

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 32

August 2009

EDITORIAL

I start this issue with a quote from our resident weather girl (Point 31) – “The most remarkable feature of the weather so far this year has been the shortage of rain”. Oops !! You may have realised by now that there isn’t too much of a shortage – in fact, I heard Paul Mooney on the BBC suggesting that this July has been the wettest on record. Now who was it who said that The Point has no influence? We ask for rain, we get rain – can’t get better than that. What we do hope is that the rainmaker in the sky now needs a long rest during August. After all the The Met Office long-range forecast for the coming summer was, we were told, warm and dry. We need some sunny weather for the Seaside Festival PLEASE !!! Talking of which, a poster is enclosed for display in your window.



Deadline for the next issue: Sept 28th

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

First off, a big THANK YOU to all who took part in the running and attending of this years **Spittal Gala**. It was by far the most successful one, both on the day and financially, in the last few years. A big part of that was due to the glorious weather, so thanks also to anyone who had a hand in that! (*Ed – no problem*)

We have received a generous donation from the Spittal shop from the sale of George Martin’s latest book “**An Anecdotal History of Spittal**”. I’m sure there must be some distant relatives who would like a copy! George has kindly donated the proceeds towards the **Fishing Shiel**. This brings me on to the letter sent into the Berwick Advertiser recently from a concerned resident who pleaded with the Trust not to embark on another project, i.e. the

Shiel, until we have completed previous projects; to be more precise, the flower beds in **Seafield Park**. This was a timely reminder that we often get so wrapped up in the work we are doing that we forget to let the rest of the community know what we are getting up to. In the case of the Sandstell Road Fishing Shiel we were instrumental in getting it classified as a Grade II Listed Building as we felt it was an extremely important part of our heritage. We then undertook a feasibility study to see what the implications were for renovating the Shiel and its use thereafter, the final report was ready in March 2004.

Since then we have been waiting for the existing owners, and users, to sort out the legal niceties between themselves before we could progress the project as a whole. This has now been accomplished, hence our interest in the Shiel once again. As for what to do with it once it has been restored, we propose to have it opened on certain days and by appointment, say for a school visit.

The **Paddling Pool** is another project we are now (again!!) getting heavily involved in. It was originally refurbished in the ‘Doorstep Green’ project 5 years ago. We had an impasse with the previous local administration which refused to fill it due to concerns over the quality of the standing water in the pool. The current Local Authority has advised that we can not expect funding for the treatment of the pool water, but they have been very supportive in looking at alternatives. This involves a complete redesign of the pool and, as we are putting this edition of THE POINT together, we have been interviewing proposed designers and installers. This will have to go to a full public consultation before final designs are agreed. We hope to be able to give a taster of what is being considered at ‘Tea in the Park’ with the full consultation taking place in September.

As with Seafield Park, we must not forget that these areas are owned, and therefore

should be maintained by, the Local Authority (LA). All we can do is to continue to make sure we have facilities and areas that are 'fit for purpose' and then try to ensure that, once completed, that the rightful owners, the LA, keep them maintained. At least with the Fishing Shiel it will be owned by the community and up to us to use and maintain it.

We are now putting together the final details for the **Seaside Festival** on 8th & 9th August, see the back cover, and for **Tea in the Park** on 30th August. Let's hope we get better weather this year for both events after the wash outs last year!

Mike Greener (Secretary SIT)

CAR BOOT SALES

The remaining dates for these are:- 9th & 30th August & 13th September. More dates may be added so watch for these on the banner.

They all take place in the Sandstell Road car park, starting at 10am. Weather permitting of course!

'TEA IN THE PARK'

Sunday 30th August

SIT will be holding its annual afternoon of refreshments and relaxing music, starting at 2.30pm.

GEORGE STEPHENSON

George Stephenson is recognised as 'The Father of the Railways', but his son Robert Stephenson, builder of the famous *Rocket*, was arguably the greater of the two engineers and has a very special place in the history and development of our beautiful border town of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of Robert Stephenson's death in 1859 and next year's 160th anniversary of the completion of his greatest work, the Royal Border Bridge, Berwick History Society and partners have put together a major programme of events for everyone to enjoy. There's still time to catch something for everyone in this Season of Stephenson, from a Family Fun Day at the Heatherslaw Light Railway to fascinating history talks.

