

# Evaluation Report - Skegness is So Bracing



# Skegness is So Bracing – Railway Poster Restoration and Display

## SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

To restore, conserve and publicly display the original artwork for the first and subsequent piece of the iconic “Skegness Is So Bracing” railway posters by John Hassall. These posters contain the iconic Jolly Fisherman. To provide more information on the artworks and artist.

These paintings have been hidden away for many years, out of sight from the public in a damaged and unstable condition. After identifying the conservation and repair work needed and through support via a heritage lottery grant and funding from Skegness Town Council, these paintings are now on display in the café seating area of the new Tower Gardens Pavilion community building. An information board has also been created about these important pieces of transport history explaining how much they mean to the Town of Skegness.



*Top picture copyright of GF Tomlinsons shows the completed Tower Gardens Pavilion building.*

*Bottom Picture copyright of Museum Conservation Services Ltd. Shows Nicholas Burnett shaving down the wood pulp on the backing of one of the paintings.*

## Before



## After




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# CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

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As the project got underway some unexpected costs for the restoration work were identified. We also found out the alarmed Perspex we had planned to put in place to protect the paintings, may create a microclimate that could cause damage to the artworks. We had to have a rethink and use contact alarms for the paintings. The savings made on the Perspex helped to mitigate the additional spend on the restoration and alarm system.

Like the rest of the world the Covid 19 pandemic has been a massive challenge for everyone involved in this project – restoration works were delayed, the building could not open as expected and we were unable to have the unveiling event we wanted or invite community groups and other representatives to see the artwork and get their valuable face to face feedback. This work is only on hold and will take place when it is safe to do so and government restrictions allow. Not being able to promote this project how we would like has been tough, but we know that when we are all able to get together again the event will be all the more poignant. The Council has although, received many positive comments from contractors working on the Pavilion building and everyone involved in the project.



**“I have known the historic Jolly Fisherman paintings since I became Town Clerk 10 years ago. For many years they had been locked away in the Mayor’s Parlour and only occasionally available for a few people to see. I must convey a big thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund for supporting the cleaning and restoration of the paintings and allowing them to be seen in vibrant colours that the artist John Hassall intended. As soon as we are allowed, they will be on view free of charge for everyone to see.” Steve Larner Town Clerk**

**“As a lifelong Skegness resident, it has been an interesting and rewarding opportunity to help with the project to restore the original Jolly Fisherman paintings. I was able to spend several hours with a restoration expert, while he examined the paintings, this was fascinating and a once in a lifetime opportunity for me. I am overjoyed at the result of the restoration and feel very proud to have been involved in this project for the people of Skegness.” Susie Crowe, Administrative Assistant.**

**“It is great to see these important paintings restored to their former glory. The Pavilion is the perfect place to house these heritage items for future generations to come and appreciate. My thanks go to everyone involved in the project”.**  
**Cllr M Dannatt, Town Mayor.**



## ACHEIVEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

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Against all the odds and during a global pandemic these important pieces of transport history have been brought back to their former glory and are displayed ready for everyone to come and see. The information board alongside the paintings will enable people who may not be familiar with the works to understand more about the artist and why these paintings mean so much to the residents of Skegness and those who love to visit this seaside resort. The paintings have been preserved for generations to come and Skegness Town Council is proud to be able to make them available to view free of charge. The building that they are housed in was delivered on budget with fully accessible changing place facilities for the profoundly disabled, meaning that nobody will miss out on the opportunity to visit the building and see these restored paintings. These paintings are a great addition and attraction for the new community building.



The interest and feedback already generated has been great, but more work is needed to evaluate and monitor this project as the building opens up and people have the opportunity to visit. We look forward to further promoting the community hall, café and paintings within the Pavilion through our website and social media channels. The Council plans to hold a small unveiling event this year and then a larger community celebration next year where we can invite Councillors, representatives of local organisations, the press and community groups.

We envisage these paintings being a major part of future heritage days that the Council participates in. These heritage open days will give the Council the opportunity to display other historic artifacts, photographs and pictures, alongside the Jolly Fisherman paintings, that the Council are custodian of.

**So, what's next?** The Council has grown in confidence, now knowing that it can deliver large scale projects successfully. The Council aspires to create a heritage centre alongside the Pavilion so that other pieces of historic interest can be displayed for the education, enjoyment and wellbeing of the community. It is hoped this next project can help support the Town's recovery from the pandemic.