

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust
Issue 60 April 2014

EDITORIAL

Deadline for next issue 23rd May 2014

The last issue of THE POINT, Issue 59, was not delivered to everyone due to various problems. So, apologies for that but we do have spare copies if anyone wants one. Just get in touch.

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

We held our **AGM** on 26th March at which the current committee were re-elected as no new members had come forward to stand for election. Our committee meetings are open to anyone to attend, the next one being on Friday 25th April in St John's Church.

We have two musical offerings in St Paul's Church in the coming two months, both are advertised in this issue. The first of these is '**ALAW**' performing on 24th April and they come through the Highlights Rural Touring Scheme. 'Alaw' is Welsh for melody, and it is a love of melody that is at the heart of this group. Drawing on a great wealth of musical experiences Alaw take their audiences on a musical journey – a tune brought back from a tour in Bulgaria or collaboration in India – but at the heart of their set is a passion for the old tunes of Wales. If you want to know about them and get a sneak preview of their playing, go to www.alaw-band.com.

The second of our live performances is from the local group '**Eclectica**'. Formed in 2010, Eclectica perform for charities and have raised thousands of pounds for worthy causes. Proceeds from this musical evening are in aid of The Berwick & District Cancer Support Group.

We have been really pleased to have been asked again to host the Highlights Touring Craft Exhibition, both for this year and 2015! This year's exhibition is entitled '**Textile Stories**' and it showcases three contemporary designer-makers whose work celebrates and brings to life real and imagined stories of our shared history, told through the medium of textiles: of courage in the face of adversity; the dignity of daily toil and perseverance and the values of thrift and patience. The exhibition will be on from 13th to 15th June in St Paul's Church and it is free to enter.

Mike Greener – Secretary SIT

CAR BOOT SALE's Sandstell Road Car Park

Starting on Easter Sunday then every Sunday until the end of September.

Cars £5/Vans £7

Start at 10am and there is *no need to book*.
All are weather permitting, of course!

A VIEW FROM THE PROM



The tail of the travelling trolley. Many of you will have used the large platform trolleys at Homebase at some point, you know the ones for loading bags onto, but have you the one that has been travelling around Spittal recently? This particular trolley started off on the little beach near the stone jetty. It was put next to the waste bin there in the hope that the Council would take it away.

It then made its way halfway along the main beach, where it was put by the bins in the hope that it would be taken away by the bin men. It next turned up at the south end of the beach and was on the Prom by the next again day, where, you've guessed it, it was put by the bins. It was then sighted on the Billendean opposite The Albion, obviously it's homing instincts were leading it back to Homebase. It finally left Spittal and was last reported next to Tweedmouth Dock, it had obviously decided to catch a boat.

It never ceases to amaze how something as large as this can be that well travelled. Why would anyone want to take it away from Homebase in the first place as they are not the easiest things to steer with a heavy load on. By the way, there was not a pound coin in the slot!

Beachcomber

SPITTAL GARDENING GROUP

Sheila and Mau are delighted that several people have agreed to join us, we now feel we can organise a gardening group within the village. As we go to press we are getting ready for our Spring judging visit for Northumbria in

Bloom this coming Thursday, 17 April. We are concentrating on the street for this visit as with so many beds looking tired after the winter it's a mammoth task getting everything back in order. We are pleased that the Probation Trust are coming every Saturday, they are helping by tidying the beds in the park, and hopefully we can show the improvement there for the in Bloom judging in July. A group of children from Tweedmouth Middle School, all from Spittal, are taking over the triangular flower bed at the bottom of Billendean.

Once the daffodils are over we will be planning the beds in readiness for the July judging and for the Neighbourhood awards. Spittal School is entering the school competition, Growing Together. This is judged early so that the children get the results before they break up for their summer holidays.

The cost of planting all the beds is considerable so we would be very grateful to anyone willing to help us water once the weather warms up and anyone wishing to help will be very welcome. We are a bit concerned that there has been damage to some of the planting and the dog fouling is proving to be a problem in some of the beds. Please help us to keep Spittal floral. It's the 50th anniversary of Britain in Bloom this year so we will be going golden and hope we merit gold this year. Any suggestions for planting schemes would be most welcome, please contact Sheila (331994) or Mau (308813) with any ideas.

Highlights Rural Touring Scheme
presents:

'ALAW'

Fiddle and accordion music from Wales,
with guitar and a touch of vocals.

