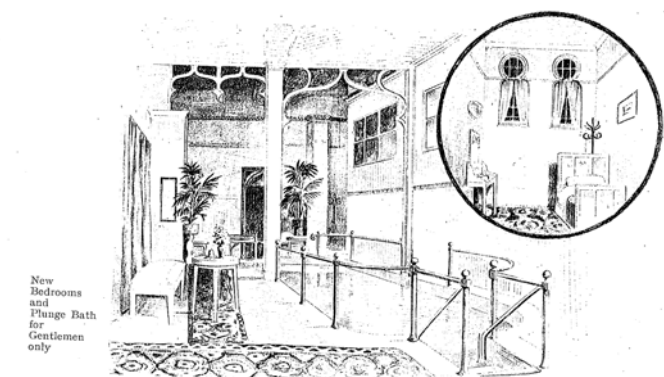
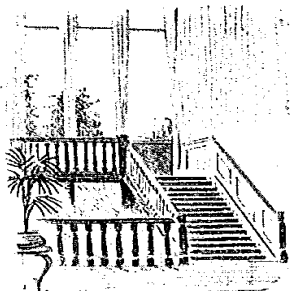
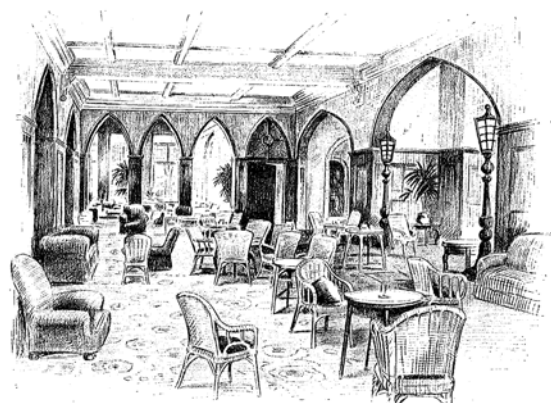


Lounge



New Bedrooms and Plunge Bath for Gentlemen only



Vestibule leading to Plunge and Gentlemen's Bedrooms

HYDRO BOARD MEMBERS SINCE 1895

1895 - William Lumb Wallis – surveyor - Henry Habgood – doctor
Paul Merritt – author - William Hicklin – contractor
Arthur Ernest Wynn – Yorkshire gentleman

1900 - John H Campion Coles

1938 - Lionel Charter – Herbert James

1945 - Malcolm Denis Horn

1949 - Richard James

1958 - Joan Hornsby

1959 - Basil Hornsby

1968 - John Cheeseborough - chairman from 1973 - 1998

1973 - John Pluck

1978 - John Halifax

1979 - Michael Piper - chairman from 1998 - 2005

1985 - Graham Bean - Joan Mann

1989 - Robin Miller

1994 - Mary Peck

2004 - Graeme King – chairman from 2005

2005 - Crispin Freeman

2007 - Julian Martya

2008 - Ian Turnbull

2014 - Christopher Bean - James Tuhey

HYDRO MANAGERS SINCE 1895

1896 – Mr Heydon

1901 – Mr Otto F Bergann

1908 – Mr William James Grimes

1917 - Mr T E Jeffries

1924 – Mr William Hornsby

1932 - Mrs Ada Hornsby

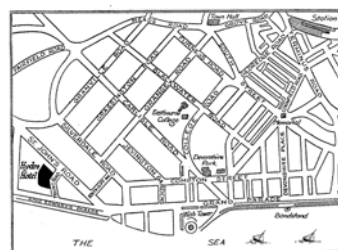
1950 – Miss Joan Hornsby

1968 – Miss Joan Hornsby & Mr John Halifax

1979 – Mr Graham Bean

2000 – Mr Stephen Lee

2005 – Mr Ian Turnbull



To find your way to the Hydro Hotel.



EASTBOURNE HYDRO

Telephone 143
Vol. 1, No. 1.]

