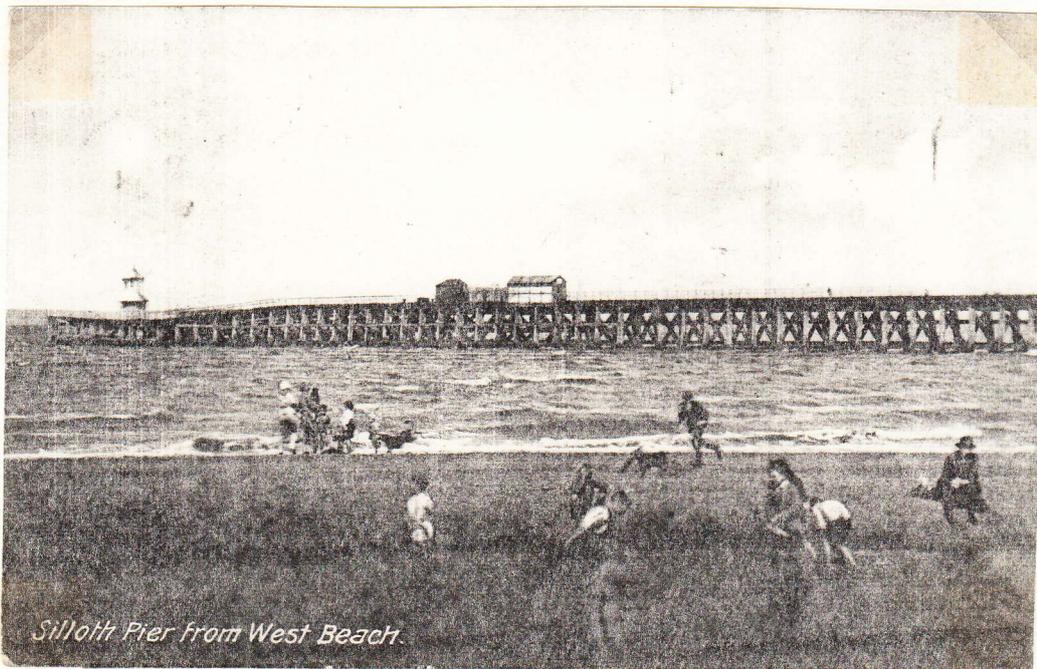


The Pier, Silloth.



Silloth Pier from West Beach.

Silloth Pier

The Pier was completed before the commencement of the first dock, the Marshall Dock, in 1857.

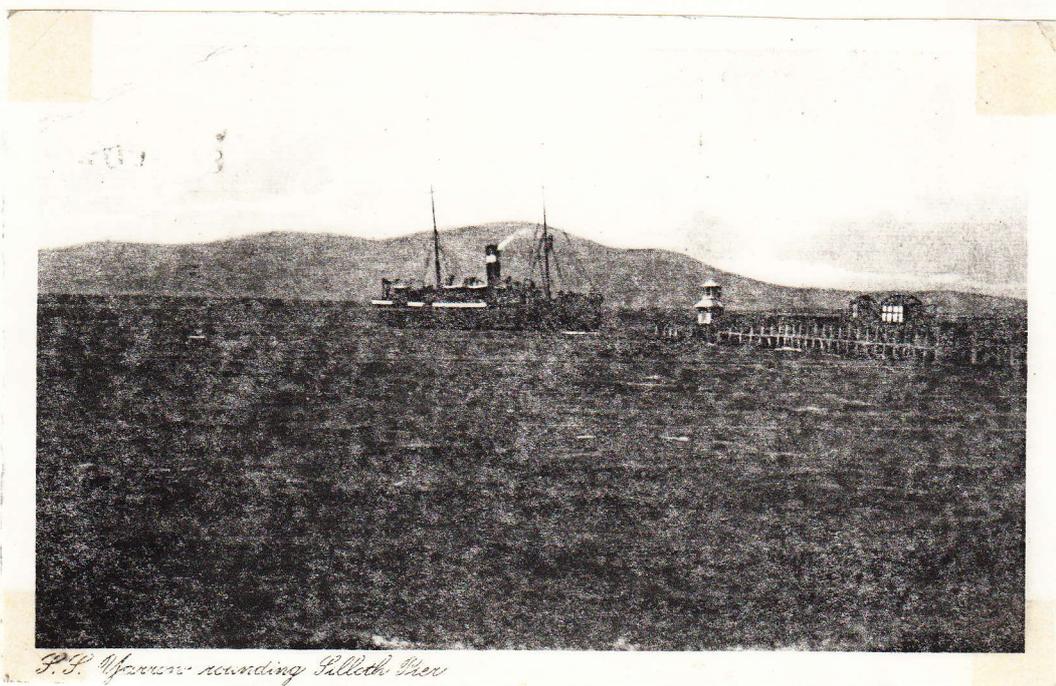
It was 1000 feet long and 25 feet broad; free to visitors, fishing or boating, and a useful promenade. Steam boats left daily to Liverpool and twice a week to Dublin, Isle of Man and Whitehaven.

