

The FUNNEL

Friends of Waverley Newsletter - Winter 2022



A Master's Perspective



Meet Samuel Brown



A Purser's Tale of "Going South"



Waverley rests at London's Tower Pier on the evening of Sunday 25 September after her first cruise to the Capital since 2018.

A Real Sense of Achievement

There is no doubt that 2022 was a successful season for Waverley with over 101,000 passenger journeys recorded, the most since 2016, and her return to southern waters. Having celebrated the 75th Anniversary the ship and crew quickly settled into the main Clyde season. A few technical niggles kept the engine room crew on their toes but as July turned to August routines were well established and the ship operated well.

The return to Ayr was hugely positive. It was fantastic to witness the sense of anticipation as around 400 people formed a queue down Ayr harbour for her arrival. The sight of Waverley that afternoon, dressed overall as she made her entrance into my home town, was a proud moment for the whole Waverley team.

As the Clyde season drew to a close in late August there was a sense of adventure building throughout the crew. Taking Waverley away from her home waters is always noteworthy but doing so after an absence of four years cannot be underestimated.

After fuelling at Campbeltown in the early evening of Monday 29 August Waverley headed for the Irish Sea with her next port being Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight.

Possibly the most significant moment in the season was standing on the paddlebox steps as Tower Bridge came into view on Waverley's first upriver sailing to London. The achievement of getting Waverley back to London can't be overstated. The sight and sound of Waverley passing under Tower Bridge always creates a response from those aboard and watching from ashore, but on the evening of 25 September the sound of her steam whistle echoing off the bascules was very special. There have been some dark days in Waverley's preservation story since she last visited London in 2018, and at times you could be forgiven for thinking her days of operating on the Thames were over.

"there had been some conversations within the Company that the season might be over."

In fact only four days previous to her first passenger sailing on the Thames there were some

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Waverley approaches Campbeltown with Davaar Island in view on the evening of Monday 29 August. She called at Campbeltown for fuel before heading down the Irish Sea bound for the South Coast.

conversations within the Company that the season might be over. A routine paddle wheel inspection on arrival at Gravesend, after the South Coast season, revealed that a vital component in the starboard paddle wheel had failed and it would be unwise to move the paddle wheel. However, thanks to the efforts of our engineering team and a key supplier a new part was made, transported and fitted, the Thames sailings could finally go ahead!

Quality Assurance

During the final weekend of sailings on the Clyde we had a quality assurance visit by VisitScotland. Following the visit a detailed report was produced which identifies how Waverley performs in several areas including retailing, catering, cleanliness, staff hospitality and the overall experience for visitors. I am pleased to report that we have retained our four star VisitScotland tour rating which is very good news. The report identifies many positives and strongly praises the crew and awards the core experience the highest ratings. There are some suggestions for future improvements which we will be able to implement.

During the season the level of activity on our social media channels increased. Regular daily posts help ensure our Facebook page receives impressions in the millions. Notable this season is the level of praise for the efforts of the crew and the shore team, this is very satisfying to see and helps motivate when the next challenge appears on the horizon. We plan to use some of the comments in future marketing materials to add credibility to what Waverley offers.

Directors and Trustees

The Waverley Boards (Waverley Excursions Ltd. & Waverley Steam Navigation Co. Ltd) continue to meet quarterly. An Action Plan has been developed which contains actions the Boards consider necessary or desirable to support Waverley's continued operation into the future.

Essentially there are five key areas and Task Groups established for each. Notably the Pounds Task Group must make quick progress as there is a financial shortfall to cover the 2023 dry docking and re-commissioning costs. The Group is seeking to identify all possible sources of income / funding for Waverley beyond what we already achieve.

The first objective of the Partners Task Group was to seek discussion and conversation within the Cross-party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism at the Scottish Parliament, and we are delighted that Waverley is now a member of that Group. The Partners Group is also concerned with making the most of our relationships with stakeholders including suppliers and public bodies.

At the last Board meeting in November, Scott Johnson was appointed as Chairman of Waverley Excursions. Scott has been a Board member over the past two seasons and has quickly gained an excellent grasp of all things Waverley. I look forward to working with Scott and using his extensive business experiences in a Waverley way.

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The newly varnished main deck pictured in early November. It is now covered and protected ready for May 2023.

Winter Refit 22-23

Within days of the crew leaving in October work got underway to strip, sand and revarnish the main deck around the engine & boiler rooms. After four coats of varnish the deck was looking immaculate, it was then covered to protect it through the winter refit period.

