

# Folkestone Leas

## Cliff Lift

Compiled by

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(2010)

CMG Archives

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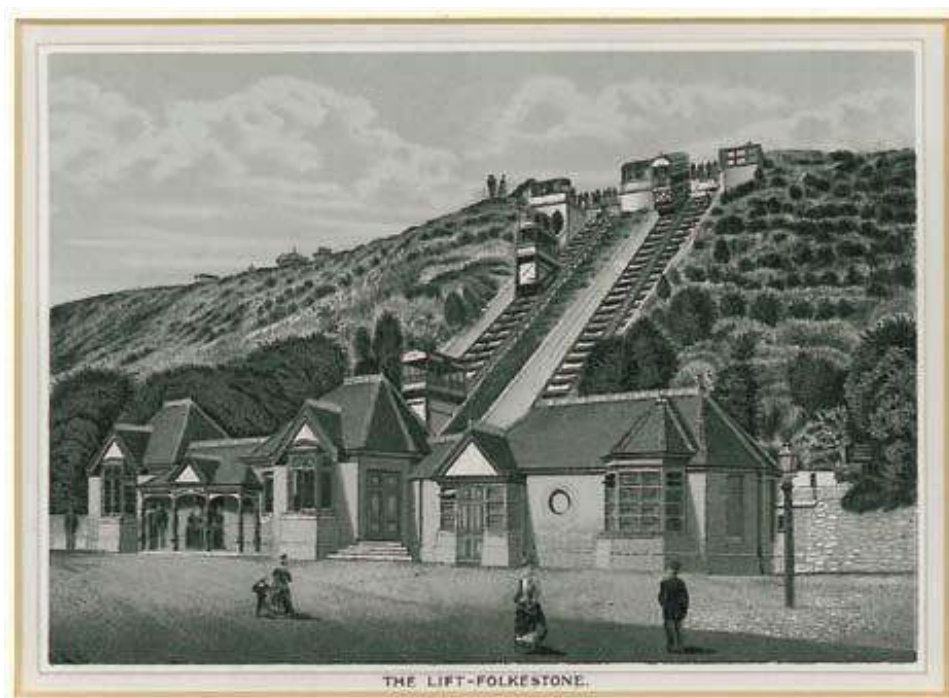
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The Leas, water powered, Cliff Lift was opened on 16 September 1885 to carry passengers up and down the cliff between the promenade and the road above.





The lift originally employed a twin set of rails running for 50 meters, and had a gradient of 1:1.64.



In 1890, a second set of rails were added, which ran for 47 meters, and had a gradient of 1:1.55.

The lift was powered by water, and up to 1890 the released water was allowed to simply drain away. However, from 1890 onwards the water system was redesigned to recycle the used water.



The second set of rails were taken out of service in October 1966; and on 30 June 2009 the water lift was taken out of service with the possibility of a permanent closure because of running costs (£90,000 per year).

The Folkestone Leas lifts were well patronised in the past, and an estimated 50,000,000 passengers had been carried during the past 125 years.



(Picture above - Location of the Folkestone Cliff Lift)



Shepway District Council terminated its full repairing lease of the lift on 30 June 2009; it owns the freehold of the Lower Leas including part of the car park adjacent to the lower lift station, and has a 999 year lease on the whole of the cliff face and The Leas above.

The Folkestone Estate owns the freehold of the lift, the whole of the cliff face and The Leas subject to the Council's 999 year lease, the 'Marina Site' car park to the east of the lower lift station and the car park between Marine Crescent and Marine Parade; it also has the benefit of restrictive covenants over some of the surrounding land that was formerly part of the Estate.

Roger De Haan and his charitable trusts have the freehold of part of the council car park, the former funfair site and the Folkestone harbour.





It is hoped that a charitable Trust will be established to take control of the lift operations and future developments.





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**BBC News Item**

26 July 2010, 08:16

**Coastal Water Lift on Folkestone Cliffs Reopened**

The Grade II-listed Leas Lift in Folkestone was built in 1885

A Victorian water-powered lift in Folkestone which closed last year has reopened following restoration work.



The Grade II-listed Leas Lift on cliffs was built in 1885 and carried passengers for the last time on 30 June [2009] after Shepway council's lease ran out.

It is one of the oldest water lifts in the UK and transported people between the seafront and the promenade.

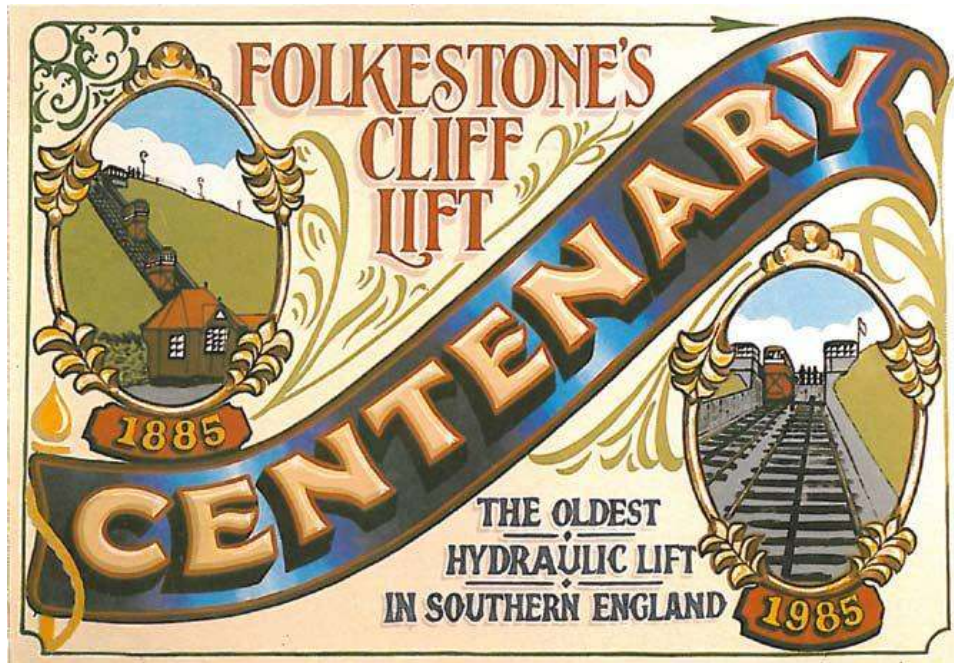
Residents have formed the Folkestone Leas Lift Community Interest company to manage the attraction.

They hope enough people will use the lift to travel between the town centre and the beach for it to make a profit.

The lift was closed in June 2009 after the Shepway District Council decided it was too expensive to run.

(BBC - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-10758519>)

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In 1985 the lift's centenary was celebrated.

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