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Halsgrove Sales Contacts:

Sue Rhodes-Thompson – DDI 01823 653770 suet@halsgrove.com

Caren Ash – DDI 01823 653772 carena@halsgrove.com

Marie Lewis – DDI 01823 653771 mariel@halsgrove.com

Andrew Stirling – Mobile 07971 572468 andrews@halsgrove.com

BOURNEMOUTH – THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Rodney Legg

REPRINT

Born in Bournemouth, as was his father a century ago, Dorset historian Rodney Legg is ideally placed to return to his roots to present memories of the town. Focussing on the Bournemouth's Edwardian heyday that faded away with the Great War, they carry on through the devastation of Second World War bombing to the era of postwar austerity and change.

The creation of the Undercliff Drive was soon followed by breaches from the sea and dramatic cliff falls as nature attempted to reinstate the status quo. The Pier story started the same way, with the original timber framework being replaced in iron by grand master of Victorian pier-building Eugenius Birch. Paddle-steamers returned for their swansong as similar sounds and smells also disappeared when the railway service into Bournemouth Central ceased, in 1967, to be the last steam-hauled mainline in the land.

Inland, the spectacle of great events included the aviation meeting that claimed the life of Charles Stewart Rolls in 1910, the first fatality in Britain of powered flight. Crowds filled the Square for carnivals, to glimpse General William Booth of the Salvation Army, and to mark the death of King Edward VII.

It is all here, evocatively archived by father and son, Edward and Rodney Legg. Together they witnessed a century of change and accumulated a remarkable collection of pictures. Included in this volume are over 250 nostalgic photographs, many never reproduced before. Above all, this is a celebration of a much-loved seaside town that is so more than just a genteel resort: it is a strong community forged by a century of tumultuous change.

Rodney Legg was born in Bournemouth and has emerged as one of Dorset's most prolific historians. Having founded *Dorset – The County Magazine* in 1968, as well as starting the Tyneham Action Group, he also edited *Purbeck and Poole Magazine*. He has published hundreds of country walks including a total of 140 circuits for *Somerset Life*. Through his efforts, with a twenty-five-year personal campaign, Thomas Hardy's Max Gate home in Dorchester was eventually opened to the public. He achieved the same for Fort Henry at Studland in 2002. Nationally he is still active in the environmental movement having been chairman of the Open Spaces Society since 1989 and a member of the ruling council of the National Trust from 1990.

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Halsgrove House, Ryelands Industrial Est.ate,

Bagley Road, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ

Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796

www.halsgrove.com e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com



By 1890 there was standing room only on Bournemouth beach, as is shown by this view from the pier, northeastwards to East Cliff Hall (top right).



The Royal Arcade (centre).



Pier Approach and the creation of the grand master of Victorian pier-building, Eugenius Birch, which opened in 1880.



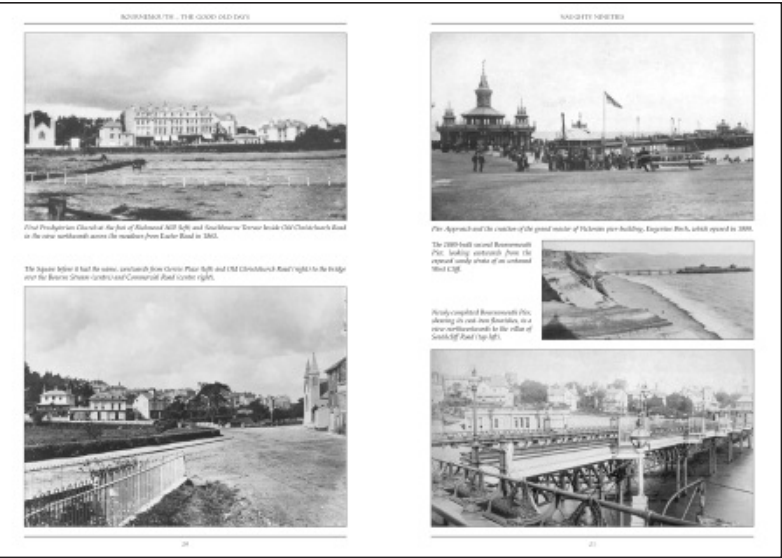
Work proceeding on the construction of East Cliff Lift in the autumn of 1907.



Children paddling and walking the plank on east beach beside Bournemouth Pier at the turn of the twentieth century.



Boscombe Pier, seen in its heyday in a view eastwards from below the Sandhill, was the second of the town's three piers.



Example of a double page spread.