



Blackpool History

The Early Fylde

The earliest evidence of man in the Fylde, a plain situated between the Wyre and Ribble extending from the Irish Sea eastwards to the foothills of the Pennines and once an area of oak forests and impassable bogs, was provided by the discovery in 1970 of the Highfurlong Elk on a site opposite the Blackpool Sixth Form College. Barbed arrowheads found with its skeleton proved that it had been hunted by man over 11,000 years ago. Later, the Fylde was inhabited by a British tribe, the Brigantes. From about AD 80, they were controlled by the Romans from a fort at Dowbridge, Kirkham. Roman coin hoards were found at Rossall in 1840 and at Hackinsall in 1926.

Many of the Fylde's villages are listed in the Domesday survey of 1086. Their names show many of them to have been originally Anglo-Saxon settlements. However, there are also examples of Scandinavian place-names in the Fylde, evidence for an influx of Vikings via the Isle of Man in the 9th. & 10th. centuries. The migration seems to have been relatively peaceful and these Vikings appear to have settled alongside the Anglo-Saxons, as evidenced by the later coupling of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian place-names, as in Layton-cum-Warbreck and Bispham-with-Norbreck. These two townships taken together form the parish of Bispham.

From the 12th century, Layton was controlled by the Butlers, Barons of Warrington. In 1257 Henry III granted to William le Botiller (Butler) an annual fair (29 Nov. —1 Dec.) and a weekly market (Wednesday) in Layton. This was the earliest grant of a market in the Fylde. Later the Butlers built a manor house for minor family members, close to the present day Hollywood Avenue in Layton.

Blackpool emerged in medieval times as a few coastal farmsteads within Layton-with-Warbreck. It took its name from "le pull", a stream draining Marton Mere and Marton Moss into the sea near the present day Manchester Square. The peat lands through which the stream ran had the effect of discolouring the water, hence the name Black Poole — by 1750 a dyke had been cut through to the River Wyre and the Mere, formerly about 2 miles long, was reduced to about half a mile in length. The original stream, Spen Dyke, was culverted along Rigby Road in the mid-19th century.

In the 14th century the small settlement at Blackpool was called simply "Pul" and a map of 1532 refers to it as "the pole howsys alias the north howsys". In 1602 entries in the Bispham parish baptismal register mention both "Poole" and, for the first time, "blackpoole". Towards the end of the century Edward Tyldesley, the squire of Myerscough and son of the Royalist Sir Thomas Tyldesley, built Foxhall, giving Blackpool its first house of any substance.

Stretching south from Spen Dyke to the boundary with Lytham (Division Lane) was a tract of common, comprised mainly of sand hills along the coast, known as Layton Hawes. Following an Act of Parliament in 1767, it was enclosed, plots of land being allocated to landowners in the townships of Bispham, Layton, Great Marton and Little Marton in proportion to the amount of land held in those places. The Act also stipulated the laying-out of the long straight main roads in the area (e.g. Lytham Road, St. Annes Road and Highfield Road).

The First Visitors

The healthy attributes of the Irish Sea coast first drew visitors to Blackpool. Friends of the Tyldesleys were among the first and their main activity would have been horse riding on the beach. In 1745 it is recorded that Elizabeth Byrom and her brother, Edward, spent a day riding on the sands at Blackpool and Lytham. In 1754, while staying overnight at Poulton, Bishop Pococke mentioned in his diary that "at Blackpool, near the sea, there are accommodations for people who come to bathe". Such people undoubtedly stayed at local inns and four Blackpool innkeepers, John Forshaw, Thomas Gaulter, John Hebson and Richard Hodgkinson, are listed in the 1755 Ale House Recognizance Roll. Thornber mentions that Edward Whiteside was the first to have a habitation fitted up for the reception of company. This was at Fumblers Hill, near the present Cocker Square, which had the advantage of a supply of water from a well.

By the late 1780s the watering place could boast four substantial hotels catering for well-to-do visitors: Bailey's (now the Metropole), Forshaw's (now Clifton Arms), Hudson's (on the site of Woolworths formerly Lewis's) and Hull's (on the site of Pricebuster's Promenade store). In addition, accommodation was offered at Bonny's, (King Edward VII, Chapel Street), Elston's (later the York Hotel), the Gynn, and in houses throughout the area.

In 1788 William Hutton, a businessman and writer from the Midlands, visited Blackpool and described the town as he saw it: "The sea coast at Blackpool forms a straight line for many miles. The bank or cliff, which is clay, rises various heights, from three feet to sixty above high water mark. Although about fifty houses grace the sea-bank, it does not merit the name of a village, because they are scattered to the extent of a mile. About six of these make a figure, front the sea with an aspect exactly west, and are appropriated for the reception of company: the others are the dwellings of the inhabitants, which chiefly form the background. In some of these are lodged the inferior class, whose sole motive for visiting this airy region is health". Hutton described, in some detail, the recreations enjoyed by visitors in the 1780s – the rich rode in carriages or on horseback along the sands while poorer visitors "find equal pleasure in using their feet". Of the six yards wide promenade, – a two hundred yard length of grass – he said: "A perpetual assemblage of company, when the weather permits, may be seen upon this elegant little walk".

There were bowling greens and facilities for archery, and also "a place dignified with the name of The Theatre; if that will bear the name which, during nine months in the year, is only the threshing floor of a barn". But of course Blackpool's principal attraction was the sea, with sea bathing and drinking of seawater being a national craze at the time. A bell was rung when it was time for the ladies to bathe, and any gentleman found on the shore was fined a bottle of wine.

The "Father of Blackpool"

At the turn of the nineteenth century the development of the resort came close to stagnation through the inaction of the principal landowners. The situation was transformed by Henry Banks, often considered to be the "Father of Blackpool", who in 1819 completed his purchase of the Lane Ends estate, including the Lane Ends Hotel (formerly bottom of Church Street) of which he had been landlord since 1801. He soon built the first holiday cottages, and in 1837, his son-in-law Dr. John Cocker, built Blackpool's first assembly rooms. This was the Victoria Promenade, which included six shop units below. The bulk of the building still stands at the north-west corner of Victoria Street and Bank Hey Street.