I am pleased to report that both boilers have now been cleaned with all tubes and both furnaces swept out. This is a very dirty and uncomfortable annual job.

Work is now well underway on dismantling and surveying various pumps in the engine room. So far we have found that the diesel fire pump will need to be replaced rather than repaired. Early in the new year the focus will be on the steering engine, windlass and main engine bearings. The dry dock specification is now being prepared and is looking to be lengthy. We are intending to replace the starboard spring beam and some paddlebox steel on the starboard side, this will be an expensive task. The expected cost of dry docking will be around £250,000 (funds we don't currently have) with the winter refit spend on the ship looking highly likely to exceed £500,000.

Looking to 2023

Planning for next season is well underway. The Oban & Inner Hebrides timetable is now drafted as well as the Clyde. While large parts of the timetable do remain set since they work well, we are looking for some novelty sailings to attract attention and therefore increased footfall up the gangway. On the Clyde Waverley can currently use sixteen piers but we are looking to increase that and have identified two further berths worthy of looking at to see if she can call.

I believe no pier should be dismissed as a possible berth without due consideration. Each and every pier call brings more passengers and therefore vital revenue. Put simply, piers bring passengers and passengers bring pounds. I am grateful for the assistance we have had from the National Piers



One of Waverley's boilers opened up with the tubes visible. Each tube is individually cleaned by brushing through the fine soot - a messy task!

Society in liaising with pier owners to help facilitate Waverley calling.

A major aim for 2023 is to return Waverley to the Bristol Channel as it has been far too long since the sight of a paddle steamer arriving at Ilfracombe was witnessed. Until 2018 Waverley tended to visit the Bristol Channel in late August on her way to the South Coast, but we would rather she operated in June to take advantage of light nights. By operating for a period covering three weekends it should enable sufficient trips to be recorded by the Bridge Officers to enable them to gain local pilotage exemptions. Operating in June should also coincide with the Victorian and Steampunk celebration in Ilfracombe and therefore help to boost loadings. Liverpool and Llandudno also remain firmly on the table for 2023 although we are reliant on pier repairs being completed at Llandudno.

2022 has been a good year for Waverley, but not one without its challenges. I must acknowledge the whole Waverley team as they have worked hard to ensure the ship operated. Everyone who works afloat and ashore plays a vital part in making it all possible.

Helen Ellis has been our accountant for the past 19 years. Throughout her time with Waverley Helen has been an exceptional member of the office team, (and Purser on call). She has always carried out her duties with tremendous diligence and professionalism, frequently working evenings and weekends to manage all aspects of Waverley's finances. Helen is soon to retire and I would like to wish her the very best for the future and hope that she will enjoy the other side of Waverley - as a passenger. Helen, THANK YOU, for everything you have done for Waverley.

Finally, I would like to express my personal thanks to you as a Friend of Waverley for your support over the past 12 months. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and I send my very best wishes for 2023.

Paul Semple, General Manager



Season Highlights - A Master's Perspective

Captain Dominic McCall was appointed full time Master ahead of the 2022 season. We asked Captain McCall for his thoughts on his first season in command of Waverley.



As I'm sure many of those reading will be aware I was delighted to be appointed as Waverley's permanent master in April of this year. It has been an absolute pleasure to meet many of you through the year. The season seemed to finish almost as soon as it had started, I'm sure you can all agree the summer really did seem to fly by.

"Waverley was back!"

The season started with a few days on the Clyde, reliability was good, crew were happy, and preparations were well in hand for the ship to head north to Oban for a few days enjoying the Scottish

West Coast. This was the first time the ship had left her normal operating area since 2018, and there was a real sense of excitement amongst the sleepy eyes as we let go from Pacific Quay at 0700 to start the passage north. The arrival in Oban really was quite special, being welcomed by the local Piper, and many excited folk lined the portable barriers protecting the berth to welcome the ship into Oban's North Pier. Waverley was back!

There followed some really enjoyable days cruising, a personal highlight was the visit to Portree where Waverley must have looked quite a sight as we backed out steering through the channel to make our departure on both occasions. It was a shame we had to lose a couple of days due to the bad weather which presented itself, but I'm sure everyone appreciates these things happen.

