

Swanage Pier Interesting

Facts and Figures

- The original Swanage Pier was constructed in 1859/60 by James Walton of London for the Swanage Pier and Tramway Company (now known as Swanage Pier Company).
- The original Pier was built primarily for shipping the local Purbeck stone to London.
- The original Swanage Pier was opened by John Mowlem.
- Horses were used to pull carts along the narrow-gauge tramway which ran along the Pier and seafront.
- A second Pier was built in 1896 and opened to traffic on March 29th, 1897.
- The first paddle steamer was the P.S. Lord Elgin, which landed people on May 1st, 1896.
- The last paddle steamer was the P.S. Embassy.
- In 1940 the landward end of the Pier was blown up as an anti-invasion precaution.
- The Pier is owned and operated by the Swanage Pier Trust.
- The Trust was formed in 1994.
- The tidal rise and fall are 2m (6.5 ft).
- Some species of fish caught from Swanage Pier are Wrasse, Pout, Mackerel, Bass, Dog Fish.
- There are 19 lampposts along the pier, each one has been designed to look like an original Victorian lamppost.
- There are over 11000 brass plaques along the pier. Sponsorship of planks/plaques costs £200.00.



Swanage Pier Timeline A Tale of Two Piers

1859/60 - The original Swanage Pier was constructed by James Walton of London for the Swanage Pier and Tramway Company. It soon became clear that the Pier was unable to cope with the ever-increasing traffic and it was decided a new and longer Pier was needed.

1895 - Construction on the “new” pier began

1896 - The first paddle steamer arrived at “new” Swanage Pier, the Lord Elgin

1897 - The new pier officially opened to traffic

1927 - By now the Gribble worm had caused much damage by eating away at the wood, that concrete cladding had to be added to several of the badly eroded timber piles.

1940 - The landward end of the Pier was blown up as an anti-invasion precaution

1948 - The blown-up section is restored, and steamer traffic was temporarily revived

1966 - Steamer services discontinued. The last paddle steamer alongside Swanage Pier was The Embassy and the pier deteriorated for almost 30 years and eventually closed.

1976 - Grade 2 listed status awarded

1994 - The Swanage Pier Trust acquired control of the Pier Company, with the aim of keeping the Pier open to residents and visitors and providing for its eventual total restoration.

1995 - The Friends of Swanage Pier was formed to raise funds for the pier.

1998 - Swanage Pier re-opening ceremony

2013/14 - Further restoration work was undertaken to replace storm damaged timber piles and surface decking.

2017/2018 - Foundations for the Future Project – to replace and repair ageing wooden piles in a critical condition. Along with the refurbishment of Marine Villas providing new exhibition and learning facilities, improved catering and retail offers

