

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 34

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EDITORIAL

You now have permission to use the 'C' word – yes Christmas and New Year are around the corner – it must be my imagination but I could have sworn that the last New Year's Day was only a couple of weeks ago. So now is the time to BE JOLLY as your cash disappears and your cards threaten to melt with excessive use. As usual there's plenty going on here in Spittal – rumour has it that Santa has called so often that he is thinking of buying a place here – must have parking space for reindeer. Sadly this is the last Christmas that I shall be spending in Spittal – I shall remember my years here with great affection. As far as The Point is concerned I am pleased to announce that Chris and Sue Timmins have agreed to take over editorial duties with effect from Issue 36 (April 2010) so you will still be able to keep up with what is happening around the village, and maybe share a joke with Gladys Friday – we shall see. In the meantime, the hundreds of staff at The Point offices wish their readers a very happy Christmas and New Year.



Deadline for the next issue: January 25th

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Things have quietened down a little over the past couple of months but there is always something ticking away to keep us busy. We are inching closer to acquiring the **Fishing Shiel** but we need to make sure the building is wind and watertight and we have covering insurances before we finally sign on the dotted line. That should all happen soon and then the serious stuff starts as we look for the funding to carry out the proposed project. We have already received some donations towards the work. George Martin has kindly donated proceeds from the sale of the second edition of

his book, '**An Anecdotal History of Spittal**', through the Spittal Shop with thanks to Jackie and David as well, and from Richard Faisey, an ex-Spittaler, who now lives in Porton near Salisbury.

The way forward for the **Paddling Pool** seems to be a new **Splash Park**. This has been the result of a consultation process with the local schools and nursery; the plans will be on view to the rest of you soon. We are working closely on this with a team from Northumberland County Council who are now applying for funding from various sources on our behalf. We should know if we are successful with this early in the New Year with the work proceeding in the Spring, taking eight weeks to complete.

Moving on to the approaching festive season, Berwick Town Council is providing us with a Christmas tree and lights, which should be put up at the War Memorial by the time you receive this issue. Another tree is coming from the Ford Estate again for outside Shiel & Morrison's and, as last year, we will be having a special event to switch on the lights after **Santa** has made his way down Main Street. The **Christmas Fair** is on December 5th with the usual stalls and festive music from the Norham Brass Band.

'**The Last Snow Rider**', a play performed by the Northumberland Theatre Company, is being performed on January 6th. This is primarily for the children of the First School but some tickets may be available. A **Ceilidh & Burns Supper Night** will be held on 22nd January, both of these will be held in the BURC Church Hall.

Whilst we have been putting this issue together a local election has either taken place or is about to. We hope that the person elected will ably represent this community and we look forward to working with them in the future.

As ever, we are grateful to all those who have contributed and helped out on behalf of the Trust throughout the year, whether that be through Quiz Nights, Car Boots, baking or just turning up to help on the day. We may be moving out of this recessionary period so we hope, like the Trust, that you are all looking forward to 2010.

Every good wish to you and yours for Christmas and the New Year.

Mike Greener Secretary SIT

**SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT
TRUST**

CHRISTMAS FAIR

**Saturday 5th December
10.30am to 1.00pm**

**Berwick United Reformed Church
(Main Street)**

**Stalls, Raffle, Tombola,
music by Norham Brass Band &
Refreshments**

SANTA IN SPITTAL

Once again, Santa is making a special visit to Spittal. He will be making a tour down Main Street from 6.00 pm on

Wednesday 16th December.

Following this you can meet him at the Christmas Tree outside Shiel & Morrison's at 7.00 pm to switch on the lights and sing some carols with the Norham Brass Band.

Refreshments will be available.

**'THE LAST SNOW
RIDER'**

Wednesday 6th January.

1.30pm

**BURC Church Hall
(Middle Street)**

A play performed by Northumberland Theatre Company.

Tickets are limited so please contact 306387 for availability.

CEILIDH & BURNS

SUPPER

22nd January

7.30pm til Late

BURC Church Hall

(Middle Street)

**£5 per person, supper included, and
cash bar.**

All Welcome

(See posters for ticket details)

A VIEW FROM THE PROM

As I watched the crowd at the Spittal War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday, especially all those young people there, I



couldn't help feeling saddened by what has become of our village war memorial – it now stands as a stark obelisk sitting on top of some concrete that would

look more in place in a war-time bunker.

When is the Trust going to finish off what they started and complete the work on the war memorial so we can offer suitable remembrance to those who selflessly gave their lives in the cause of our freedom?

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The **Spittal Railway and Local History Society** held its inaugural meeting at Spittal Bowling Club on November 3rd. At a well attended meeting a DVD, **North from Newcastle**, was shown thanks to kind permission of CineRail©. The DVD showed interesting aspects of long forgotten stations and working practices along the line. Some of the now-closed branch lines were also featured. Spittal had its own waggonway down the Main Street, along with Mr Harrison's park railway which was laid out opposite Martins Printing Works. The men whose names appear on the Bowling Club honours boards, and who also worked on the Railway, were mentioned, emphasising the impact the Railway had on local employment.

Future Meetings: The date of the next meeting will be at **7.30 pm on Tuesday 2nd February** when Roger Jermy, well known local historian and writer, will be giving a talk

on **Local Minor Railways**. Among the subjects covered will be transportation of coal, stone, limestone, sandstone and grain. This talk promises to be a very entertaining one, as the speaker is well known for his enthusiasm for the subject and his ability to make it enjoyable for the listener. We look forward to seeing you all at Spittal Bowling Club on February 2nd: tea and coffee will be provided and there will be a small admission charge. Surplus funds will be donated to St Johns railings repair fund. All are welcome !