The next big event was the 16th June and the 75th Anniversary cruise. This was a very special day for everyone involved in Waverley, both past and present, and it turned into a real celebration. The sailing up Loch Long to Arrochar has established itself as one of my more favourite trips to enjoy as the season progressed. The sound of the paddle beats and the whistle echoing around the top end of the loch is a sound that I can still remember now as I write this article on a miserable November morning sat in our Glasgow office.

Through the Clyde season excitement gradually built as the ship was getting closer to setting sail for the

Waverley cruising up Loch Long to Arrochar on the 16th June to mark the 75th Anniversary of her maiden voyage.



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sunny South Coast. Monday 29 August was finally the day, weather forecast was good, by lunchtime stores were onboard and the ship was ready for sea so off we went. Once again, the crew were excited, some were taking some well earned rest before the busy last few weeks of the season, and others were enjoying the trip South.

The weather turned out well, and before long we were approaching the Needles Lighthouse, Waverley had finally made it “down South” again after 4 years of absence. There were many successful sailings on the South Coast, and it was great to see so many faces delighted to see the ship back. She clearly had been missed. It brought quite a sense of pride to myself and the crew to bring the ship back to so many people who had clearly missed her so much. The round the Island cruises were enjoyed by all, and cruising the Jurassic Coast to Durdle Door I found a particular highlight. Some of the days the weather could not have been better for these trips.

Following on from a period on the Thames, where the opening of Tower Bridge at night amongst the back drop of the twinkling lights of London, can only be described as spectacular, it was time to bring the ship back home. The weather remained suitable for us to head North straight away, so I’m reliably informed she got from centre of London, to centre of Glasgow, in one of the quickest times she’s managed that voyage.



The view from the Bridge with Waverley berthed ‘port side to’ at London’s Tower Pier with Tower Bridge in view. Captain McCall opted to berth port side at Tower Pier in certain tide conditions to avoid turning in the upper Pool on a flood tide.

The final weekend was one of mixed emotions as we celebrated the completion of the 2022 season, but it was also time to say a few goodbyes as passengers and then crew departed for a well earned break. I would like to thank you all for your support through the 2022 season, rest assured planning is already well underway for some exciting cruises next year, and I look forward to welcoming you aboard once again.

Dominic McCall, Master PS Waverley

A busy view from the Bridge at Swanage Pier during Waverley’s 2022 South Coast season.





Meet Samuel Brown

Ahead of the 2022 season we advertised two permanent office positions - Booking Office Manager and Marketing Executive. Samuel Brown applied for the Booking Office position but after interviewing was considered more suited for the marketing role given his background.



In his spare time Samuel enjoys travelling with a fondness for exploring Scotland's west coast.

Can you outline your role as Marketing Executive for Waverley?

My main goal is to sell the experience of sailing aboard the world's last seagoing paddle steamer. Through creating and implementing marketing activity across various channels, I am responsible for increasing passenger footfall, maximising ticketing revenue and passenger spend per head, attracting donations and support towards Waverley, and increasing awareness of the ship and what she offers.

What approaches were taken to market and promote Waverley's sailings this year?

From press ads to press releases, interviews to influencers, there has been a wide range of marketing activity this year across many channels.

In terms of new approaches to marketing, some highlights include collaborating with STV on a TV advertising campaign reaching over 150k consumers

daily with prime-time spots including This Morning and Coronation Street. We introduced an NHS discount in recognition of NHS staff and social care workers which was used on almost 300 bookings, increased the volume of sponsored posts on social media with the Waverley Excursions Facebook page reaching over one million impressions and partnered with several social media influencers to target specific audience types and create brand awareness in new markets.

We had a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with customers on the South Coast and London & Thames through working with local newspaper publications on press advertisements, media visits, digital advertising campaigns, content marketing and distributing press releases to generate news stories.

You started with Waverley back in March, have you found similarities or anything surprising with marketing Waverley compared to your previous experience of working with VisitScotland and other visitor attractions?

There are similarities to other visitor attractions, but what personally makes Waverley exciting and provides me with a challenge are the differences. Marketing a visitor attraction that is constantly on the move when operating was new for me – I quickly realised that Waverley would need a different approach to reach a wider geographical area. Working with more local publications was new to me, but the benefit to this specific advertising strategy was clear very early on.

Working in a small team has given me a unique opportunity to see how truly important incoming revenue is to the operation. Seeing first-hand how ticketing revenue, onboard spend, membership and donations are crucial to ensuring Waverley will sail another year. Every sale - from a customer purchasing a ticket to a Christmas hamper from the online shop - makes a difference and helps the charity.

