

# Belle Vue Park

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of Lowestoft's First Public Park

Insert Photo from Opening

## Establishment of the Park

Before the 1840s there were no public parks in Britain, with many towns in close proximity to the rural hinterland prior to the development of urban populations, which caused civilians to become increasingly separated from the natural world. Campaigners and politicians, such as Edwin Chadwick and Robert Peel, championed the creation of green spaces for the urban populations.

Lowestoft had no free public park until 1872, when the Chairman of the Lowestoft Improvement Committee, James Peto, and two other members, William Youngman and William Rix Seago, proposed a piece of common land be converted into a free public park as a symbol of Lowestoft's civic pride. Originally called 'Arboretum Hill', it was renamed to Belle Vue Park and opened to the public in 1874.

## Park Design

The layout of the park followed the contemporary pleasure garden design, which was an outdoor ticket-for-entry entertainment space that began popular in London during the 18th century as the growth of an urban middle class and rising incomes led to several innovations in paid-for entertainment. The pleasure gardens were designed as formal gardens, with shrubberies and miniature waterways, and buildings for performances and dining.

Belle Vue continues to develop with new additions since the formation of the new Lowestoft Town Council in 2017. The Peace Garden, designed in the shape and colours of the Flanders' Poppy, commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of the *Great War* and those who sacrificed their lives for peace. The Rose Garden is a virtual memorial garden for local people to remember their loved ones and support the James Paget Hospital Charity. It is planted with red roses, to mark the Hospital's 40th Birthday in 2022, and has a QR code to view online memorials.

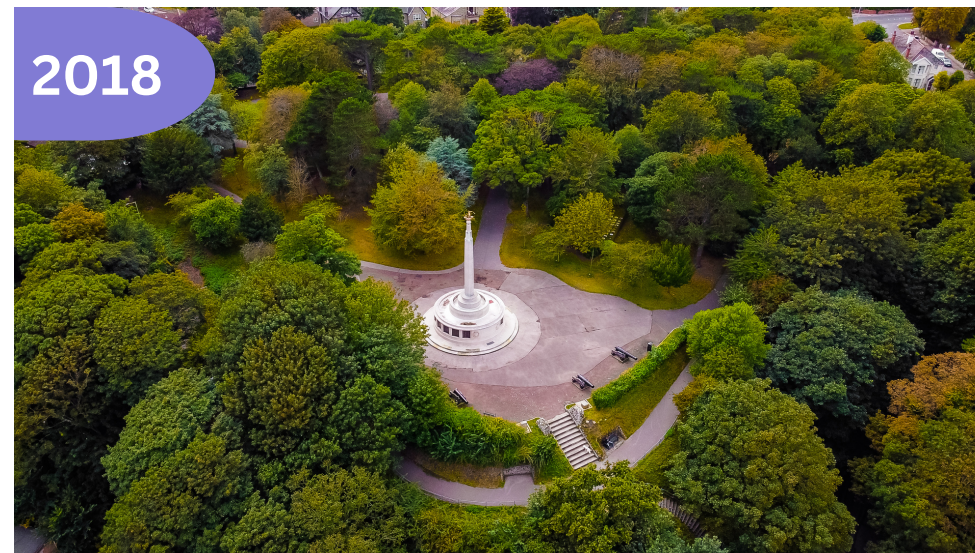


## The 'Vue' from Above

1928



2018



## Notable Aspects

### Ground Keeper Thatched Cottage

In August 1873 a tender of £256 from G Simpson was accepted to erect a thatched keeper's cottage. A grounds keeper was established in 1874 to oversee the park. In 1990 a fire destroyed the lodge and in 1991 it was rebuilt to the original design.

### Bandstand/Naval Memorial

The bandstand was erected in 1873 to provide beautiful sea views. It was demolished in 1952 and replaced with a memorial commemorating officers of the Royal Naval Patrol Service, as Lowestoft had been the Depot for the Royal Naval Patrol Service during World War II.

Built by the Imperial War Graves Commission, it was unveiled by the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Rhoderick McGrigor on 7 October 1953. Three restored cannons were added to the site in 1972.

### Jubilee Bridge

In 1887, Council member Mr Arthur Stebbing proposed a bridge be erected over the ravine on the northern boundary of the park to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.