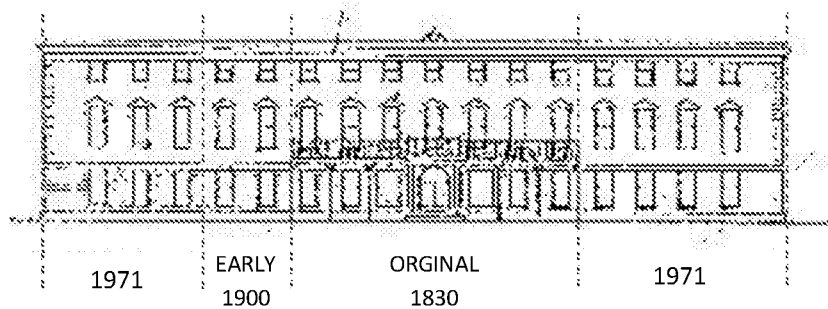


The Royal Norfolk Hotel History



The Royal Norfolk Hotel is the most prominent of the hotels in Bognor Regis situated overlooking the seafront and has had an interesting history.

Bognor's original hotel and assembly rooms were situated in vicinity of The Royal Norfolk but it suffered a fire in 1826 and was burnt to the ground. The remains subsequently succumbed to the encroaching seas. Out of this was born The Royal Norfolk Hotel built in 1830 by Andrew L Sarel and it became a genteel hide-out for Royalty. The exiled Emperor Napoleon III of France, Queen Alexandra of England and her Danish sister the Empress Maud of Russia, as well as Princess Victoria, daughter of Queen Alexandra, all stayed here in a family party.

By 1837 the hotel was being managed by William Lock, who advertised it in the Brighton Herald as a family hotel and invited visitors to enjoy the splendid views of the sea. Dally's Bognor Guide also extolled the virtues of this impressive establishment.

In 1857 it was described in many guidebooks as "resembling a gentleman's mansion". Early pictures of the hotel show how the lawns went down to the beach. The early building was in fact only the central section of today's hotel and was also without its impressive balcony which was not added until the 1880's. During 1872 Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte III stayed at the Hotel for a week. The Royal Coat of Arms appeared on the Hotel in 1888 and in 1917 it was discovered that no royal warrant has ever been given but it was agreed that it could remain because of the duration of its existence.

In 1910 an extension was built onto the west side of the Royal Norfolk and it is possible to view the various extensions by looking at the roofline of the hotel today. The Hotel was sold in 1944 to the Bognor Town Council and after much speculation the Hotel was sold in 1946 to new owners and was re-opened again as a hotel. It has remained as a hotel since then and in the 1970's the local people were encouraged to use the hotel's two outdoor pools and tennis courts.

Today it is owned by Leisureplex Ltd., a family business which owns and operates 20 other UK hotels in prime seaside or sea loch locations.

Details taken from Bognor Local History Articles and '*Salute To The Royal Norfolk Hotel*' by J Wentworth Day

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