The Coming of the Railways

In the early years travel to Blackpool involved much discomfort, taking two days for the journey from Yorkshire and a day from Manchester. The situation was transformed in 1840 when the Preston and Wyre Railway was built to serve Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood's proposed elegant port and watering place at the mouth of the Wyre. However, the development of Fleetwood soon ground to a halt through lack of capital, and the railway, on the verge of collapse was only saved by cheap excursion trains from industrial Lancashire — many trippers travelled to Blackpool from Poulton station by horse-bus or wagonette. The railway reached Blackpool with the opening of Talbot Road station on the 29th April 1846, but the resort was scarcely prepared for the thousands of visitors from Lancashire and Yorkshire who could now reach it with comparative ease.

When, after much previous local opposition, Layton with Warbrick (sic) was constituted a Local Board of Health District on the 23rd October 1851, the town consisted of little more than 420 dwellings, housing some 2,500 persons. Gas lighting was provided from 1852 onwards, at first by a private company for Bonny's estate, but piped water was not brought to the town until 1864 when the Fylde Waterworks Company (later the Fylde Water Board) completed its Grizedale Reservoir in the Pennines. The first stretch of sea defences from Talbot Square to Hounds Hill, lined with a post and rail fence and with a wooden bridge over the Lane Ends slade, was completed in 1856.

The mid-Victorian Resort

Even by the beginning of the 1860s, there was still very few forms of entertainment to be found in Blackpool. Uncle Tom's Cabin, perched on the crumbling cliffs to the north of the town, had begun to provide refreshments, music and dancing. But it reached its zenith later in the century, by which time it was threatened by erosion of the cliffs. What remained of the building was demolished in 1908. Blackpool got its first pier, the North Pier, designed by Eugenius Birch and built of cast iron on screwed piles, in 1863 — it soon became an exclusive promenade for "quality" visitors and the pier is now a Listed Building.

In 1867 the Prince of Wales Arcade opened (now the site of the Tower), and the following year saw the Talbot Road Assembly Rooms and Theatre Royal (Yates's Wine Lodge and Addison's night club) and the South Jetty added to the list of attractions. The last, now the Central Pier, was not well patronised until 1870 when Robert Bickerstaffe introduced open-air dancing for the "working classes" — in the same year a new Promenade, with a sloping sea wall, was completed from South Shore to Claremont Park (just north of the Metropole hotel).

In 1872, extensive pleasure gardens were opened at Raikes Hall, to the east of the town. Within a few years they boasted a lake, racecourse, football and cricket ground, skating rink, aviary, monkey house, ballroom, theatre, switchback and many other attractions. By the end of the century, the gardens were unable to compete with attractions nearer the sea and were sold off for building in 1901. In 1872, Dr. W. H. Cocker had bought the Prince of Wales arcade and turned it into a private aquarium and menagerie. In 1875 he opened it to the public. Part of its south wing survives in the Tower's aquarium. On the plot to the north, the Prince of Wales Theatre was opened in 1877, to which swimming baths were added in 1881.

The resort was still seen to be lacking in indoor facilities, so the Winter Gardens Co. was formed in 1875 to build an indoor Promenade and Pavilion. It was opened with great ceremony on the 11 July 1878. It had forced the rival North Pier Company to build its Indian Pavilion at the seaward end of the pier (1877). The existing rail link could not cater for all trippers wishing to visit Blackpool, so the single-line coastal railway, opened in 1863 to run between Lytham and Blackpool Central, was rebuilt as a double-track and linked with the Kirkham to Lytham line. Central Station (now Coral Island) soon became the town's principal terminus.

Blackpool Borough Created

Having almost doubled its population in the previous decade, the town was granted a Charter of Incorporation as a Borough on the 21st January 1876. Dr. William Henry Cocker, son of Dr. John Cocker and grandson of Henry Banks, became the first mayor. Whilst the 1877 season saw the opening of the Borough Theatre (later Feldman's and the Queen's, now the C & A department store), the following years saw the resort in the midst of a depression which threatened the future of the whole town.

The Council tried to find a saviour for the 1879 season, and decided to hold a grand fete and carnival on the beach between the two piers to publicise the installation of its pioneering electric-arc street lighting. This event featured a "Naval Attack on Blackpool" which was watched by up to 100,000 people from the Promenade, piers and ships. Blackpool was now catering ever more for the working classes of Lancashire and Yorkshire, rather than for the gentry.

The increasing popularity of the resort forced the Council to examine various transport systems to supplement the town's horse-buses and landaus. An electric railway, a novelty set up in the grounds of the Winter Gardens, led the Council to Michael Holroyd Smith and his conduit system of electric tramway operation. The country's first permanent electric street tramway opened on the 29th September 1885 and ran from Cocker Street to South Shore.

The Entertainment Boom

In the 1890s it was estimated that Blackpool's 7,000 dwellings could accommodate 250,000 holidaymakers as well as the permanent population of 35,000. These visitors required entertaining, and the period saw the development of many of the resort's famous attractions. In 1889 the original Opera House was built in the Winter Gardens complex, and two years later a start was made on Blackpool Tower. The tower and buildings, which included a circus and ballroom, opened at Whitsuntide 1894.

In 1893 Victoria Pier (now South Pier) opened and, the following year, the impresario Thomas Sergenson opened his Grand Theatre in Church Street. With the tremendous success of the Tower, the Winter Gardens looked for a new feature to act as a counter-attraction and in 1896 the "Gigantic Wheel" was erected at the corner of Adelaide Street and Coronation Street. However the 220 feet high wheel, with each of its 30 carriages holding 30 or more passengers, was never a great success — it made its last trip on 20th October 1928 and shortly afterwards was demolished.

The stock of theatres was increased by the construction of the Empire (later the Hippodrome and now the ABC Cinema) in 1895. In 1896, the Winter Gardens had also opened its huge Empress Ballroom and adjacent Indian Lounge. The Tower Company responded by rebuilding its own pavilion as the famous Tower Ballroom, designed by Frank Matcham and opened in 1899. The same year, the Alhambra opened on the site of the Prince of Wales theatre (now Woolworth's). This latter development was a financial disaster and, taken over by the Tower Company, it reopened as the Palace in 1904.

In 1897 the development of the Golden Mile began when the Corporation banned stalls from the beach and the traders moved into the gardens of houses on the Promenade. 1899 saw the completion of a three-tier Promenade and a sea wall between Carleton Terrace (Cocker Square) and the Gynn at a cost of £144,716.

