

THE POINT



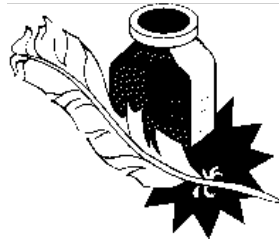
A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 20

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EDITORIAL

Let's begin with a moan – what a rotten summer we are having weatherwise. But the sun shone for the Gala so things can't be all that bad AND the summer's



not over yet. Reading this issue of The Point will bring some sunshine into your lives I'm sure. Many thanks for your contributions to The Point – because we are limited for space I have to edit some of them, which I hope you understand. Just to set the record straight, the editor does not write 'A View from the Prom' – we publish comments that come in to us as long as they are not offensive or personal. If you wish to pass your views to a contributor to this column then write to the editor and your letter will be reach the author.

Next Deadline (October issue): September 24th

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Gala: This year's Gala was a tremendous success but we are conscious that we cannot let the event become stale, so we tried a few different items this year. The Red Bus helped to bring more people across from Berwick and a few of you even managed to get a round trip. We've already booked it again for next year but we'll be looking for a clippie - any volunteers!? Teenagers have not usually been well catered for so we booked the Slater's ride, which was well received judging by the screams that emanated from it! Our thanks go to all those who helped out on the day, the performers and stall holders, and you all for coming along. If you have any new ideas for next year then please let us know.

Beach Clean: The last beach clean was well attended, 31 in all, with a good turn out from the local Scouts. Once they got over the fact that the litter pickers they were given were not

for fencing or implements for torturing each other they settled down to the job in hand. We are getting some sponsorship from Jus Rol for the next one (see the notice).

'Summer in the Park': Scottish Country Dancing on July 22nd (see report later on) was the first event of this season of entertainment in Seafield Park – there's, the Norham Brass Band on August 7th and Tea in the Park on 26th August.

Equipment Storage: We have finally got the issue of the storage of our equipment resolved. Frank Bettison has kindly taken on a storage container at the facility in Allerdean for our sole use. He is now trying to get the cost spread around other sponsors within the village. Our thanks go to him for his generosity. If you would like to help to cover the cost through sponsoring for the TINY sum of £1 per week then please get in touch with the Chairman or Secretary.



A VIEW FROM THE PROM

Here's a good one for you. The Borough Council have sent a letter around to a number of local groups and organisations asking for our comments on "...**their experience of the grass cutting and gardening service, and whether they believe there are problems in the current service.**" Where do you begin with this one? We are told that the current level of the gardening 'service' is at a bare minimum due to the cuts in the Council's budget at the start of the year. In short they are not able to hire the seasonal workers necessary to meet demand. This means that the grass gets cut at just the right time before the mower wouldn't cope, edges never get

trimmed and the beds get a light tickle with a hoe once a month. No scope at all for keeping every thing to a high standard and making improvements. To add salt to the wound the Trust had to show the 'Northumbria in Bloom' judging team around Spittal in mid-July, which was embarrassing! To a certain extent we could see this coming and suggested in this column in the April issue that we, 'the community', get out there and pitch in ourselves. That met with a deafening silence. If you think that this is the sole responsibility of the local Council, think again. We are now planning to hold a Gardening Day so watch for notices. Whilst compiling this issue we now hear that Northumberland will be one Unitary Authority. What chance of someone sitting in Morpeth being worried about our grass and borders? If you would like to make a (*printable please*) comment on the level of gardening service then please send them into the Trust Secretary, address on the back page, by Wednesday 8th August.

Talking of cuts in budgets, apparently our paddling pool is not getting filled this year, at the time of going to print anyway, due to the lack of funds available to fill and maintain it. Well it's raining anyway, so why do you need a paddling pool!

Just who decides on what happens on the Green in South Greenwich Road? Who gives permission and why don't they have the courtesy to inform those who live by the Green?? On July 22nd residents were woken early by the noise of a marquee being constructed just 30 meters from their back door. Then came the penetrating noise of music which ruined the peace of a Sunday afternoon. If we'd known in advance we could have made arrangements to be elsewhere. And what about the alcoholic drink that appeared to be consumed – were the by-laws suspended for the afternoon?? Without doubt a worthy cause was being supported, but please somebody will you have the courtesy to liaise with local residents next time – it saves any unnecessary ill-feeling.

