

# THE POINT



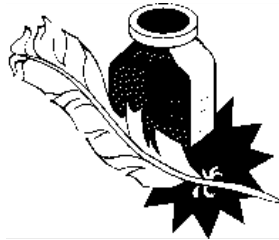
A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 28

December 2008

## EDITORIAL

As I put this issue together the temperature outside my window is hovering around freezing point and the forecast is for heavy snow by the morning.



Hopefully our intrepid delivery service has been able to get this pre-Christmas issue to your door. The Trust wishes you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

We apologise to those of who may have wished to contact either the Berwick Wildlife Trust or HOST (See Issue 27) by e-mail – the addresses disappeared in the transfer to the printers. For information, the Wildlife Trust address is repeated in this issue, and HOPE can be found at [www.hostuk.org](http://www.hostuk.org).

Deadline for the next POINT is February 2nd

## SPITTAL CHRISTMAS TREE

By the time you read this issue The Trust should have the village Christmas tree in place outside Shiel and Morrison's at the north end of Main Street. Watch that space.

### SANTA IN SPITTAL

As a special favour to the people of Spittal, Santa Claus is interrupting his incredibly busy schedule to pay us a visit.

He promises to be in Main Street from 6.00 pm and to meet us all at

the Christmas Tree at 7.00 pm to sing some carols on

**Thursday December 18th.**

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

We don't usually go back over past events but the success of our '*Bygone Spittal*' exhibition

is worth a mention. The success of any event is normally measured by the attendance and its financial outcome. With an event like this though we like to measure the outcomes by the interest it generates and we had this in abundance. We appreciate the help given by those that contributed photographs and artefacts. It was also nice to see people taking the time to have a blether over the images and the memories they conjured up. We are approaching the **Christmas Fair** at the time of writing this piece so I hope that proves to be just as successful.

We also don't harp on about all the work that we get through but this newsletter is the only way we can do this so here's a 'brief' round up. We are keeping a watching eye over the proposals for the redevelopment of **Spittal Point**. One suggestion is for siting a **University** on it and another was previewed at the Bygone event. This stimulated a lot of comment, especially a stainless steel-clad chimney! I'm sure a full public consultation will generate further debate on this most contentious of sites. The **Spa Well** still needs finishing off and this will be pursued early next year. Some additional planting has already been carried out and we look forward to an abundance of blooms in the spring. We are still waiting for news on whether we can acquire the **Fishing Shiel**. Lorries keep managing to knock stones out of the walls and the roof has been vandalised recently. We have already spent money on repairs and are reluctant to keep doing this if we are not getting any further with it.

The **Paddling Pool** is of major concern and we do not want to go through a third season without it being filled. This year the quality of the standing water was the reason for it not being filled. We have met with representatives of both the Council and Northumbrian Water to see how we can overcome this problem. A scheme to treat and recirculate the water has been proposed but we are now trying to clarify who is going to be responsible for it post April next year.

This needs to be done before we seek the funding required to do the work. **Dog fouling** remains a perennial problem, a matter we have had lengthy discussions over with the Council since February of this year. All to no avail so far but we will keep plugging away.

We do try as a community to do our bit. The **Beach Cleans** are still well attended, the next is on December 13<sup>th</sup>. We know that the river and the next high tide bring more rubbish up but those taking part obviously feel as though we are making a difference. The Council need gentle reminders at times on the upkeep of **Seafield Park**, the **Prom** and access ways down onto the beach. This usually meets with a favourable response.

We have had a tremendous response from the High School, as reported before, with a project to put forward ideas for pieces of **Public Art** around the village. However, constraints on our time have prevented us progressing this any further.

The production of **The Point** is no mean achievement itself and it is the most effective way to get our message out to you. We were advised at first to charge for the newsletter but we have stuck to our policy of it being free. It needs paying for of course and this is offset by occasional donations from the **'Two John's' Quiz Nights**. Our thanks go to the both of them. I still have trouble over 'Name that tune' though; something a little more pre 60's would be appreciated! (*Ed – you mean 1860's ??*)

I am sure you are all aware of our main events the **Gala**, **Tea in the Park** or the **Christmas Fair**. We are already planning for a another **Seaside Festival** next year but finances will have to be in place before we commit ourselves, so more events are planned to fund-raise early next year.