Into the Twentieth Century

The turn of the century saw a transformation in the town's transport system. In September 1892 the tramway was taken over by the Corporation. In 1895 it was extended inland along Lytham Road and later connected with the system operated by the Blackpool, St Annes and Lytham Tramway Company Limited. The private Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramroad, running eight miles between Talbot Road Station and Fleetwood Ferry, was opened in July 1898 and soon showed the advantage of the overhead system of power collection. This system was adopted along existing Corporation routes in 1899, on the coastal extension to the Gynn (1900), around Marton (Church Street, Whitegate Drive and Waterloo Road, 1901) and to Layton (1901). In later years the Corporation took over the Fleetwood Tramroad (1920) and built the extension to Starr Gate (1926).

The 1960s saw the Promenade route left as the only commercial electric tramway in the country when the routes along Lytham Road (1961) and around Marton (1962) were replaced by bus services — the link between North Station and the Gynn along Dickson Road closed in 1963.

Blackpool was constituted a County Borough on the 1 October 1904, a dignity it retained until the reorganisation of local government on the 1 April 1974. The years 1902 to 1905 saw the building of the present Promenade between the North and South Piers, a project that involved reclaiming some 22 acres

from the sea. About the same time, the foundations for the Pleasure Beach were laid as the first substantial features were erected in the sand dunes beyond South Shore, for many years the home of gypsies and fairground artists. One of the very first rides, Sir Hiram Maxim's Captive Flying machine (1904), remains today though in somewhat different guise, but over the years many additional attractions have been added to create the present forty acre fun park. Rail traffic to the resort was so heavy that the existing stations at Talbot Road and Central were rebuilt in 1898 and 1900, and a new direct route opened from Kirkham to South Shore in 1903.

Blackpool, ever eager to encourage new developments, held its first motor speed trials on the new Promenade in October 1904 and in October 1909 it staged one of the first aviation meetings in the world, attracting many famous aviators.

The first illuminated trams had been seen in Blackpool as part of the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, but static illuminations were first erected in 1912, when, on the 2nd May, Princess Louise opened the Princess Parade. The illuminations were well received, so were revived in late summer. A more ambitious display was produced the following year, a season that broke all records. The Great War forced the termination of the 1914 display and they were not seen again until 1925. They were again discontinued between 1939 and 1948, but in 1949, when fuel restrictions were relaxed, the illuminations were revived and are now one of the town's great attractions.

The war years from 1914 to 1918 saw 14,000 troops billeted in the town and a major convalescent hospital on land now part of the airport at Squires Gate, but with many South and East Coast resorts closed, additional visitors were attracted to Blackpool.

Between the Wars

The inter-war period was marked by many municipal schemes and developments. In 1923 the world's largest open-air baths opened at South Shore. To the south of it the new South Promenade to Starr Gate, 400ft to the west of the old beach, was completed in 1926. The same year saw the official opening of Stanley Park, beyond which a municipal aerodrome was built in 1929. In 1925 the Colonnades were completed at North Shore as far as the Gynn and, beyond, the cliffs were faced with artificial rockery. By 1937, Blackpool's sea defences, promenades and shelters extended from its boundary with Cleveleys in the north to Squires Gate in the south.

In the late 1920s, new bridges were built at Squires Gate, Harrowside and Layton. Devonshire Road was extended as far as Bispham and then beyond to Anchorsholme. The 1930s saw the building of the Technical College on Palatine Road, Stanley Park Café, Harrowside Solarium, new municipal buildings, Talbot Road Bus Station and the prestigious Derby Baths. Several new schools, libraries and clinics were also built. J. C. Robinson, who was the borough architect from 1920 to 1944, undertook the design of these schemes. A comprehensive rebuilding of the Central Railway Station in 1939, which would have resulted in a new civic centre, was only stopped by the war.

In the private sector, 1928 saw the merging of the Tower Company and the Winter Gardens. This resulted in the immediate demolition of the Big Wheel, the Olympia complex being erected on its site. Between 1933 and 1939 the Pleasure Beach was transformed by the modern architecture of Joseph Emberton. In 1939 the Odeon and the new Opera House opened, respectively Britain's largest cinema and theatre.

At the commencement of the Second World War, Blackpool received 37,500 evacuees and 1,700 civil servants. Most of the former went home within a few months to be replaced by the first of 769,673 airmen to be given their initial training at the Winter Gardens, the heart of RAF Blackpool — evening entertainments carried on as usual. Wellington bombers were assembled in a new Vickers-Armstrong factory at Squires Gate, later used for the manufacture of prefabricated houses, Hunter jets, and now a trading estate. Wartime aircraft construction at Squires Gate had led to its development by the Government, including its runways. The municipal aerodrome east of Stanley Park had ceased to serve a useful role by 1939, Squires Gate then being favoured by the airlines. In 1962 Squires Gate airport was purchased by Blackpool Corporation.

Blackpool Today

In 1955 the boundaries of the Borough were extended to include a small part of the urban District of Poulton-le-Fylde. As a result of this and earlier extensions in 1879, 1917, 1920 and 1934, the area of the Borough has increased from 2,358 acres in 1876 to 8,650 acres of land and 2,068 acres of foreshore and tidal water today. The population of Blackpool rose slowly from 473 in 1801 to 3,707 in 1861, reached 47,348 by 1901 and 101,553 by 1931, and has now steadied at around 145,000 (145,776 in 1981). A feature the Fylde shares with many coastal resorts is the high proportion of elderly people in this population, 27.8% as compared with 18.9% in Great Britain as a whole, showing the continuing attraction of the seaside to people of retirement age.

The principal role of the town continues to be that of a holiday resort, with the tourist industry thought to employ 12,500 people in activities directly associated with the trade. In 1989 a national survey found that 4,190,000 holidaymakers stayed in the resort, and 12,590,000 people came on day or evening trips — these

visitors are thought to have spent over £445 million in the town in 1989. Over the past twenty years the pattern of holidays has changed, with an increasing emphasis on self-catering accommodation (now forming 25.5% of the town's stock of hotels, guesthouses and holiday flat premises), and on day trips and short breaks throughout the extended season.

While the traditional areas of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland still provide the bulk of the visitors, strenuous efforts are now being made to attract foreign visitors, to whom the fine shopping centre is a major attraction. The variety of accommodation available in the town makes it particularly suitable for conferences, festivals and trade fairs, with exhibition and conference facilities available in the Winter Gardens, at the Norbreck Castle's Norcalympia, and in various hotels throughout the town.

Blackpool continues to develop new facilities for the visitor with reconstruction in the town centre and the Tower Buildings, and major extensions and continuous rebuilding of the Pleasure Beach. Indoor amusement centres have replaced much of the Golden Mile, but although a number of theatres have closed, live shows and clubs remain a feature of the resort.

