

# HASTINGS PIER CHARITY

HASTINGS  
PIER

## Steamships at Hastings Pier



Passengers aboard the Devonian in 1925, (HPC001.001)



Supported by  
**The National Lottery®**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



[www.hastingspier.org.uk](http://www.hastingspier.org.uk)

## Steamships at Hastings Pier

The paddle steamer Carrick Castle was purchased second-hand in 1885 by the newly formed Hastings and St Leonards Passenger Steamship Co Ltd. She began trips from Hastings Pier in May 1885, the year this picture was painted, taking up to 360 passengers at a time.



A Painting of Steamship Carrick Castle with Hastings Pier in background. By George Mears, 1885. This Painting is in Hastings Museum.

Not all the ships that worked from Hastings Pier were paddle steamers. This is the Lady Brassey at the landing stage on eastern side of the Pier. She was built in 1886 in Newcastle for the Hastings and St Leonards Passenger Steamship Co, could carry 372 passengers, and had two steam driven propellers at the rear. But she didn't last long because in 1890 she was sold on to Amazon Steamship Co Ltd in Paraguay.



The Lady Brassey moored at Hastings Pier head. (HPC006.128)

Paddle steamers were the preferred craft because they could operate in shallow water, were highly manoeuvrable, and so were ideal for running the seaside excursions from piers which had become very popular by the 1880s. Between 1886 and 1890 the landing stages at Hastings Pier were extended twice, on the eastern and southern sides, so that up to four vessels could be moored at a time.

The Lady Brassey was replaced by the Seagull, which was really a steam tug with a passenger certificate. The 121 feet paddle steamer Seagull was operated by the Hastings Steamboat Company from Hastings Pier between 1891 and 1895.



PS Seagull off Rye, on a stereoscope card HPC061.019

Edwardian postcard showing a paddle steamer tied up at the extended landing stage on the eastern side of the Pier. (HPC006.010)



The little booth in front of the Pavilion just left of centre in this picture is selling tickets for trips on the paddle steamer Alexandra which ran from Hastings Pier between 1895 and 1904. (HPC006.012)



The Alexandra was an ex-cross channel ferry steamer formerly operated by one of the railway companies. She was purchased for Hastings to run day trips to France. Edwardian holidaymakers were by definition quite well off but even so the prospect of a day out across the channel must have seemed very exotic. (HPC006.125)



### **The Waverley**

There were two steamers named Waverley, both owned by P&A Campbell, and at least one of them came to Hastings. The first was built in 1885, the second in 1907. The second was bombed and lost in 1941, and the first was in such a bad state at the end of the war that she was scrapped. Today's Waverley was built in 1946 to replace her predecessors.

During the 1970's, the only paddle steamer in revenue earning service was P.S. Waverley, an LNER paddle steamer built in 1947 and operating on the River Clyde in Scotland by Caledonian MacBrayne. However, in 1974, she was offered as a gift to the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society (PSPS) for the token sum of 1 pound and Douglas McGowan, Honorary President of the PSPS Scottish Branch, handed over the 1 pound note on behalf of the PSPS on 8th August that year. P.S. Waverley was then prepared and went into service under PSPS ownership in May 1975.

After 2 years' operating on the River Clyde, a decision was made to expand its operational area to the rest of Britain, and in 1977 P.S. Waverley offered cruises from Liverpool and North Wales. This was a great success and from 1978 P.S. Waverley operated cruises from the Sussex Coastal towns of Hastings, Eastbourne, Newhaven and Worthing, as well as other parts of Britain. From the mid 1980's however P.S. Waverley has only operated from the 4 Sussex resorts of Eastbourne and Worthing, due to the unsuitability of Newhaven and the poor condition of the landing stage at Hastings Pier. (HPC043.025)



**Steamers owned, or hired by, Hastings-owned operating companies which worked off the Hastings and St Leonards piers.**

Steamer	Built	Length in feet	Gross Tonnage	At Hastings/St Leonards
Alexandra	1863 Greenock	208	369	1895-1904
Bonnie Princess	1882 Rutherglen	240	434	1896-99
Britannia	1897 Port Glasgow	200	318	1897-1904
Carrick Castle	1870 Paisley	192	176	1885-88
Conqueror	1890 North Shields	132	210	1890, 1893-95
Cynthia	1892 South Shields	153	235	1905-07
Glen Rosa	1877 Greenock	206	254	1892
Halcyon	1887 Kinghorn, Fife	209	458	1905
Lady Brassey	1888 North Shields	160	248	1888-90
Nelson	1875 Preston	140	166	1887
Queen of Thanet	1864 Glasgow	142	159	1884-85
Ruby	1854 Renfrew	181	264	1896-97
Seagull	1877 North Shields	121	107	1891-95

Local Company	Initials	Years' Operating
Hastings and St Leonards Passenger Steamship Company	HSLPSC	1885-87
Hastings, St Leonards-on-Sea and Eastbourne Steamboat Company	HSLSESC	1888-93
Hastings and St Leonards Steamboat Company	HSLSC	1904
Hastings, St Leonards and Eastbourne Steamship Company	HSLESC	1905-07

Steve Peak, author of A Pier Without a Peer, The History of Hastings Pier and Peerless Piers and his website <http://hastingschronicle.net>

HMAG – Hastings Museum and Art Gallery <http://www.hmag.org.uk>

Please note that this information is provided free of charge and whilst Hastings Pier Charity makes every effort to keep the information on the website accurate, the majority of the information comes from the general public and volunteers. We therefore disclaim any warranty or representation, express or implied about its accuracy, completeness or appropriateness for a particular purpose. If there are any errors, please contact Hastings Pier by email [info@hpcharity.co.uk](mailto:info@hpcharity.co.uk)