

# THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 35

February 2010

---

## EDITORIAL

After the winter weather that we have experienced I feel a bit like a polar bear surfacing from a winter hibernation beneath the snow – except that I have been anything but cosy. What a memory of Spittal to take away with me !! This is my last issue of The Point and I hand over the reigns to Chris and Sue Timmins. Looking back at the Mission Statement that I put together for the Point in the summer of 2004 we promised to “inform, provide interest, raise awareness, amuse, comment on local issues, and involve the community” – I think we achieved most of these in some measure and I sense from comments that most of you have been happy enough with what has been coming through your door every couple of months.



From your new editor  
*“Sue and I are delighted to take over from John and we will do our utmost to continue with the same high standard of editing”.*

**Deadline for the next issue: March 24th (Easter Issue)**

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

We are looking forward to a very busy 2010 and while putting this piece together we have had news about two of our projects. Firstly, we have agreed a Licence with the Tweed Foundation for the **Fishing Shiel**. This takes effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February and will allow us to use the Shiel for open days etc, while we seek the necessary funding to restore and equip it. This all started back in 2003 (*we have a lot of patience!*) and while there is still a long way to go before we achieve our aims for the Shiel, at least we are on the way. Secondly, funding applications have been submitted for the new **Splash Park** in the play area. We have been

successful in getting through to the next stage for two of the prospective sources of funding but we are keeping fingers crossed that all of the necessary £££££ can be obtained so that it can be opened, albeit late, in the summertime.

Two other projects are worth a mention at this time. The completion of the works around the **Spa Well** and **War Memorial** are topmost in our minds and are being looked at again. Getting some form of **Community Gardening** venture going will also be on this year’s agenda. More on these two in the next newsletter.

We were dismayed that the recent bad weather forced us to cancel our events in January but there are several adverts for forthcoming Trust events in this issue. First up is the first **Beach Clean** of the year. Numbers have dwindled a little over the previous outings but those that do come along enjoy a nice healthy walk, and talk, along the beach. Next is the play ‘**A Village Life**’, we hope you enjoy the performance and look forward to further shows later in the year.

The **AGM** can never compete with ‘Corrie’, it being on at the same time, but it is a chance to elect, or get elected to, the Trust’s Committee and have some influence on the future of both the Trust and therefore Spittal itself. Anyone wishing to offer themselves for election to the committee would you please advise me by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March. If, on the other hand, you want to have your views known but are unable to attend the AGM in person then please get in touch.

And the last ad is for the **Car Boot Sales**, which will start again on Easter Sunday. Once again we are indebted to Hazel and Alastair for organising these on behalf of SIT. They bring in a much needed source of income for the Trust, helping to pay for this newsletter for example.

All of the projects and events we undertake to do are, we hope, for your benefit and we need your support to carry them out and make them successful. If you feel that you can offer some time to any of the above we would be delighted to hear from you. None of us are getting any younger!!!

And finally from the Trust, as this is the last issue edited by Rev John Harrison we would like to thank him, and his wife Averil, for all the hard work put into this newsletter and for all they have done throughout their stay in Spittal. They will of course be kept in touch with what goes on here by receiving an e-mailed copy of The Point and we hope to see them back in the not too distant future. (*Does this mean he is taking the bad weather with him!!?*)

*Mike Greener (Secretary SIT)*

## 'A VILLAGE LIFE'

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March.**

**7.30pm**

**BURC Church Hall**  
(Middle Street)

A play performed by Northumberland Theatre Company which takes a hard look at rural life today.

Tickets are £6.50 and are on sale in Spittal Food Store or call 306387.

