



**Hastings & St. Leonards, Sussex.**  
**Population 74,000. Yearly average**  
**sunshine 1,740 hours.**  
**London 69 miles—1¾ hours by rail.**

In this, the first of a new series, we turn the spotlight on Hastings & St Leonards, giving a comprehensive breakdown of not only the fishing — what to catch and where — but also full details of clubs, boats, tackle shops, parking, etc. In other words, everything you need to know before setting off for sunny Sussex with rod in hand. Each month we will focus our attention on one particular spot, and with the entire length of Britain's coastline at our disposal we aim to provide a useful, as well as interesting, service to all our readers.

The Hastings & St. Leonards report was written by Mike Barnes, with research assistance from East Hastings SAA secretary Dave Brockington.

#### **Tackle shops:**

Hastings Angling Centre, 33-35 The Bourne, Hastings.  
 Amber Dolphin, 5 Marine Parade, Hastings. Redfearns, 8 Castle Street, Hastings. Anglers Kiosk, Hastings Pier.

#### **Charter boats:**

Summer only. Between 4-10. Contact via East Hastings. SAA or Hastings and St Leonards SA.

#### **Dinghy Launch Points:**

No official points, but normally launched from Rock-a-Nore at east end of town.

#### **Clubs and associations:**

East Hastings SAA, Secretary D. Brockington, EHSAA, The State, Hastings. £5 joining fee (£7.50 annual sub). Club house, bar and teabar (open 6.30am) daily except Monday. Two full time boatmen, plus six winches.

St Leonards SA. Secretary, G. Dawson, St Lds SA, Market Passage, St Leonards on Sea. No joining fee (£3.50 annual sub). Club room open two nights per week. One winch. Hastings Motor Boat and Yacht Club. Secretary K. Weedon, 37 Berlin Road, Hastings. £3.50 joining fee (£5 annual sub). Club house open at weekends. One winch.

Hastings and St Leonards SA. Secretary G. Wall, H & St Lds SA, Marine Parade, Hastings. £1 joining fee (£4 annual sub). Club house and tea bar open daily. Two winches.

#### **Main open competitions:**

Hastings & St Leonards International Sea Angling Festival September 22, 23 & 24 Boats. November 24, 25 and 26 Pier. Details from clubs.

Hastings Motor Boat and Yacht Club Open. September 8 & 9. Details from club.

Hastings Pier and Beach. Details from Hastings and St Leonards SA. Hastings and St Leonards Beach Open. Details from St Lds SA.

IF NOTHING else Hastings will always be synonymous with a battle date remembered by even the biggest of history dunces. But there is much more to this splendid old Sussex coastal town than 1066 and all that, particularly for the sea angler.

The fishing is as good as it is varied. And there is plenty of sport all the year round.

Hastings and St Leonards, for you can't have one without the other, boast five miles of shingle beach, running out to sand at low tide. There are also four very thriving angling clubs, an excellent pier and a number of good offshore marks.

Virtually all of the beach is fishable, including the harbour wall and pier (toll 25p), with the local hot-spots being in front of the Royal Victoria Hotel, the groynes at the far east end of the town and in front of the East Hastings Sea Angling Association clubhouse.

Offshore the 20 to 25 fathom deep water marks approximately six miles south of the town are recommended along with numerous wrecks lying between four and 12 miles from the beach. The inshore marks are several gullies and the extensive ridges, plus the rocky areas east and west of the town.

"But what fish?", you may ask. Well, as a glance at the Species Calendar on these pages will indicate, quite a lot.

Among some of the specimens of the last three years were: 65lb angler fish, 65lb conger, 59lb tope, 43lb 12oz cod, 25lb 6oz ling, 21lb bull huss, 18lb 10oz thornback, 18lb 7oz turbot. The smaller species too have their say with for example a black bream of 5lb 8oz and a whiting of 3lb 10½oz.

Black lugworm heads the bait list as the "all the year round" bait and is obtainable from local tackle shops.

Squid is also good and available from the same source, while mackerel and herring are available throughout the summer, and are useful in winter if fresh peeler crab is also used and earthworms have been effective for dabs and plaice.

Skippers are mainly prepared to take anglers out in the summer when there might be between four and ten boats available at £5 per angler.

This may seem a little short in terms of supply and demand, but the four clubs usually look after the needs of anglers who find the trawlermen booked up.

East Hastings SAA has 34 club boats and between 110 and 120 private, the Motor Boat and Yacht Club has no club boats but 50 mixed (power and sailing), Hastings and St Leonards SA has about 15 club boats and 50 to 60 private, while St Leonards SA has four club boats and a few private as well.

The rivalry between the two

biggest clubs, the East Hastings and the Hastings and St Leonards is most certainly of the friendly variety, and one of the two always comes to the rescue of visiting anglers. Their charges are far from mercenary, and depending how far out the anglers wish to go (how much petrol they use) it will cost no more than 50p to £1 per person.

While on the subject of boats, it would perhaps be worthwhile at this point to go a little deeper into what you can expect to find at the marks shown on our map, which I should add is very kindly supplied by Graham Furness of East Hastings SAA.

The two wrecks shown are: A. A small aeroplane that lays ¾ mile offshore and though quite hard to find, the trawlers cannot fish the area, so it yields excellent catches of dabs and codling in season. As some of the wreckage is up to four feet high, other good fish may shelter here in the summer.

