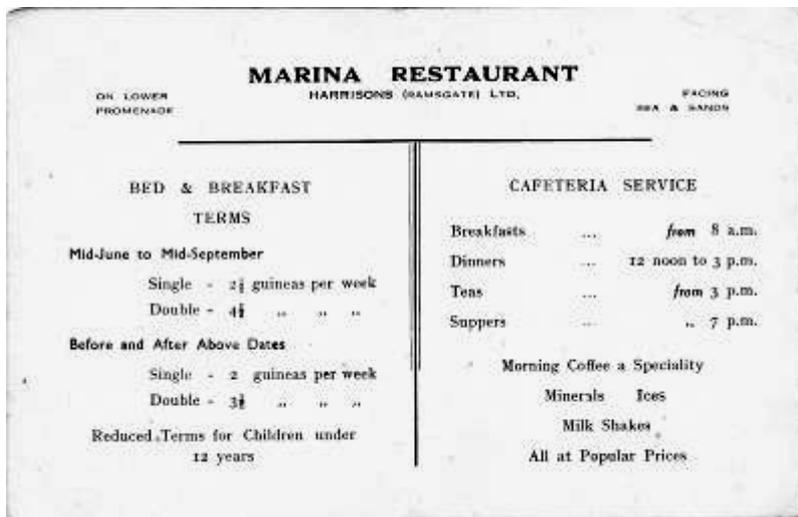


Marina Memories

D. H. Prestedge

My Father took out a lease for No. 1 The Granville Marina from Messrs Harrison's in the late 40's and retained it until the early 60's. It was known as the Marina Restaurant but also had an ice cream bar and what we now call a fast food outlet. On the first floor above the restaurant was the private living accommodation whilst on the upper floor there were guest rooms used for the "Bed and Breakfast" trade. Directly after the war there was a boom in holidays at the seaside and the seafront was crowded with visitors. Holiday accommodation booking was not always in advance and so it was not unusual to have visitors seeking a room late on a Saturday night and the unsuccessful spending a night on the sands or seeking shelter under the old bathing station.



The typical holiday trade was catered for with take away Hot Dogs @ 9d each and a Bag of Chips 6d. One item of interest is that in those days "trays for the sands" were available subject to a deposit. What is not shown is that the Cafeteria was open to 11pm or so at the height of the season.



showing a very modern fascia and frontage and its clean and attractive exterior.

The season started at Easter with the restaurant being open only at weekends. All week opening started at Whitson and at the height of the season, late July to early August, it could be quite manic! Left is the restaurant in its heyday



Two photographs of the era. Note the Casino before it was converted to flats

Every year the carnival procession came along the Granville Marina and it was in those days a really special event.

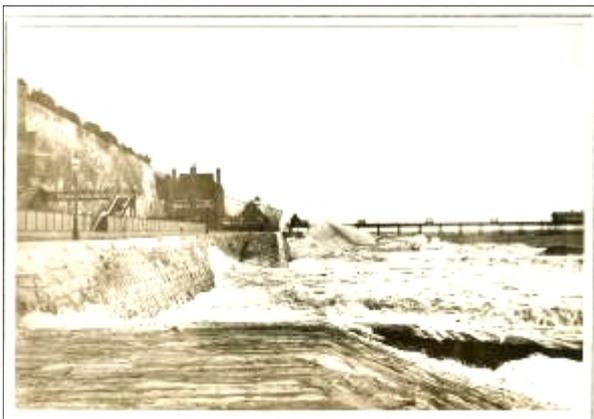


The Carnival Queen's float.



The "Kursal Flyer" from (Southend) negotiating the Bathing Pool bend.

The Pier was opened in 1881 and early photographs show the distinctive Marina buildings, later to be the restaurant, the beer garden and the ballroom.

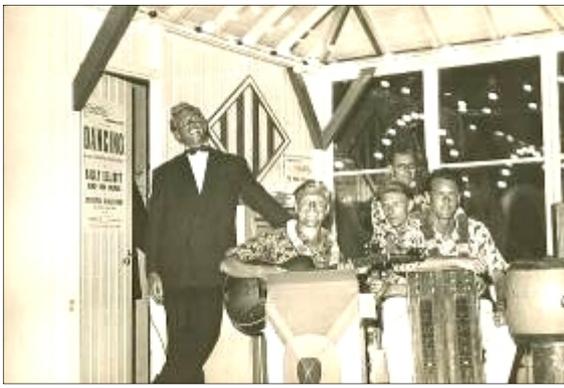


Above is an early photo of the pier.

When enlarged it shows the pre-ballroom building and No1 Granville Marina, at that time the large advertising proclaiming "Lombardi, Photographer, Marina Studios". I cannot recall hearing of him and although photography was in its infancy there could still be examples of his work.

In the 50's I supplemented my income by working with Sunbeams (photographers) and in the summer I was hard at it in the Marina Beer Garden and Ballroom every evening and at weekend lunchtimes. At the height of the season many organised coach loads of day trippers had their lunches in the Coronation Ballroom and I had to cover each and every one of them. It was not unusual to have a dozen or so coach loads – about 400-500 people to photograph and one had to be able to deal with all the vagaries of well victualled East Enders. At this time I would probably be taking in excess of 1,000 photos a week.

The Beer Garden of an evening was a trifle more sedate with a resident band, singer and compere.



nighttime: The Hawaiian Serenaders and Vocalist



daytime: Compere and Organist



There were of course children's programmes and this charming shot also has the details of the Marina activities, Dancing to Billy Elliott in the Ballroom with its "crystal" floor and multi coloured under floor illumination. The "Miss Marina" competitions were held in the Bathing Pool culminating with a presentation in the Ballroom.



Next to the bathing pool entrance and overlooking the pool was the Marina Skating Rink

It was very popular with the skating fraternity, especially in the evening when most of the visitors were in the ballroom or beer garden



Quite early on, I was taking a photo in the Beer Garden as the band and vocalist were performing “Easter Parade” and had got to the phrase “the photographer will snap us”. My flash went off at the crucial moment and from that time onwards I was expected to support them at every performance! I did not mind, it was very good publicity and encouraged good customer relations.



Night time photo of the Marina

Brochure – updated

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