

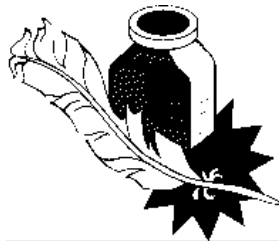
# THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust  
Issue 30 April 2009

## EDITORIAL

Well the snow eventually cleared away and we have had a warm dry March – I suppose some of you are now hoping for a good summer – but was



March this year's summer? This issue of The Point is the 30th - no great celebrations, but the editor is willing to accept a free pint by appointment any evening at either the Red Lion or Blenheim !!! I hope you continue to find in The Point a blend of useful information, general interest and humour. Members of the Trust are currently putting together the two main events this summer – the Spittal Gala on June 21st and the Seaside Festival on the weekend of August 8th/9th – hopefully you and your family will go along and enjoy these, and if you are in business perhaps they will send a few customers your way.

**Deadline for the next issue: June 1st**

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

We've just had the **AGM** and the committee were re-elected but with two vacancies. Members can only be elected at a General Meeting but if you want to get a feel for being on the committee then why not give it a try and come along to a meeting.

The next **Beach Clean** (*see the advert*) is an additional one to our normal programme. Voluntary groups throughout the Town are taking part over that weekend in a general clean.

There is also an advert for volunteers for **Gardeners**. We are not trying to take over the planted areas around the village but see it more as a way to enhance what the 'Council' do, or don't do, as the case may be!

### **GARDENERS WANTED!**

*SIT are looking for volunteers to help clean up some of our public areas. We intend starting with Seafield Park, next to the Bowling Club, and in time widen it to other areas if enough people turn out. If you feel you would like to take part in some activity in the fresh air, nothing too strenuous but something worth doing, then please contact Mau Watkins on 308813.*

The **Gala** is on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June and plans are well in hand. What we need are more volunteers to help on the day. It needn't be all day, but if you could spare some time then please get in touch with The Trust. We would also appreciate any unwanted presents that you may have for use as prizes in the raffle and tombola.

Plans for this year's **Spittal Seaside Festival 2009** are currently centred around finding enough funding to hold the event. We have been delighted with the grants already received from the Town Council, Berwick Borough Housing, Jus Rol, Northern Angels to name a few. Discussions are being held with other possible sources of funds but these are still at an early stage.

Acquisition of the **Sandstell Road Fishing Shiel** is a step closer as we have engaged a solicitor, a Spittaler, to act on our behalf.

The **Paddling Pool** is still a long way off of being filled this year as we need to present a proposal to the Town Council this month, and then seek the funding to do the work. It will entail putting up a building for the equipment, the associated installations and daily monitoring of the water quality.

I finish with an appeal to anyone who would like to get involved with any of the Trust's events or projects. There's many more but too many to list here. Your help would be most welcome.

*Mike Greener (Secretary SIT)*

### CAR BOOTS

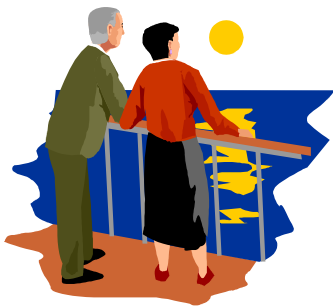
*Yes it's that time of the year again. The chance to clear out your attic and make some cash!*

*They take place as usual in the Sandstell Road car park, beginning on Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup> and then April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> & June 7<sup>th</sup>. All starting at 10am, weather permitting of course!*

**PS** The Spittal Improvement Trust has been placed on the Berwick Community Portal which can be found at <http://www.berwick.2day.ws>. The Seaside Festival in August can be found on the Berwick Community Calendar.

## A VIEW FROM THE PROM

As we watch the sun sinking down on the old Borough Council, what of the brave new dawn that awaits us in the guise of the new Unitary Authority? Well, nobody seems too sure, and



the early signs are worrying. The handover between the old and the new authorities has not been as seamless as at first promised. Looking at our own situation, the upkeep of our parks,

gardens and paddling pool are all in a nether world, caught between the outgoing and the incoming administrations.

