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SeaBritain 2005

An Illustrated Exhibition on the History of the Port of Silloth

To be held at the Golf Hotel, Silloth, Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st July, from 10am to 4pm

As part of the nation-wide SEABRITAIN 2005 maritime event, there is to be an illustrated exhibition of the history of Silloth Docks, presented by Captain Chris Puxley, the Harbour Master at the port. It was the late Norman Hammond, a keen local environmentalist, with an interest in all Solway maritime activities, who first raised the idea of holding such an event.

Situated amid remote coastal sand dunes and at the end of a new branch railway line from Carlisle, Silloth Dock, or the "Marshall Dock" as it was named, was constructed in 1859. It was initially built as a trading facility for the industries in Carlisle, before the national railway network had



Silloth Port 1982

been fully established in this region. A one thousand feet long pier extended into the Solway from the dock entrance, providing a berth for shipping at all states of

the tide. The town of Silloth gradually became established and grew on the back of this bold commercial enterprise. Port Carlisle and the eleven-mile canal link to the city, which had been built 36 years earlier, was proving non-viable as shipping increased in size and busy trading routes were established.

Silloth Dock also had its problems through the years, none more so than when the dock entrance collapsed in 1879. Rising again from that set-back, the "New Dock" was built and completed in 1885. Carrs Flour Mill was built alongside this dock in 1887. Many people will know of the "Yarrow", later renamed "Assaroe", that traded across the Irish Sea, as well as the other small passenger-cargo ships that shuttled between Silloth and Liverpool such as the "Kittiwake" and the "Albatross". Silloth was a busy port throughout both World Wars, exporting a vast tonnage of coal to Ireland and providing a home for air-sea rescue craft that served the RAF airfields in the region. Cattle imports provided work for numerous people, right up to the mid 1980's. The Port of

Silloth has constantly had to adapt to trade requirements, and it is because of that ability that it remains busy and profitable today. Imports of wheat, fertilisers, wood-pulp and molasses provide the main trades today and the "Marshall Dock" still provides a sheltered haven for a small fleet of shrimp boats.

This forthcoming exhibition is based around a very extensive photographic archive, many photographs of which have been loaned from local private collections.

Also at this exhibition there will be a collection of Solway charts, port plans, trading routes to and from Silloth, dock and tug-boat logbooks, maritime artefacts, general and detailed documentation, etc., along with contributions from Associated British Ports, Carrs Milling Industries, Silloth Lifeboat Station, the Coastguard Agency, the Solway Firth Partnership, local ship enthusiasts, fishermen and amateur historians. There will also be an RNLI souvenir stall and refreshments will be available throughout the day from the hotel facilities.

A small entrance fee will be administered by Silloth Rotary Club and this plus any donations will be passed on to Cumbrian charities and worthy causes.

Capt. Chris Puxley,
Harbour Master & Port Superintendent.
Tel: 016973-31358
Fax: 016973-32709
E: silloth@abports.co.uk

RNLI Long Service Awards



L-R: Tom Stalker, Eddie Studholme, Jim Blake and Mayor Graham Wilkinson

Silloth Lifeboat Station Saturday 2nd July 2005. Presentation of "Long Service Awards" to two members of the Lifeboat Station.

The awards were presented to the station's tractor driver, Tom Stalker, who joined the team on 1st January 1985 and to station's lifeboat mechanic, Jim Blake, who joined on 1st August 1983. Both having completed more than 20 years service at Silloth Lifeboat Station, they received a "Long Service" badge together with a "Letter of Thanks" signed by the Chief Executive of the RNLI, Andrew Freeman. The awards were presented to Tom and Jim by the Mayor of Silloth, Graham Wilkinson. The presentation took place at Silloth boathouse and was followed by a buffet and refreshments.

Our sincere thanks go to all who attended, making it a very memorable and special occasion.