EASTBOURNE, THURSDAY, 4th JULY, 1895.

Telegraphic Address “Hydropath, Eastbourne.
Volume 1, Issue 1



Front of Hotel facing Sea, Croquet and Tennis Lawns

The Hydro Hotel, a brief history.

Incorporated on 4th July 1895 and opened as Eastbourne Hydropathic Company Ltd.

The first board of Directors would consist of William Lumb Wallis, a surveyor, Henry Habgood, a doctor, Paul Merritt, an author, William Hicklin, a contractor and Arthur Ernest Wynn, who was described as a Yorkshire gentleman!

It was believed to be a freehold premise known as “Marine Mansion” consisting of residence, outbuildings and grounds of about 2 acres.

The Marine Mansion had been originally built in 1888 for the Estates Manager of the Duke of Devonshire. It is not known why the sale of the property was to take place but it would be the start of the Hydro Hotel’s long history in Eastbourne.

In 1895 the Marine Mansion was to be converted into a hydropathic establishment, hotel, restaurant, and residence for visitors.

It is noted that in 1896 a Mr. Heydon had been employed by the board of directors to be the first manager who would run the hydropathic establishment in Eastbourne.

One can assume that the Eastbourne Hydropathic Company Ltd could have been what a regular Spa Hotel is today.

The baths themselves were available to all guests residing at the Hydro, all free of charge if taken before breakfast.

Full board and residence with breakfast, luncheon, afternoon tea and dinner at the stated hours, with bedroom and all attendance was from £3 3s per person, per week, according to room selected.

There was no liquor licence for the Hydro and guests were advised to order their own beers and wines.

Combination bed and sitting room in the South Wing directly facing the sea were available from £5 5s per person, per week. These were noted as elegant apartments some of them opening by french windows onto a balcony overlooking the hotel gardens, the English Channel and the South Downs.

House arrangements. A bell was rung at 8.30am and a quarter of an hour before dinner. The gong was sounded at each meal.

Breakfast 9am
Luncheon 1.30pm
Afternoon Tea 4.30pm
Dinner 7pm

On Sundays
Breakfast 9am
Dinner 1.30pm
Tea 5.30pm
Supper 8.30pm

The hotel also boasted at this time that all of the bedrooms and public areas were lit by electricity.

The Eastbourne Hydropathic Company Ltd was regarded as the finest health and pleasure resort in the South of England. Situated on the cliff top overlooking the English Channel and elevated at 120 feet above sea level, it was only a 10 minute drive from the railway station with its fast train service to London taking only 90 minutes.

For amusement, the Hydro offered 2 grass tennis courts and croquet lawns.

Croquet is still played to this day and the Hydro hosts a croquet tournament each year.

A daily programme of dances, concerts and theatrical arrangements was printed every evening for the Recreation Hall and three or four times a year the Hydro would also arrange a visitors ball.

Beachy Head is a straight mile from the hotel and guests were encouraged to take walks along the seafront and up the steep hill at the foot of the South Downs to the top of Beachy Head.

The Hydro also boasted of the facilities available to its guests.

These consisted of **The Central Hall**, with its oak panelling and gothic arches which still remain today.

The Smoking Lounge where gentlemen could smoke whilst enjoying the company of ladies.

The Drawing Room with its view of the lawn and sea.

The Library where one could sit quietly and read or write, conversation was not allowed in this room.

The Billiard Room was off the Central Hall.

The Recreation Hall for dancing with a stage for theatricals and concerts.