The Stephenson 150 Festival welcomes any questions and comments about the events or the history it celebrates. Get in touch with us if

you have any stories and photos you would like to share - we can put them on this website. Berwick Record Office and Berwick Museum would be interested in any pictures or objects you would like to donate for future generations. Contact details are:

Website:

www.berwickmuseum.org.uk/stephenson150.html

Email: stephenson150@googlemail.com

Tel: 01289 301760 or 01289 308005 or 07931 377705.

PILATES IN THE PARK

This takes place in Seafield Park every Sunday between 10.30am & 11.30am. It's £2 per session with the proceeds going to SIT. Everyone is welcome, weather permitting of course, but please bring a mat.

For further details contact Sarah Patterson on 01289 304749.

SCHOOL NEWS

At the end of the summer term Spittal School not only said goodbye to its Year 4s, who are heading for middle school, but also to its head teacher of 15 years Bob Curry. Mr Curry has taught at the school for more than 30 years and seems almost part of its fixtures and fittings. So there were many damp eyes at the annual Leavers' Assembly when he was presented with golfing equipment, a hamper and a delicious-looking cake. We all wish him a long and very happy retirement.

Mr Curry's leadership has seen the school improve greatly, and its last Ofsted rating declared it officially a good school. He's going to be a very hard act to follow. But we know that everyone will make the new head teacher welcome in September. She is Catherine Taylor, who was the head of Swaffham VC school in Norfolk. However, she's not entirely new to the borough - some years ago she taught in schools in the Scottish Borders and still has family in the area.

Thanks to everyone who supported the great number of events we held towards the end of term, including the barbeque and camp-out which finally happened after initially being rained off. These recent activities have raised more than £300.

Finally – the school never falls silent in the summer. The holiday club is now being run by Sure Start during August. For further details, please contact Berwick Out of School Club on 07766205444.

Wanted!

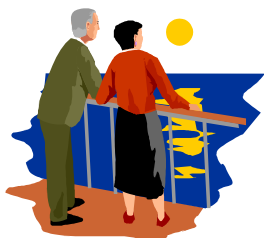
Your spent inkjet cartridges.

These can be placed in the bin inside the Spittal shop, the one for used stamps, but in a plastic bag please!

These will then be donated to Spittal First School.

A VIEW FROM THE PROM

Never let it be said that Spittal doesn't welcome all comers – but I have noticed an increasing number of members of a strange religious sect in recent weeks. The core of their ceremonies seems to be to set fire to a range of different sort of meats, filling the air with acrid smoke from burning fat. I assume that the idea is to



inhale the smoke which presumably helps them to get in touch with their gods. Certainly, I can't imagine that the sacrificed meat is in any way edible afterwards. What is disturbing is that I hear that permanent sacrificial altars have been established in back gardens so we can look forward to lots more blue smoke.

BEACH CLEAN

The next beach clean will take place on Saturday 19th September.

Meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10am as usual.

All are welcome, tea or coffee to finish.

AND THE RAIN IT RAINETH

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The rainfall on Friday July 17th broke all records – in Spittal we recorded 78 mm (3.1") over the 24hrs – with some places inland recording in excess of 120 mm. Over the period 11th to 17th the total rainfall in Spittal was 121 mm (4.8"), which is more than double the long-term average for the whole month.

THE PARISH CHURCH

As most of you know by now, the old church font, which was a centre-piece of the gardens at the east of St John's, was stolen overnight 22nd/23rd June. To date there has been no report of anyone finding it. As for the gardens, they have looked wonderful so far this year, thanks to the efforts of the gardening team.

The Parish Church Coffee Morning takes place in the Guildhall on Saturday August 22nd – raffle tickets are already available around the village. Do please try to support your parish church.

The railings at the front of the church are now in very poor condition. We are working towards replacing them, but in the meantime we suggest that hands are kept away from the rusty, and in places sharp, metal.

AND FINALLY

Gladys Friday

I overheard a conversation between my two very attractive nieces the other day – they take after their Aunty Gladys in this regard. Iris said "I'm fed up; every time I take a boyfriend home Dad always disapproves". "That's an easy one to deal with" replied Chrissie, "just find one that's like your Dad". "I've tried that" said Iris, "but my Mum couldn't stand him."

Why is it men always sound their horns at we lady drivers – we try our best – it's not easy replacing lip gloss while you're driving. A friend of mine was out with his young daughter the other day when he accidentally sounded his horn. His daughter looked across at him and said "I know that was an accident Daddy 'cos you didn't open the window and shout 'arsehole' like you usually do".

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