

More particular comparisons of high-water depths over some previous years are indicated in the following tabulation :—

NUMBER OF DAYS ON WHICH DEPTH OBTAINED ON THE BAR AT HIGH WATER

Depth.	1917.	1927.	1931.	1939.	1942.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.
14' to 16' ..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	..
16' to 18' ..	..	..	25	2	1	39	23	35	..
18' to 20' ..	..	..	132	88	33	96	69	124	35
20' to 22' ..	..	..	165	149	181	150	142	117	151
22' to 24' ..	22	112	43	115	143	75	87	62	126
24' to 26' ..	143	125	..	11	7	5	43	24	51
26' to 28' ..	137	70	..	..	..	..	1	1	2
Over 28' ..	63	32	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mean for year	26' 3"	24' 10"	20' 2"	21' 3"	21' 9"	20' 8"	21' 4"	20' 8"	22' 2"

NOTES.—In the foregoing tabulation the years quoted are as at 31st March. In the history of the port 1917 was the year of best depth conditions. This was during the year following completion of the last breakwaters extension plus a period of very intensive dredging.

The good return of working depths for 1927 was the result of many floods in the river that year, topped by the exceptionally great flood of 5th November, 1926.

The figures for 1931, except for 1934 (depression circumstances), represent the poorest working depth conditions for over forty years.

During the past year, 254 (316) vessels aggregating 184,943 (198,643) tons net register worked the port, the figures in parentheses being those corresponding for the previous year. In all, the in and out vessels for the year totalled 508 (633), with total net register tonnage of 368,869 (398,565).

Bunker-coal trade in respect to overseas and intercolonial cargo-vessels was an appreciable feature in the port's activities in pre-war years, but fell away after Japan's entry into the war and has not yet returned, although two such vessels did work the port, lifting 3,950 tons of bunkers, as against "nil" the previous year.

Timber lifted from the port totalled 1,229,000 super feet, compared to 1,500,000 super feet in 1945-46.

The following record of annual shipments of coal, together with mean high-water depths on the bar—in respect to several past years—might be of interest :—

Year.	Mean of High Water Depths on Bar.	Total Quantity of Coal shipped.
	Ft. in.	Tons.
1931	20 2	513,500
1939	21 3	426,400
1942	21 9	487,500
1943	21 8	446,500
1944	20 8	401,300
1945	21 4	402,000
1946	20 8	385,300
1947	22 2	384,800

The port's three dredges were maintained in commission, more or less, throughout the year. The bar suction dredges "Eileen Ward" and "Rubi Seddon" operated predominantly on the bar, with incidental attention to the lower reach of the river fairway. The "Eileen Ward," which is the Department's most powerful dredge, was out of action for about three months whilst undergoing extensive dock overhaul and replacement of new internals in the gravel pumps.