

Saltdean Lido in its 30s heyday

Open air swimming is back in vogue and Lottery investment is helping make it happen.

Spring is just around the corner and at long last, after a chilly winter, the days will soon be warmer and longer. It means that up and down the country, we'll all be getting back outdoors. Back in to our gardens, into our local parks and some of us will be enjoying a refreshing dip at one of a number of recently restored historic lidos.

The 1930s were the golden age of the lido in the UK, with more than 160 built across the country. Beautifully adorned with Art-Deco pavilions, fountains, changing rooms and diving boards, they were the height of sophistication and glamour. The place to see and be seen.

Following the Second World War, the British love affair with the lido went into rapid decline. The lure of affordable oversees holidays took its toll on these once thriving pools, many of which sat at the heart of beleaguered seaside resorts. The 80s and 90s saw widespread closure and it seemed like there was no way back.

[quote]"We love our historic lidos, they are incredible places."[/quote]

But the tide is turning for the lido. After years of neglect communities are seeking to revive these derelict sites. Lottery funding is playing a major role in their revival, putting them back at the heart of their local areas. Lidos that have been restored and reopened include Brockwell Park Lido in London, Tinside Lido in Plymouth and Ynysangharad Lido in Wales.

Saltdean Lido, just four miles along the coast from Brighton, is the latest to secure Lottery funding that will see it restored and reopened to the public once more.

It was designed as the centre piece of Saltdean's new seaside resort when it first opened in 1938. Comprising an iconic Art-Deco building and three pools, it was created to elevate Saltdean's status as a fashionable resort in the competitive 1930s British holiday market.

Using money from our Heritage Enterprise programme, Saltdean Lido Community Interest Company (CIC) will now renovate and revitalise the entire site as a modern leisure destination providing the local community with a heated outdoor pool, indoor and outdoor play areas, café, gym, community and function rooms, and a revived library.

Ben Greener, HLF's Historic Environment Advisor, said: "When it was built, Saltdean Lido was the beating heart of a successful seaside resort. Sadly, as the lido declined, so did Saltdean. Yet local people have never forgotten how important this heritage icon was to their town. Now, through our Heritage Enterprise scheme, the community can breathe new life into this precious local landmark, signaling Saltdean's return to prosperity whilst saving one of the most significant lidos in the UK."

We love our historic lidos, they are incredible places. We reckon that Britain's lido renaissance has only just begun.



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Women swimming in the lido at Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd

Heritage Lottery Fund makes a big splash at one of Wales' largest Lidos!

New ideas need old buildings