

**1992-2002 (1996)**

## **Exmouth Docks**



Exmouth's history as a port is very hard to establish. For many centuries, the whole of the estuary and beyond, from Exeter to the Teign in the west and the Axe in the east, was known simply as 'Exmouth'. However, it had certainly been active for a very long time before the docks were formally opened in 1865.

The silos in the picture were used for bulk storage. The main cargos were cement, coal, timber, fertiliser, grain and foodstuffs, much of which was shifted with the help of the docks' very own branch railway line. A quick glance at the photo will show three cargo ships tied up at the wharves, in addition to at least thirty small boats. Sadly, there was no room for expansion and the rapidly growing size of cargo ships made the docks redundant. The last ship sailed out on New Year's Day, 1990, but it took six years of negotiation before the sale took place, and the marina development could begin.

Clearly visible in the photo are some of the 125 chalets, many of which started out as boathouses, which were dotted round the docks in a much-loved shanty town known as Shelley Beach. To many people, the saddest thing about the closure of the docks was the loss of the chalets. Because they were built on land owned by the docks company, they had no option but to go.

The Marina now houses many working fishing boats and The Point Bar and Grill, an award-winning restaurant and bar serving fresh fish and seafood with other locally sourced ingredients.



The docks also housed the sailing club, whose clubhouse had an unfortunate accident in 1971. The club has new premises just round the corner of the estuary. The swimming and lifesaving club also had its HQ in the docks, but later moved to baths built on the site where The Ocean now stands – and where the water quality was undoubtedly an improvement.