SCHOOL NEWS

Here we are in the middle of the summer holidays – but the school has been far from quiet and empty. The COOSTY Kids Summer Play scheme runs until mid-August, with children from all across Berwick taking part. It's the school's willingness to open its doors

to the wider community that's won it so much praise and recognition recently.

We had a busy end to the summer term and our ongoing fund-raising is going well. OK – so the wet weather made for some soggy sausages at our end-of-term barbeque – but we've had some fantastic successes, thanks to the help and support you all give to the school. The balance our PTA's carrying forward is a brilliant £2,800 towards our new large play furniture.

Of course, a big 'thank you' must also go to the Spittal Improvement Trust for a generous donation of £200 from the proceeds of the Gala. Many of the school's pupils, parents and staff enjoyed the Gala itself on the school field - and now some of the money raised will go straight back into improving our outdoor area.

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back in September for the brand new school year.

***FROM OUR NEIGHBOURS* ST BARTOLOMEW & ST BOISIL'S RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Spittal Improvement Trust realise that to get anywhere these days you need to form working partnerships with others to achieve a common goal. With this in mind we thought it would be a good idea to get to know our nearest neighbour and introduce them to the rest of you. St Bartholomew & St Boisil's Residents Association operate in the area lying to the south of Union Brae and Ord Drive in Tweedmouth as this is taken as the recognised demarcation with the West End, who have their own residents association. Although getting their name from the Church in their area they are not affiliated to it. They were formed in 2003 to counter anti-social and other undesirable developments in their locality and achieved some early successes

They have two major projects in hand at the present time. First there is the application for 'Town Green' status for the embankment along Dock Road from the old Coating Works site to Carr Rock. This is to prevent incompatible development along Dock Road, which offers some of the best views of Berwick. Their second venture, and the one

that we will work together on, is a project to bring some much needed TLC to The Goody Patchy, an underused asset. They have already done some sterling work in identifying the areas that most need attention and the wildlife it contains; there are even orchids down there! We look forward to working with them and wish every success.

**SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST
CAR BOOT SALES
SANDSTELL ROAD**

*Next dates 5th, 19th & 26th August, 9th & 23rd
September (to be confirmed).
10.00am to 2.00pm
£5/car - £7/van*

Refreshments now available

CALENDAR 2009

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 (*No not the wife posing for a WI 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 2008 so you have plenty of time – and we'll give you a reminder. No great prizes, just a free copy of the calendar AND the fame of course.

And don't forget that the 2008 Calendar is now available - a bargain at £3.99

HISTORY OF SEA VIEW WORKS

PART 1

Sea View Works in Spittal was built by Thomas Black & Sons as a foundry to make spades and shovels in 1855, which was the year that the Royal Border Bridge was built. Thomas Black started in Swinton, moved to Ford Forge, then, because of the sudden need for spades and shovels for the building of the Railway Bridge, moved to Spittal. The whole of Spittal in 1855 was owned by the Earl of Derwentwater as part of the Greenwich Estate. It was the earl who persuaded the Black's to move there. At that time it was an ideal site because all the ashes and waste could easily be dumped close by on the dunes and 'Forge Flats' (now residential flats).

Their spades and shovels, which were all shapes and sizes, were exported all over the world including Australia, New Zealand, and America. With a workforce of about 80 men and boys they produced as many as 600 spades, shovels, and forks every day when in full production. The steel was imported from Germany and the wood for the handles was all ash. The coal was transported direct from the mines at Scremerston by rail. The coal trucks were drawn by cable by an engine at the top of the Cliffs, transferred to a bucket system to the Spittal 'prom' below, on to rail trucks again and either dropped off at Black's forge or continued on to the 'small dock' for shipment.

