

Cockermouth Post 2009

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I recently came across a battered photograph from 1927 showing the then Prince of Wales in Harris Park. He spent two days in West Cumberland, visiting several towns including Cockermouth. In Workington he opened the new Prince of Wales Dock and was presented with a gold-mounted walking-stick made from greenheart wood. He commented on the difficult economic times and hoped the new dock would help industry in the area.

In Cockermouth his brief visit on June 30th caused great excitement. Houses and shops were festooned with bunting, flags were strung across roads, and banners bearing inscriptions 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' and 'God Bless Our Prince' were attached to buildings. The newspaper account describes the fine avenue of trees along by the auction marts, all beautifully decorated. In the background the Grand Theatre was adorned with shields, plants and flags by Mr Arthur Wilson (theatre manager) and his assistants. Fairfield House and gardens had been decorated by the Mitchell family. On the day the Border Regiment 'D' Company 5th Battalion and military band set off from the Drill Hall to march to Harris Park. At the same time 300 ex-servicemen, decorated with medals marched behind the Mechanics' Band to the park, stopping on the way to lay a wreath at the War Memorial. In the park waiting were many groups of people, including around 1,250 schoolchildren from Cockermouth and surrounding villages, with their respective heads and teachers. Mr Simon, headmaster of Fairfield Boys' School, was Master of Ceremonies. As the Prince entered Harris Park the band struck up the National Anthem. The Royal Salute was given and taken and the Prince inspected the Guard of Honour formed by the Territorials. Council members were presented, followed by an inspection of the many ex-servicemen present. The Prince then came to the schoolchildren, who cheered heartily and waved their flags. He declared that the 'enthusiasm and dignified behaviour of the people in the streets' had delighted him, as did the happy expressions on the children's faces! The whole town had certainly gone to a lot of trouble to make this brief visit a special one.

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