

Saltburn Pier History

The most northerly surviving British Pier and the last remaining in Yorkshire, the history of Saltburn Pier tells a remarkable tale of a man made structure defying the elements. Built in an exposed position and facing due north into the unforgiving North Sea, the pier in the little resort of Saltburn was commissioned by the Saltburn Pier Company in 1867. Designed by Mr J Anderson the pier was completed two years later, opening in May 1869.

Built to a length of 1,400ft (424m) Saltburn Pier consisted of iron trestles under a wooden deck. There was a steamer landing stage at the head and two circular kiosks, used as office accommodation at the entrance. The pier's first encounter with the wrath of nature was to come in 1874 and 1875 when the landing stage and part of Saltburn Pier itself were lost in violent storms. The pier re-opened in 1877 but by 1880 Saltburn Pier's once proud owners were looking to sell the structure.

Under new ownership Saltburn Pier saw a revival in fortunes. It was restored to a length of 1,250ft (379m) and windshields, a bandstand, and refreshment rooms were added. The company also arranged for the repair of the Cliff Lift, allowing visitors much easier access to Saltburn Pier. Further storm damage occurred in 1900 to the pier-head, and in May 1924 the 'Ovenbeg' collided with the West Side of the structure ripping out a considerable amount of the deck. As the bandstand was now inaccessible a theatre was built at the shoreward end in 1925. The damage caused by the collision was finally repaired, five years later, in 1930.

Purchased by the local council in 1938, Saltburn Pier along with other East Coast piers was sectioned in 1940 for fear of German invasion. Re-built at a cost of £20,000 repair work commenced shortly after the cessation of hostilities in 1947, opening to the public in April 1952. The following year a severe gale badly twisted the whole structure necessitating repairs estimated at £23,000. These were to take a further five years to complete, but no sooner had Saltburn Pier reopened when two piles were lost at the seaward end costing a further £6,000 to replace. Worse was to follow in 1961 when some twenty piles were badly twisted in another exceptional storm.

The 1970s were going to prove no kinder in Saltburn Pier's turbulent history. In 1971, 1973 and 1974 piles were lost at the seaward end leaving the pier in a dangerous state. As emergency plans were being drawn up to save the pier, a severe gale on 29th October 1974 washed away the pier-head and left the remainder of the neck in a much weakened state. Finally, the local council had had enough and in 1975 they submitted an application to the Department of the Environment to have Saltburn Pier demolished.

Against the odds Saltburn Pier survived yet again when a public enquiry concluded that only the last thirteen trestles should be removed and the remainder of the structure should be restored. The pier, now reduced in length to 681ft (206m), was restored, reopening to the public on 29th June 1978 after a closure of five years. A new restaurant in the entrance building was opened the following year. Further restoration work was carried in the early 1990s when the entrance-building roof was renewed using Welsh Slate in keeping with its original appearance earlier in the century. With the new millennium, this Grade II listed pier

underwent a major restoration programme to return it to its former glory. Work included stabilising the foundations, replacing the decaying steel beams with hardwood, and re-laying over 5 miles of decking. Saltburn Pier was officially re-opened to the public on 13th July 2001.