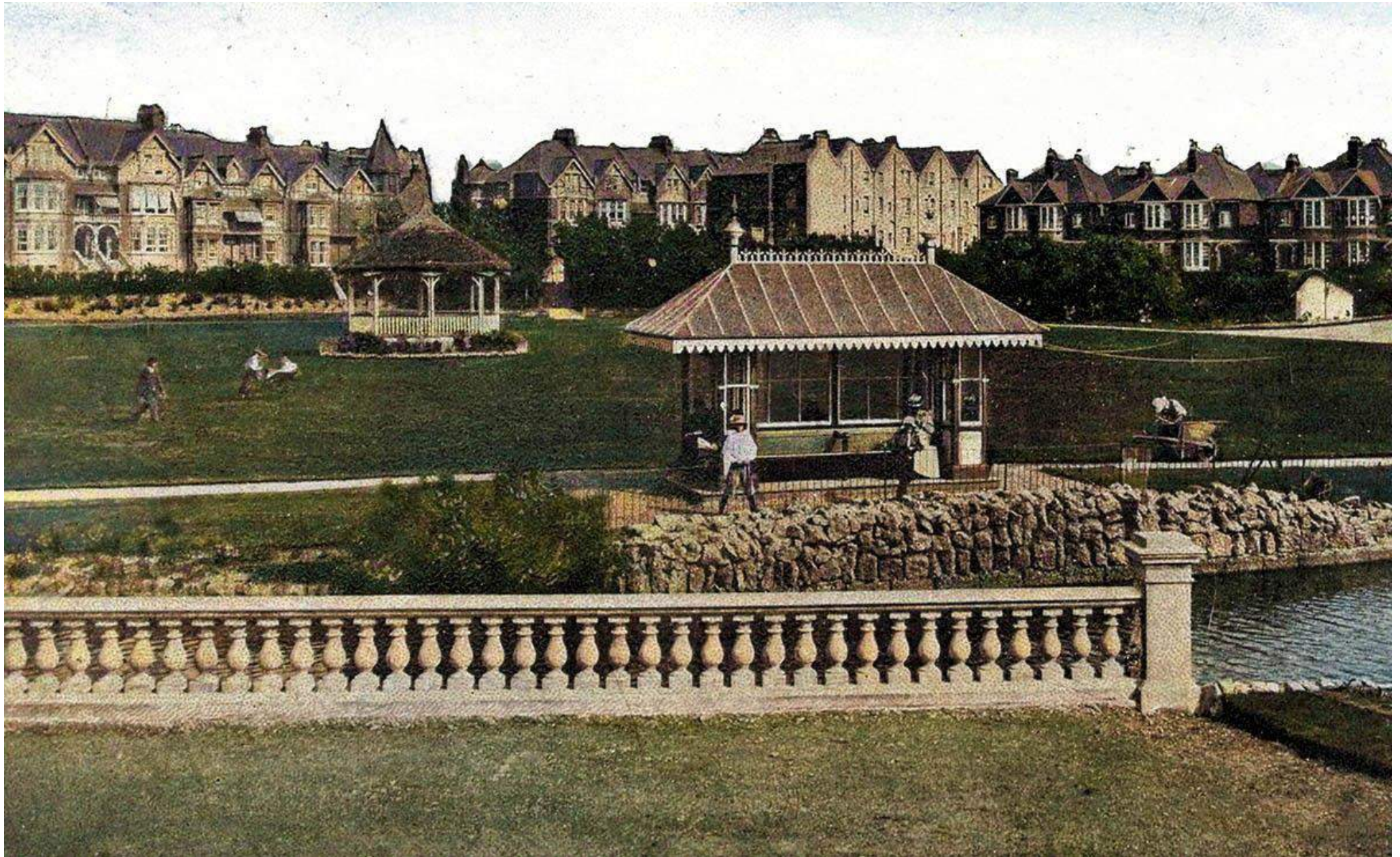


THE PERGOLA, EGERTON PARK, BEKHILL-ON-SEA.

#2: Egerton Park Bandstand (1892 - 1972)



#3: Egerton Park Victorian Shelters (1892 - 1977)



#4: West Parade Victorian Bandstand (1899 - 1977)



#5: West Parade Edwardian Shelters (1899 - 1977)



#6: West parade Postwar Round Shelter (1962 - 2010)



#7: West Parade Postwar Shelters (1977 - 2010)



#8: Central Parade Temporary Bandstand (1910 - 1911)



#9: The Colonnade Bandstand (1911 - 1949)



6380. THE COLONNADE BANDSTAND. BEXHILL-ON-SEA.

#10: De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v1 (1945 - 1950)



#11: De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v2 (1950 - 1980)



#12: De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v3 (1980 - 2001)



#13: De La Warr Pavilion Bandstand v4 (2001 - 2022)



#14: East Parade Bandstand (1895 - Present)



#15: East Parade Shelter (1896 - 1940)



#A: Next Wave, West Parade Improvement Project, Shelter Competition Entries (2010)