The Pier had a railway line right down its length to carry passengers disembarking from the boats into Silloth Station; also the goods off the boats.

The cost of the foundation, or sheet piling of the pier, was 1s 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d per foot. The piles were driven to the depth of twenty feet. The upper part cost 8d per foot. The contractor was a Mr John Tweedy, of Newcastle, who unfortunately lost his life before completion of the work, which, however, was continued by his widow.

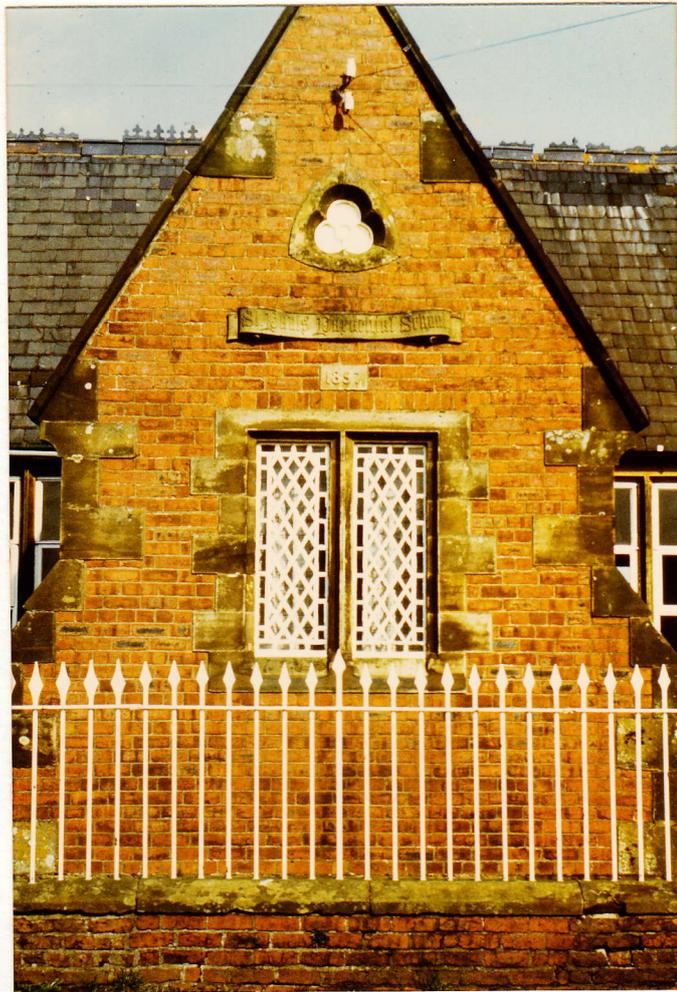
Owing to a report in a local newspaper of the times, much to the relief of those who first put forward the plans for a railway and docks at Silloth, they soon had proof of the utility of the Pier - 'Passengers arriving at Silloth from Liverpool by steamer have been able to land and be in Newcastle within fourteen hours from leaving Liverpool, and before they could have been landed at any of the other Cumberland Ports'.

The demise of the Pier came about the time of the Second World War, and its lack of use led to its rot and it was finally washed away by heavy seas. It has been said that the Pier could have been saved at a cost of about £20,000, but this was thought to be too much. A false economy in retrospect when considering the cost of the sea defence of Silloth today. The structure now standing in place of the Pier does not do its job half as well.



P. G. Mearns rounding Silloth Pier

Original School Buildings



EDUCATION

By 1695 Holm Low had a small building used as a school, opposite the Public House at the three road ends at Causewayhead; this was converted into a cottage when the Colt Park School was built.

At Silloth the old school in Liddel Street (now the school canteen) was endowed in 1850 by John Longcake in memory of his son, and the 'new' buildings built by public subscription in 1857, were used for church services until the church was finished in 1871.

Longcake Charity Trust

"John Longcake Esq., of Pelutho, left by will in 1873, the interest of £600 to the poor of the Parishes of Holme St Cuthbert, Holme St Paul and Holme Abbey, under control of the incumbents (vicars) and four laymen; the residue of the estate, after certain legacies had been paid, was to be invested in the names of the seven trustees, and the interest thereof to be devoted to the promotion of religion and subscriptions to dispensaries, hospitals and institutions which benefit the poor of the said parishes, and education in the townships of the same parishes; £15 per year is set aside for deserving cottagers; under a scheme of the Charity Commissioners the trustees will make the following awards -

Scholarships to higher grade schools, three or more of the annual value of £25 each, tenable for 3 years at the same place of further education, to be approved of by the trustees. One or more to be competed for by boys and girls in each of the three parishes (Holme St Paul included Christ Church, Silloth), who shall not be less than 12 years of age, and shall have attended some Public Elementary School or schools (as defined by the Elementary Education Act 1870), in one of the above mentioned parishes, for not less than 6 years next preceding the award."

