

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 24

April 2008

EDITORIAL

By the time you receive this issue, Easter will have long gone – thank goodness. What incredible weather – but it was apparently the earliest Easter for



95 years. I had a wedding on Easter Saturday and it was difficult to tell the difference between the confetti and the snow!! While on the subject of the weather, a big THANK YOU to Berwick Borough Council for organising the removal of much of the sand from the Prom (it was blown there in a gale) – and for shifting some of the accumulation from the upper beach. The steps down on to the beach remain a bit of a problem, and I notice that the recent winds have created another pile of sand at the corner in South Greenwich Road. Perhaps the only lasting solution is to remove all the sand and concrete over the whole beach – painted in a realistically sandy colour of course (*NO this is not a serious suggestion*).

Many apologies for the late arrival of the last issue – a breakdown in communication with the printers delayed production.

As we progress towards finishing off the work on the Spa Well, the hard work of planting bulbs and roses is now slowly coming to fruition despite the few who seem to have no respect for the memorial or its setting. And I am assured that the 'ornamental sewage fountain' has been dealt with so there's no need to hold your breath as you set out on the cliff path.

Finally a **thank-you** to Bryan Munro for his work for the Trust over the last couple of years.

If you are reading this and are a visitor to Spittal – in the caravan parks or in B & B - we hope that you enjoy your stay with us. Do please avail yourself of the hospitality in any of our three pubs and, of course, the village food shop.

Deadline for the next issue: May 16th

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

During the past few months we have had several guest speakers at our committee meetings in an effort to make sure our views on certain subjects are known in the right quarters. Subjects covered have included the next stage in the consultation process for the 'Future of Berwick' (lovingly called the 'Master Plan'), the build up of sand on the Prom, dog fouling and the large numbers of youngsters congregating around the Prom. All guest speakers have given us their opinion and have listened to our views. We have already had some positive responses, namely the clearing up of the sand from the Prom; we now wait to see as to what effect these meetings will have had on the other issues.

As this issue is put together we will be having our AGM. We will let you know the make up of the Trust's committee in the next issue. Please remember that our monthly meetings are always open for you to attend. We use each of the three pubs in rotation; it's a matter of finding which one we are in!

Car Boot Sales

Car Boot sales have resumed again and will run at fortnightly intervals throughout the summer. They will again be run by Hazel and Alastair Nesbit and we hope that you will come along and support them.

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

Next dates 6th & 20th April;
4th & 18th May & 1st June.
10.00am to 2.00pm
£5/car - £7/van

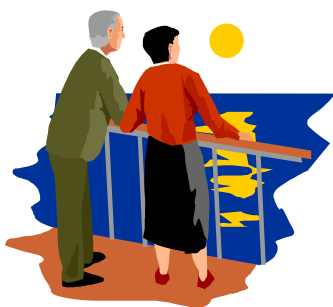
Seaside Festival

In addition to our annual summer events this year, along with the Council we are also busy putting together a 'Seaside Festival'. This will take place over the weekend of 8/9/10 August and encompass the whole of the Prom and beach; at least that's the intention. There will be separate music venues, street entertainers, buskers, open air cafés, events on the beach (we hope donkeys as well) and brilliant weather! We are aiming at attracting a large number of visitors to Spittal and Berwick. More news of the Festival will appear in the next issue.

Mike Greener – Secretary SIT

A VIEW FROM THE PROM

It's very pleasing to see that the Council responded favourably to the concerns expressed by everyone about the sand on the Prom. There has been criticism however about the time and the amount of men and machinery it took to get the work done. You can be reassured that it hasn't cost any additional money as, apparently, maintaining the Prom and the access points onto the



beach, is all within the contractor's specification for the job. So, we now know that should this happen again, all we have to do is let our fingers do the walking. The more we phone, the more

we get done; it's as simple as that.