We have ideas aplenty about projects and events that we could do but time prevents us doing everything. We just hope that what we do manage to do is appreciated, we do try! We are all going through tough times at the moment so here's hoping you and yours have an enjoyable Christmas and can look forward to a better 2009.

## TWO JOHNS QUIZZES

We thank those who have become regulars at our monthly quizzes in the Red Lion. In

addition to supporting the printing of this community newsletter, the cash raised has helped the Great North Air Ambulance and Project Sri Lanka. If quizzes are new to you do please think about coming along for a very relaxed evening – we usually finish by 9.30. Quizzes during 2009 are planned for January 30<sup>th</sup>, February 27<sup>th</sup>, March 27<sup>th</sup>, April 24<sup>th</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup> and June 26<sup>th</sup>.

**See you there**

## A VIEW FROM THE PROM

Ever the get the feeling that we must be on edge of one of those continental plates and that the Tweed is getting wider? Is this just cynicism or a feeling of impending doom? After all the Council are not giving us a Christmas Tree this year, whatever next! Well the signs are there if you just look. Money was being requested to tidy up areas of 'the Town' with no mention for some of that coming our way.

Funding for progressing six of the important sites highlighted in the Future of Berwick 'Masterplan' has been secured, but what about the two sites over this side of the water?



The Council have been repeatedly asked for action over dog fouling and for comments on the future of the paddling pool but nothing comes of this. It's as if they are trying to put off responding and hoping that April comes quickly. Have they actually gone before April and told no one, has anyone seen any lights on in the Council offices?

What we must impress upon them, and they do get to read this newsletter, is that we need to know answers to our concerns now and not leave it until we have to deal with someone on the end of a telephone in Morpeth. At least the present Council do offer you the courtesy of personal contact.

To finish on a more positive note, well maybe next issue!

*On the subject of dog fouling, readers say they have seen dog owners picking up dog mess and chucking it over the wall into the parish church gardens – yes we know who you are, and it's not a nice thing to do is it?*

## A UNIVERSITY IN BERWICK?

Discussions are still under way regarding the possibility of establishing a University here In Berwick and those involved remain optimistic that something can be achieved in this direction. The planning group has already discussed what subjects would best match what Berwick has to offer. It is important that any application to the Funding Council is well thought through and will be strengthened if Berwick already has a track record in Further Education (FE). Plans to develop FE are well advanced and at present focus on the possibility of a skills centre in Berwick, a site for which is already under discussion. A central location in the town near to transport links is probably a wise choice at this stage. However, in the longer term, should the plans for a university come to fruition, then the search will be on for suitable sites, one option being Spittal Point if this is still available.

## SCHOOL NEWS

Merry Christmas from all at Spittal Community School and we hope everyone who's attended our Christmas events has had a wonderful time.

Thanks also to everyone who helped make the PTA Halloween/Bonfire Disco such a success. It raised over £250 and our Poppy Appeal also raised £50. The school is always represented at the Remembrance Sunday service.

Meanwhile, although the children have very little except Christmas on their minds, things aren't standing still in the school itself. In the spring term, new doors will be fitted to access the playground from the main corridor and the reception door will be repaired. As the school is a Grade 2 listed building, all the doors will have to look like the original 100 year old doors.

In many ways, however, it is a shame that looks and design always take precedence over warmth and comfort. Double glazed windows would have reduced energy costs considerably, but it was decreed by the powers that be that single glazed windows would be aesthetically pleasing and reflect the period style of the building.

But we are green in other ways! Our Centenary Garden is now completed. A small plaque has been fixed to the school wall to acknowledge the design submitted by

Alexander Campbell's family, on which the garden layout is based. We will also dedicate one of the benches to Jason Bradbury, who won't be forgotten in our school.