The Trust still exists today and funds still go into local schools, Church Halls and Sunday Schools.

In 1878 the management of the Liddel Street School was transferred to the Holme Low School Board. The buildings were described at the time as 'handsome, combining both the Elizabethan and early English styles; the interior was well arranged, and replete with the necessary apparatus for imparting a good education. A shield over the fireplace had the following motto inscribed "Disce Vivere" (Learn to Live).' The cost of erection was about £960, including the masters house contiguous to the school.

The School Board erected another school (the old infant school building) in 1896 at a cost of £1300 - £1800 (different records state different figures), raised through public subscription and grants from the Privy Council.

By 1901 many improvements were made in both schools and for several years the maximum grants had been earned and the schools were always highly spoken of by the inspectors. They were endowed with a scholarship for the Longcake Charity for the annual value of £18 18s. Average attendance at the school was 240 in the upper school and 100 in the infants.

The Colt Park School at Causewayhead was erected by the School Board in 1875, 'a noble block of buildings with master's residence attached, and cost altogether £1800'. The school had accommodation for 112 children and the average attendance in 1901 was 100. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War the school was closed (probably for security reasons because of its proximity to Silloth Airfield) and the pupils from Colt Park were sent to Wigton, with the Silloth children, and the school was never re-opened.

As well as the State Schools there were several private schools in the town.

The largest, Greenrow Academy, previously described, closed in the 1870's. But several smaller schools continued into the early 1900's: among them -

Miss H D Thompson ran a day school at 10 Wampool Street

Mr Grantham Dodd had a boarding school in Criffel Street

Miss H Shaw had a boarding school at Blitterlees.

George Makin at 9 Caldew Street

Mr Freddie Fisher ran a boys Prep School, where the Fisherman's Cove restaurant is now.

And in 1894 a Mrs Maybury ran a private school in Caldew Street. When Mrs Maybury died in the 1920's the school was taken over by a Miss Elizabeth Johnston who continued to teach children from five up to leaving age until her death in 1942. She was assisted by her niece Miss Moyra Edwards who continued the school as a private 'kindergarten' until she retired in July 1979.

As the child population increased so the need for bigger schools increased. In 1923 it was first suggested, in a Holme Cultram Urban District Council Meeting, that there was a necessity for a separate Senior School in Silloth. It came up again in 1924, the council wanted Further Education and Higher Education for the Holme Cultram area.

In 1927 the solicitors of the late Mr Joseph Wilson enquired of the council if they wished to purchase Silloth Park. The Council offered £1500 and finally make a contract for the Park, including the entrance to Skinburness Road and the land behind this road for £1600. Silloth Rugby Union Football Club and Silloth Town Association Football Club, both applied for permission to have pitches on the Park and there was talk of buying a Grandstand.

But in 1929 the Director of Education sent the Council plans of the proposed layout of a new school and asking to purchase 8 acres of Silloth Park. This meant the Council selling all of Silloth Park except 6 acres at the North End. Despite the proposed sale to the County Council, in 1932 Holme Cultram Council still let Silloth Park for football, Shows, Carnivals, hen runs and also let the grazing rights when it was not in use. They apparently bought Silloth Park so that the land would be in the hands of the Local Authority for use as building land for the proposed new school. By 1933 the County Council now owned the largest part of Silloth Park, allowing Holme Cultram Council to lease this part for Agricultural Shows, etc, as long as the land and fences were restored to good order.

Just before the Second World War a Secondary School was built for the senior pupils. It was immediately taken over for use by RAF personnel serving at Silloth Aerodrome for the duration of the war. The Silloth children had to be transported to Wigton for a half day of schooling.

In August 1946 the Parish's remaining portion of Silloth Park was sold to the County Council, for school buildings (probably for the 'temporary' junior school buildings) for £750.

Today, the Secondary School educates children from 11 - 16 years up to GCE 'O' level standard. Anyone wanting to study further must travel to Wigton for 6th form education or to Carlisle Technical College (lack of public transport has now stopped students travelling to Workington or Whitehaven Colleges of Further Education). The school became a Comprehensive School in 1977/78 and also changed it's name to Silloth Community School in 1980, making available many extra-curricular activities to pupils and all people of the town willing to subscribe to the Friends of Silloth School Association.

The original infant school building continued in use until 1982 when, together with the Junior School pupils who had been educated in 'temporary' prefab buildings built in 1947, the new Silloth Primary School was opened. The new building, obtained in the times of cut backs, largely due to the untiring efforts of County Councillor Mr Ormand Holliday, was erected at a cost of approximately £350,000 by Tom Willis (Builders) of Kirkbride. It was built to accommodate 280 pupils and officially opened by Mr O Holliday on 25th June 1982. Mr Peter Billingsley is the present headmaster with a staff of 11.

1984