Even with working for a charity in the past, there was one area that really surprised me ... the volunteers. Waverley has such dedicated and reliable volunteers who are a valuable asset to the operation. From distributing posters to varnishing and selling raffle tickets, the volunteers are very much the glue that holds us together and we are always looking for extra help. We are also particularly grateful to every volunteer or customer who has sent in their images

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RIVER CLYDE

Welcome aboard the one-of-a-kind Paddle Steamer you can still cruise around Scotland on: PS Waverley



SteveMarsh
43.4K subscribers

Subscribe

2.4K



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Download



One novel approach to marketing Waverley in 2022 was to invite social media influencers and content producers aboard to share Waverley with their audiences. Several were aboard during the season resulting in some promotional materials at no cost to Waverley.

Steve Marsh (pictured) is a content producer who makes short films showcasing Scotland and was invited aboard Waverley for the first sailing of the season. He produced an excellent 15 minute video which has now had over 74,000 views.

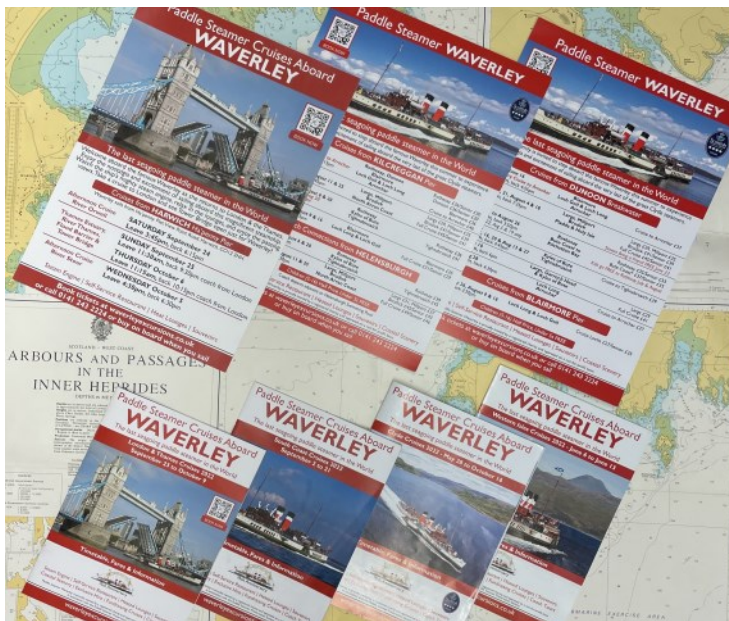
or videos from a sailing this year – this content allows us to constantly update our marketing materials

In your judgement is there still a value to using press ads?

Print materials used in marketing, like press ads, posters, and flyers, naturally represent a more conventional strategy. Print marketing has advantages, such as the longevity of the materials and raising awareness in challenging areas. For instance, a direct mail campaign will guarantee that brochures reach customers who don't have internet access.

Essentially the problem is that it's difficult to monitor or evaluate how effective press ads are. Apart from

Printed posters and brochures (pictured below) still have a significant impact in marketing Waverley.



the circulation figure, there is no other way to consistently track how successful press ads really are. Therefore, there are both advantages and disadvantages involved.

This year, to address the lack of evidence on the success of press ads, we developed a discount code that would only be publicised within press ads. The special offer proved to be generally successful with the code being used on over 140 bookings. In addition, there was a particularly strong response to press ads for the South Coast. This indicates that even geographically response rates will differentiate and some parts of the country will have higher newspaper readership figures than others.

There seems to be a widespread opinion in marketing that print and digital cannot coexist as one. It is frequently advised that you pick one, generally digital, and stick with it. In contrast, I disagree. I want to see a hybrid approach to marketing Waverley that includes both print and digital activity. We will continue to offer sailing dates/times or information on how to make a phone booking when we place a press advertisement or design and distribute a poster, however the primary call to action will be visit the website and make an online booking. This, in my opinion, appeals and caters to the widest audience.

How do you see marketing for Waverley developing into the 2023 season?

Market research is my first step to effectively develop marketing in 2023. I am looking at three key groups to focus on: those who have sailed before, those who know of Waverley but have yet to sail and those who have no knowledge of the product.

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To help develop the Waverley brand in 2023 there will be an increased use of images showing passengers enjoying the unique experience of sailing aboard the World's last seagoing paddle steamer.

