

Forgotten Treasures

Article by:
Tommy Akitt

How many of us know what is actually under the ground that we stand upon? Probably, if the truth be known, not very many of us at all but it can often be quite surprising.

I was born in Silloth and have lived here ever since. I moved to my house in Roddan Terrace, a

small introverted row of houses, about thirteen years ago. It has quite a large garden and one of the things we wanted to do was to set aside a piece of land at the bottom for growing vegetables. This was where it all begun.....

Digging into the ground, it was obvious from the outset that this was going to be no easy task, as the ground was full of broken glass, pottery, bricks and other rubbish. What I decided to do was to dig the garden out to a reasonable depth, sieve the soil with a large homemade riddle hanging on chains and put the cleaned soil back in minus all the rubbish. Even with the hard work of my family this was an arduous task and took a few months, but it started a new collecting bug which is with me still.

As well as all of the broken stuff, there were lots of whole bottles, jars etc. which were very interesting. Apparently, my garden had been used as a rubbish tip both by the row of houses, and the lemonade factory next door. It is a long forgotten fact that Silloth had its own lemonade factory which was the "Silloth Mineral Water Company", occupying the premises that was, up until recently, the West Silloth Motor Co. The Company was on the go from the late 1800s into the early years of the 1900s. Sometime after this, it was taken over by W. Arnison and Sons who also had factories in Wigton and later Penrith.



The trademark of the Silloth Mineral Water Company was the old style shrimping boat that fished out of Silloth, which at the time were sailing boats. The bottles were mainly stoneware ginger beer bottles with a blue or black print, Codd bottles (with marble

stoppers invented by Hiram Codd), Hamilton or Bowler bottles (with pointed or rounded bottoms so they couldn't be stood up and dry out the cork) or green or amber coloured standard type beer bottles. I fell in love with these bottles straight away, but there were also many other bottles from all over the country, which starts you wondering how they got there, what they contained and who might



Tommy Akitt excavating bottles in a garden

have previously owned them. As well as bottles and jars there were other domestic things like bisque (porcelain) dolls' heads, which must have belonged to some little girl's much loved dolly at some time.

Out of the vegetable patch I filled a large sized skip with all the broken glass, pottery and rubbish but kept about 500 bricks to build paths and things. Next came the main garden area; was this the same? I dug the whole area methodically to a depth of four to five feet and took all of the big pieces and whole bottles out, backfilling the hole as I went along until I got to the last bit. I had a bit

of help from a friend that lived in Carlisle, who was already an avid bottle collector, and jumped at the chance to be involved. He couldn't believe I could be so lucky as to have a tip like this in my own garden.

In the last hole, we piled up all the broken bottles, left a time capsule message, and covered them over again. They now lie underneath my summerhouse.

This digging started an interest in old bottles with me, and I have dug on many old rubbish tips from as far away as Edinburgh and Harrogate. These old tips are becoming increasingly difficult to find but there must be lots out there as in rural areas most places had their own tips before there were any municipal collections. Along with my friend, Peter Wise, we still love to go digging, as the hobby is mainly about the excitement of never knowing what you are going to unearth next. I would like to take this

Councillor Markley Opens Play Area



Councillor Markley cutting Ribbon being held by youngest and oldest Pupil.

Although the weather was dreadful for the Holm Cultram Abbey CE Primary School Infant Play Area Opening, a good number of parents and friends turned out to celebrate.

Councillor Tony Markley attended Abbeytown School as a child and was delighted to help mark the occasion. The Play Area has been developed over the last

two years, funded partly by the Local Authority, and with generous donations from the friends of Abbeytown School. Bikes and wheeled toys have been purchased thanks to a generous donation from Mrs Alison Harrison in memory of her husband

Steven.

Children and adults enjoyed an afternoon in school watching a superb dance performance by KSI and taking part in 'Freddie Fit' aerobics. Refreshments were served and the school is very grateful to all who helped with the afternoon.

One Night With You

Report by: Charlie Harrison
President,
Silloth Rotary Club

What a fantastic night at Stanwix Park. I hope that all who attended enjoyed themselves, everyone seemed to have a smile on their faces.

Young Eric did a grand job keeping the acts and me on the right track, many thanks to him. Also due thanks for their kind donations are Enkev, Studio Be & Salon Di Moda, Pearson Farms, TSL Sports, Harrisons Butchers Cockermouth and everyone who donated bottles for the drawing. The first prize, a 19inch Plasma TV, was won by Isabel Gilmour.

The auction was also very successful, the highest price was given by Mike Ferguson for the picture of a Solway Sunset taken by Peter Cusack and mounted on canvas by John Cook Signs.

On the night Gary Winter, of Winters Newsagents, presented a donation of £100 to Peter Gilmour, Chairman for Silloth First Responders. (Gary it's time you gave up the day job and became a full time golfer – you're the man.)

We would like to have another evening with different acts and would like to hear what type of evening and any acts you would support. Please let us know by writing to us c/o The Golf Hotel or speak to me and we will try our best to arrange it.

I will not forget those who came and contributed to a fantastic night, we raised £2,259.40 for our Charity Account which is used to help those in greater need than ourselves.

Once again thank you from all members of Silloth Rotary Club.

digging damaged bottles and wanting to restore them to their former glory. I have a website with my collection, and other pictures on at www.collectingantiquebottles.co.uk

If anyone has any old bottles they would like to sell, or has any information on old rubbish tips, I would be very grateful if they could contact me on either my e-mail address on the website, or by phone on 01697332053 or 07752613315. We would be prepared to pay rewards for allowing us to dig on these tips, and we always restore the ground afterwards to the landowner's specification.

So it just goes to show, you never know just what is under your feet, even in your own garden!



King Bee
by Rob Girdler
from Holm Cultram Abbey
School