I don't know about you but going for a walk down the Prom these evenings makes one feel really out of place, especially if you haven't got a hoody on! There are so many youngsters about the place, even on the coldest of nights; not all of them are from the village either. It's easy to say that we should just get them moved on, but to where? All that does is send the problem elsewhere and they

will only come back eventually. Apparently providing a building and a 'youth' club is old hat these days, as they prefer to hang out in the shelter and on street corners. If you have any thoughts on this, please share them!

Lastly, there has been much made recently about whether or not Berwick should be taken back into Scotland. How does this affect us over this side of the river? Well I am reliably informed that although Berwick has been Scottish in the past, Tweedmouth and Spittal have always been governed by the English, something about 1247 springs to mind. Not sure how this is going to end up but it's good publicity for the Borough, just can't see that any decent chap could get used to wearing a skirt though (*I think he means kilt – Ed*).

CHAIRMAN'S FAREWELL

Dear Neighbours

It is with great regret that I am having to stand down as Chairman of SIT, due to work commitments. I would like to take this opportunity to wish my successor every success. As it is "AGM Time" this may be a good opportunity to review what we have achieved this year, as well as having a look ahead to what the Trust will be working on.

What we have done this year

** Put together and circulated a questionnaire. The results of this survey have resulted in the SIT planting in the "little park" as well as the SIT working with the Council to try and tackle dog fouling
** Events – including Race Night, Country Music Night, Tea in the Park, The Gala and the Christmas festival. Our main focus this year was the Gala, which, feedback suggests, was a great success (the weather helped). The sub committee that arrange this and the other events do a fantastic job and I thank them all (Mau, Willie, Lynda, Amanda and Hazel) for all their efforts – they all have a day job as well!!!

What the future holds

+ Further input to the *Berwick Master Plan* – the SIT is a recognised stakeholder
+ Phase II of the *Spa Well* area – planting and finishing off
+ *Spittal Seaside Festival* (a huge thank you to the usual team who have put in a massive amount of time and energy into this endeavour) – see elsewhere in this issue.

+ *Dog Fouling* – continuing to work with the Council to tackle this blight on our otherwise fantastic village
+ *The Point* – more of this superb newsletter – keep up the good work John!

Finally neighbours, a call to arms. If we want a Gala, want a Christmas festival and want to have a real voice in the community, then get involved. The SIT needs new members – many skills reside within our community, we can all do something – so come along and get involved!
Bryan Munro

WELCOME to new businesses

We would like to welcome **Berwick Dog Groomers** into the village. It's run by Brenda who needed a change and wanted to do something different. She underwent her training last summer in Glasgow and now undertakes hand stripping, clipping and general grooming. Brenda realises that every dog has different needs so why not give her a try. It's by appointment, so ring on 305155, or just pop in.

SCHOOL NEWS

Easter's almost upon us (*when this contribution was written – Ed*), but you may be surprised to see the school open for business straight after the long weekend. This is following a move by Northumberland County Council to regularise the spring term holidays, so – strange as it sounds! – we'll break up for two weeks on Friday April 4th. **Easter may be a moveable feast, but from now on the Easter holidays will be fixed.**

And if your thoughts are turning to Spring, then so are ours – the latest news on our Centenary Garden is that we're in the process of collecting quotes for the work. Obviously we're keen to get going as soon as possible on what should be a very special new space.

Now for a renewed plea for any help and information regarding our forthcoming 100th birthday. We need your memories and stories about Spittal school over the years – you can either tell us your tales or let us copy your pictures and documents, if you have any. It's all to go in a centenary exhibition. We've had some great input already, but we'd like as much as possible, in order to best reflect the whole community.

Finally – thanks again to all the kids, parents and grandparents who came to the Valentine's Disco, which raised around £300.