I'd like to start by expanding my knowledge of the passengers who have sailed previously or sail frequently. Customer profiling will play a key role in supporting this with insights helping us determine where marketing activities should be focused. Passengers who sailed in 2022 have had the chance to participate in this continuing research by completing our passenger survey. The survey is primarily based around marketing, however it will provide passengers with the chance to share any feedback they may have about tickets to the onboard catering facilities. Development of the brand is important to sell the

onboard experience when targeting new markets. To sell the experience to those who are aware of the ship but have never sailed, I want to highlight the human side of Waverley. The marketing needs to answer the question – what is it like to sail on Waverley?

Targeting those who haven't heard of Waverley will inevitably be more difficult, but I think activities like collaborating closely with several social media influencers and developing a variety of original onboard events will be productive when trying to reach a new audience.

Waverley receives regular press attention through press releases direct from the Company or local reporters picking up the story. The Bournemouth Echo published a readers letter in September which gave a glowing account of a sailing from Poole (pictured below). Publicity such as this is very welcome.

'Beautiful Waverley is pure escapism and nostalgia'

16th September



The Waverley Paddle Steamer (Image: Poole Harbour Commissioners)

“Travelling on this magnificent vessel is really a step back in time – whether one wants to sit and just enjoy the view from the seating on the decks, have a bite to eat or go downstairs and marvel at the massive triple expansion steam engine which is mechanical ballet to watch, totally mesmerising. I thoroughly enjoyed my time on her.

I do hope that Waverley returns to Poole every year, as she gives so much pleasure to so many people in these difficult times. A bit of pure escapism and nostalgia – a truly beautiful ship.”



On Board Services 2022

Waverley's Assistant General Manager, Lucy Morley, leads the catering and retail operations. Lucy reports on the 2022 season giving some key statistics.

Catering

Waverley's catering crew served a lot of hungry and thirsty passengers during the 2022 season and this is evident by the annual revenue of over £690,000.

The busiest day of the season for Waverley's dining saloon was Sunday 9 October when Waverley sailed from London at 9:30am to the Thames Fords, returning to the capital at 8:15pm. On the morning cruise down river over 150 breakfast rolls were sold and then during the hot meal service 258 main meals were provided with over 170 sandwiches and almost 700 hot drinks.

Feedback on the Catering offering was very positive, and the freshly battered haddock continues to be the top selling main meal option – 7,660 fish & chips prepared and served within Waverley's small galley. In total almost 12,000 passenger meals were served.

The introduction of a slice of cake / loaf alongside our other sweet treats proved popular with almost 2,500 slices of cake sold during the season.

The sales mix (food / alcohol) for each area Waverley operates in is different. There is a greater proportion of alcohol sales on the Clyde compared to other operating areas. A busy Saturday on the Clyde might see 400 pints of lager sold compared with under 100 pints on a busy Saturday sailing on the South Coast.

This season we were delighted to have Steven McGunigal, one of our "Friends of Waverley", hire the ship for his wedding to David Wood. The catering crew handled all the arrangements with Champagne & canapés following the wedding service, a table service 4-course meal and evening hot buffet.



Souvenir Shop

Waverley's stalwart Shopkeeper volunteers were busy over this season serving over 101,000 passengers and achieving an incredible total sales for 2022 of over £189,000!

Busy days in the Souvenir Shop included the 75th Anniversary sailing on Thursday 16th June where Graeme Dunlop (on his own!) achieved over £4,100 in revenue. Another busy day was the last Sunday on the Thames, where Geoffrey Ryder achieved an incredible £4,537.

Our shopkeepers are familiar with the challenge of displaying 100's of products within a small display space in the souvenir shop. The product range is reviewed every year and new products are sourced to tempt passengers to buy on board.

New products for this year included a Waverley Parker pen, travel / coffee mug, waterproof jacket, mouse mat, travel card wallet, new tea towel as well as the anniversary clothing range. Additionally our standard range of items required new images.

Special thanks to our volunteers who dedicate a lot of their time to working aboard and achieving these fantastic results. If you are interested in volunteering aboard please get in touch - no key skills are required, although a friendly face and an interest in Waverley are a must!

Below Left: Waverley's dining saloon set up for guests when the ship was hired for an afternoon and evening as a wedding venue. The tables were funnel themed with red, white and black.

Below: Graeme Dunlop pictured in Waverley's shop during the 2022 season.