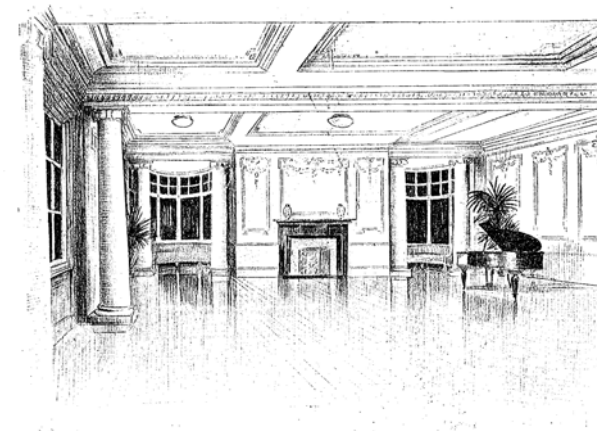
The Garden Room is where the Conservatory stands today.

The Dining Hall could accommodate 150 diners.

The Baths comprised of turkish, russian, sitz, electric and needle. These were well managed by efficient bath attendants and masseurs.

The Eastbourne Hydropathic Company Ltd name was quite short lived. Whether the well being side of things didn’t take off, with the thought that perhaps it sounded too much like a hospital, by 1902 the name was changed to what it is today, Hydro Hotel, Eastbourne PLC.

It is believed that the hotel boasted 130 bedrooms as opposed to the 80 bedrooms available today.



Ball Room

Over the next 2 decades there would be 3 more managers taking over the running of the Hydro Hotel. In 1901 a German hotelier Mr Otto F Bergann served for 8 years, Mr William James Grimes from 1908 to 1917 and Mr T E Jeffries who would be manager until around 1924.

From 1924 the hotel was run by the Hornsby family and they served the Hydro for over six decades.

Mr. William Hornsby became manager of the hotel until 1932 when his wife, Mrs Ada Hornsby, took over as manageress due to his ill health.

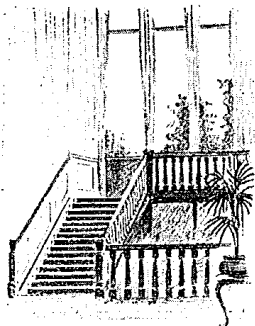
At a time when war was looming the Hydro made a bold move in 1938 to build what is referred to as the New Wing of the hotel, a more modern bedroom arrangement with en-suite facilities in most rooms.

The board at this time consisted of directors Lionel Charter, Malcolm Horn and Herbert James. This was a project that would shape the future of the Hydro in years to come and became the start of a long business relationship for the James family who are still major shareholders in the company today.

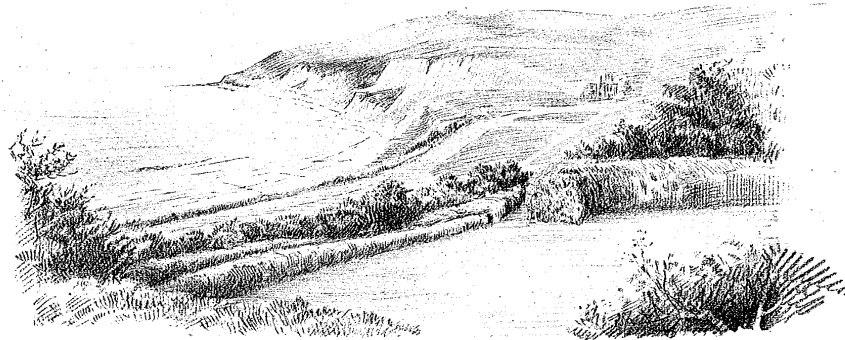
One of the most well known members of the Hornsby family associated with the running of the Hydro hotel was Miss Joan Hornsby. She was trained in hotel management after leaving school and was appointed assistant manageress to her mother following the death of her father.

In the war years the hotel was closed to the public and during this time Miss Hornsby served with the Auxiliary Fire Service before returning to reopen the Hydro in 1945 with her mother who was then manageress of the hotel.

During this period the board of directors were joined by Herbert James' son, Richard who would remain a part of this board until 1974.



View from
Front
Bedrooms



In 1950, after the unfortunate death of her mother, Miss Hornsby took over the Hydro as manageress and was elected to the board of directors in 1958.

