

Pebbles to the Pier

A sample of the messages collected throughout the project

Back in 1956 I remember riding the train along the pier to the pier head and boarding the Medway Queen, which took me to the Southend Pier, and back again to Herne Bay. It was enjoyable to take a walk along the pier, the second longest in the UK.

Herne Bay.

Sunny Herne Bay. Sunny Herne Bay. There's champagne air to breathe all day. Promenades of flower gardens. A wonderful creation. Monumental clock tower built in celebration. Walk sea breaker wall titled Neptune's Arm. A beautiful and peaceful stroll when the sea's calm. Jet Skis, speedboats, fishing boats, yachts, & canoes. There's every kind of watercraft one could wish to choose. An architectural pearl the grand town hall, with theatre stage and dance, something for all, weddings, parties, conferences and many, many shows. Down by the seafront where everybody goes.

I first visited Herne Bay when I was the age my children are now – In those days summers were six weeks of uninterrupted, sun – now climate changes means heatwaves and storms – a worrying trend. The old pier has weathered many (if not all) storms. I hope it will outlast the next period of change. We can all change our ways to save many summers for my children and grandchildren yet to be... Thanks. Richard

My first memory of Herne Bay... Driving through the High Street in the myopic rain looking for a shop selling "beer and pub merchandise". By passing the beach for fish and chips. Comparing you unforgivingly to your sister, Whitstable. Oh, Herne Bay, how you have grown on me.

XXX

My mother's abiding memory of Herne Bay is from a railway journey to Margate, just after the war. The train stopped just outside Herne Bay and some woman who was terribly train-sick took the opportunity to lean out the window and relieve herself. Unfortunately she vomited so hard, her false teeth flew out and landed in a puddle of puke on the tracks. My mother tried to get my father to retrieve them but he refused, so the woman had to go gummy to Margate.

I used to fish out on the pier, and then later, I ran boat trips out there, detailing the history, such as the cannon on the clocktower which came from the end of the first pier. I took 500 people out there, then 2400 people the next year – they all expressed desire to see her rebuilt and regret that it had not yet happened. As a mariner's landmark, the landmark of the pier is always a welcome sight. Everyone wanted to see a Victorian walkway, not a shopping plaza, and so recently when they announced a proposed rebuild, I was very pleased. I have a mad idea to organise an annual walk out to the old pier head on stilts at low tide, it would be eccentric, but unique. Mike, 38.

To our Pier.
To my old friend
Standing all alone
Out at sea
How I long to
Meet you and
Walk along you
And say hi,
nice to meet you at last.

I lived in Canterbury and Whitstable from 1980-1986 and never visited Herne Bay! It was just a fun fair and a long boring beach full of old people. Now 20 years later with my kids and wife, maybe an old man, I visited Herne Bay for the first time yesterday, and now again today. And it's great! Friendly. The weather is good (only a little rain). And the Festival is on! I found out yesterday about the festival on the internet. I've lived in south Germany the last 20 years and was just visiting my mother, and the World Wide Web has brought me back here. In the last 2 hours I've talked to people about music, life, technology, people politics, weather, boats, ships, food, and the love of life. This area has so much history and future to offer. The world is how you travel it. The world is how you see it. The world is how you feel it. The world is you.

Herne Bay reminds me of Alexandria, it makes me feel so emotional. I remember nice, beautiful days and beautiful memories. To all the seas and piers in the world: I love you!