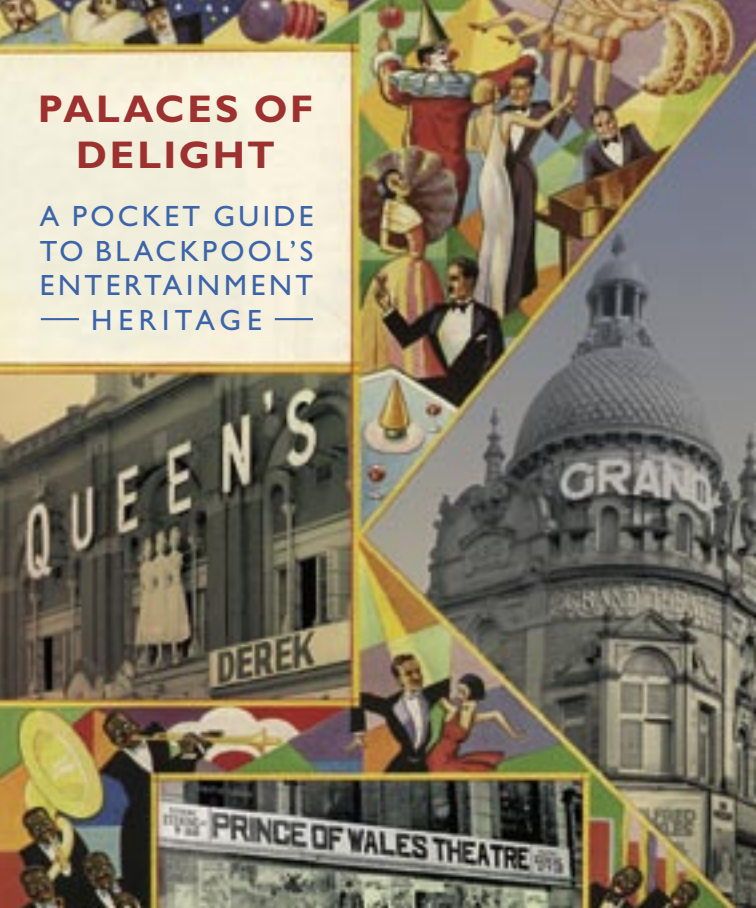


# PALACES OF DELIGHT

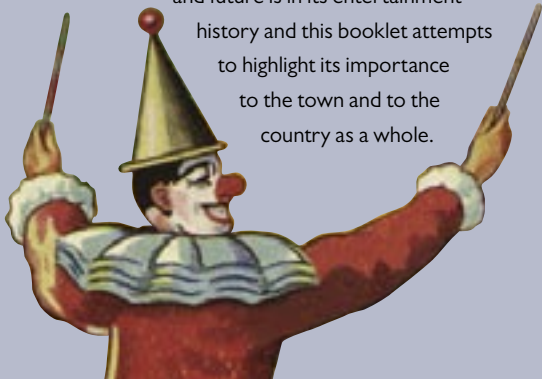
A POCKET GUIDE  
TO BLACKPOOL'S  
ENTERTAINMENT  
— HERITAGE —



## INTRO

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Blackpool, as a seaside resort, expanded as part of the late 19th and early 20th century boom in leisure time. The Palaces of Delight highlighted in this brochure were built and developed during this period. Blackpool at its peak had approximately 20,000 theatre seats to fill each night and the scale of these venues provided a vibrant theatrical experience. Holiday-makers enjoyed concert parties, end of pier shows, variety entertainments, ballroom dancing and international stars of stage screen and radio. The splendorous interiors of its remaining Victorian venues stand alongside the art deco modernity of the Opera House. Blackpool's heritage and future is in its entertainment history and this booklet attempts to highlight its importance to the town and to the country as a whole.



## FOREWORD

Blackpool has had a long relationship with entertainers and entertainment. Founded and nurtured with the intention of being a middle class resort, it quickly became the destination of choice for working communities. The entertainment available from the late 19th century was phenomenal and Blackpool quickly became a key place on the theatre, concert and variety scene, attracting top acts from around the world for well over a hundred years.