**Thursday 24th April
at 7:30pm**

BURC (St Pauls) Church

Tickets: Adult £7.50/u17's £4 (includes
refreshments)

On sale in Spittal Food Store,
call 07752403409 or from

www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights

NEWS FROM ST JOHN'S

St John's Church is continuing with our regular community activities for young and old. We have a thriving Junior Youth Group for youngsters in roughly the 8-13 age range who

meet twice each month in Spittal Vicarage on a Sunday from 3.00-4.30pm.

On Good Friday night we will be having a sleepover in church for those brave enough to experience the building at night! On the last Thursday of each month we hold a short service for the residents of Garden House followed by informal conversations over refreshments. It is lovely to be in contact with the residents and staff and we have been made welcome there.

We continue to hold our monthly Creative Church on the last Sunday of each month at 3pm in Church when we have crafts, refreshments and a short service. All the activities are aimed at families and suitable for every age group. Again new families are most welcome to join us.

Our Easter services are as follows:

Wednesday 16th April: Evening prayer at pm.

Good Friday (18th): Devotional service 1pm.

Easter Sunday 20th April: Holy Communion at 9am and a Songs of Praise service at 6pm.

And looking forward, from the start of May we are changing our pattern of services as follows;
First Sunday of each month: 4pm an informal family service. Other Sundays of each month: 9am Holy Communion, in addition the Saints Days services will continue at 10.00am.

You are all welcome to attend any of these services – just turn up! Full details of all our activities can be found on our website www.potss.co.uk which is updated regularly. God bless you all. Revd. Ann Peters.

BERWICK UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (formerly St Paul's)

Our Easter services are as follows:

Thursday 17th April: United Service 7pm - 8pm

Easter Sunday: Beach service and breakfast (8:00am - 9:30am) on Spittal Beach (beside St Helen's Terrace) led by Mrs May Short followed by breakfast in Berwick URC (Spittal)

SOS – SAVE OUR SWIFTS!

This piece was in the last issue but due to the problems with distribution we are running this important item again.

Swifts need our help! Swifts are amazing, beautiful birds and supreme aerialists. They are with us for about three months each summer and while they are with us they fill our summer evenings - aerobatic, amazingly fast flight filled with elfin screams, daring and drama.

Swifts predominately nest in pre-1944 buildings and virtually no post 2000 buildings. This is due to the change in building techniques, which afford them little prospect of adequate nest

sites. The birds are already on the amber-list of conservation concern after declining by 33 per cent between 1995 and 2011.

What can we do locally? There is a wealth of advice out there on helping swifts by maintaining existing nest sites, or creating new ones by introducing nest boxes. The information would take up two issues of this newsletter so if you want to take up the SOS challenge then visit our website at www.spittalisgreat.co.uk and we will post further information there to help you, and the swifts of course.

We would like to thank members of Berwick Wildlife Group for their help and advice on this important subject.

BERWICK WILDLIFE GROUP



Wednesday 21st May, AGM and Wonderful Wildlife Quiz, Berwick United Reformed Church, 7.30 pm. The AGM will be short (half hour max.) as usual. The Quiz, a new selection of slides and questions modelled on our very successful quiz night in February, will begin immediately afterwards. If you have any "slides" you would like to have included, do please send them to Fiona. Everyone is welcome and, because of the AGM, we will waive our usual entrance charge to the hall.

'ECLECTICA'

Saturday 24th May

at 7:30pm

BURC (St Pauls) Church

Northumberland based musicians performing popular and classical music.

Tickets: Adult £5.50/u17's £3
(includes refreshments)

On sale in Spittal Food Store, or call
07752403409

SPITTAL AT WAR

(The final part of Jim Cromarty's recollections.)

During the war, civilians, even those in reserved occupations contributed to the war effort. The Home Guard did sentry duties and also trained for any invasion should it happen. Air raid precaution wardens supervised the blackout, their main job was to get people to safety during air raids. The Women's Voluntary Service, acted as a support unit for the A R P. At home, many women knitted gloves, scarves and socks

for servicemen and women. Youth groups, Scouts and Boy's Brigade collected waste paper and other salvage for the war effort. There were also Fire Watchers in schools and factories. And not forgetting the housewives who managed to feed their families every day in spite of food rationing and other shortages.

The war carried on, year after year. Air raids kept happening, the sirens wailed, people made for the shelters until the all clear sounded. Then it was back to whatever it was they were doing. Up to date news of the war was usually BBC wireless and newspapers, no television. After reading the news at night, the newsreader would read out coded messages for partisans in Europe, e.g. 'the white rabbit has returned to its hutch', which meant an undercover agent had arrived back home safely.

