

1981-1982



Monday, 26 July 1982



Mr Bob Spedding (third left), chairman of Allerdale Council, unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the official opening of a new section of the Silloth sea wall near Skinburness. Also seen (left to right) are Mr Robert Cansdale, director of Edmund Nuttall Ltd (Scottish Division), the contractors; Mr Ken Bowe, Silloth Town Mayor, and Mr Michael Barrett, of Westminster, consulting engineer, Lewis and Duvivier, who designed and supervised the work.

Damaged by Storm Feb. 1983



THE SEA DYKE CHARITY

From the early 17th Century records show that '16 Men' were elected as the local parliament, acting under the Steward of the Manor, who was responsible to the Lord Warden of the West Marches, and when the Wardenship was abolished, to the Governor of Carlisle, representing the Crown. Such a body was not peculiar to the Holme Cultram area in the time of Elizabeth I. It was recorded in 1657 that - "there hath been a custom, time out of mind, that a certain number of persons called the Sixteen, or the greater part of them have used to make orders, set penalties, choose officers and let the meadows and do all such things as are usually performed in the Court Baron of other manors."

The number (16) was determined by the four quarters of the area (Holme Abbey, Holme Low, Holme East Waver and Holme St Cuthbert) into which the parish, like others, was divided - four men from each quarter.

Whether there was such a body under the Holme Cultram Abbey is unknown. At the Commissioners enquiry under Elizabeth I it was already noted, juries of 24 were summoned; but these men were not the Parish Council. The first direct mention of the '16' is in a tithe suit of 1586, but they are also mentioned in 1568, "there was 16 Men chosen by the parish for to sett down a tax in the 10th year of Elizabeth I". The earliest records of the '16 Men' are lost, but from 1630 - 1721 the minutes exist in a book form; a second book deals with the period 25.10.1721 - 1839, and a third brings the records up to 1884.

The records give a hint of the various duties of the '16'. They included the maintenance of the sea dykes, and the care of Wedholme Wood (given by Elizabeth I for the repair of the sea dykes), care of the 'three' bridges (Barrocks Bridge, Hart Law Bridge and Crummock Bridge), the levying of local rates, the appointment of the school master and clerk, the confirmation of bye-laws, the custody of 'parish stock' (money), the supervision of the church warden's and collector's accounts; and they were often chosen as a court of appeal or as arbitrators.

It appears that over the years (from records of the 17th century) that wood was sold from Wedholme - for repairs to churches etc.- which was excess in need for repairs to the sea dykes, and so this profit was to be put to other purposes within the parish. When repairs were required on the sea dykes the men of each district of Holme Cultram had to take turns to labour at the work until it was finished, for the wage of 1 shilling (5p) per day, and a fine was payable if they did not attend.

In 1667 it is recorded that money became more plentiful after the Restoration and the parish began to accumulate a 'Stock' from which it lent out sums of money at interest. Between 1760-1765 the parish stock had risen to £1024 11s. 2d. and the first real estate, West House, was purchased for £930 (sold in 1812 for £1810). About the same time it was agreed to open a workhouse (instead of paying for destitute parishioners to be sent to Whitehaven or Workington Workhouses), and a part of the barn at

West House was used. There are records of some kind of Poor Relief being provided from 1640 for prisoners, maimed soldiers, orphans and other destitute people.

It was in 1778 that the last payment of £100 was made to the '16' for wood from Wedholme, which they had not succeeded in replanting, and the land reverted to Sir William Musgrave as lessee of the herbage, at a small yearly rent. During the early 1800's it was decided to sell all other properties for which they were responsible, except for Swinsty Farm, some 91 acres of land and Stank Side Cottage. Swinsty Farm was leased for farming but was used in part as a Poor House.

By 1888 most of the responsibilities of the '16', including sea defence, were taken over by the County and Parish Councils, and the '16 Men' were at odds as what to do with the money being earned and left in their trust. Some were for using the money for their own purposes but others were opposed to this and demanded a public audit, and the affair was thrown into the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice for the funds to be registered with the Charity Commission and Trustees elected to administer the fund. The number of Trustees was still to be 16, 4 landowners from each of the 4 districts and each Trustee to be proposed and seconded by qualified landowners of the district. The document setting out the rules and regulations of the Charity, and the qualifications of the Trustees, is held by the present Clerk to the Charity, Mr John Todd, Waver Street, Silloth.

Between 1896 - 1904 the Charity spent £463 on concrete and repairs to the sea dykes and the sea defences in front of Silloth, even though sea defence was by now the responsibility of the County Council.

The Charity still owns Swinsty Farm, 91 acres and Stank Side Cottage and the money earned could still be used for sea defence, but today this has become too big for them, so with the permission from the Charity Commissioners donations are now made in other quarters:

eg. £2000 to the Holme Cultram Abbey Restoration fund.
 £3000 to the Convalescent Home in May 1980.
 £1000 to the Convalescent Home in May 1982.

