

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 23

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to 2008. The Trust hopes that you all had an enjoyable Festering Season and that you are now fired up for the year ahead.



There are plenty of ongoing concerns in Spittal, some of which you will find referred to in the **View from the Prom**. This year we hope that some of them will be resolved.

This year also sees one of our local councillors, Hazel Bettison, becoming the Mayor of Berwick, and of course our local school celebrates its 100th anniversary. So there's plenty to celebrate. This year's Gala is being planned for June 15th and there are other events for you to support once we have dug ourselves out from beneath the sand that threatens to overwhelm us.

Next Copy deadline: March 9th (Easter Issue)

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Looking ahead over this year there is a much planned, which means a lot of hard work for the dedicated few. At the time of putting this newsletter together we are anxiously waiting for news of our annual insurance premiums. With the current climate of fear that someone may trip over a blade of grass, we are having to reassess our present level of cover, and we are hoping that the new premiums do not mean that we have to rethink whether we can hold events!

Looking on the positive side we are planning for the Gala in June, promoting entertainment in Seafield Park over the summer months and, we hope, staging a 'Seaside Festival' in August. News of all these will appear in later issues. In addition, the Car Boot Sales will

take place again, probably from May onwards, so start looking out those long forgotten items in the attic; don't take them to the tip, earn a little extra cash.

We will also be taking up some perennial challenges, the state of the beach, encroaching sand over the Prom and the dog fouling issue to name just a few. There is no improvement to any of these, they are just getting worse. So there's plenty to get on with, if you feel like helping then come along to the AGM and have your say. Better still why not join in, it can be fun you know!
Mike Greener

NOTICE OF AGM SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 26TH MARCH AT
7.30PM IN THE ST. AIDANS ROOM OF
BERWICK URC, MAIN STREET

ALL ARE WELCOME



A VIEW FROM THE PROM

Once upon a time we were lead to believe that all would be well if we mastered the three R's, Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic. Then came the new three R's, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle; at least they all started with R! Now it seems we have the three C's, Consult, Consult and Consult again. You may remember that the future of Spittal Point was taken through a well presented public consultation exercise by the Borough Council held in Berwick URC back in September 2004. The object of this exercise

was to put before the community the Council's proposed Development Brief for the Point in order to see if this met with local aspirations, which indeed it did, and the resulting comments were very promising. So ended the first 'C'. Then along came the outfit that were engaged to look at the redevelopment of the Tweed Estuary as a whole. They had a half day guided tour of Spittal, held some discussion 'workshops', notably not in Spittal though, and eventually produced what was lovingly called 'The Masterplan'. Here endeth the second 'C'. To be fair their document did incorporate some of those aspirations from the previous Development Brief.

Here beginneth the third 'C'. The difference is though that nobody seems to have been contacted by this new set of consultants, whose brief we are told is to make contact with the local communities. These people are adding 'flesh' to the bones of the previous exercise and their final report will be the one that shapes the thinking of the future decision makers. It's frightening to think that someone who has not spoken to us, and will not have to live with the consequences, can say that this is truly representative. A cynical view you may say, it's more like trying to wade up the Prom ankle deep in sand! (*Editor – I don't wish to worry you, but people usually talk in terms of the seven C's*)

The BIG QUESTION for Spittal at the moment must be WHY?

Why, when we have such a lovely new prom which allows able-bodied and disabled alike to enjoy the sea air, do we allow it to degenerate into an impassable sand-strewn wasteland?

Why, when our school children put so much effort into the design of the paddling pool can we not allow our young visitors to enjoy it, while at the same time we allow a large pool of stagnant water to accumulate at the corner of South Greenwich Road?

Why, when we were so pleased to have our cliffs designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, do we find the first outstanding features to be the ornamental sewage fountain by the old chalets and the fly-tippers decorative handiwork?

Why, when we have an attractive village on a heritage coast do we, and our visitors, have to put up with the filth left behind by dogs? Do we really want people to have a slimy and smelly image of Spittal, and how long will it be before a child is infected by the bacteria present in dog muck?

Why when we have such a glorious beach do we allow access to it to become so difficult, with sand blocking some of the main access points and dune grass taking over the upper beach?

Why when we have a reasonably well maintained Main Street do we allow it to be used, along with the south end of the prom, by youngsters keen to see how fast their two-wheeled lawn mowers will go? How long will it be before somebody is killed?

Regrettably the answer is usually the same – maybe nobody cares any more.

CALENDAR 2009

Just to remind you that The Trust's 2009 Calendar will feature photographs taken by Spittal folk. So if you have any good views of Spittal with a seasonal flavour that you think would look good in a calendar please send them to Bryan Munro at 127 Main Street – either by e-mail attachment or hard copy through the letterbox. The deadline for contributions is the end of March 31st.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

WELCOME - We would like to welcome **Shiel & Morrison** into Spittal. They are the printers of this illustrious publication and have relocated from their previous premises in Tweedmouth. The recent commemorative insert in the Berwick Advertiser stated that Berwick was an important publishing centre for Northumberland and the Eastern Borders. With Martins already here we would like to think that Spittal can now be thought of in this way. So, good luck to S & M and we hope that they are here for the foreseeable future.

GOING – our lollypop man, **Dickie Moffatt**, is hanging up his high viz jacket and handing over his stop sign in March to enjoy his well earned retirement. Dickie formerly worked for Jus Rol and is a member of the band that plays at the Gala, so we haven't seen the last of him.