PROJECT SRI LANKA

The Mayor and Lady Mayoress, together with Councillor Hazel Bettison (Deputy Mayor) and Frank Bettison visited Rassandeniya in Sri Lanka during February and were able to see at first-hand the wonderful work of reconstruction that Spittal folk are funding through Project Sri Lanka. They were also able to see the devastation caused by the tsunami. As part of the re-equipping of the village school in Rassandeniya, the Director of Project Sri Lanka, Joy Palmer, presented a set of new musical instruments **provided by the people of Spittal**. Fund-raising for the community continues and before long we should be able to send a further contribution. Do please try to support this effort which is very much a sharing between two communities living at the water's edge.

NATURE DESK

Beach Cleans

The March outing saw fewer people on the beach but we filled 20 bags, and they were full and heavy! Several large items were also retrieved, these included 3 car tyres complete with hubs, a mangled up bike, a child's multi storey toy garage, several traffic bollards and a couple of Council rubbish bins. These were retrieved well below the high tide line and it always amazes me how this stuff gets there! Our thanks go to those who turned out (several were again from outside the village), and the donors who paid for the refreshments. The next one is on June 14th, so ice-creams all round! *MG*

Boxing Clever

Watching birds nest in your garden can be very rewarding especially when they are protected from predators in a purpose built home such as a nest box. Members of the tit family are particularly happy to use boxes and are always interesting to watch. Other birds such as robins and flycatchers can also use a box, provided you remove part of the front. For larger tracts of land, such as farms, you can be more ambitious and put up larger boxes to attract barn owls.

Nest boxes should be away from strong sunlight, wind and rain, and should be between 8 and 15 ft (old units) above the ground to avoid cats and nosy people. It is important that the box is not too near a bird-table and other bird boxes as nesting birds can be aggressively territorial.

During the winter months the boxes are likely to be used by insects and other birds as shelter from the weather so remember to clean them out before the nesting season begins. *John Dougall*

Swifts

A concerned resident has wondered what will happen to the swifts that are due to return in May as quite a few of their nest sites have either been demolished or renovated. We have within our midst a craftsman who does a nice line in bird boxes (including ones for swifts), bird tables and feeders. If you fancy putting up a nest box for the swifts, or any other species come to that, he is advertising his wares in the Spittal shop or contact the Trust for further details. *MG*

Berwick Wildlife Group

BWG are holding their AGM on Wednesday May 7th in Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, at 7.30pm. This will be followed by a talk by John Rae on his Canadian Wildlife Adventure.

HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

I have been enjoying the historical supplements being produced by the Berwick Advertiser. From the 1859-1880 edition (March 13th) I noted "Scene of tumult at Spittal baptism" (page 7) when there was a baptism in a herring trough in one of the herring yards on April 2nd 1859, and I also noted that the joinery work for St Mary's church (now closed) in Berwick was carried out by Mr Burn of Spittal (page 8). *JH*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

As most of you are no doubt aware, from April next year, the current structure of local government in Northumberland will be replaced by a 'unitary authority' (one authority for the whole of Northumberland). The authority's area of jurisdiction is to be divided into 'Areas' each of which will have its own 'Area Committee'. In our case we shall be in

Northern Northumberland which extends as far south as Alnwick and Morpeth. In order to ensure that local people feel a part of the governmental process, the new authority is setting up 'Belonging Communities' each of which will have its own Community Forum made up from parish and town councillors together with representation from other interested groups. In Spittal we are to be in 'Berwick and Islandshire'. At present the form and function of these new local groups are still being decided so if you wish to make your views known, it is suggested that you contact Jane Pannell at Berwick Borough Council.

UNIVERSITY OF BERWICK

Many of you will have heard rumours of a proposal to establish a university here in Berwick – or a university college. This would be a great employment opportunity for the town and no doubt the land on Spittal Point will be mentioned as a possible site for an educational campus. What are your views on such a proposal – let us know.

AND FINALLY

Gladys Friday

I realise that this is difficult to understand, but I have yet to be swept to the altar. Maybe I must resign myself to the shelf, but at this time of year we start thinking about weddings ... so I leave you with a reassuring thought.....

"Marriage teaches us self-restraint, forbearance, and a lot of other qualities we would not need nearly so badly if we had stayed single."

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