The replacement of the Palace Theatre by Woolworth's store and the Queen's Theatre by C & A, as well as the redevelopment of the Palatine Hotel site, are measures of Blackpool's continuing importance as a shopping centre.

In 1975 the Blackpool Civic Trust was formed. Despite the image often portrayed of the town by the media, the late 60's and early 70's saw a recognition that Blackpool had some fine buildings which required protection and areas which were worthy of conservation. The Civic Trust takes a very keen interest in planning proposals which have an impact on the town's built heritage but are also keen to see new development of a high standard of design. In recognition of the heritage of Blackpool, a town trail, linking historic buildings, has been designed by the Trust. The Trust is also keen to work with the Council in promoting design excellence and is working on a number of initiatives, such as a heritage trail for Stanley Park.

In 1980, the town's first indoor shopping centre, the Hounds Hill Centre opened on a three-acre site next to the entertainment area close to the Promenade. The centre has 40 shop units, and now the town can offer the visitor and resident over 1 million square feet of shopping space. The Corporation has actively pursued policies of pedestrianisation in the town's shopping streets for over 20 years, and has improved the shopping environment by making most of the principal shopping streets traffic-free.

In 1984 the Council designated the first two Conservation Areas at Stanley Park and Talbot Square. Since that time, the park has now been placed on the national register of historic parks and gardens indicating its historic interest.

Outside the service trades, Blackpool provides employment in a variety of light-engineering industries and also in the manufacture of biscuits and confectionery. A number of Government departments including the Departments of Social Security and National Savings have offices on the Fylde Coast.

Since the last war, there has been a marked shift from rail to road transport. Central Station closed in 1964 allowing space for the development of the Coral Island entertainment centre and releasing extensive areas for car and coach parking. In 1975, the M55 opened from the M6 to the Borough boundary, making it even easier to reach Blackpool by road. In 1983, Phase 1 of the Squires Gate Link Road opened, and phase 2 having been completed in 1995, it provides a direct link between the Motorway and the Airport. In January 1986, the two mile long Yeadon Way opened, utilising the railway embankment that carried the former Kirkham-Blackpool direct line. Yeadon Way provides a direct link from the M55 for visitors into the extensive car parking facilities situated on former railway land in South Shore, which can accommodate 6,000 cars. The rebuilt Blackpool North Station is now the principal terminus in the town, with Blackpool South returning to the branch line status it had in the early days. The new Pleasure Beach Railway Station opened in April 1987 to serve Britain's premier tourist attraction.

Other new facilities for the Visitor include the Sandcastle Leisure Centre complex which opened in June 1986 on the site of the former open air baths, the Big Wheel on Central pier and a Sea Life Centre which opened in August 1990.

While catering for the visitor in terms of accommodation and entertainment will continue to dominate the economy of Blackpool, the town is growing in stature as a regional shopping centre, and is now ranked third in the shopping hierarchy of the North West. Blackpool is also actively continuing to promote itself as a town for industrial expansion, and it is hoped that in this way the economy of the town will remain buoyant in the years to come.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The list below includes only the principal references and books on Blackpool obtainable in local libraries and at bookshops. More detailed bibliographies have been prepared by Blackpool District Library of books available for study at the Reference Library, Queen Street, where a rich collection of photographs, maps and pamphlets may also be consulted during normal opening hours.

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**A DIARY OF EVENTS IN
BLACKPOOL'S HISOTRY**

- c.80AD The Romans built a fort at Kirkham and controlled the inhabitants of the Fylde, the Brigantes.
- 1087 The local villages Bispham, Layton, Marton, Carleton, and Staining mentioned in the Domesday Book, along with Rossall, Thornton, Poulton and Lytham.
- 1257 William le Botiller (Butler) granted an annual fair (29 Nov.—1 Dec.) and a weekly market (Wednesday in Layton, of which he held the Manorial rights. The township included “le Pull”, a stream which drained Marton Mere and Marton Moss, reaching the sea near the present Manchester Square. The areas of peat through which it flowed gave it a dark colour and it eventually became known as the “black poole”.
- 1332 The first written mention of “Poole” as a settlement as opposed to a geographical feature.
- 1532 “The Houndehill in Laton” mentioned in a court case.
- 1602 Bispham Parish Baptismal Register mentions “Poole” and “Blackpoole” for the first time.
- c.1680 Edward Tyldesley of Myerscough built Foxhall as a coastal retreat.
- 1731/41 Marton Mere partially drained and no longer turned the water mill at Great Marton (near Rectory Road).
- c.1750 The thatched cottage of “Ethart a Whiteside” (Edward Whiteside) at Fumblers Hill (Cocker Square area), was “fitted up for the reception of company”.
- 1754 Bishop Pococke recorded that at Blackpool there were accommodations for people who come to bathe.
- 1755 Four registered alehouses in Blackpool and two in Layton.
- 1769 Layton Hawes, the large tract of common stretching from Manchester Square to Division Lane, enclosed and plots of land allocated to the land-owners of Bispham, Layton and Great and Little Marton.
Its principal roads were laid out.
- c.1790 There were four substantial hotels in the resort. Bailey’s (now the Metropole), Forshaw’s (now the Clifton Arms), Hudson’s (on the site formerly occupied by Lewis’s), and Hull’s (where Pricebusters stands). Accommodation was also available at Fox Hall, Bonny’s (site of King Edward VII on Central Drive) and the Gynn Inn.
- 1801 The population of the town stood at 473.
- 1810 Henry Banks, known as the father of Blackpool, obtained the Lane Ends Estate, which included the Lane Ends Hotel at the west end of Church Street.
- 1817 National Schools (St. John’s) built at Raikes Hill.
- 1819 The first houses at South Shore built by Thomas Moore.
- 1821 6 July. St. John’s church consecrated, at this time a chapel of ease from Bispham.
- 1835 First Central Methodist chapel opened at Hounds Hill.
- 1836 West Hey House built as a summer residence for the Manchester banker, Sir Benjamin Heywood. It became the site of the Tower.
- 1837 24 May. Blackpool’s first assembly rooms, Victoria Promenade, opened at the north east corner of Bank Hey Street and Victoria Street.
- 1838 Little Marton Mill constructed.
- 1840 15 July. Preston and Wyre railway opened to serve Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood’s proposed “elegant port and watering place” at the mouth of the Wyre.