South Coast 2022 Images



Waverley captured as she leaves the western Solent on a cruise to Swanage with the Needles Rocks in view.



Afternoon cruises to the Needles and Freshwater Bay proved popular. This image shows the dramatic Isle of Wight coastline which Waverley cruises.



Waverley captured as she departed Yarmouth pier for the final time this year.

Waverley makes an impressive sight as she charges through the Solent.



Passengers were entertained as a Search and Rescue Helicopter carried out a training exercise by landing one of their crew members on Waverley's stern deck.





A Purser's Tale of "Going South"

Waverley's Purser, Andrew Comrie, tells his story of the South Coast and Thames sailings in 2022.



Andrew Comrie surveys the scene as Waverley berths at Swanage Pier with a large crowd waiting to board. Scenes like this were common at Swanage during Waverley's visits this year.

It was a great privilege to be a part of the Waverley team this year as the ship made her much anticipated return to England's South Coast and the Thames Estuary for the first time since 2018. For me personally, it was an experience that I been relishing for a long time having never visited the South Coast before or ventured east of Greenwich on the Thames. It would also be the first time I'd seen Waverley outside of Scotland, and so for that reason it was a strange sensation to find myself joining Waverley in the unfamiliar environment of Southampton Docks on the evening of Thursday 1 September, the ship having arrived earlier in the day after her epic voyage from Glasgow.

The contrast between Waverley's home waters on the Clyde and the South Coast was immediately obvious. The deep blue sea and green hills of Scotland had been replaced by a much more aqua coloured sea with white chalk cliffs. The relative calm and tranquility of the Clyde Coast had now been replaced by a stunningly beautiful, but much more exposed cruising area where there were no sheltered lochs to hide in if the weather turned. The strong tidal currents and

significant shipping presence on the Solent were also on full display. Seeing the Needles and Old Harry Rocks for the first time was a great experience, but the real highlight was seeing how grateful Waverley's South Coast supporters were to see that she had at long last returned. It felt like a great achievement to bring her back to those who have remained loyal in their support for the ship.

There were of course a few Waverley challenges. Unfortunately, the first of the popular "Round the Island" cruises had to be curtailed at Yarmouth on Saturday 2 September due to a steering issue. Fortunately the issue was cured just in time to enable Waverley to return to Portsmouth and Southampton as planned but it did result in some additional work for the Purser in issuing Half Price Vouchers and recording details to enable the Glasgow office to process part refunds.

The following day's cruise to view the Bournemouth Air Festival was significantly delayed due to a serious medical emergency at Swanage, resulting in passengers only being able to view the Red Arrows from a distance.

Inevitably there were some weather disruptions but where possible alternative sheltered waters cruises were offered although the sailing on Wednesday 7 September was cancelled. When there is an alteration or cancelled sailing, I work with the office staff to notify and inform passengers. Those who have pre-booked are contacted by email and receive a text alert. The website is then changed to show the most up to date information – a relatively new feature as we work to be as open and honest as possible when sailings can't go ahead as advertised. Our Facebook page is also used to share information so that we try to inform all pre-booked passengers and those who might be intending to sail.

On 8 September the planned sailing to Lulworth Cove had to be amended to a non-landing cruise of the Solent and Southampton Water from Portsmouth due to strong winds. That evening the sad news of Queen Elizabeth II's passing was announced, and within minutes Waverley's ensign was dropped to half mast and remained lowered until the day after her funeral.

From 9 September Waverley's South Coast programme was blessed with great weather and strong passenger numbers. Full circumnavigations of the Isle of Wight were achieved four times with a full complement of passengers carried on each occasion. Lengthy pier-long queues became a very common

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sight, particularly at Yarmouth and Swanage, and occasionally non-ticket holders had to be turned away. Though this is always disappointing to potential passengers, it is a positive symptom that the ship is generating interest and revenue.

This year it was possible to have the ultimate steam experience by combining a cruise on the world's last seagoing paddle steamer with a trip on the Swanage Steam Railway, and this proved very popular. Waverley made her triumphant return to Poole Quay for the first time in eight years on 12 September. As Waverley was quite literally berthed in the middle of town, she generated a lot of curiosity. The Round the Island cruise from Poole had already sold out by the time she arrived, but I displayed adverts on the quayside for the other Poole sailing which still had some space available.

