

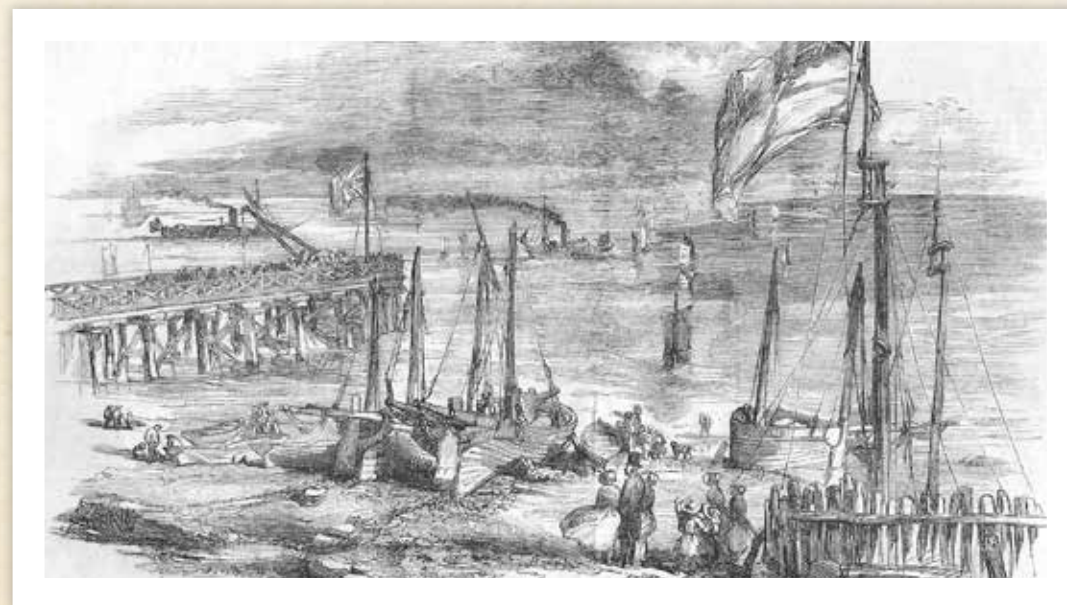
DEAL PIER

The first pier

Despite once being a bustling port, Deal never had a recognisable harbour or any docks. Many schemes for proper quays had been put forward, but none were ever carried through. In 1824, permission was granted to build a harbour near Sandown Castle, but nothing further was done about these proposals.

The first Deal Pier, built in 1838, was a wooden landing jetty. This helped tourism to flourish by allowing people to disembark easily from steamers. Ships could also berth alongside where goods could be landed or loaded. Before then, Deal galley boats had transported cargo while the ships waited offshore.

The pier was built to the north of the Royal Hotel, opposite Oak Street, and was designed by the famous Victorian engineer, Sir John Rennie (1794-1874). It was originally intended to be 135 metres (445 feet) long, but because of financial problems, only 76 metres (250 feet) were completed. The pier was reasonably successful, but the structure began to decay due to storm damage and sandworm attack. It was largely washed away in 1857 and its last remains were salvaged and sold for just £50.



Credit: Colin Vorrall

The first pier was wooden and was designed by Sir John Rennie. It was built in 1838 but was mostly washed away in 1857. Two steamers can be seen in the distance.



Credit: Colin Vorrall

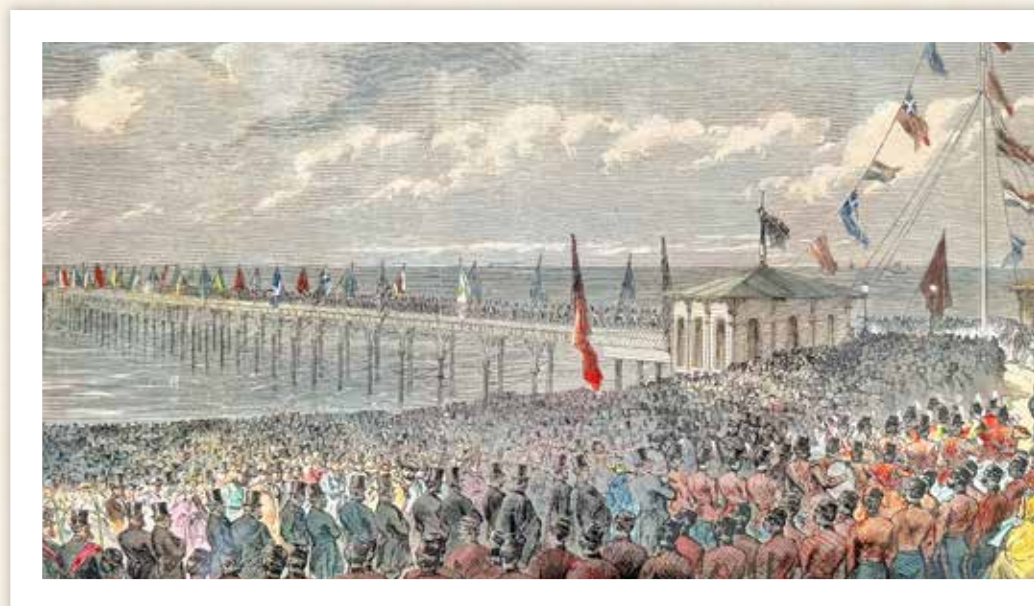
Fishing has always been popular on Deal Pier, as this photograph of ladies fishing around 1910 shows.