GOING – **AA Foods** are merging with JB Foods, a company based in Loanhead, Edinburgh, with most of the staff relocating there. Lorraine and Alan Archer have spent 27 years building up their business, moving

into Spittal from Duns in 1995, but see this as a necessary move that will allow the company to grow even more. They will be initially joining JB Foods themselves offering them their many years of knowledge and consultation for retail ice cream. The AA Foods logo will still be seen around Spittal as their premises in Sandstell Road will be used as a local distribution centre. They have always supported the work of SIT so we wish them well for the future.

GONE – *Leith UK* have now departed these parts and moved up to the North Road Industrial Estate. No more will we see the convoys of trucks leaving for distant places carrying marquees for some poor soul's wedding bash!! They too have supported us well in the past, so good luck to them too.

SCHOOL NEWS JANUARY 2008

We're busy thinking about a New Year *and* an old year – the school is approaching its 100th birthday and we're very keen to mark this centenary in all sorts of ways. We'll keep you posted on the proposed events throughout the year – but among the things we are planning are an exhibition and a book detailing the history of the school. If anyone has any memories of the school they'd like to share – and if they have any old pictures, documents or newspaper cuttings we could copy and reproduce – then please get in touch with us. It's your contribution that will make it extra-special.

As we mentioned in the last edition of The Point, we're also planning a Centenary Garden. All the children have been asked for their ideas and we'd like ideas from anyone else in the community who's green-fingered – and green-minded! Let us know what you think should be in this very special new space, which will be at the side of the school adjacent to the church.

The usual thanks to everyone who supported our PTA Christmas Fair back in December – it raised a massive £800! We hope you all also enjoyed our Christmas performances, which raised £194 for a new sound system.

And the fund-raising continues with a Valentines Disco on Thursday 14th February, 6pm – 8pm. Love to see you all there!

CALLING ALL TRAIN SPOTTERS

An appeal was made in the letters section of the Berwick Advertiser of 17th January for information about a small gauge railway that was set up on the Prom in 1966. The letter was from Roger Jermy of Alnwick who is researching this for his latest book on narrow gauge railways of the North East. Roger is a railway enthusiast who has four previous books to his credit. This railway was apparently only set up for a few months and then taken away as it was a particularly poor summer weather-wise, but not for the England football team who won the world cup! If you have any recollections of the railway or photographs, he would be delighted to hear from you. He is also looking for photos of the steam loco's used in the Scremerston colliery. Roger can be contacted on 01665 606168 or at roger@jermy4648.freemove.co.uk.

NATURE DESK

BERWICK WILDLIFE GROUP

The next meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 13th February.

The Music of Birds. Demonstration and talk by Geoff Sample, wildlife sound recorder.

Wednesday 12th March.

David Rollo, OBE, will talk about his experiences as a wildlife vet.

Both of these are held at Berwick United Reformed Church (St. Paul's) Main Street, Spittal at 7.30pm.

Find us at www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk, or phone 01289 330591, or e-mail mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk or just come to an event.

BEACH CLEAN

The next beach clean will take place on Saturday 15th March; meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10am.

All are welcome, tea or coffee to finish, with hot cross buns to boot!

PROJECT SRI LANKA

Rassandeniya update

As some of you will have seen in the Berwick Advertiser, the Spittal banner arrived safely in Rassandeniya and both teachers and pupils are delighted with it. The banner will be on permanent display in the school.

A small amount of the money that we have sent has been used to support a family in need. Vipula had no means of supporting his family so we have purchased an engine for his boat so that he can resume fishing.

At the end of 2007 we were able to send another £500 to the Project and we are well on the way to the next £500. Thanks are due to those who support our various events or give regular donations. And to those of you who have agreed to sponsor children through their education.

Professor Joy will be travelling out to Sri Lanka in February and I am hoping that we can welcome her back here in Spittal on her return. *John Harrison (Local Coordinator)*

WEATHER OF 2007

Whatever you thought about the weather last year the facts, based on Spittal weather station, are :

The average of daytime maximum air temperature was 13.1 degC, which is 1.3 degC above the long-terms average. The average night-time air temperature was 7.0 degC which is 1.1 degC above the long-term average. The rainfall total for the year was 638 mm (25 inches) which about 11 per cent higher than the long-term average.

The temperature values were consistent with trends across the UK so the warming trend continues. The most exceptional month was April when the average daytime maximum was 4.1 degC above the long-term norm. As far as rainfall was concerned the most remarkable features of 2007 were the April rainfall of only 3.4 mm and the disappointingly wet summer.

THE TWO JOHNS PUB QUIZZES

Here are the dates for the next two quizzes – even if you have never been to a pub-quiz before, do come along. The questions aren't difficult – the emphasis is on having some fun together and raising money for charity at the same time.

Date	Location (Spittal)	Charity supported
February 29th	Red Lion	SIT
March 28th	Red Lion	Great North Air Ambulance

CANDLES4CHARITY

Many thanks to all of you who bought candles last year. By the end of the year we had made a profit of £734 which meant that £587 could be sent to various charities. Accounts are available if you wish to see a copy – from the Editor.

ST JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

It was wonderful to welcome so many of you to St John's over Christmas, particularly at the Parish Carol Service on Christmas Eve when we managed to get 150 of you seated. Apart from a packed church, other lasting Christmas images were the nativity scene under the forward altar, and the wonderful silk screen print which the children of Scremerston First School made for us.

AND FINALLY

From Gladys Friday

Mercifully (for you) there's not much room for my words of wisdom but I leave you with this amusing epitaph

"Two things in life I've had and ample Good advice and bad example"

and a sign from a butcher's shop(not local I hasten to add) which said

"Try our meat pies, you'll not get better"

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