Joan would also be joined by her brother Basil Hornsby as a director of the Hydro. Basil, who was the manager of the Chatsworth hotel brought his hotelier knowledge with him to assist Joan with the running of the hotel.

During the early 1960's when times were hard, Miss Hornsby, along with members of her staff purchased 28lb bags of coal and bottles of brandy and gave them to the towns needy old folk who were suffering badly from the cold weather. 128 bags of coal and 3 dozen bottles of brandy along with 80 envelopes containing 5 shillings for gas meters were distributed. The W.V.S. had set up the Emergency Shilling Fund which was the inspiration behind this story.

Miss Hornsby was joined by Mr. John Halifax in 1968. As joint manager he later joined the board of directors as finance director from 1978 until 1986.

Miss Hornsby continued as manageress until 1980 when she retired. She remained a member of the board until 1989.

In the spring of 1964, Roger Smith, a talented young chef, decided to move to the south coast to seek better employment. He attended an interview for the 2nd Chef's position at the Hydro, having already had an interview at the York House hotel. The manager of the York House said he would be pleased to employ him if he didn't get the job at the Hydro. I think that showed how good the Hydro's standing was in Eastbourne with its competitors. Luckily Roger liked the Hydro and Miss Hornsby and started work as 2nd chef on 6th April 1964.

After 2 years he would take over the kitchen to become head chef.

Roger was renowned for his skills, his presentation buffets were masterpieces and became an annual event during the christmas packages and special events hosted at the hotel. Roger's dedication and service showed when he completed nearly 40 years at the Hydro.

In 1968 John Cheeseborough joined the board of directors and would continue to serve for the next 40 years, taking over as chairman in 1973. Once again another family would become part of the Hydro for many years to come.

A number of changes were to take place throughout the 1970's starting with a rolling programme to make every bedroom in the hotel en-suite. Over the next decade the number of rooms in the Hydro would reduce as bedrooms were converted into bathrooms and added to existing bedrooms, it would eventually become an 84 en-suite bedroom hotel.

1972 saw the Crystal Restaurant increase in size, adding an additional 14 feet to the end of the restaurant and a dance floor area installed. This allowed seating for up to 160 diners.



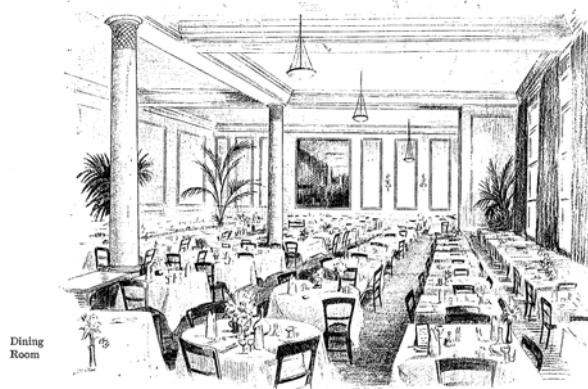
THE NEW WING

In 1974 work started on the Sun Lounge. Large glass windows were installed where the veranda once was and an area for morning coffee, light lunches and afternoon teas was created.

By 1976 travel by car was to become increasingly popular, so much so that the rear tennis court was converted to a 50 space car park. Also in 1976 the hotel installed a new fire alarm system which cost over £40,000.

Another new director joined the board in 1979, Michael Piper whose skills in insurance, surveying and buildings would bring new qualities to the board. Michael took over as chairman in 1998 and retired after 26 years of service in 2005.

In 1979 work started on a new outdoor swimming pool which was ready for the 1980 summer season, it has brought added value and style to the Hydro and is still in use today.



Dining
Room

Graham Bean was appointed General Manager in 1979. This appointment was to become another great asset and change the face of the Hydro in the style that Mr. Bean and his family would bring.

He brought a new outlook and transformed the way the Hydro would be positioned in the hotel market in Eastbourne.

