

Name: Bryn Parry

Title: *Towering Ambitions: (re)learning ambition & legacy - New Brighton Tower Football Club and the Watkin Tower / Wembley Park projects*

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Recent headlines show concern over the grassroots legacies of the *London 2012 Olympic Games* and conflict over the *Olympic Stadium's* legacies; especially the impact of its preferred legacy tenant (BBC, 2011). Meanwhile, media debate about whether financial affairs are ruining football, from the *Premier League* down, continue to rage. Historians know, 'we have been here before' (BBC, 2009).

The *Eiffel Tower* and the *Blackpool Tower* are well known, but the legacies of *New Brighton Tower* (The Times, *n.d.*)(New Brighton History, 2009) and the *Watkins Tower, Wembley*, (Sutton, 2004)(Museum of London, 2005) register less memorably, today; whilst some may think that they know the leisure & sporting legacies of *Wembley* (Hill & Varrasi, 2009), this is rarely the case (Cronin, 2002). The lessons of the *New Brighton Tower and Recreation Company's* ambitions (The Times, *n.d.*) and of its *New Brighton Tower FC* (BBC, 2009) (New Brighton, 2011) are, sadly, being, re-learned by modern football - at considerable cost to all.

The story of the *NBTRC's* ambitions and its *New Brighton Tower FC* sounds as if it is taken from today's headlines (BBC, 2009). It encompasses conflict between an [initially] wealthy commercial concern [boasting Britain's tallest building], and the *Football League* authorities, record-breaking transfer fees, large squad sizes, a club excluded from the transfer market over debts, fans demanding a say, an over-sized stadium where athletics and football sat uneasily together, before the plug is pulled when sporting success doesn't reflect investment. In five years, *NBTFC* ran the gamut of issues now being blamed for the ills of both the professional and grassroots game - whilst both the *New Brighton Tower* grounds, themselves, and the latest phase in the resort's [£60m.] regeneration project illustrate lifecycles in the policy and planning of legacies (Parry, 2004).

Wembley Stadium's evolution, through periods of success and set-backs, should have tempered the ambitions of both the *WNSL* and the *London 2012* organisers. Thankfully, current budget shortfalls on *Olympic* projects have not forced such radical measures as Britain testing the *Geneva Convention's* regulations - to secure its [1948] *Olympic* construction workforce (BBC, 2010).

Comparing and contrasting the lessons from these two legacies, illuminates current thinking and practice, regarding other leisure & sporting legacies (Parry, 2004).

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