## **SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST**

### **NOTICE OF AGM**

*THIS WILL BE HELD AT 7.30pm*  
*on*

**WEDNESDAY 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH**  
*in*

**ST. AIDANS ROOM**  
**BURC (ST. PAULS) CHURCH**



## **A VIEW FROM THE PROM**

Many of us complained during the cold weather about the state of the roads and pavements and The Point hopes that you have come through without any personal harm. At one stage the suggestion was being made that we could rent out the streets as ice rinks!!! The apparent failure of local government to provide an adequate level of treatment is not just a local issue, and the conditions were indeed exceptional, but many of you are asking whether the poor level of treatment was indicative of where Spittal will stand on a range of issues in relation to a distant local authority down in Morpeth.

## **SCHOOL NEWS**

Christmas may seem like a distant memory, but we have to start off by thanking everyone who supported our school fair in early December. It turned into the most profitable PTA event in years, raising over £770 (with help from Barclays' Bank to take the total over £1000). Parents, teachers and children all enjoyed the traditional Nativity plays a week later. As you may have seen in the Advertiser, Miss Allan was presented with a bouquet of flowers as it was her 35th nativity play at Spittal.

Like all the other schools in the borough we were forced to close for the first week in January because of the snow and that meant the planned coach trip to the pantomime in Edinburgh had to be called off. There are plans afoot to schedule a summer trip instead and we will certainly try to get to next year's panto – weather permitting!

Sales of the Spittal School Centenary book have raised over £500 so far and it is still available from the school itself and from Spittal Foodstore, Grieves Stationers, Doolallys Bookshop, Hope's Newsagents and the Council Archive offices. Thanks to all these businesses for stocking it, and to Spittal Improvement Trust and Spittal's United Reform Church coffee morning group for also selling them at their events.

**Diary Date:** Thursday 11th February:  
Valentine's Disco at the School

## SPITTAL SCOUT GROUP



We would like to thank all those parents, children and anyone who supported our fundraising events last year. A good time was had by all those who came to the Group Christmas Disco and well done to all those who braved the weather to attend the District Carol Service at Ford.

### Spittal Scout Group **RACE NIGHT** **26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** 7.30pm **Spittal Bowling Club**

Contact Gordon on 305272/ 07980452436  
**All Welcome**

On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February at our Race Night (above) we are looking for sponsorship of the horses. Each horse costs £5 and the winning sponsor of each race will win a bottle of spirits. Anyone wishing to sponsor a horse can contact Gordon on either 305272 or 07980452436.

**Brenda Rollo – Group Scout Leader**  
(Please remember to log onto our fundraising website, the address is:  
[www.easypfundraising.org.uk/2ndbutssg](http://www.easypfundraising.org.uk/2ndbutssg))

## ST JOHN'S LOCAL RAILWAY AND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

On April 6<sup>th</sup> there will be another CineRail© DVD together with guest speaker and relates to Border Railways. Future projects include local fishing history and the history of the small shops of Spittal Main Street. Meetings are held in the Spittal Bowling Club.

## NATURE DESK

**Berwick Wildlife Group**  
Forthcoming events in Berwick United Reformed Church, Main Street, Spittal:

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 7.30 pm.**  
Wildlife photographer Phil McClean will talk about and demonstrate his craft. Look forward

to an evening of superb photos combined with wildlife and photographic information, and an introduction to the animals that shared Phil's house.

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30 pm.**  
Siberian Dream, in search of nesting Ross's Gulls. A talk by international birder Graham Bell.

*If you would like more information about the Group, or any of our events, visit our web site: [www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), email: [mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](mailto:mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), call 01289 330591 or come to an event. Everyone is welcome, there may be a small charge (no charge for children, but they must come with an adult).*

## BEACH CLEAN

The first one of the year will be on  
**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

Meet outside the Amusement Arcade at 10am, weather permitting.  
All welcome but come prepared for the bracing, but let's hope not too cold, weather. We will finish with the usual refreshments.