During the evening repositing journey from Swanage on 14 September to an overnight anchorage in the Solent, members of the Dutch Coastguard, who were training on the South Coast, paid us a visit via helicopter. Their English colleagues repeated the exercise the following week as we cruised around the Island with passengers on board. Some passengers were a bit disgruntled when I had to clear the aft deck until the reason became obvious. On both occasions the coastguard crews were gifted some Waverley's souvenirs and encouraged to visit again.



With the sun setting and only the crew aboard, Waverley took part in an exercise drill with the Dutch Coastguard during her repositioning run on the evening of 14 September.

The South Coast season ended on a high with all afternoon cruises sold out in advance with gorgeous weather. Overall, it was a highly successful and relatively undisrupted South Coast season despite a few early setbacks, and I left the South Coast feeling a little sad but certain to return. Particular thanks are owed to Jim Harris, who served as Waverley's Southampton pilot and occasional commentator, for the hard work and great friendship he showed Waverley and her crew throughout the South Coast season.

After disembarking passengers at Portsmouth on 22 September, Waverley departed immediately for the Thames and made the overnight passage in flat calm



Waverley berthed at The Quay in Poole harbour, an ideal location for the ship to attract attention given its proximity to the town centre.

conditions, perfect if you need to spend a night at sea in the Purser's Office! Unfortunately after arriving at Gravesend a routine paddle inspection revealed that a component of the starboard paddle wheel would need to be replaced as a matter of urgency. This resulted in the cancellation of Waverley's first two Thames sailings as a replacement part had to be machined in Scotland, delivered, and installed. This was achieved by the afternoon of 24 September and Waverley was able to reposition to Harwich where she would begin the following day's cruise to London's Tower Pier.

Throughout 2022 Waverley has reintroduced herself to several areas of the UK, but her reunion with Tower Bridge was perhaps the most anticipated. It was the culmination of the painstaking effort that has been made by a relative few to bring Waverley back to life following the boiler failure in 2019 and see her through the pandemic years with all their challenges. I was lucky enough to secure myself the prime advantage point for this special moment from Waverley's 'monkey island' on top of the bridge (pictured below), and it certainly proved to be moment of high emotion and pride for all on board.



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Saturday 1 October saw the popular London to Whitstable return scheduled. This is normally one of the highest revenue earning days of the year due to the large numbers of one-way passengers on both outward and return sailings, hence the ticket revenue and on board spend is very high due to the sheer number of people on board throughout the day. Unfortunately, as we approached Southend on the return leg, an ominous rumbling and banging sound began emanating from the starboard paddle. Waverley was brought to an immediate stop and dropped anchor while engineers investigated the source of the problem which turned out to be the failure of a radius rod. Although the ship carries spare rods, the process of cutting out the failed rod and replacing it takes time and as such it soon became clear that the sailing would have to be terminated with onward transport arranged for several hundred passengers to London. The situation was made considerably more challenging by the fact that a national rail strike was also taking place that day, meaning that there were very few private hire coaches available and no other means of returning to London. Just my luck!

Thankfully I had the assistance of Paul Semple and Lucy Morley, and between us we kept phoning every coach company operator in the south east until we had sourced sufficient coaches. Explaining that you have a paddle steamer at anchor off the longest pleasure pier in the world with 400 passengers requiring transport to London on a Saturday evening doesn't tend to bring an immediately positive response! The situation was made slightly easier by the fact that several coaches had already been booked to return Whitstable passengers from London later that evening, so these coaches were simply diverted to pick up at Southend instead. At the same time Waverley's engineers worked tirelessly to arrange a temporary repair that allowed Waverley to come alongside Southend Pier at slow speed. With coaches sourced just in time all passengers were disembarked. It was later reported that London bound passengers arrived back in London only 50 minutes behind Waverley's scheduled return time, a successful outcome given the circumstances. After dispatching the final coach from Southend Pier, the reward was a 1.3 mile walk in the cold and dark back to the ship. Now I really believe that Southend Pier is the longest pleasure pier in the world! Looking back on that evening I'm very proud and grateful for the combined efforts of all of Waverley's crew, the Glasgow office staff, and the Southend Pier staff that evening for achieving a satisfactory outcome to what was a very challenging situation.