- 1842 Thomas Clifton, Squire of Lytham, bought the manorial rights of Layton from Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood for £495.
- 1843 Thomas Clifton acquired a large portion of the Forshaw Estate and began to develop Talbot Road.
- 1844 July. The first St. John's Market, Market Street, opened on the site of the Municipal Buildings.
- 1846 29 April. Railway branch line opened from Poulton to Talbot Road Station.
Bank Hey House built on the site of the Winter Gardens.
- 1849 Congregational Church, Victoria Street, built.
- 1851 23 October. Layton with Warbrick (which includes Blackpool) constituted a Local Board of Health to run its affairs. The township then consisted of 420 dwellings and 2,500 persons.
Wellington Hotel built on the site of the local pinfold by Robert Bickerstaffe.
- 1852 Gas lighting provided by private company.
- 1854 Local Board's own gasworks opened in Princess Street.
- 1856 New promenade opened between Bailey's Hotel and Hound's Hill. It included rudimentary sea defences and the wooden "Bridge of Peace" over the Lane Ends slade.
- 1857 The Church of the Sacred Heart, designed by E. W. Pugin, opened on Talbot Road as Blackpool's first Roman Catholic church.
- 1860 St. John's church assigned a separate parish (formerly under Bispham).
- 1861 The population of the town stood at 3,707.
4 September. Read's Market and Baths opened on South Beach (later site of Luna Park and present Sea Life Centre).
- 1862 Police Station and Court opened in Abingdon Street.
- 1863 21 May. North Pier, designed by Eugenius Birch, opened.
4 April. Lytham to Blackpool Central railway line opened as a single track.
The development of the coastal area between Cocker Square and the Gynn as Claremont Park, an exclusive estate of houses and hotels, begun by the Land, Building and Hotel Company.
- 1864 20 July. Blackpool got its first lifeboat, the Robert William.
21 July. The first piped water supplied to Blackpool by the Fylde Waterworks Company (later the Fylde Water Board) following the completion of the Grizedale reservoir in the Pennines.
The Lane Ends Hotel demolished and rebuilt.
- 1866 3 May. Christ Church opened (site of Jobcentre, Queen Street.)
- 1867 July. The Prince of Wales Arcade opened (now the Tower site).
Imperial Hotel opened.
- 1868 The Talbot Road Assembly Rooms and Theatre Royal opened (now Yates's and Addison's).
30 May. South Jetty opened (now Central Pier) without ceremony.
1 July. The Layton with Warbrick Board of Health renamed the Blackpool Board of Health.
- 1869 21 April. Charles Dickens stayed at the Imperial Hotel.
- 1870 18 April. Opening ceremony of New Promenade and sea defences from South Shore to Carleton Terrace, along with a cast iron drinking fountain in Talbot Square.

- 14 July. Bob Bickerstaffe appointed manager of Central pier. He introduced open-air dancing to a German band to cater for popular taste.
- 1872 Extensive pleasure gardens opened at Raikes Hall.
- July. Dr. William Henry Cocker (son of Dr. John Cocker) bought the Prince of Wales Arcade.
- 26 August. Dr. Cocker's Blackpool Seawater Company registered.
- 1873 14 February. The first internment at Layton Cemetery.
- 31 May. St. John's graveyard closed.
- July. Cocker Street Baths refitted and opened by Jonathan Read.
- 1874 17 May. Dr. Cocker's aquarium and menagerie opened to the public.
- 1875 18 August. Bank Hey House purchased from Dr. Cocker by the newly formed Blackpool Winter Gardens Company.
- 1876 21 January. Blackpool granted a Charter of Incorporation as a Borough. Dr. W. H. Cocker became its first Mayor.
- 27 July. Outdoor roller skating rink opened at the Winter Gardens.
- 1877 July/August. Indian Pavilion opened on the north wing of North Pier.
- 20 August. Prince of Wales Theatre opened.
- September. The Borough Theatre opened (later Bannister's Bazaar, Feldman's Theatre, then the Queen's and now C &A).
- 1877/78 The Lytham rail link extended to Kirkham and a double track constructed.
- 1878 11 July. Grand opening of the Winter Gardens with a parade of the mayors of many towns.
- Fire Station opened in the Town's Yard off Sefton Street.
- 1879 Grand Fete and sea Carnival between the piers, to publicise the installation of the first electric arc street lighting (watched by 100,000 people).
- Blackpool extended to include parts of Marton.
- 1880 26 February. Famous rescue of the crew of the *Bessie Jones* by the Blackpool lifeboat led by coxswain Bob Bickerstaffe.
- 18 June. Blackpool's first free public library opened in the Octagon Room of the Talbot Road Assembly Rooms.
- 1881 Prince of Wales Baths opened next to the theatre.
- 1882 28 August. Sarah Bernhardt's disastrous performance at the Winter Gardens Pavilion.
- 1883 11 December. Oscar Wilde lectured on "The house Beautiful" at the Theatre Royal.
- 1885 29 September. The country's first permanent electric street tramway between Cocker Street and Dean Street, South Shore.
- 1887 21 November. Bill Holland arrived to take up the post of manager of the Winter Gardens.
- 1889 10 June. The first Opera House opened at the Winter Gardens.
- 11 July. Ohmy's Circus opened in a wooden building on the site of the Grand Theatre.
- 1890 7 July. The Grand Circus opened in the partially built Grand Theatre.
- 1891 7 July. Blackpool Sanatorium opened in New Road (Talbot Road).
- 25 September. Foundation stone of the Tower laid by Sir Matthew White Ridley, M.P.

