

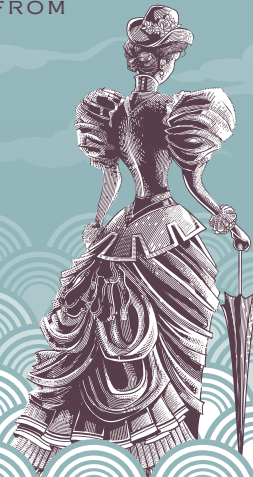
GRAND

MOMENTS

ESTABLISHED
1864

DISCOVER OUR GRAND MOMENTS FROM
1864 TO THE PRESENT DAY...

#GRANDMOMENTS





WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The Grand Brighton occupies the site of the old West Battery which was installed in 1793. It had several cannons pointing out to sea although these were never used for military defence. They would however be fired to salute during royal visits, which would each time shatter the windows of nearby buildings. The Battery was removed in 1858.



THE GRAND IS BORN

Described as a 'Palace By The Sea', the hotel was formally opened on the 21st July 1864 to great fanfare. It was a feat of Victorian architectural brilliance, masterfully designed by the celebrated architect John Whichcord Jr.

There was an enormous amount of materials used for the construction of the hotel including 3,500,000 bricks, 12,560 cubic feet of York and Portland stone, 450 tons of wrought and cast iron, 23,500 cubic feet of timber and 30 miles of flooring. The original hotel had 300 rooms and was the tallest building in Brighton. The building cost was documented to be around £100,000.



JOHN WHICHCORD

Within the hotel there are a couple of acknowledgements to John Whichcord Jnr Esq FSA, the much celebrated architect of The Grand. Firstly, the large painting hung in the Victoria Lounge and secondly, his face carved into the balustrade at the start of the Grand stairwell. See if you can find him! Our famous staircase remains a true focal point and has even featured in a Film4 advert, still aired to this day.



THE FIRST LIFTS OUTSIDE OF LONDON...

The Grand Brighton was the first hotel to install lifts outside of London, known as 'omnibuses' which went up to the fifth floor and were powered by huge water tanks situated on the seventh floor. The lifts were a huge source of interest and generated a great deal of attention to the hotel.



A ROYAL BABY

In 1933 a young Indian Prince, heir of one of the wealthiest areas of India, Khairpur State, and his wife enjoyed a long stay to the hotel, occupying the whole of the first floor. During their stay a new Indian prince was born. General Manager, Sidney Thomas Smith, was photographed here congratulating the Indian Prince on the birth of his son, with directors of Spiers and Ponds, who were the owners of The Grand Brighton at the time.

This was the second birth to occur in the hotel with the first being Lady Pamela Sydney Wilson in 1923, daughter of the General Manager.

1793

1864

1864

1933



WORLD WAR II

During WWII The Grand Brighton was requisitioned by the MOD for the war effort. The hotel closed its doors in May 1940 and was handed back in the autumn of 1945.

Airmen from Australia were billeted to the hotel and perhaps due to drunkenness, high spirits or simple resentment, caused widespread destruction and vandalism. During this time the stairwell was slung with heavy wire netting to stop soldiers throwing themselves or their 'mates' over the balustrades. Prior to this time a number were known to have fallen over 100 feet to their death. There is still evidence of the soldiers occupation with graffiti scratched into the original marble pillars dated 1943. See if you can find them.

1940



DAILY EXPRESS RALLY

Charles 'Doc' Hardman, shown in the Dellow vehicle with his wife Molly, was the first person to drive his vehicle up the front steps of The Grand Brighton. 'Doc' was the winner of the 1952 Daily Express Rally and the awards were famously hosted in The Grand Ballroom. He was in good company, with a young Stirling Moss in attendance!

1952



ABBA WIN THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

In 1974 the Eurovision Song Contest was held in Brighton after Luxembourg declined to stage the contest for two consecutive years. The night belonged to an unknown Swedish group called ABBA. The rest is history as they say.

ABBA graced the stage at The Brighton Dome with a rendition of Waterloo and were crowned the winners. Undoubtedly, it was a moment in their musical history that helped to catapult the group to worldwide fame. Following the contest, they headed back to The Grand to celebrate their success, they famously allowed the Swedish press access to their suite the following day. What a Grand moment indeed!

1974



QUADROPHENIA

One of the most iconic films of the 20th Century was filmed in and around Brighton. 'Quadrophenia' centres around Jimmy, a disillusioned young man in the midst of teenage angst and his looming self-destruction.

One of the films main protagonists, Jimmy's idol, 'Ace Face', played by the pop artist Sting, turns out to be an undistinguished bellboy working at The Grand Brighton. Sting's character is seen to park his Vespa GS in this position where it is stolen by the disgruntled Jimmy and driven off the cliffs at nearby Beachy Head.

1979



IRA BOMBING OF 1984

The Grand Brighton was catapulted into the global spotlight following an IRA bomb attack during a Conservative Party Conference. At 2.45am on 12th October 1984, a bomb detonated killing five people and injuring 34 others. Former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, was unharmed and playing true to her Iron Lady persona carried on with the conference, to schedule, the following day!

1984



ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES

Room 220 famously featured in this much loved British sitcom. The Christmas special, Mother Nature's Son, first broadcast on 25th December 1992, saw Del Boy and Rodney treating their significant others to a luxury Christmas break at The Grand Brighton, following the success of their extremely dubious venture of selling Peckham Spring Water.

Scenes include a smug Del Boy soaking up the sea views from their balcony, unaware of a water catastrophe occurring back in Peckham.

1992



TONY BLAIR LEARNED OF 9/11 AT THE HOTEL

Tony Blair was in residence at The Grand Brighton as Prime Minister on September 11, 2001, when two aircrafts struck the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York.

Tony Blair was working on his speech for the Trade Union Congress Conference alone in a room when No 10 contacted him to advise that he needed to watch the news.

After watching the live news footage, he immediately returned to his home in London and he was one of the first to comment live on television.

2001



FAT BOY SLIM BIG BEACH BOUTIQUE

On the 13th July 2002 Norman Cook, AKA Fat Boy Slim, held his first Big Beach Boutique. A quarter of a million people came to this unticketed event, filling the beach and blocking the seafront. Norman started at The Grand Brighton and continued the 'after party' in his suite on the first floor of the hotel.

2002



HALL OF FAME

The Empress Suite is one of the city's most sought after event spaces and has seen much more than just a light sprinkling of celebrity stardust over the years.

Famous performers include: Jessie J, The Saturdays, Elbow, Magician Dynamo, Rizzle Kicks and Sugababes.



THE GRAND
BRIGHTON