(Some while ago The Point raised the possibility of having a Spittal Local History Society, to which response was quite encouraging. It is good to see this getting off the ground and we wish the Society well – Editor)

SCHOOL NEWS

Our big news this month is that the school was given another good OFSTED report – and it is a real achievement for all sorts of reasons. Since the school was last inspected two years ago – when it won its ‘Good School’ accolade – OFSTED has changed a lot of the criteria and it’s even harder to win a ‘good’ rating than it was in 2007. What’s more, the inspectors arrived when our new head teacher Catherine Taylor had been in post for less than a month. All the staff pulled together to make sure the inspection team saw Spittal School at its best – and their hard work really paid off. The report told us that pupils are happy at our school and that teaching and learning are good overall. “Teachers are knowledgeable, confident and eager to engage all pupils;” it has “effective leadership” and parents and carers praise its “warm, welcoming atmosphere.” Of course these are things we already know – but it’s wonderful when it’s official!

We thank everyone who contributed so generously to our Harvest festival collection, which was well received by Garden House. The PTA had its most successful Halloween Disco yet, raising more than £1000! This was only possible through the great support from children and their families, almost all of whom were in full scary dress. The PTA thanks Northern Lab, Pagans' Coal Merchants, Spittal Foodstore and NCN IT Solutions for their kind donations, and also Barclays Bank who provided matched funding, taking the profits into four figures. The money raised will subsidise a coach trip for pupils and their parents to the pantomime at the Kings' Theatre in Edinburgh after Christmas. Oh, yes it will!

The long-awaited “A History of Spittal School 1908-2008” is now off the press and can be bought for just £5 from the school itself, Grieves Stationers, Spittal Foodstore, Berwick Archive Offices and Doolally’s. All proceeds from the book sales will go to PTA funds, in turn paying for school equipment and resources. It was formally launched at the school on 13th November with the ex-head Mr Curry handing a copy to our present head Mrs. Taylor.

DIARY DATE: The school’s **Christmas Fayre** will be on **Friday 4th Dec. at 2pm** with the usual mix of bring-and-buy, cakes, crafts and raffles. All are welcome. The centenary book will also be on sale there – why not buy one for an ex-pupil’s Christmas stocking?

WANTED!

Spittal First School are looking for a piano player for morning assembly and at other times during the school year.

*You will **not** have to endure an X Factor style audition so, if you would like to help out, please contact the School Secretary on 307413*

NATURE DESK

BEACH CLEAN

*The final one of the year will be on **Saturday 12th December.***

Meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10.00 am, weather permitting.

All are welcome but come prepared for the bracing, and probably wet, weather.

We will finish with the usual refreshments of mince pies and mulled wine.

Spittal Gardening Group

Mau Watkins is the Trust’s representative on the Berwick in Bloom group, and she tells us that Spittal is being entered for next year’s ‘In Bloom’ competition. We won’t have anything with which to impress the judges unless we all make a contribution. If anyone is interested in a Spittal Gardening Group (see previous issues of The Point) would you please contact Mau on 308813. There was a disappointing response last time but perhaps

the incentive of a competition may inspire some of you.

(The Gardening Group is not about lumbering someone with the task of maintaining all the public gardens, large or small, in Spittal, but about providing some vision and inspiration so the village will look blooming good. Editor)

CHRISTMAS CANDLES

I would like to thank all those who have provided me with old candle ends etc over the last few years. As candle making will cease in January, I regret that I can not accept old wax for a while - so the wax bin will be removed. But please don't throw your candles away as I shall resume collection from April onwards – at a location yet to be decided. In the meantime, your old wax can be seen in its new guise at various Christmas fairs (Trust's fair on the 5th and the Parish Church fair on the 12th, in addition to a candle-sale at The Blenheim between 8.00 pm and 9.00 pm on Sunday December 9th.) 80% of profit (roughly 70% of what you give) goes directly to charities, including Project Sri Lanka and local charities. If you are fundraising for a charity, remember that you can buy candles at 30% of their usual price, to be sold on by you. Contact 307342.
John Harrison

THE PARISH CHURCH

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Sunday December 13th 4.00 pm

Christingle Service – families very welcome.

Thursday December 24th 7.30 pm

Parish Carol Service – a village tradition not to be missed – “Come early and get a back seat”.

Friday December 25th 10.00 am

Family Communion for Christmas

PARISH CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAIR

Saturday December 12th

10.00 – 12.00

at St John's Church

Usual Stalls etc

CHRISTMAS HOST

Are you thinking about who might come for Christmas this year? Perhaps you would like to make it a bit different. Some of the adults from overseas who are currently studying at UK universities would love to spend a couple of

days in a real home, rather than on a deserted campus. HOST has been linking students with hospitable volunteers for 22 years, at Christmas and also one-off weekends. It is a registered charity backed by the Foreign Office and many universities. It is not necessary for hosts to live near a university, as students are prepared to travel far for this unique experience! See www.hostuk.org or call HOST's voluntary regional organiser for the North East, Alan Robson, on 01946 822128. Thank you!

BURC
CHRISTMAS COFFEE
MORNING
17th December
10.00am to 11.30am
in the
Church Hall
(Middle Street)

Stalls, Raffles & Mince Pies
All Welcome

AND FINALLY

Gladys Friday

One of my many male acquaintances (*note the 'many'*) decided to take his son to church. Some way into the service the boy leaned over to his father and said that he was feeling ill and needed to be sick. The church didn't have a toilet so my friend suggested that he went outside and was sick behind one of the bushes. The boy dashed away but was back in a matter of seconds. “That was quick son” said my friend. To which his son replied “It's OK Dad, I didn't have to go as far as the bushes, there's a box at the back of the church which says on it 'For the Sick'”.

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