- 1892 The Corporation takes over the tramway system.
- 9 October. Norwegian barque, *The Sirene*, wrecked against North Pier destroying shops.
- 5 December. New General Post Office opened in Coronation Street.
- 1893 Victoria Pier opened (now South Pier).
- 5 June. New Police Station and Courts opened in South King Street.
- 5 August. Athletics Grounds at Whitegate Park (site of present cricket club) opened.
- 28 September. Completion of the Tower's construction. Work continued on the building at its base.
- 2 October. Original St. John's Market building pulled down.
- 13 October. Electric Fete to mark the inauguration of the Corporation's Electricity Works in South Caroline Street by Lord Kelvin. Electricity supplied for street lighting and for premises.
- 15 December. Death of Samuel Laycock, the famous dialect poet.
- 1894 20 February. Blackpool Golf Club formed.
- 14 May. The Tower opened (Whit Monday).
- 23 July. Thomas Sergenson's Grand Theatre opened by Wilson Barrett.
- 20 August. The first Victoria Hospital on Whitegate Drive opened.
- 1895 26 September. Tramway extended along Lytham Road to Station Road.
- 4 July. Empire Theatre opened (later the Hippodrome and rebuilt as the ABC).
- Work began on the new Town Hall.
- 1896 8 April. Talbot Road Assembly Rooms and Theatre Royal acquired by Yates's
- June. First demonstration of moving pictures in Blackpool using the Lumière Brothers' Cinematograph at the Prince of Wales Theatre.
- August. Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens, opened informally.
- 22 August. Gigantic Wheel opened on the corner of Adelaide Street and Coronation Street.
- 1897 January. Work begun on the development of Bailey's Hotel into the Hotel Metropole.
- January. Work begun on the new Victoria Street entrance (Fernery) to the Winter Gardens.
- 2 March. The development of the Golden Mile precipitated by the Corporation banning stalls from the beach, only for traders to move into gardens along the Promenade.
- April. Talbot Road Station buildings demolished for rebuilding.
- 16 June. Nelson's one time flagship, *The Foudroyant*, driven ashore at Blackpool in a storm. The crew rescued by the Blackpool lifeboat.
- 22 June. Trams illuminated for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
- 22 July. The top of Blackpool Tower burnt out by fire caused by electrical fault.
- 1898 4 January. First meeting of the Town Council in the new but incomplete Town Hall (held in Committee Room A).
- 14 July. The Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad opened between Talbot Road Station and Fleetwood.

- Talbot Road railway station rebuilt.
- 1899 May. Tower Ballroom, designed by Frank Matcham, opened.
- 3 July. Alhambra Theatre opened on the site of the Prince of Wales Theatre (now occupied by Woolworth's).
- New three-tier Promenade and sea wall completed between Carleton Terrace and Gynn Square at a cost of £144,716.
- Overhead electrical system adopted on the Tramways.
- 9 December. Messrs. Bickerstaffe's store opened on Foxhall Road.
- 1900 Central railway station rebuilt. Tramway extended to the Gynn.
- 14 May. Tower Circus re-opened after refurbishment to the design of Matcham.
- 25 May. Tramway through Claremont Park opened.
- 26 May. The clock on the new Town Hall formally started.
- 1901 23 May. Marton Tram route opened.
- 18 June. Tramway extended from Talbot Square along New Road to Layton Cemetery.
- November. Much of Raikes Hall Gardens sold for building land.
- The population of the town stood at 47,348.
- 1902 March. Work begins at South Shore on the construction of the present Promenade between North and South Piers.
- 1903 New pavilions added to the landward ends of North and Central Piers.
- May. New direct railway from Kirkham to South Shore Station opened.
- 26 October. New Fire Station on Albert Road formally opened.
- 1904 January. The old entrance of Raikes Hall Gardens demolished.
- 4 July. The Alhambra re-opened as the Palace by its new owners, the Tower Company.
- 1 August. Sir Hiram Maxim's Captive Flying Machine opened on the newly created Pleasure Beach, formerly a fairground traditionally occupied by gypsies.
- 1 October. Blackpool made a County Borough. Statue of Queen Victoria unveiled in the Town Hall.
- 14 October. Motor speed trials held along the new Promenade at South Shore.
- 1905 23 April. Blackpool's first fatal motor accident.
- June. The River Caves opened on Blackpool Pleasure Beach.
- 25 July. Official opening of the new Promenade. 22 acres reclaimed from the sea.
- 1906 21 February. Blackpool Secondary School formally opened (later the Boys Grammar School and now the Salvation Army Citadel).
- 4 October. New Fylde Water Board offices opened in Sefton Street.
- 1907 10 May. New Skew Bridge on Lytham Road opened.
- 25 June. Opening of the Scenic Railway on Blackpool Pleasure Beach.
- 9 August. The arrival 16 ships of the Channel Fleet off Blackpool. Civic events ruined by bad weather.

- 1908 9 January. The demolition of old Uncle Tom's Cabin completed. It was being affected by erosion of the cliffs.
- 30 July. E. H. Booth's shop and café opened on the Promenade (formerly on Market Street).
- 1909 Roller skating craze. Several rinks opened.
- 19 April. Cocker Street Baths bought by the Corporation.
- 18-23 October. The country's first successful Flying meeting held at Squires Gate.
- December. The Grand Theatre bought by the Tower Company for £47,000.
- 1910 February. The Council evicted the Gypsies from the Pleasure Beach.
- 10 March. A museum opened at Revoe Library.
- August. 3 week long Flying Carnival held at Squires Gate.
- 8 November. Abingdon Street General Post Office opened for business.
- 1911 14 April. Death of William Henry Cocker, Blackpool's first mayor.
- 5 June. Re-modelled Opera House opened at the Winter Gardens.
- 1 August. The first race took place at the new Clifton Park Racecourse, Squires Gate.
- 26 October. Carnegie Library and the Grundy Art Gallery opened in Queen Street.
- 1912 2 May. The opening of Princess Parade by Princess Louise. The resort's first illuminations mounted for the occasion.
- 8 September. Blackpool's first Autumn Illuminations switched on.
- 1913 The first Casino building opened on the Pleasure Beach.
- Central Beach Cinema and Redman's Café (later the Huntsman) opened in an imposing neo-classical building.
- 1914 World War I — 14,000 troops billeted in the town.
- 19 October. Illuminations curtailed by the Great War.
- 1915 5 February. 2,000 Belgian refugees arrive in Blackpool.
- March. The Savoy Hydro opened at North Shore.
- Sunken Gardens along the cliffs at the Gynn completed.
- October. The first patients arrived at the King's Lancashire Military Convalescent Hospital at Squires Gate, which became the largest in Great Britain.
- 1916 25 January. Synagogue opened on Leamington Road by Lord Rothschild.
- 1919 7 March. Belgian refugees leave Blackpool to return home.
- Three large municipal housing schemes announced. "Garden Cities" to be built around Condor Grove (St. John's), Counce Street and St. Annes Road/Watson's Road.
- 1920 1 January. The Corporation took over the Fleetwood Tramroad.
- 1921 August. The old Gynn Inn demolished for road improvements.
- 11 September. Indian Pavilion, North Pier, destroyed by fire.
- 1923 9 June. Blackpool Carnival week began, with the opening of South Shore Open-air Baths.
- July. The Big Dipper opened at the Pleasure Beach.

