

Port of Silloth Exhibition

AN ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION ON THE HISTORY OF THE PORT OF SILLOTH

Report by: Chris Puxley

On Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st July 2005, the Harbour Master of Associated British Ports, (Silloth), Captain Chris Puxley, presented an exhibition covering the history of Silloth Docks. This weekend event was given as a local contribution towards the "SEABRITAIN 2005" celebrations being held around the country.

The exhibition followed two special ship visits earlier in the year. The Royal Navy sent HMS "BITER" for a successful two day stop-over in March and the replica 1790's frigate "GRAND TURK", re-enacting the "BOUNTY" mutiny, paid a five day visit in June. Both ships were open to the public, who took full advantage



Captain Chris Puxley welcoming Mayor Graham Wilkinson and his wife Marjorie

this ever-growing port archive, many residents and shipping enthusiasts, in and around Silloth, plus Carlisle's Tullie House museum and



Europe and North Africa illustrated the wide range and location of ports that have traded with the port of Silloth over the near 150 years of its existence. It was in fact on 16th July 1855, that an Act of Parliament permitted the construction of a railway link and a dock to be built at this remote location. With the railway link to Carlisle completed, trading from the newly built pier began in 1857 and the "Marshall Dock" was completed and opened in 1859.

Following a disaster in 1879 when the port entrance and the dock gates collapsed, briefly trapping about twenty vessels within the dock, a second and larger dock was excavated behind that existing facility, completed in 1885 and imaginatively called the "New Dock". In 1887, the biscuit manufacturing Carr family opened a newly built flour mill alongside this dock. That same basic infrastructure remains today and it is within the "New Dock" that all the commercial activity of the port is

undertaken.

ABP's Short Sea Ports Director, John Fitzgerald and the ABP N.W. Ports Manager, Nick Ridehalgh hosted a celebration dinner and private viewing of the exhibition for invited guests on the Saturday evening at the Golf Hotel.

All the hard work of compiling and assembling the exhibition was fully rewarded by the large number of visitors attending, the keen interest they



Graham studying an exhibit

showed in the items on display and the kind comments expressed to me throughout and after the event. A small entrance fee raised over £620 for Cumbrian charities and worthy causes, all of which will be administered and distributed by Silloth on Solway Rotary Club.



One of the many items on display

of this opportunity to step aboard and explore these interesting vessels.

Held in the ballroom of the Golf Hotel in Silloth, the "Illustrated Exhibition" was based around an extensive collection of photographs, letters, documents and newspaper items, supplemented by descriptive text, all collected and placed in chronological order by Chris Puxley. Details dated back to the early 1800's when basic dock facilities first began to appear in the upper reaches of the Solway Firth, and continue right up to the present day.

In addition to the seventeen volumes of

the County Archive Office, loaned paintings, pictures, documents and artefacts, all of which greatly enhanced the exhibition. Silloth RNLI lifeboat station, the local RNLI souvenir shop, H.M. Coastguard and the Solway Firth Partnership, along with port related businesses, were given the opportunity to take part in this event and made a significant contribution to the colourful and interesting displays. Also on show were several editions of Admiralty charts of the Solway Firth, dating from 1837 right up to the charts in current use by modern mariners.

A large map of

Silloth & District Community Transport

At a recent meeting of S.A.D.C.T. tribute was paid to David Pigeon. David had been a driver and committee member and was conscientiously active on many issues regarding community transport for many years.

He will be a big miss to the whole community.

Also recognised was the dedication shown by Lawrence Marshall. Lawrence has his name on our log sheets driving 443 times. This plus brokerage driving must

put him very close to 500 journeys. This is an achievement which has shown tremendous commitment to S.A.D.C.T. and the community. Many thanks to Lawrence.

Through the

Solway Buzz may I ask that drivers who had expressed a willingness to drive for groups, please return their availability forms. The information you give is very important to the service we attempt to provide thank you.

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