Thomas Black & Sons was taken over by A. & F. Parkes from Birmingham in the early 1900's but kept the Black's name. During the two world wars spades and shovels were needed by the army for digging trenches etc. The coalmines also required shovels which were specially designed to scoop up the coal. At the end of the Second World War A. & F. Parkes started to use rolled steel instead of hammered steel for their spades and shovels, which greatly improved their production. Their factory in Birmingham was able to cope with the required production and the Spittal Foundry was closed in 1953. The foundry was put on the market for sale and Martin's Printing Works bought the site in 1955. Martin's moved their plant to Spittal in the last week of March 1956.

NATURE DESK

The Kingfisher – Alcedo atthis

On seeing their first kingfisher most people are surprised by how small it is. Probably Britains' most exotically coloured bird, all that is usually seen is a streak of brilliant electric blue flashing low and fast over the water surface. If there's not a suitable perch the kingfisher will hover for several seconds before plunging head first after its prey.

A Supply of freshwater fish is essential to this bird – the male presents a fish to the female in a courtship display. Each young bird needs between 12 and 18 fish daily and many young birds starve or drown in the first week of life on their own because they haven't learned to catch their own food. The birds also suffer very badly in harsh winters when it may be impossible to fish because of ice. However, if you are ever at the Chain

Bridge at Horncliffe, for example, keep an eye open for this beautiful little bird.

BEACH CLEAN

The next beach clean will take place on Saturday 8th September; meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10am. All are welcome for this quarterly saunter up the beach with a convivial tea/ coffee & cake to finish.

Summer Weather Summary

Well, has this summer been all that bad so far? Here are the facts and figures from Spittal weather station – for June and July.

Month	Weather variable	This year	Long-term average
June	Maximum Temperature Deg C	14.7	15.9
	Minimum Temperature Deg C	10.5	9.5
	Rainfall Mm	83	45
July	Maximum Temperature Deg C	18.9	17.7
	Minimum Temperature Deg C	11.6	11.3
	Rainfall Mm	102	49

John Harrison

SCOTTISH DANCING REPORT

“If you wish to chase away the blues, try some Scottish country dancing” – this was the sentiment expressed by several people who joined in an afternoon of music and lively dancing in Berwick URC church hall on Sunday July 22nd (*unfortunately the local weather man couldn't fix good enough weather to be outside – Ed*). It was encouraging to see children, mums and dads, grannies and grandpas all dancing together so enthusiastically. A special medal goes to the dad who joined despite a sore knee. The music of Gus, Gordon and Tam made for easy listening and a great rhythm for dancing, ably instructed by Tony Houghton. Will it be “dancing in the park” next time?

PARISH CHURCH

Many thank to those who came along to the Garden Party on July 1st which helped us towards our target for the west window repairs. We still need your cash. This summer has been very busy in your parish church with plenty of weddings and christenings – good to see that you want us to be here for you at the

happy times in your lives as well as the sad. Looking ahead, the CHURCH ANNUAL COFFEE MORNING takes place in The Berwick Guildhall at 10.00 am on Saturday August 11th – do come along – we need your support (*no not that one, they'll fall down*).

PROJECT SRI LANKA

A very successful launch of the latest phase of fund-raising for Project Sri-Lanka was held at The Blenheim on June 6th, and was attended by the mayor, and mayoress. We are still looking for a few more sponsors to support the education of children in Rassandeniya so if you are interested please contact the editor for further information. The next fund raisers are a Country and Western quiz night with the Two Johns at The Blenheim on August 24th and a possible Body Shop night at the Blenheim in October.

AND FINALLY

Gladys Friday

Every time I walk down the prom it seems to me that the jungle at the top of the beach at the north end gets ever thicker and wee girl like me is soon going to have to take some stepladders with me in order to see the sea.

Talking of sand, my friend Ima and I were having a nice chat in one of the bunkers while we were out playing a round of golf the other day - why was that man swearing at us? Well, anyway, she told me this very worrying story - she asked a clairvoyant if she knew whether there were any golf courses in heaven. In reply, she was told that there are indeed many perfect golf courses in heaven and that players are provided with all the best golfing equipment. However, the clairvoyant also told her that she would be teeing off next Thursday at 11.30am.

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