- 10 November. War Memorial unveiled by Brigadier General Topping.
- 1924 11-21 June. 2nd Blackpool Carnival. Marred by hooliganism.
- 1925 Colonnades from Cocker Square to the Gynn completed.
- Autumn illuminations revived as an alternative to annual carnivals. The display extended from the Gynn to South Shore.
- 1926 2 October. Formal opening by the Earl of Derby of Stanley Park and the new South Promenade, South Shore, including an extension of the tramway to Starr Gate.
- 1927 28 June. The Miners' Convalescent Home, Bispham, opened by the Prince of Wales.
- 29 June. The Cocker Memorial Clock opened by Sir John Bickerstaffe.
- 1928 9 February. The Tower Company acquired the Winter Gardens.
- 20 October. Gigantic Wheel closed and demolished soon afterwards.
- 23 October. Girls' Secondary School (later Collegiate), Beech Avenue, officially opened.
- 1929 Harrowside Bridge built.
- 1930 Lift at North Shore Boating Pool completed.
- Autumn Illuminations extended to Bispham Cliffs.
- 1931 The population of the town stood at 101,553.
- 28 May. Opening of the Olympia Complex, including the Baronial & Spanish Halls and the Galleon Bar, at the Winter Gardens.
- 2 June. Blackpool's Municipal Aerodrome and Clubhouse at Stanley Park officially opened by the Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald.
- 14 September. Squires Gate Railway Station opened.
- 1932 10 June. Official opening of Layton (Crossley's) and Squires Gate Bridges.
- 2 July. Marton Branch Library, Waterloo Road, opened.
- 1933 June. Air Service to the Isle of Man and Liverpool from Squires Gate began.
- 1934 1 April. Parts of Carleton, Hardhorn, Staining and Marton amalgamated with Blackpool.
- The Fun House, designed by Joseph Emberton, opened on the Pleasure Beach.
- 15 September. The foundation stone of the Technical College, Palatine Road, laid by the Earl of Derby.
- 1935 18 July. Carleton Crematorium officially opened.
- 1936 7 October. Fire at Messrs. Boots and Municipal building. Some Corporation records destroyed.
- 19 October. Tram route to Layton Cemetery closed.
- 1937 Woolworth's super store next to the Tower completed.
- June. Squires Gate Holiday Camp opened by Gracie Fields.
- 9 June. Stanley Park Café officially opened by the Mayor.
- 17 July. Ice Drome opened on the Pleasure Beach.

- 21 October. Official openings by the Duke of Kent of the Promenade from Little Bispham to Cleveleys, the new Victoria Hospital at Whinney Heys and the new Lifeboat House near Central Pier.
- 22 November. The official opening of the Technical College by Baron Wigan.
- 1938 Co-op Emporium, Coronation Street, completed.
- 31 January. Sir Cuthbert Grundy made a freeman of Blackpool.
- 5 May. Official opening of Hawes Side and Bispham libraries and clinics.
- 28 May. St. John's Market opened.
- July. The foundation stone for Derby Baths laid at North Shore. It was to have been officially opened by Lord Derby in 1940. The war prevented this and the opening was performed in 1965 by his grandson Earl Derby upon completion of the adjacent Sauna Centre.
- 12 November. Corporation departments occupied new Municipal Buildings, Corporation Street, rebuilt after the fire in 1936.
- 1939 Talbot Road Bus Station completed in cream & green faience (re-faced in 1964).
- 9 January. Demolition of old St. John's Market and old property (B.H.S. site) begun.
- 6 May. Odeon Cinema opened.
- 26 May. New Casino by Emberton opened at the Pleasure Beach by Lord Stamp.
- 23 June. New theatre opened on North Pier (previous one burnt down in June 1938).
- July. Derby Baths opened.
- 14 July. New Opera House opened by Jessie Matthews and Sonny Hale.
- 23 October. RAF Station Blackpool officially opened. During the war a total of 769,673 RAF recruits received their initial training at Blackpool.
- 1940 Vickers Armstrong factory at Squires Gate built for the assembly of Wellington Bombers (later used for the manufacture of Hunter Jets and prefabricated homes and now a trading estate).
- 12 September. German bombs, aimed at North Station, fell on Seed Street, killing 8 and injuring 14.
- 1941 27 August. RAF "Botha" crashed on Central Station, killing 18 people.
- 1946 5 October. Sir Winston Churchill made a freeman of Blackpool at the Opera House.
- 1949 Autumn Illuminations resume.
- 1953 March. Neville Duke breaks the sound barrier over Blackpool in a Hawker Hunter jet.
- 2 May. Blackpool F.C. won the F.A. Cup Final against Bolton at Wembley.
- 1955 13 April. The Queen attends the first Royal Command Variety Performance to be held outside London at the Opera House.
- 1956 14 December. Tower Ballroom badly damaged by fire.
- 1957 9 May. British Home Stores opened on former market site.
- 1958 23 May. Restored Tower Ballroom and Lounge opened.
- 1961 14 October. The Palace closed. Demolished early the following year.
- 29 October. Lytham Road tram route closed.

- 1962 28 October. Marton tram route closed. Corporation buys Squires Gate airport from the Government.
- 1963 31 May. ABC Theatre opened
27 October. Dickson Road tram route closed.
- 1964 2 April. Lewis's store opened on the site of the Palace.
2 November. Central Railway Station closed.
- 1965 Locarno Ballroom and Top Rank Bowl opened in the new Mecca building, Central Drive.
10 November. Derby Baths remedial section opened.
- 1966 July. Town Hall's spire removed.
- 1967 7 May. R. H. O. Hill's store, Bank Hey Street, destroyed by fire.
November. Old property, on the Golden Mile including Luna Park, removed.
- 1968 January. Talbot Hotel demolished.
- 1969 Congregational Church, Victoria Street, demolished.
26 October. Reginald Dixon's farewell concert.
- 1971 The population of the town stood at 151,860. 29.4% of these are elderly (18.9% national average).
19 February. New Law Courts, Chapel Street, opened.
23 August. Chief Supt. Gerry Richardson shot dead following an attack on a jewellers.
- 1972 A national survey shows that 3,240,000 holidaymakers stayed in the town, 12,800,000 came on day or evening trips and a total of £70 million was spent locally.
6 July. Blackpool Zoo opened on the site of the old aerodrome at Stanley Park.
- 1973 Demolition of property at Hounds Hill – Central Methodist Church, Queen's Theatre and the New Inn,
9 May. Pedestrianisation of Bank Hey Street begun.
- 1974 January. Demolition of Central Station and the Palatine Hotel completed.
February. North Station demolished.
March. Cocker Street Baths demolished.
1 April. Local Government re-organisation meant that Blackpool was no longer a County Borough.
- 1975 16 March. Bridge over the Promenade from the new Palatine building constructed.
May. Old Fylde Water Board Offices, Sefton Street, demolished.
3 July. M55 Motorway link with the M6 opened.
- 1978 The Coral Island entertainment complex opened on the site of Central Station and the New Inn.
- 1979 21 August. The Revolution ride opened on the Pleasure Beach, the first modern 360° ride in Europe.
- 1980 17 February. Death of Charlie Cairoli.
29 August. Hounds Hill Shopping Centre opened by the Mayor, Colin Hanson.
- 1981 A 20 year programme got underway involving the strengthening, protection or replacement of coastal protection works. The programme was due to be completed by 2001, by which time it will

have cost over £28 million. The Norbreck Coast Scheme was completed in April 1988 and a £2 million scheme has since been completed at Duchess Drive. Blackpool has the largest scheme in the country for rebuilding Victorian-style vertical sea walls.