The second pier

A new iron pier, on the south esplanade (where the present pier stands), was built in 1863-4. It was 340 metres (1100 feet) long, designed by the civil engineer and noted builder of promenade piers Eugenius Birch (1818-1884). Despite more financial difficulties, a grand opening ceremony took place in 1864. Later extensions in 1870 and 1886 saw the addition of a reading room and a pavilion.

Some of the local mariners considered the iron pier was a danger to shipping. A storm in 1871 caused the loss of eight men in the well-known Deal lugger, *Reform*, which had been launched to answer a distress signal. Rough seas pulled it against the pier where it sank between the piles. Ship collisions in 1873 and 1884 caused damage that needed significant repairs.

Archive photographs show how popular the pier was around the turn of the 20th century. The pier drew huge crowds who visited it for amusement and leisure activities, as well as to get a breath of bracing sea air, or take a trip on a steamer. National angling competitions were a regular feature of the 20th century. The conditions in Deal



Credit: Colin Vorrall

A large crowd gathers at the opening ceremony of the second Deal pier, an iron structure, in 1864

were promoted as the best in the country for rod and line fishing.

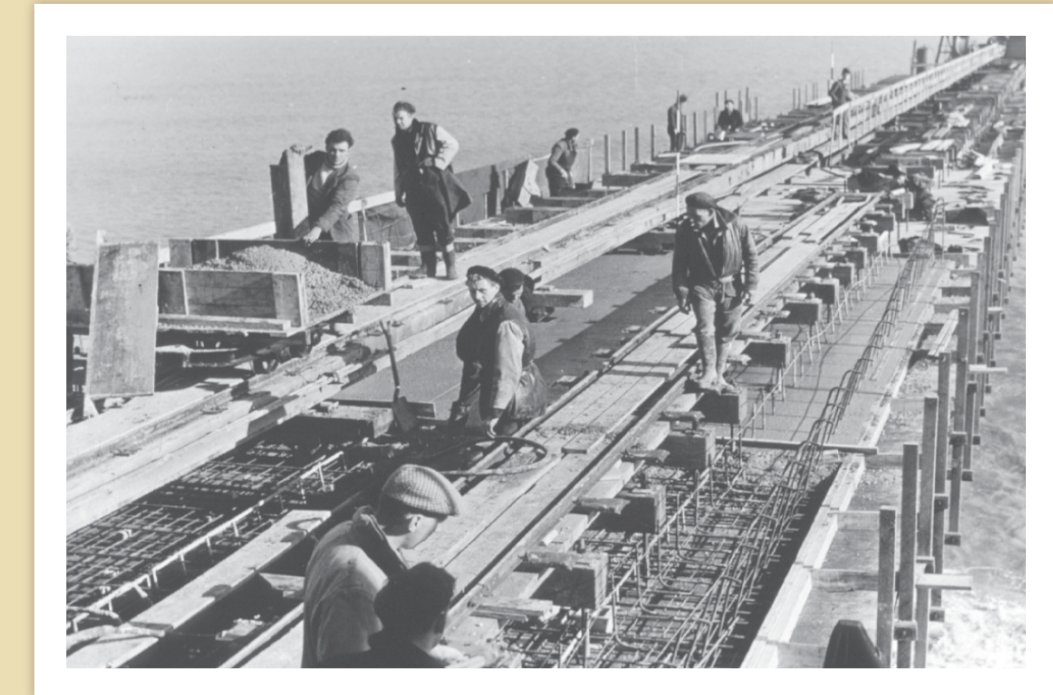
Deal Borough organised annual programmes of shows that were held at the Pavilion at the end of the pier and it bought the pier for £10,000 in 1920. It remained a popular pleasure pier until the start of the Second World War.

