

MBL 019

Helen Loxam is the current Chief Executive of the Lancaster Port Commission which is based at Glasson Dock. Helen presents a snapshot of the workings of the Port Commission as well as a historical overview. She also describes in detail dealing with the aftermath of the 2016 damage to the Plover Scar Lighthouse.

	Can you explain what the Lancaster Port Commission does? Helen describes the overall operation which is responsible for boats docking safely, buoys, a pilot service, maintenance of river berths, docks, dock gates and dredging.
2.28	Helen explains how the dock is only accessible at certain tide times. She explains how the pilot boat accompanies boats.
3.16	Helen talks about the type of boats using the port, including pleasure boats, the Silver River (a twice weekly cargo boat from the Isle of Man) and bulk vessels carrying animal feeds and fertiliser.
5.17	Helen describes in detail the origins of the Lancaster Port Commission which reach back to the late 1600s. This includes- problems with sailing ship getting to Lancaster, an Act of Parliament, issue with Quakers, why Lancaster is a trust port, 4 further Acts of Parliament, original land from church, rent and lots, new quay built, clearing river at Scale Ford, building of pier at Glasson, 1800 peak of trade, D&T Stevensons surveying river in 1839, river dredged, moving channel, building of training walls, last commercial ship to Lancaster 1986.
16.00	All revenue has to be earned by Lancaster Port Commission through ship dues, and rents etc. They have spent 200 years solving problems.
16.42	Helen first came to Glasson as a tally clerk for the Isle of Man vessels 28 years previously. She describes what a tally clerk does.
19.18	She talks about the progression of her career, setting up bookkeeping systems, health and safety and quality systems for Glasson Grains. After 18 years she moved to the Port Commission as a bookkeeper and 5 years later she became the Chief Executive.
22.13	She talks about creating management accounts for the Port Commissioners. Helen gives the historical background to the Port Commissioners.
26.20	Helen talks about the duties and responsibilities of the modern commissioners and describes the plans required.
30.50	Description of the role of Harbour Master. The Port employs 9 staff who all need particular training. History attracted Helen to the job.
32.55	Detailed account of the Plover Scar Lighthouse incident which includes - spotting damage, an unprecedented accident, survey of damaged lighthouse, questions of how could it could be fixed and reached, the tender process, 4 layers of environmental designation and ramifications, MPM Mayport the construction company chosen, description of deconstruction and construction, 1846 plans from Lancashire RO, plans looked different to lighthouse, son of last lighthouse keeper providing information that the lighthouse had been reclad at a later date, description of inner lighthouse and building work, changes made by building work, time capsule created by local primary school.
46.38	General discussion about the construction project.
49.00	Relationship between port and village. Helen talks about issues with dust from cargos and relationship between port and community.

51.27	Talks about the pressure of work, but she loves it. The other staff work to the time of the tides, often ships come in during the night or lunchtime. Talks of specialist knowledge and passing on of knowledge.
54.57	Helen talks about an ancestor who was Mayor of Lancaster in 1600s. Her roots go back generations. She talks of love of the area, 60's desecration of Lancaster city centre and changes to the area.
59.07	What are benefits and strengths of the area? Helen talks of character and diversity of scenery. Talks of her father, that her family are grafters and that job satisfaction is important
1hr 1 min	Future of Glasson Dock? They are caretakers with little influence on who uses the port. Helen talks about the possibility of short sea shipping and the difficulties of not having a 'voice' as a small port.
	Interview by Emma Aylett Summarised by Emma Aylett
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