Mr. Bean would take the Hydro to conference and trade shows in London and Birmingham to obtain new business which helped grow the business and more importantly the turnover and profits of the hotel.

By 1982 Mr. Bean had televisions installed in every bedroom as demand for in-room entertainment started to increase.

Graham's hard work and continued development of the Hydro would not go unnoticed and he was elected to the board of directors as executive director in 1985.

The board at this time would then consist of John Cheeseborough, Michael Piper, Joan Hornsby and Joan Mann.



Drawing
Room

Expansion was once again on the cards for the Hydro and the board of directors in 1987 agreed to the creation of the Garden Suite, the biggest undertaking since the building of the new wing back in 1938. This would be one of the best investments in the hotel for years to come.

At a cost of £150,000 this multi-purpose function suite would see the Hydro become one of the most popular venues in Eastbourne.

The hotel became one of the leading venues for wedding receptions with the addition of the Garden Suite and of course the private gardens that looked out across the English Channel and towards Beachy Head.

Jaguar Car Company would use the Garden Suite for the launch of the S-type Jaguar and cars were driven into it from the garden to go on display for visitors to come and see.

It was also in 1987 that the Hydro's turnover would break the £1,000,000 mark for the first time.

During Mr. Beans' time he would play host to a special royal visitor. The Queen of Spain would often stay at the Hydro when visiting the Nanny who took care of her as a child in Eastbourne.

The entire central 1st floor of the hotel would be reserved for this royal visitor and her party.

During 1989 Robin Miller joined the board of directors as company secretary and remained on the board until 2005.

In 1992 the conversion of 3 bedrooms on the 3rd floor took place to create a purpose built conference room for the Inland Revenue. They had requested the hotel build this so they could hold their residential conferences at the hotel, thus the Hornsby Suite was created in the memory of Joan Hornsby.

Mary Peck, solicitor and daughter of John Cheeseborough joined the board in 1994 and still currently serves.

Another landmark was in 1995 when the Hydro hit 100 years of trading and a special centenary weekend took place, along with an additional special centenary dividend to its shareholders.

In 1998 the Board agreed to risk the sum of £80,000 to build a bigger conservatory overlooking the garden and removing the outside patio area. Once again this proved to be a great investment for the hotel as the 80 seater conservatory became a popular venue for non residents to visit for its food and beverage offerings.

May 2000 saw the purchase of the White Lodge country house hotel, a 15 bedroom establishment set in 5 acres of Sussex downlands in the village of Alfriston. It was intended by the board at that time to become the start of an expansion of the Hydro into a group of hotels. Unfortunately the countryside was hit by an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and also floods across the village of Alfriston which made trading difficult for the White Lodge. The hotel traded for 5 1/2 years before being sold to Oakdene homes. The White Lodge still proved to be a good investment having originally been purchased for £790,000, it was sold in 2005 for £1.7 million.

After 31 years as manager of the hotel, Graham Bean retired in 2001, but remained on the board as non executive director until 2006

Current chairman Graeme King joined the Board in 2004 as non executive director and took over a year later when Michael Piper stepped down as chairman.

In 2005 Crispin Freeman joined the board and became the new company secretary.

The board agreed in 2008 to build a small extension to the restaurant and the Orangery Restaurant was created. This has become a popular venue for private family occasions and events.

Refurbishment of the hotel continued on a rolling basis and 2 new suites were added in 2013/14, firstly the South Downs suite and then The Downlands suite.

Another new director joined the board in 2014 which continued the long family history the Hydro has when Christopher Bean was appointed as non executive director. Jim Tuhey would also join the board in July 2014.

I think it's fair to say that the Hydro has been a family oriented operation over the years with a number of managers and directors along with their families holding shares in it, a tradition which still continues and hopefully will for many years to come.

There have been many others that have worked at the Hydro over the past 120 years where their hard work and dedication has made it successful and will continue to be so in the future.

