

Solway Superstars

Story by Norman Hammond

Rocks and animals of our coast

Complete with suitable footwear and a 10x hand lens, take a low tide shore walk from Skinburness to Beckfoot and you have a wonderful opportunity to study at first hand the marine animals to be found both above and below high water mark.

First look at the geology of the rocks and boulders; see the effect of the ceaseless pounding of the waves on our shores. See if you can identify the various granites, greywackes and sandstones!

As you examine these rocks and boulders consider how some of the animal species may have originally migrated from dry land and how remarkable they have now colonised. Others had to adapt themselves to dry conditions when not covered by water. They had also to adapt themselves to the pounding of the waves, the strength of which varies from between a ton or possible three tons per sq foot, and the constant grinding of the sand particles. Marine animals are classified into various groups; the major one being termed Protozoa.

The single-celled Protozoa, of more than 30,000 species, causes marine phosphorescence, and many local people have seen this glow, by the minute Noctiluca, when waves or movements of a swimmer or dolphin/porpoise etc. disturb sea water. Sponges are really simple animals; drawing in water through holes sieving it and extracting their food.

Jellyfish, corals and

sea anemones are another group and there have been many lurid accounts of the Portuguese Man of War, which is not a true jellyfish. It has the ability to sting so that it pierces the skin and punctures it. All jellyfish are of course capable of stinging. Two to be avoided are those with brown stripes and those brownish in colour, especially in very hot weather. Sea anemones can also sting but not enough to puncture the skin while corals are simply sea anemones that had built around themselves calcium carbide.

There are a tremendous variety of segmented worms on our seashores. Many readers will have seen the lugworm and the fan worm, both favourites of fishermen. The fan worm lives in a tube, pushing out its head, which becomes fan shaped and gathers in the water and food. It is most attractive.

You may find a starfish, which feeds on mussels, using their suckers by which they stick to their prey.

Among the many molluscs you can find are seashells: cockles, mussels and limpets. The limpets adapted themselves to the rocky shores, sticking to the one place but leaving it when the tide comes in to cover them and returning to the same place as the tide goes out.

In the days of old wooden piers, the Teredo beetle, or Common Shipworm, as it was termed, caused considerable damage. These are really worms, which worked like a brace and bit, boring holes in the wood, often Oregon Pine, if it was

On the Waterfront by Tommy Legs

January 2003

The year started with the molasses tanker WEST STREAM which arrived on New Years Night with a cargo from Bremen.

The BEN VARREY was next with a cargo of wheat from Liverpool, followed by the large Russian MIKHAIL DUDIN with a cargo of fertilizer from Vyborg.

The NORDICA HAV then brought a cargo of wheat from Bonnières followed by another wheat cargo on the SUOYARVI from Rostok.

The ARKLOW BAY, again brought a cargo of fertilizer from Ghent and went to Workington to load rails.

On the last day of the month the BEN ELLAN arrived with another cargo of wheat from Liverpool.

February 2003

February proved to be quite a reasonable month weather wise.

The port had six visitors including the Antigua - registered HELJO with a record cargo of 3,300 tonnes of fertilizer from Ellesmere Port on the Manchester Ship Canal.

The first ship of the month was the BEN ELLAN with wheat from Liverpool, followed by the tanker ORATANK with a cargo of molasses from Avonmouth and then the HELJO.

The BEN ELLAN brought another cargo of wheat from Liverpool and the ARKLOW MILL arrived with a cargo of fertilizer.

The last vessel was another visit by the molasses tanker ORATANK



not treated or Copper covered. A peculiarity about them was that though the wood was riddled with holes no two holes ever ran into each other. If the damage was not noticed another worm, the gribble, ate away near the top, which led to the damage being seen, and repairs undertaken. Search old stranded tree trunks and wooden flotsam on the tideline for these 'boring' worms today.

Watch the incoming tide and return again into this fascinating world for further study.

Silloth Tide Table

APRIL 2003 TIMES OF HIGH WATER AT SILLOTH

(Courtesy of A.B.P. Silloth)

Times in G.M.T.

Heights in metres

	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
1st. Tues.	1145	7.3	****	**
2nd. Wed.	0003	7.0	1216	7.3
3rd. Thur.	0032	7.0	1249	7.2
4th. Fri.	0103	7.0	1320	7.1
5th. Sat.	0133	6.9	1350	6.9
6th. Sun.	0203	6.6	1422	6.6
7th. Mon.	0233	6.4	1457	6.2
8th. Tues.	0308	6.0	1538	5.8
9th. Wed.	0352	5.5	1632	5.2
10th. Thur.	0454	5.0	1744	4.8
11th. Fri.	0619	4.8	1915	4.9
12th. Sat.	0750	5.1	2034	5.4
13th. Sun.	0857	5.9	2130	6.2
14th. Mon.	0949	6.8	2217	7.0
15th. Tues.	1034	7.4	2300	7.5
16th. Wed.	1117	8.0	2343	8.0
17th. Thur.	****	**	1201	8.2
18th. Fri.	0023	8.1	1244	8.3
19th. Sat.	0107	8.1	1331	8.1
20th. Sun.	0152	7.7	1417	7.6
21st. Mon.	0237	7.3	1505	7.0
22nd. Tues.	0327	6.6	1600	6.1
23rd. Wed.	0425	6.0	1708	5.4
24th. Thur.	0541	5.4	1835	5.0
25th. Fri.	0706	5.3	1955	5.1
26th. Sat.	0816	5.6	2056	5.5
27th. Sun.	0913	6.1	2145	6.0
28th. Mon.	0959	6.5	2225	6.4
29th. Tues.	1039	6.9	2301	6.6
30th. Wed.	1115	7.0	2333	6.9