B. An old barge, just under 2½ miles offshore. Some good conger have been caught here and also some large catches of cod up to 20lb. The wreck is all in one piece and stands 15 feet high.

The Outer Lees is an area of rough ground covered in boulder, and a useful mark for general fishing.

Boulder Bank is another rough area, and one that can prove an excellent winter mark for cod. However, it is a long trip, and should only be attempted in good conditions. Not shown on the map, it lies slightly further east, and a little over two miles out.

Sand Waves (three miles further out, and in line from wreck A) is an area of bumpy ground excellent for dabs all year round, and for cod in the winter, as well as providing good general fishing.

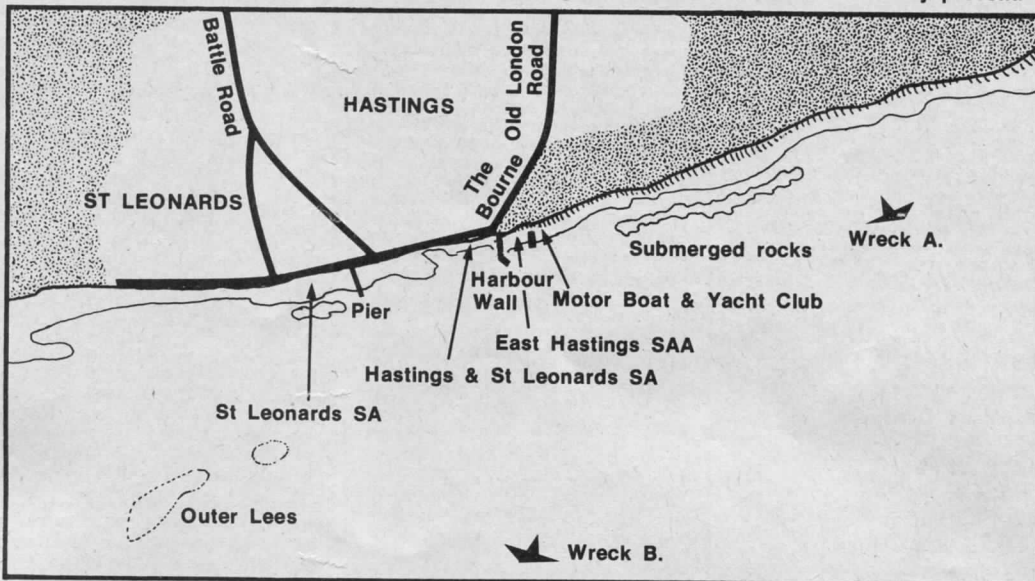
The Four Fathom Sand Ridge



JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

FISH TAKEN IN THE NORTH SEA											
JANUARY						FEBRUARY					
MARCH						APRIL					
MAY						JUNE					
JULY						AUGUST					
SEPTEMBER						OCTOBER					
NOVEMBER						DECEMBER					
Fish to be taken from the shore:											
Dabs*, whiting						Dabs*, whiting.					
Cod.						Cod.					
Some bass.						Congers at night by rocks.					
Additional species to be taken from boats:						Spurdog*					
Spurdog*						Spurdog*					
Inshore cod, whiting*.						Inshore cod, whiting*.					
Conger*, tope*, huss, mackerel*, wreck cod*, turbot, black bream*, pollack, ling.						All year — dabs*, whiting, plaice, pouting*, thornback rays.					

Above: SPECIES CALENDAR Key: \* Present in large numbers. No asterisk — merely present.



(not shown on map, but beyond wreck B) is shallower than inshore and is a noted mark for all flatfish, with a chance of tope or turbot. Spurdog sometimes run over this bank in the Spring.

Looking to the shore, Castle Rocks, between the pier and the harbour wall, are mostly exposed at low tide. The outer rocks have however produced some good conger and bass — also the gullies between the rocks holds fair quantities of sole at certain times of the year.

Goat Rocks lay ¼ mile east of the pier and are quite extensive. The outer reef can be fished at all states of the tide. Some excellent conger and bass have been taken here, while skin divers have speared several large plaice from the sand strips between the rocks.

The best of the rocks under the cliff run from Ecclesbourne Glen to the east side of Mare Bay, an area that offers some of the best inshore conger fishing.

All of these inshore rock marks have to be treated with care and respect. Boats intending to fish these marks must see the commodore or the boatman and obtain a rock anchor before fishing.

Shorter tides incidentally,

provide the better fishing, but are the worst for bait. You takes your choice.

Many holidaymakers look to a harbour wall or pier for their sport. This is after all a very traditional aspect of mixing holiday and hobby.

There will be no disappointment here. The pier is as good as you are likley to find anywhere with eels, flatties, bass, mullet, small pollack and codling in season. The Harbour

wall too has much to recommended it, in the shape of good bass, codling and flatties.

Conveniently-placed at the entrance to the pier is the Anglers Kiosk, a tackle shop that hires tackle by the day.

If you are planning on visiting the town by car, you are also in luck. A large car park is situated adjacent to the East Hastings SAA — all four clubs have premises on the sea front — and there is plenty of street parking,

in addition to the underground car-parking which is available the full length of the front.

And if there is any other information you require you will find all the club secretaries more than willing to help.

Finally, for accommodation and hints to keep the non-fishing members of your party happy, your best bet is to write to The Information Centre, 4 Robertson Terrace, Hastings, Sussex (Hastings 424242).

Boats line the east end of Hastings sea front near the headquarters of some of the local sea angling clubs.