Waverley returned to service on 3 October following the replacement of the broken radius rod. This sailing featured a rendezvous with the steam tug and Dunkirk veteran *Challenge* at the Red Sands Fort, an event which attracted big crowds and a lot of steam whistle action. The following day was to be an off-service day at Gravesend, but unfortunately forecast gales on 5 October required a positioning voyage to Harwich to

be made a day early with the sailing on 5 October cancelled. Since the gale force winds had a knock-on effect on the 6 October's call at Clacton the decision was made to coach Clacton passengers to Harwich rather than risk leaving them on the pier if the swell was too strong. I was therefore dispatched early in the morning to arrange the coaches up to Harwich. Between that Thursday and Sunday all of Waverley's sailings attracted capacity crowds with fantastic weather over the final two days of the Thames programme.



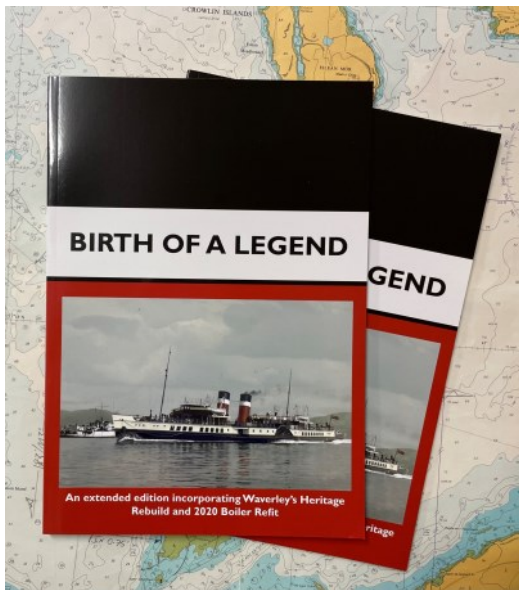
Unusually Waverley manoeuvres off Tower Pier to berth "port side" on Saturday 8 October.

The final Saturday saw a trip up the River Medway as far as Gillingham where Waverley met up with another surviving paddle steamer, *Medway Queen*. Arrangements were made to ensure the event was marked appropriately and so the two paddle steamers saluted one another, Waverley using her steam whistle and *Medway Queen* using a slightly more comical air horn. The passenger transfer on the return call at Southend was among the largest I've ever handled with many of those boarding amazed that the ship could handle that many people. They were even more astonished to learn that at one point she could take over 1,300!

Throughout the final day on the Thames there was a jovial atmosphere on board as Waverley visited the Forts once again. Large numbers were carried, and it wasn't long before we were sailing up the "Twinkling Thames" for the final time. I was once again sad to leave the area we had called home for several weeks and was surprised at how quickly the time had flown by. Waverley sailed from London for the final time this year under a full moon that appeared to be positioned perfectly between Tower Bridge's raised bascules. Bunkers were taken at Gravesend and I disembarked to take a few days off and travel back home by rail. Waverley and the rest of her crew departed Gravesend just after midnight and made the long sail back to Glasgow in record time, with fuel stops at Portland and Warrenpoint en-route. By the Wednesday evening she was safely tied up at the Glasgow Science Centre ahead of her final sailings on the Clyde which concluded the 2022 season in fine style.

Andrew Comrie, Purser PS Waverley

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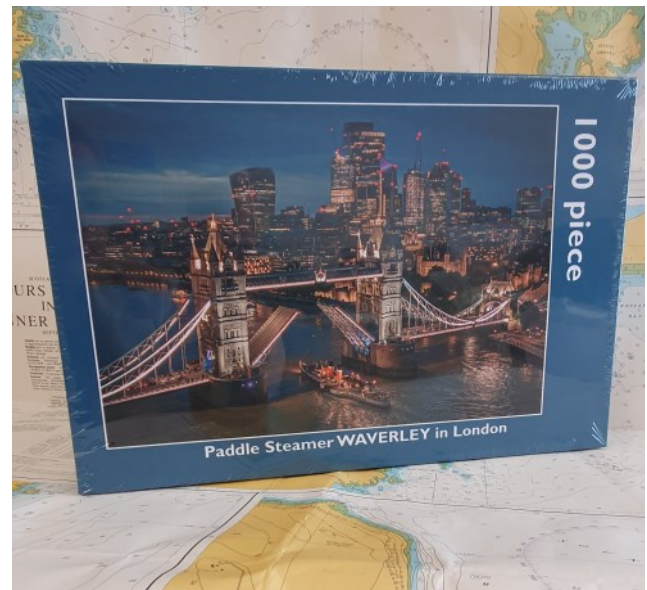


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