May. Information Bureau on Promenade closed and new premises on Clifton Street opened.

29 May. Prince Charles visited the Grand Theatre.

1982 Pembroke (now the Stakis) Hotel opened.

1983. The population was estimated as 147,000.

February. South Shore Open-air Baths demolished, to be replaced by the Sandcastle.

1984 1 April. The rateable value of the Borough was £ 18,820,583.

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|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Area of Borough | 10,718 acres, made up of |
| Land | 8,650 acres |
| Foreshore & Tidal Water | 2,068 acres |

21 August. Space Invader ride opened at the Pleasure Beach.

1986 3 January. The opening of Yeadon Way, along the former path of the excursion line from Blackpool South to link up with the M55.

23 June. The Sandcastle Indoor Leisure Centre, with pools, bars, snack bars and live entertainment facilities, opened on the site of the South Shore Open-air Swimming Baths.

1986/87 Creation of the Central Coach and Car Park covering 17 hectares of former railway land to accommodate 6,000 cars, or 2,000 cars and 1,000 coaches.

1986/87 Major improvements completed at Stanley Park, including the provision of an all-weather sports pitch, refurbishment of the athletics track and upgrading the pavilion. The total cost of the work amounted to £1.35 million. A £50,000 grant was obtained from the Sports Council towards the refurbishment of changing rooms.

1987 January. Fire Brigade moves to new station on Forest Gate.

April. A new railway station on the Blackpool South line, costing £120,000, opened opposite the Pleasure Beach.

August. The old Evening Gazette office & printing works on Victoria Street demolished to make way for six retail units costing £11 million.

Blackpool Airport's runways and main buildings improved, costing £530,000.

1988 March. Derby Baths closed.

April. Indoor Bowling centre opened opposite North Station. It was developed by the Council at a cost of about £1 million.

A £2 million investment plan announced for the Piers by First Leisure. The plan included a Heli-pad on North Pier for coastal pleasure flights.

September/October. Co-op Emporium and Jubilee Theatre demolished.

1989 25 January. First Leisure complete a £4m. refurbishment of the Winter Gardens.

August. A new 12-sided Tourist Information Centre, costing £50,000, opened on the Promenade opposite the Tower.

September. Opening of the £14 million Tower Shopping Centre in the refurbished former Binns Store.

November. A 40,000 sq. ft. Normid Superstore opened on site of former railway sidings, Talbot Road.

- 1990 13 April. A 108ft high Big Wheel opened on Central Pier by owners, First Leisure, having strengthened the pier to take it. Built in Holland, it cost £760,000 and can carry 208 people in its 26 carriages.
- May. Derby Baths demolished.
- August. The £5 million, 2,000 sq. ft. Sea Life Centre opened on the Golden Mile. It houses over 25 displays of British marine life in a specially constructed walk-through aquarium. The most spectacular display is a 53ft x 40ft tank, the biggest in Europe, home to 30 tropical sharks and containing over 110,000 gallons of water.
- December. The old Foxhall Hotel demolished.
- 1991 The hundredth anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Blackpool Tower celebrated. A time capsule concealed under the stone remained undiscovered following searches made behind a terracotta tablet high on the building. A further capsule containing contemporary information was laid.
- Spring. The dry side of the Sandcastle complex converted into a version of the popular TV game "The Crystal Maze". On the first floor was a labyrinth of secret passages and a range of themed rooms called "the Cyberdrome". The refurbishment cost half a million pounds.
- 2 May. The Borough Council elections resulted in a Labour controlled Council for the first time in Blackpool. The electorate returned 27 Labour councillors, 12 Conservatives and 5 Liberal Democrats.
- July. The opening of the new Foxhall Hotel, replacing a public house built on the site of the original Fox hall, the home of the diarist Thomas Tyldesley in the early 18th Century. Part of the old building was discovered during its demolition in 1990. The new pub, built by Bass, cost £1.7 million.
- November. Work began on a £17.7 million investment package for developing the Blackpool Tower complex. The scheme, to be named "Tower World", to include the Dawn of Time dark ride and the closure of the Tower Circus, to be replaced by a 20 minute "animatronic" attraction with a circus theme.
- 1991 16 December. Fire destroyed the Fun House at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. The damage to the 57 year old building, and to other rides and equipment, was estimated to be about £10 million. The 100ft high flames were tackled by 80 fire-fighters from 15 appliances.
- 1992 May. Refurbishment of Tower completed, including Dawn of Time ride.
- 1993 9 January. Lewis's store closed.
- May. Village (now De Vere) Hotel opened on East Park Drive.
- 1994 April. Work began on major sewage scheme along the Promenade.
- 10 May. The Mayor unveiled £1m. Promenade revamp, including Victorian-style shelters.
- 28 May. 235ft. high roller coaster, *The Pepsi-Max Big One*, opened to the public at the Pleasure Beach.
- 2 July. New Victorian-style bandstand on the Promenade opposite Victoria Street opened by the Prime Minister, John Major.
- 22 July. Visit to Blackpool Tower by the Queen as part of its centenary celebrations.
- 2 September. Woolworth's store opened in the remodelled former Lewis's building.
- 1995 2 May 1995. Second phase of the Squires Gate Link Road officially opened by County Council leader, Louise Ellman.
- 15 September. The Foxhall Fire. Bickerstaffe's old store burnt down.
- 1996 1 May. Newly pedestrianised Birley Street precinct opened by the Mayor, David Owen.
- 1997 February. The freehold for the Hounds Hill Centre sold by Blackpool Council. Refurbishment and the remodelling of the Victoria Street entrance begun by the new owners.

1998 1 April. Blackpool achieves unitary status.

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