Looking on the bright side, (*it's this year's theme for this column*), the new Town Council, once thought to be just a tick in the box exercise to appease the masses who voted for a dual Authority, are making a valiant attempt to get the necessary systems in place and to pick up the pieces. It's coming to the end of its first year and to put it in perspective, Morpeth has a Town Council that has been operating for nearly 15 years and they have been steadily acquiring services and facilities from Castle Morpeth District Council and the nouse to operate them. That smacks of foresight and forward planning, or some smart cookie that could see what was coming!

So, we have to settle in for the long haul, the current climate in the property market is not conducive for selling up and moving anyway! We will just have to support the Town Council in their efforts and remember the words of US

President John F Kennedy when he said "Ask not what Spittal can do for you but what you can do for Spittal". Ok, some of the words might have been changed, but you get the drift!

And we now have a new attraction for our residents and summer visitors – the Main Street Avoid-a-Pothole adventure drive. Entry is free – you start by The Blenheim then drive south and see if you can get your car and yourself down to the south end of Main Street. Once you have tried it you'll want to do it again and again, because it just gets more difficult day by day – so have a go – spoil yourself, or your car.

## SCHOOL NEWS

Very big news for Spittal School this month. As most of you will probably already know, our longstanding head teacher Mr Curry is to retire in the summer and he's going to be a hard act to follow. But it's a testament to the school's reputation that we had strong interest in the post. We're now delighted to announce that Mrs Catherine Taylor is to become the school's new head in September. Mrs Taylor is currently the head teacher at a school in Swaffham, Norfolk, but people with long memories may remember her teaching around the Tweed cluster some years ago. She's bringing a wealth of experience with her and we know the community will make her welcome.

On a much lighter note - did you see our children coming to school wearing a variety of silly hats on Red Nose Day? They were so colourful and inventive – and they raised a total of £140 for Comic Relief.

The school is on its Easter holidays until April 20<sup>th</sup> but the building won't be quiet and empty. The play-scheme is going on as usual. It's being run by Sure Start after the unfortunate closure of the Family Centre.

## LOCAL HISTORY

'Re the Dainty Dinah' cup referred to in Issue 29, a local reader informs us that he used to work for Horners Confectionary in Chester-le-Street and one of their products was Dainty Dinah Toffee. Can we assume that we have found the sponsors of this football trophy?

## PROJECT SRI LANKA

Professor Joy Palmer, Director of Project Sri Lanka paid a visit to Spittal on March 25th and spoke to a well-attended meeting at St John's church. Not only did she bring news from the children being sponsored by folk in Spittal, she was also able to update us on what has been happening in the villages that were so badly affected by the tsunami in December 2004. The community of Rassendeniya, which Spittal has been supporting for some while, is now beginning to get back on its feet, so those present at the meeting agreed that some of the money raised in future should be used to extend support to the neighbouring village of Hiththatiya. We look forward to being able to bring some support the people there.

## CLUB NEWS

Berwick & District Motorcycle Club, who meet in The Blenheim every other Sunday, are holding their annual Quayside Show in Berwick on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. On view will be an array of bikes, old and new, of all shapes and sizes. On the following weekend, Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May, a Charity Dance in aid of Berwick Cancer Support will take place.

For further details of any of their activities call 07711220020

## USED STAMPS

The Trust, the Berwick United Reformed Church and the local Philatelic Society are collecting used postage stamps in aid of the Leprosy Mission. There will be a collecting bin at Laidlaw's shop. (*Can't resist – let's prove the saying wrong that that 'philately will get you nowhere' – Ed*)



## SPITTAL SCOUT GROUP CENTENARY

Spittal Scouts were started in 1909 by men who wanted to be part of the new organisation of Scouting and were to become the first warranted Scout Masters. When Wolf Cubs began in 1916, it was not too long until Spittal started up a pack. At this time we were

registered as part of the Scottish Scout Association and this remained for many years. They continued through the First World War and up until 1936, when they then stopped for a short while. They reformed in 1940 and went right through the Second World War and by now they were the oldest group in Berwick.

There was a spell in the 1950's when they again stopped but soon restarted. In the 1960's and 1970's the Cub section were always one of the largest in the then Berwick-upon-Tweed County before we transferred to England and joined North Northumberland as part of Northumberland County on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974.

