

## OCTOBER 2011 NEWSLETTER



Dreamland Ghost Train 1980 courtesy of TDC Margate Library

It's Halloween and what better time to reflect on Dreamland's ghost stories, so if you're sitting comfortably I'll begin...

During the 1990s some of Dreamland's large, white knuckle rides were being replaced in favour of more traditional fairground rides such as the dodgems and waltzers, but the work had to be halted when workmen reported strange and ghostly goings on in a new version of the former Dreamland favourite, The River Caves.

The services of Clairvoyant, Mia Dolan, were employed to help resolve the matter, which had previously been investigated by Ghost Hunter, Andrew Green (who had also investigated paranormal activity at Battersea Park and was consultant to the Disney Corporation). It transpired that the disturbance was being caused by the spirit of a murdered young woman who had been wrongly accused of immoral practices and she was making contact, from beyond the grave, to clear her name...

There are many other ghostly and bizarre stories associated with Dreamland not least the murder of former owner the colourful circus showman, 'Lord' George Sanger who was killed by a member of his own staff. Perhaps you have a Dreamland ghost story to share – if so we would love to hear it!

## OUR NAME IN LIGHTS



Photography by Dave Collard

The urgent work to Dreamland's Grade II\* listed cinema building has pretty much been under wraps, but we will soon begin to see the results of the labour when Coombs (Canterbury) Ltd start to take down the scaffolding around the cinema's majestic 80ft high fin. Over the next few weeks the removal of the scaffolding will gradually reveal Dreamland's fully restored vertical lettering in a sort of architectonic strip tease.

Dreamland's iconic signage was installed in the 1970s, and replaced the original 1930s' sans serif neon lettering. The Prince's Regeneration Trust's Conservation Report identified a number of finishes and details as being degraded by neglect, later interventions or clumsy repairs.

Under Thanet District Council's urgent works notice it has been possible to restore the distinctive 1970s' lighting scheme as a glowing invitation to the new Dreamland. The letters were removed and sent to a specialist company to be restored; this involved removing the yellow paint, polishing, re-wiring, painting the sides, replenishing the bulbs and on-ground testing. The letters are being remounted as the contractor's work progresses down the fin, with each letter being individually tested in situ.

In addition, TDC is investigating the costs of replacing the bulbs with LED lighting. At present the incandescent bulbs are wired in series of five, meaning that if one blows, five go out – producing a noticeable gap. LED lights would be connected in parallel, meaning that only one bulb at a time fails. Even more importantly, LED lights have a life of 100,000 hours (as opposed to 5,000 for a regular bulb), drastically reducing maintenance costs. They are also much more energy efficient, making them the environmentally-friendly choice. However, they are more expensive to install, so we await news from TDC.

We anticipate that some of the sign will be visible and tested in time for Christmas – watch this space!

The urgent work to the cinema building is necessary to prevent any further deterioration to the listed building. The works include:

- Inspect and make safe electrics;
- Install new lighting and emergency back-up lighting;
- Replace existing fire alarms;
- Provide adequate ventilation;
- Replace all asphalt roofs and repair auditorium roof;
- Repoint brickwork to walls, parapets and rooftop structures;
- Expose the building's steel structure, remove corrosion, apply protective treatment and replace brickwork;
- Refurbish or replace windows and doors (excluding the seafront arcade and Cosmo restaurant);
- Remove pigeons and debris from the cinema auditoria, staircases, lobbies, side rooms, toilets, arcades, shops, cafes, bars and ballroom;
- Erect and maintain full height scaffolding with platforms at all levels;
- Safeguard theatre organ.

## PROJECT UP DATE

Thanet District Council's Compulsory Purchase Order has been challenged by Dreamland site owners, Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company Ltd., Margate Cinema Ltd and Margate Ride Ltd. The matter will now go to Public Inquiry on 10 January 2012.

Meanwhile the Heritage Lottery Fund will be visiting the Dreamland site next month ahead of their board meeting to consider our £3m Stage 2 HLF application. A decision will be made shortly after and, if successful, funds released once the CPO has been confirmed.

Further information about the CPO can be found on Thanet District Council's website via [http://www.thanet.gov.uk/environment\\_planning/planning/ldf\\_and\\_local\\_plan/dreamland.aspx](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/environment_planning/planning/ldf_and_local_plan/dreamland.aspx).

## BATTLE OF SOUND



Dreamland Youth Panel 2010 with Pie Factory Music and Head Teacher, Andy Somers, Hartsdown Technology College. Courtesy of Peter Barnett.

Battle of Sound 2011 is well underway with the Dreamland Youth Panel (DYP) leading the event. The DYP worked with the Dreamland Trust during development as consultants and now act as ambassadors for the project. Working with the DYP allows us to engage young people, and the Battle of Sound is the perfect vehicle for not only reflecting Dreamland's Youth Culture heritage, but also providing opportunities for young people to create a culture of their own. The DYP and Battle of Sound also provide valuable skills development and confidence building for young people.

Last year the DYP organised the whole event from auditions, to designing promotion material, advertising, selling tickets, technical support, rehearsals, back stage, stage management and front of house – and then, of course, an opportunity for emerging performers to take their talent out the school environment and into a real, live public venue – very scary!

This year we are partnering with Hartsdown Technology College, Pie Factory Music, Dolph Hamster Music and Thanet College Media Department. The talent show is open to under-18s by audition; a call out for artists will be announced in November.

Competitors, judged by professionals, will have the opportunity to win the Battle of Sound title plus 4 hours studio recording session with Pie Factory Music, make-over and promotion pack by Thanet College and a public performance slot at another public event.

Battle of Sound 2011 will take place on Wednesday 14 December 2011 at the Westcoast Bar & Music Venue, King Street, Margate. Doors open 6pm – full details and prices will be posted on our website next month.

**AND FINALLY...**



You can now capture the latest project up-dates, snippets of news and announcements from our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/dreamlandmargate?ref=ts> or follow us on Twitter @dreamlandtrust.

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