Photograph Courtesy of Gordon Akitt

When you are exploring the dunes

concrete arrows within the grasses

and wildflowers. They are located

about half-way along the reserve,

Galloway cattle grazing and ponds

breeding season during springtime.

created for rare Natterjack toads'

From the car park at Mawbray

Banks there is a 2.5km circular

options to explore both the beach

The area during the First World

Rounds were targeted and fired

into the estuary with a range of

over one thousand yards. Once

collect the used shells off the

Slightly further along the coast,

towards Blitterlees, it is possible to

visit a substantial bunker that was

once used as an arsenal (weapons

store). This can still be accessed

practice had ceased, a six-strong

team of horses would be led out to

making both war and peace.

War is said to have been used for

walk around the reserve with

and the central dunescape.

impressed!

sands.

close to the seaward side. You

might also spot some Belted

you might be able to find the two

Mawbray Markers

The arrows and associated observation markers were set out on the dunes during World War 2. They were used by pilots to guide aircraft towards the targets set out for them in the Solway Firth, as part of their training. The infrastructure here was constructed as part of the Number 1 Operational Training Unit based at Silloth Airfield.

Although this was once part of a busy bombing range, the nature reserve at Mawbray Banks is now a peaceful and beautiful place to visit.

Blitterlees Bank Secret Weapons Testing

From 1886 up until 1928, the area now known as West Beach was home to a large artillery gunning range (see photograph below).

It is hard to imagine the now peaceful dunes full of wildlife and flowers was once a testing site for the 26-tonne Armstrong guns.

Steam trains were used to transport the heavy artillery on a track along the dunes (see map) and also to bring wounded soldiers to the convalescent home (now Silloth Nursing and Residential Care Home). In 1895 the Shahzada of Afghanistan made a visit to observe the firing range in action and was said to be most



Silloth Airfield

Silloth Airfield was opened in June 1939, just before the start of World War 2, and closed on 31st December 1960. During the war, the airfield was home to No.22 Maintenance Unit with the purpose of repairing and maintaining the planes. No 1. Coastal Command maintained and tested many different aircraft from fighters such as Spitfires and Hawker Hurricanes to large bombers such as Vickers Wellingtons and the world-famous Lockheed Hudsons.

The town of Silloth expanded greatly as pilots and airmen arrived from the USA, Canada and parts of

Europe to acclimatise to the Western European flying conditions which included frequent fog, low visibility and high winds.

Both male and female pilots transferred planes to different airfields around the UK from Silloth, many of whom remember the area fondly. The area also suffered several air raids, including the 1940 Luftwaffe bombing, which occurred after a training exercise using flares attracted the enemy aircraft.

You can visit the Lockheed Hudson Bomber model opposite the RAFA club, on Silloth Green.



Photograph Courtesy of Colin Baty

Causewayhead Military Cemetery

During the early months of the Second World War an area of Causewayhead Cemetery was set aside as a burial place for service personnel. The sixty-one War Graves can be found on the far side of the cemetery, pictured here. Most of the airmen buried were serving at the Royal Air Force Station at Silloth. Many of the bodies were recovered from the Solway, which some local people renamed 'Hudson Bay' as many of the crashes involved Lockheed Hudson bombers.

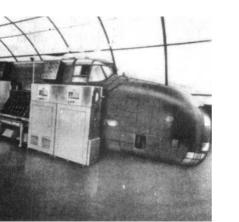
The World's First Flight simulator

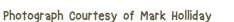
During World War 2, air crews at RAF Silloth's Operational Training Unit were trained using the 'Silloth Trainer,' a type of familiarisation 'simulator' for learning drills and the handling of plane malfunctions. The simulator was developed by Wing Commander Isles at RAF Silloth, and built from the fuselage of a Halifax Bomber. The trainer taught basic flying behaviour and emergency procedures before the young pilots took to the air.