During the war, on 29 January 1940, the *Nora*, a Dutch merchant ship, struck a mine and, drifting helplessly, crashed into the pier, cutting it in two. Soon after, the pier was completely demolished as an anti-invasion measure.

Today's pier

The present concrete pier was begun in October 1954 and was designed by Sir W Halcrow & Partners. It was officially opened by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh (1921-2021) in 1957. The new pier is constructed mainly from concrete-clad steel. It is 313 metres (1026 feet) in length and ends in a three-tiered pier-head with a café and fishing decks.

In 1998, a large bronze statue, 'Embracing the Sea', by sculptor John Buck was commissioned and placed at the entrance to the pier. During 2008, a new cafe designed by renowned architects Niall McLaughlin, was built at the end of the pier.



d10012

The construction of the current Deal Pier in 1955. Work started in 1954 and took two years to complete.

The pier remains popular with holidaymakers and is also a noted fishing venue.

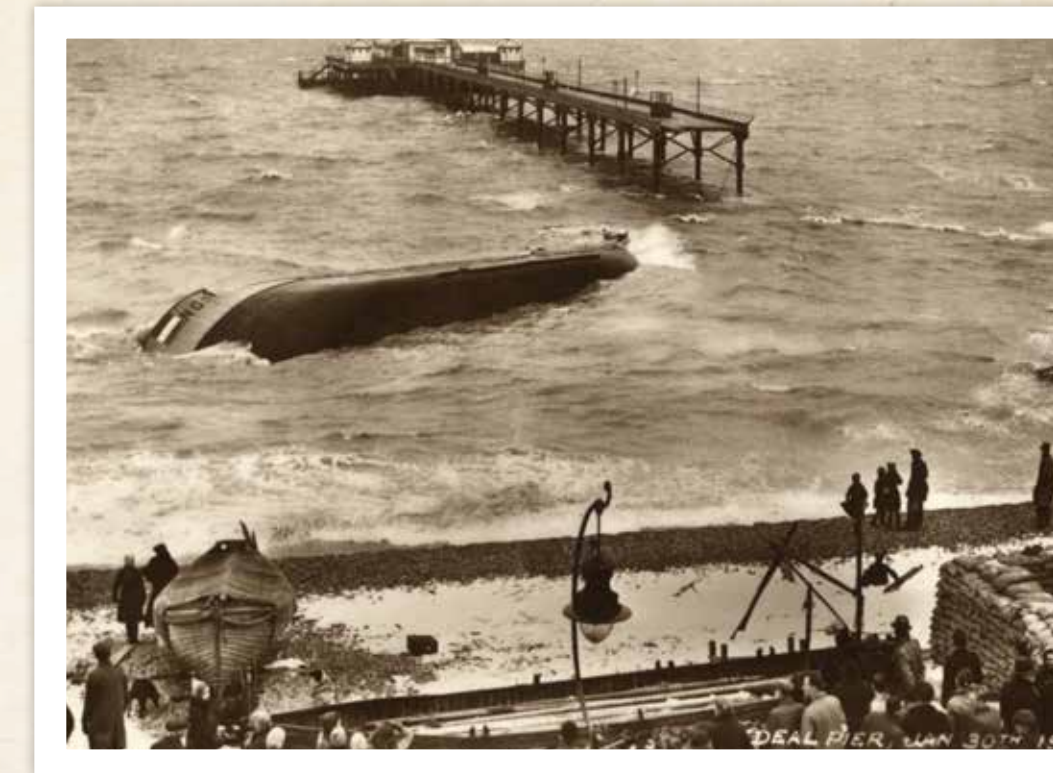
The legend of the Lady Luvibond

The *Lady Luvibond* is a legendary schooner that was alleged to be wrecked on the Goodwin Sands, although no contemporary records of it exist. Legend says that it reappears every 50 years as a ghost ship. People gather on the pier to see if they can spot it. The next gathering will be in 2048!



d34492

The grand opening ceremony of Deal's third pier took place in 1957 by HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The band of the Royal Marines, a Guard of Honour and a very large crowd of onlookers attended the ceremony.



d30809

The wreck of the Nora and Deal Pier in 1940. The Nora had been holed by a drifting magnetic mine and stormy seas had drifted it into the centre of the pier structure, completely dividing the pier from front to end. The Nora lay for many years upside-down on the beach, at the side of the pier that was cut in two.

Find this and more heritage panels at www.towntrail.uk


Funded by
UK Government



Text copyright Dover District Council.

Every effort has been made to ascertain who owns the images on this panel but please contact DDC if you are aware of any further information.