## STRICTLY COME DANCING

Strictly Come Dancing in Spittal has had a very successful run for several weeks and will be finishing on 3rd December. The Ballroom and Latin lessons will recommence in the New Year. You are invited to come and join us for a lot of fun as well as keeping fit in the most enjoyable way. For further details contact Maria on 01289 332 592.

## NATURE DESK

### The Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulous*)

The waxwing is a plump bird which is slightly smaller than a starling. It is one of the most colourful of our winter visitors, with a prominent crest. The bird derives its name from the unusual waxy-looking red tips to its upper flight feathers. It is reddish-brown with a black throat, with a small mask around its eye yellow, and has white in its wings and a yellow-tipped tail. The first birds usually arrive on the east coast but soon start to move inland in search of food. Its main diet comprises berries with a particular preference for rowan. The birds that arrive here tend to come from Finland so if you have a rowan tree in your garden keep an eye open for these colourful winter visitors. *(If they have wax wings do these melt and fall off when they get hot? - Ed)*

### Berwick Wildlife Group

#### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January. Berwick is**

**Brilliant for Wildlife Event.** A display to consolidate and show off BWG's work in 2008, plan for 2009 and especially to celebrate our wonderful local wildlife.

**7.30pm.** Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, SPITTAL. Refreshments. Everyone welcome. No charge, but donations welcome!

#### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February (or if weather v. bad, 21<sup>st</sup> February. Wader and wildfowl**

**Survey.** Berwick Wildlife Group's annual assessment of wildfowl and waders on the coast and estuary. Meet at Tweedmouth end of Old Bridge, Berwick, **10.00 am.** Wear warm waterproof clothing, sensible boots or shoes (can include cliff-top walk).

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February. "Putting Berwick on the Geological Map".** Ian Kille of Northumbrian Earth. **7.30pm.** Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, SPITTAL.

Members and non-members are welcome at all our events. Want to know more about us at our website [www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), phone 01289 330591, e-mail [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), or just come along to one of our events.

## **A CHURCH WEDDING ?**

You may have heard that the Church of England has relaxed its rules relating to marriage in church. The previous rule was basically that you had to live in the parish before you could get married in the parish church. The new rules allow for 'a measure of association' with the parish church so the qualifications are now:

- One of you should have been baptised or prepared for confirmation in the parish
- One of you has ever lived in the parish for six months or more
- One of you has at any time attended church services in the parish church for six months or more
- One of your parents has lived in the parish for six months or more in your lifetime
- One of your parents has regularly attended church services in the parish church for six months or more in your lifetime
- Your parents or grandparents were married in the parish church

If you wish to discuss getting married in St John's Spittal then do please get in touch with Rev John Harrison (*that's me*) on 307342 or e-mail (*same as the editor*)

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Please see the church noticeboards for services leading up to and after Christmas, but on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services are as follows:-

### ***Berwick URC (St Paul's Spittal)***

#### Christmas Day

9.45 am Family Worship

#### ***St John's Parish Church Spittal***

#### Christmas Eve

7.30 pm Traditional Parish Carol Service for all the family – a must for Christmas

#### Christmas Day

10.00 am Family Communion

#### ***St Peter's Parish Church Scremerston***

#### Christmas Eve

11.30 pm Midnight Eucharist

## **PARISH CHURCH NEWS**

At long last the church now has a sound system. The PCC wishes to thank all those who helped us meet the cost, in particular the BUFFs and the regular monthly BINGO customers and organisers.

## **ON A HISTORICAL NOTE**

No literary gems on Spittal's history in this issue but one of our local historians offers the following from the Spittal News of the 1970's

"The streaker of Sea Road's a disgrace  
His identity no-one can trace  
On August the tenth  
He ran it full length  
But nobody looked at his face."

*(we're still looking for you – be warned, identity parades are to be organised)*

## **SPITTAL VARIETY GROUP**

### **PANTOMIME**

## *Babes in the Wood*

at

The Maltings

Tuesday January 13th to

Sunday January 18th

## **AND FINALLY**

*Gladys Friday*

A Christmas message from your local glamorous supermodel – "gissa present"

and an amusing car sticker which is very appropriate for the festering season  
*"Drive carefully. Why die in perfect health"*

### **SIT Contacts:**

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