Trustees - August 1983

Mr J O Holliday, Abbeytown
 Mr J J Bowe, Calvo, Silloth
 Mr JJ Pearson, Abbot Farm, Blackdyke
 Dr H Hutton, 70 Skinburness Road, Silloth
 Mr S Bowe, Millgrove, Abbeytown
 Mr J Mattinson, Brownrigg Farm
 Mr W Hornsby, Rose Farm, Aldoth
 Mr J Graham, Longcummercattiff
 Mr A F Coulthard, Sandycroft, Silloth
 Mr W Bell, Beach Tree, Tara, Saltcoats
 Mr J H Wilson, Oak Tree Farm, Newton Arlosh
 Mr E Wise, Low Tarn, Silloth
 Mr R C Clague, Pelutho Farm, Silloth
 Mr A Hanley, Manor House, Edderside, Mawbray
 Mr G Pattinson, Mawbray Farm, Allonby
 Mr J S Todd, 12 Waver Street, Silloth - Clerk

1882, W. 2764.

Filed 26th Oct., 1888.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE,

CHANCERY DIVISION.

Mr. Justice NORTH.

Between WILLIAM FLETCHER WILSON, William Wishart, Richard Jackson, George Tordiff, Wilson Johnston, John Jefferson, William Jackson, George Rigg, Robert Lawson, Martha Wills (widow), Thomas Garner, Jane Ann Wise (spinster), Robert Cullen, William Graham, John Barwise, Barwise Robinson, Joseph Robinson, Frank Scott, Joseph Miller, Martha Steel (widow), Robert Caruthers and Robert Ritson, on behalf of themselves and all other, the Copyholders of the Manor of Holme Cultram, in the County of Cumberland (except the defendants, Joseph Barnes, Robert Glaister and Joseph Martindale),
Plaintiffs.

JOSEPH BARNES, Robert Glaister (since deceased), Joseph Martindale and Her Majesty's Attorney General, *Defendants.*

Some poetry inspired by Silloth

From 'A Guide to Silloth' pre 1921

A ship! a ship! from the wide blue sea,
Laden with things from Amerikee!
From Amerikee she has found her way
To the celebrated SILLOTH BAY.

Oh! Silloth; sure
The pulse of memory must cease to beat
Ere I forget thee, ere affection fail,
For thee, thou worn and weather-beaten shore,
Barren of Ocean - foreland of the Firth.

Farewell dear Silloth, farewell happy hours,
Ye lofty sandhills, farewell, and fairy dales,
Farewell, ye mossy banks and rainbow flowers;
And fare ye well, old historical tales,
Farewell, ye conies, sporting in green vales,
Mysterious monks and ancient monastery,
Farewell, ye odourous and spicy gales,
Love, beauty, all of joy that tongue may tell.
To you I breathe a sad adieu - goodnight- farewell.

(Some amateur verse written on the Pier)

Of all the gay places of public resort,
At Brighton, at Scarboro', at Bath or at Court,
There is none like sweet Silloth of which I can boast,
So charming the sands, so healthy the coast.
Rheumatics, scorbutics, and scrofulous kind,
Hysterics and vapours, disorders of mind,
By bathing and cleansing are made quite anew,
As thousands have proven and know to be true.

But strange now: I'll tell what has happened of late,
Tis true, though I heard it today (tete-a-tete),
"Still lest you mistake me I'll fully explain,
Young Cupid, the urchin, lies under yon main,
And filters each wave as it rolls to the shore",
A draught daily drunk by the rich and the poor:
The ladies well pleased with a potion so sweet
Come here in whole groups, their fond lovers to meet;
And gentlemen too, who are friends to the fair,
Come under pretence, to enjoy the fresh air.

SILLOTH BAY (an Acrostic)

Silloth is the place for the sick to reside,
 If they bathe (it will cure them) on the sea-side,
 Lovely sweet breezes blow fresh from the sea,
 Long life they impart and fill hearts full of glee.
 Old ladies and gents and young ones come here,
 To parade on the Green, their spirits to cheer.
 Having leisure - to Silloth they're determinèd to roam -

Buy presents and other nice things to take home;
 And having got health - to a lofty degree,
 You'll see them depart as blithe as can be.

I DEARLY LOVE SILLOTH

O, tell me neah mair o' fell, forest an' feeld,
 Neah lang'er they hev enny 'trackshun for me;
 Ther charms ta yon sea-side reswort noo mum yeeld,
 For ah dearly leyke Silloth, that pleace doon be t'sea.

Ah yence luv'd a city - nivver pleace was as dear -
 Neah spot in t'wide wurreld was fairer ta me;
 Me whopes, an' me thowts wer aw center't theear -
 But noo they're at Silloth, that pleace doon be t'sea.

Sum ma' like to clim moontains, an' sum ta explore,
 While udders i't'trains far countries may see;
 Bit gi' me a few days on Solway's nice shore -
 For ah dearly luv Silloth, that pleace clwose be t'sea.

Fwoaks may toak o'ther Späs, an' ther grand institushuns,
 They may gâ theear an' drink o'spa-watter for me;
 Theear's nowt like sea-breezes ta impruve constitushuns -
 They blow keen at Silloth, that pleace doon be t'sea.

Ah luv t'ebenin' woaks on that oot-strichin pier;
 Bit ah'll tell yeh a secret - atween yoo an' me -
 Just ten days ah've been married, an' me darlin' is heear;
 That's why ah luv Silloth, that pleace clwose be t'sea.

Seah, batchelors, maidens, young fwoaks an' oald,
 Cum reet doon to Silloth if mated yoo'd be -
 Cum doon afooar t'wedder gits deazy an' coald,
 When luvvers leev Silloth, that pleace doon be t'sea.