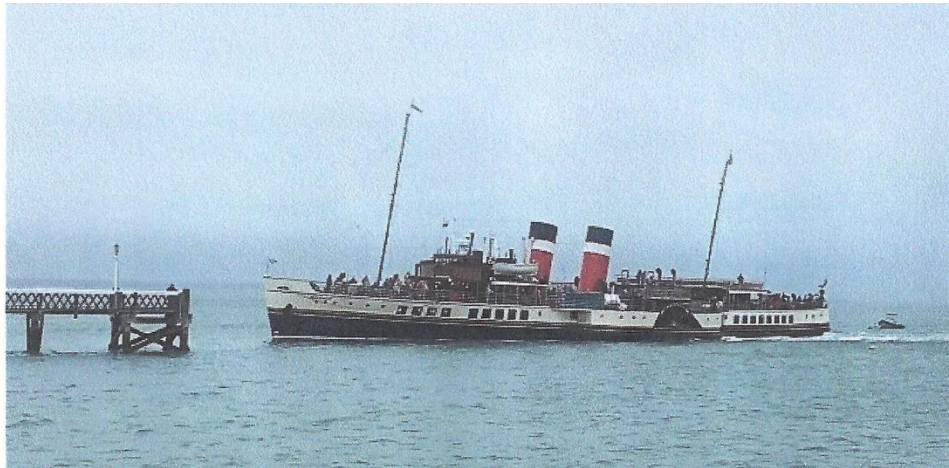


Cruising on the *Waverley*, the World's Last Seagoing Paddle Steamer, 17th September 2025

A group of Steyning Society and friends sailed on the *Waverley* from Southampton, cruising down Southampton Water, in to the Solent, on to Yarmouth, the Needles and finally Portsmouth. Brian Lavery brought the cruise on the historic ship to our attention. Thank you, Brian. The *Waverley* was built in 1946, replacing the original Victorian ship which was sunk during the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940.



The *Waverley* approaching Yarmouth Pier

For me, alighting from the coach and seeing the paddle steamer was like a magical step back in time. I found it quite an emotional moment. I think, all the more so, since in 1950 my father and brother had cruised on this ship from Brighton Pier. My mother and I watched from the shore at Saltdean as she steamed by.



A family party on a Clyde steamer around 1950

As we cruised we experienced the nostalgia of bygone days with the wooden benches on the viewing decks, wooden rails everywhere and the wooden interiors of the tea room and the observation lounge. On calm days, ours wasn't, there might have been steamer deck chairs.

Although it was a very misty, with the Purser's commentary, (and Brian's invaluable historic notes), we were introduced to all the sites and places of interest on the River Itchen, in the Solent and on the Isle of Wight. At one point when lunch (delicious) was being served, the various currents converged causing some exciting turbulence.



The engines

We went below and, fascinated, could see the Engineer operate the main engine to drive the ship's massive paddle wheels. There was a port hole where I could see and hear the paddles powering through the water.

Due to the gales, we could not begin our journey from Shoreham Port. The sea state was just too high for safety. However, the *Waverley* is usually in the South Coast area in September. So maybe next year, if the timetable allows, there will be a cruise from Shoreham Port. I shall enjoy another trip on the *Waverley*.

Wendy Francis