Blackpool is changing, with major developments like New Headlands and Talbot Gateway. The arts and entertainments offer in the town is constantly growing. An exciting recent development is the emergence of new variety, encouraged by the hugely successful Arts and Humanities Council sponsored Admission All Classes. These events have taken place almost exclusively in fabulous historic venues. Read on, enjoy, and please visit the amazing places in this guide – you will all receive a very warm Blackpool welcome!





## WINTER GARDENS PAVILION & OPERA HOUSE

The 1878 Pavilion became a theatre proper in 1897,  
but in 1986 the seating and stage were removed.

The art deco-style Opera House of 1939 is the  
third, the first having opened there in 1889.

## EMPIRE / HIPPODROME

The Hippodrome opened as the Empire in 1895. It became the Hippodrome in 1900 and following extensive alterations opened as the ABC Theatre in 1963. Since 2002 it has been the Syndicate Night Club.



## THEATRE ROYAL

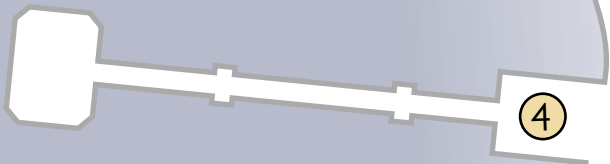
Talbot Road Assembly Rooms, now Yates's Wine Lodge, was built in 1868 and included Blackpool's first substantial theatre. It became the Tivoli Cinema in 1910 and more recently Addison's night club.





## INDIAN PAVILION & THEATRE, NORTH PIER

The Indian Pavilion opened on North Pier in 1877, burning down in 1921. Its replacement was also destroyed by fire in 1938, the present theatre opening the following year.



## KEY

1. WINTER GARDENS
2. EMPIRE / HIPPODROME
3. THEATRE ROYAL
4. INDIAN PAVILION &  
THEATRE, NORTH PIER
5. PRINCE OF WALES /  
ALHAMBRA / PALACE
6. TOWER CIRCUS
7. FELDMAN'S /  
QUEEN'S THEATRE
8. GRAND THEATRE

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CLIFTON ST.

BIRLEY ST.

CHURCH STREET

VICTORIA STREET

ADELAIDE STREET

DEANS GATE

ABINGDON ST.

EDWARD ST.

TOPPING STREET

LEOPOLD GROVE

CORONATION ST.

ALBERT ROAD

MARKET ST.

CORPORATION ST.



## PRINCE OF WALES / ALHAMBRA / PALACE

The first theatre on the site was the Prince of Wales, which opened in 1877. In 1899 the Alhambra opened there, becoming the Palace in 1904. It was demolished in 1962.



## TOWER CIRCUS

Another Blackpool landmark, the Tower, first opened in 1894 with its Matcham-designed Circus and Ballroom following in 1899. A circus has been held in the tower every year since the opening of the Tower. The present ballroom dates from 1899 and was restored after a serious fire in 1956.

## FELDMAN'S / QUEEN'S THEATRE

The Borough Theatre opened here in 1877, later becoming Bannister's Bazaar. It became Feldman's Theatre in 1928 and the Queen's Theatre in 1952. It was demolished for C&A's store in 1973, now TK Maxx.





## GRAND THEATRE

The Matcham-designed Grand Theatre partially opened as a circus in 1890 and was only completed in 1894. It was acquired by the Tower Company at the end of 1909, but has been run by a trust since 1980.

## ADMISSION ALL CLASSES

The 18-month collaboration between the University of Sheffield's National Fairground Archive and Blackpool Council has seen a number of exciting initiatives and partnerships develop, exploring the marvellous entertainment heritage of this world famous resort.

Through a combination of heritage, live entertainment and the world of neo-variety we have tried to celebrate and highlight the importance of Blackpool as a resort both historically and for the future. Underpinning the glamour of the shows has, of course, been the entertainment heritage alive in Blackpool. The project, and indeed the brochure, would not have been possible without the support of individuals and organisations who have worked tirelessly to preserve and highlight this heritage, in particular Carl Carrington, Built Heritage Manager, for sponsoring this brochure and Ted Lightbown,



from Blackpool and Fylde Historical Society, for supplying all photographic material and captions.

This brochure can be downloaded alongside the heritage podcast which enables you to take both a virtual and walking tour through Blackpool's entertainment heritage at [www.admissionallclasses.com](http://www.admissionallclasses.com) or [www.blackpool.gov.uk/mediagallery/podcasts](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/mediagallery/podcasts)

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