## The weather of 2009

By the time you read this newsletter Spittal weather station will probably be closed. So as a finale, here is a summary of the year gone by ... Whatever you felt about 2009, it still turned out to be a warmer year than average being +1.0 deg C above normal – and it was warmer than 2008. It was a wet year with 740.5mm(29.2 inches) of rain, which is 129% of normal, but there were fewer wet days than in 2008. The wettest day was a record – this was July 17<sup>th</sup> when 78.2mm (3.1 inches) of rain fell. The year ended with one of the coldest Decembers in recent history, which, as we know continued into 2010. *(I will leave the weather switched on for you when I leave so if you carry out the ritual weather procedures you will be able to stay in control – not sure whether I taught you these but they involve a bucket and a piece of seaweed – Ed)*

## THE PARISH CHURCH

As this issue goes to print it is hoped that work is to commence soon on the new railings and currently we await the final go-ahead from the Diocese in relation to the

remedial work on the West Window. Thank you all for your support for these projects.

## PROJECT SRI LANKA

During 2009 we have managed to send a further £1500 to the Project, and we hope to be sending a further £500 early in 2010, depending largely on candle sales. Particular thanks in 2009 go to a small band of regular donors and to Paul and Joan Angus who have not only hosted the regular pub quizzes at The Red Lion but also fund-raised for the Project. I shall remain involved with Project Sri Lanka and maintain contact with the group here but Peter and Joan Eccles have very kindly agreed to act as local contacts after my departure.

*John Harrison*

times come round. For many of you I have officiated at the funerals of members of your family, and of your friends and neighbours. This has been a great privilege for me. I have of course also shared in the joys of weddings and baptisms with many of you. I am not, and never will be, a priest who operates behind the closed door of a vicarage – for me the church, if it is to have any future in our society, has to live in and for its community – otherwise it is simply another club which a decreasing number will choose to join. Thank you all for the laughs, for the support and practical help, and for just putting up with a rather eccentric vicar. Whether Spittal is any the different for me having been here is a question only you can answer and time will tell.

*Rev Dr John Harrison*

## CAR BOOT SALE

*Sandstell Road Car Park*

*The first one of the season  
will be on*

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April**

Starting at 10am  
(weather permitting of course!)

## AT THE RED LION

The Red Lion is hosting a Jazz Night on the first Wednesday of every month with the resident band 'Swing Street' playing foot tapping, easy going jazz from 8.30pm. Joan and Paul will be pleased to see you there

A regular feature of the last Friday of the month has been the 'Two Johns' quizzes which, apart from being a good night out, have raised for a number of charities, including the Trust, Project Sri Lanka, the air ambulance and local cancer care support. It is hoped that the quizzes can continue after March following the departure of one of the Johns so look out for posters.

## GOODBYE FROM JOHN

I can't abide goodbyes – so I'll not rabbit on. Suffice to say that I shall miss Spittal a great deal, and I would like to think that I have been a vicar that you could talk to face to face. And also someone you could trust when the hard

## AND FINALLY

*Gladys Friday*

Amidst the ice and snow of December and January one of our local shopkeepers (not Spittal) went away on holiday – where? He went on a skiing holiday – why spend all that money travelling when he could have used the Springhill resort slopes – but the après ski is not quite up to St Anton standards.

I leave you with a story from my friend Bobby who is a farmer. One day his son Jason didn't go to school so of course the next day he was asked by the teacher why he hadn't attended. I gather that this is roughly how the conversation went...

"Why weren't you at school yesterday Jason – you missed an important class test?"

"Our cow was on heat miss so I had to take her to the bull"

"That's all very well but I don't see why your father couldn't have done that."

"Oh no Miss, he couldn't have, it has to be the bull."

### SIT Contacts:

**Chairman:** Willie Young, 27 Main Street  
Tel. 304862 berwickgas@Hotmail.com

**Secretary:** Mike Greener, 84 Main Street  
Tel. 306387

mike@greener50.freeseve.co.uk

**Editor:** John Harrison, 129 Main Street  
Tel. 307342 Johnandaveril@aol.com

- **for the next issue** Chris Timmins at  
rovtim@fatbloaters.com

**Website:** www.spittalisgreat.co.uk

*Printed in Spittal by Shiel and Morrison*