They have always been well supported with a waiting list of children wanting to join. The group now has three sections, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and it is the largest group in the District. This is due to a group of enthusiastic and well trained leaders who have volunteered to give up their time to pass on their Scouting skills just like those first leaders who started them up 100 years ago. So here's to the next 100 years!

### ***Brenda Rollo – Group Scout Leader***

*If anyone has any information or photographs of Spittal Scouts during the last 100 years, then please contact Paul Wilkinson, Scout Leader, at 92 Main Street, Spittal, or on 330953.*

## NATURE DESK

### **The European Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

The Starling has the reputation for being one of the noisiest and most gregarious garden birds. Its plumage is mainly blackish with buff-edged wing feathers and reddish-brown legs. In the winter, however, it has white speckles, and as Spring arrives its plumage becomes iridescent with green and purple. They are great at mimicry and can imitate, for example, telephone ring-tones and car alarms, in addition to the calls of other birds such as curlews and pied wagtails. Otherwise their song is little more than a medley of squeaks, clicks and whistles.

Adult Starlings eat almost anything but they feed only caterpillars and insects to their chicks. The male bird builds the nest from

grass, usually in a hole in a wall or tree. The female bird then lines it with feathers, wool and moss. The eggs are pale blue and both adults take turns to incubate them. The female will sometimes remove an egg from a neighbouring starling's nest and lay one of her own, in order to give her offspring a better chance of surviving.

John Dougall

*(PS The Starling is one of the most widespread birds in the world and is also migratory, large numbers over-wintering in Britain. I love to see the huge flocks, which can number more than a million birds, form into ever-changing black shapes in the evening sky – Ed)*

### **Berwick Wildlife Group**

The next meetings are as follows:

**Sunday April 19th. Walk with Berwick Save our Squirrels** in Detchant wood looking for signs of squirrels. Meet at **1.30 pm** at entrance to the wood opposite bungalow called Detchant Park, on minor road between Detchant and Fenwick (NU 082 373). Limited parking (car share if possible). Probably muddy - wear boots or wellies.

**May 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> . The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI)** are having their **Spring Conference in Berwick**. This will focus on the alien trees and shrubs that are now part of the British landscape, and how to recognise and record them. There will be talks and exhibitions in the Guildhall, Berwick on Saturday and excursions to Cheviot Trees and Kyloe Woods on Sunday, St Abbs Head or Holy Island on Monday. The Chairman has kindly invited BWG members to all the events, and we will have a small exhibition of the Group's work. Details and a booking form will be e-mailed soon, or included with paper newsletters.

To celebrate it's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, **North Northumberland Bird Club** will host a **special presentation by Laurie Campbell, "Taking stock; my life in photography"**, on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30 pm** in the Maltings. Reserve the date in your diary now. Details later.

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.

## **BEACH CLEAN**

*An additional beach clean will take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April as part of the 'Clean up Berwick' weekend. Meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10am as usual. All are welcome, tea or coffee to finish.*

## **THE PARISH CHURCH**

There will be a **Easter Festival** in St John's at the end of Easter Week, on Saturday April 18th – between 11.00 and 1.00 pm. The Easter Bonnet competition is open to all, and 'blanks' can be obtained from the church for the sum of only £1. Councillor Hazel, our former Mayor, will be judging the competition. There's also traditional activities such as egg painting and rolling, and an Egg Hunt (no not seagull ones). Tea/coffee and refreshments are available as usual.

## **AND FINALLY**

*Gladys Friday*

One of the reasons why I no longer have a dog is that I just don't like picking up warm sticky dog poo. Perhaps there are other like-minded souls out there – so help is at hand. Surfing the net the other day (bikini flapping in the wind) I came across 'Poop Freeze' – it comes in a handy aerosol can – you spray the poo, it freezes hard, and you can pick it up more easily. Isn't science wonderful? Never let it be said that The Point is not a useful publication.

*And from my Christmas present again –*

A Dad got fed up with his little boy weeing in the bath. "Stop that right now" he said, "it's unhygienic to wee in the bath. And I wish you would at least wait until I get out."

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*Printed in Spittal by Shiel and Morrison*