Photograph Courtesy of Colin Baty







A View Inside... The ladder down

into the fort and the handle which

filled sandbag pill box in the image

here lie at the end of Grune Point.

operates the bilge pump.

The Pickett-Hamilton fort was a circular fortified pill box that was designed to be lowered into the ground while it was not in use, enabling it to become hidden from the enemy's view.

Pickett-Hamilton Fort

The fort could be raised above ground level, where it would act as both an obstacle to enemy vehicles and a protected site from which to fire rifles and machine guns.

One fort has now been fully restored and is situated on Silloth Green. Maintained by the Silloth Airfield Project team, it is fully operational — you can see it in action and explore inside on open days. Check the information board on Silloth Green for details.

The Solway Aviation Museum near Carlisle has a collection of over twenty-three aircraft, with access to various cockpits and both indoor and outdoor exhibitions. Visit www.solway-aviation-museum.co.uk to find out more.

The Grune Point Pill Box Also known as the 'Cumberland Machine-Gun and Anti-Tank Rifle Emplacement,' it is a design unique to the Cumberland area. The remains of the unusual concrete-

Photograph Courtesy of Colin Baty

Hudson Wreckage At low tide the remains of Hudson AM 771, which crashed on take-off from Silloth Airfield during WW2, can be seen lying in Moricambe Bay. It is unsafe to visit this site due to the shifting sands but the remains of the Grune Point bombing ranges wooden structure can still clearly be seen from the coastal path.



Photograph Courtesy of Frank Moore

There were other WW2-related

Photograph Courtesy of Gordon Akitt

structures on Grune Point, notably a quadrant tower (no longer present) which observers would have used to monitor the success of the 'practice bombing runs'. In addition, there was a 'field office' and a moving firing range, where model aeroplanes were run along a railway track, to enable target practice.



and unstable sinking sand along the

coast between Skinburness and

These are illustrated as a guide only.

the coast, highlighted in red on the map.

There are various walking routes along

heritage and the role the airtield played

of Silloth-on-Solway are proud of its rich

and many who live in the local community

worked and served at Silloth Aerodrome

community of Silloth who live(d) close to

WW2; also its significance to the civilian

story of Silloth Airlield and its role during

wordpress.com has been set up to tell the

airmen, RAF personnel and the local

Men and women who worked there,

accompanying website sillothairfield.

The Silloth Airfield Project and

it and hold it dear. The people who

operated by Stagecoach.

Walking Routes

during WW2.

Please be aware of rapidly changing tides

Workington. The service is Number 60,

There is a regular bus running along the

solwaymilitarytrail.co.uk

Created by Tale Trails www.taletrails.co.uk

Cover photograph courtesy of James Smith

Find out more: sillothairfield.wordpress.com



Causewayhead Cemetery ///stylists.written.dated Grune Point Pill Box ///wished.subtitle.reshape

Mawbray Markers ///running.trees.grafted

///summaries.bliss.fuels Blitterlees Bunker ///establish.sculpture.daily

Silloth Green Pickett-Hamilton Fort

Military Features - ///what3words

sware that parking in the village of Please refer to Ordnance Survey Explorer map OS314 Solway Firth when planning

Silloth.

When visiting Grune Point, please be

Mawbray Banks Car Park can be found at CA15 6QS, just 5 miles south of

The nearest postcode to Silloth Green is CA7 4DA. There is parking along the roadside and by the lifeboat station. Please see the map for other parking locations along the coast.

Silloth can be reached easily from Penrith, Carlisle, Keswick and Workington. It is located on the Solway Firth, close to Scotland and the Lake an area of outstanding natural beauty and with numerous sites of special and with numerous sites of special scientific interest and nature reserves scientific interest and nature reserves

Getting There and Parking Silloth Airlield Project



Map and Guide

Silloth Military Trail

A wealth of heritage on the Solway coast



Produced with Silloth Tourism Action Group with generous funding from S.O.S Community Shop