Between programmes, the BBC would transmit the Morse Code for V (V, for victory) over and over. On occasions, "Germany Calling" would break into the BBC frequency. This was 'Lord Haw Haw', an Irish American fascist politician broadcasting to the UK, telling British people to surrender, "the war is lost". His real name was William Joyce. Joyce was executed as a war criminal on 3rd January 1946.

After six long years, on 14th August 1945, Germany surrendered; the war in Europe was over. Church bells rang out, bonfires were set alight in celebration. The blackout was ended, at dusk Mr Ellis the lamplighter was again a familiar figure, with a long pole with a flame on the end on his rounds lighting the street lamps. Early in the morning, he would go around again with a pole with a hook on the end to turn the lamps off. However, austerity remained, food rationing was to remain until 4th July 1954.

The war was not a happy time, it affected everybody's life in some way. Many women were widowed, children were left fatherless, parents lost sons and daughters in the war. Some servicemen who had survived the war, returned home to find their families had been killed in air raids and their homes demolished, Others found their loved ones had died of natural causes. Some returned to find there were extra children in the family.

Years after the war, it emerged that some Spittalers had had important roles in the war effort. Tom Kennedy, who was a very keen amateur radio enthusiast and whose call sign was G6UC, served during the war in The Royal Corps of Signals. Because of his expertise, he was able to track down enemy agents by locating signals to and from Germany. After the war, Tom reopened his fish and chip shop at 22

Main Street.

Jimmy Edminson, the local butcher, was in the Home Guard. Being an expert cattle grader he was also employed by The Ministry of Agriculture to procure cattle for slaughter, which meant he was a familiar figure in the countryside. With two other local business men, also in the Home Guard and whose occupations also took them around the countryside, and because they had no children, they were trained in the use of explosives. Their job in the event of a German invasion, would be to blow up certain installations and the bridges over the River Tweed, including The Union Chain Bridge at Horncliffe.

These are my memories of Spittal in World War 2. I apologise for any omissions or if I have recalled any unpleasant memories for anyone.

Jim Cromarty Bsc

Editor's note: *Our thanks to Jim for allowing us to publish his memories of this most difficult time in his and our history. If anyone would like to submit any stories of their own from days gone by here in Spittal, then please let us know.*

LAST SALMON FISHERY IN BERWICK

The Trust has joined other organizations and interested individuals in pledging support to a proposal being lead by The Mouth of the Tweed Initiative (MoTT) who are concerned about the future of the last salmon fishery at Berwick-upon-Tweed. This follows the retirement of our very own Ian Bruce, who held the licence from Berwick Harbour Commission to net salmon at the Gardo Fishery, near the old bridge.

The loss of the fishery would represent more than the ending of another small business as it would bring to an end an activity that has a recorded history of at least 900 years of continuous operation at Berwick. The loss of the last remnant of the salmon-fishing industry from the town will be keenly felt by the local population. It lies at the heart of the local ceremony of Crowning the Salmon Queen, which takes place during the Tweedmouth Feast festivities in July each year.

Derek Sharman, local tour guide and co-founder of MoTT Initiative says: "It is ironic that this news comes when plans are about to be revealed for a programme of events throughout 2015 to celebrate 900 years of Berwick's history. Salmon-netting on the Tweed at Berwick is the one thing that has remained constant through those nine centuries."

"As well as offering some seasonal work and a world-class product for the town, salmon-netting at Gardo Fishery has potential for development as a significant feature in Berwick's offer as a distinctive visitor destination."

MoTT has received confirmation from Berwick Harbour Commission that the future of the fishery is being reviewed but all options will be considered before a final decision is made. MoTT and their supporters hope that this will allow time to explore practical options for its continuation as a working fishery.

Proposals have to be viable and may include the setting up a community heritage project to purchase the fishery and manage a self-financing operation that could be developed as a valuable tourism asset and ensure that wild Tweed salmon would be available as a quality product in local shops and restaurants.

The continuation of the last working salmon-fishery could form the centerpiece of a heritage project including viewing points, interpretative displays and living history activities on Berwick Quayside and other sites in the town associated with the salmon industry, which was vital to the town's economy well into the 20th century.

For example, Spittal Improvement Trust owns the Fishing Shiel, which once accommodated the salmon-nets men at the nearby Sandstell Fishery. The building probably dates back to 1735 and the Trust aims to install displays illustrating the history of Tweed salmon-fishing and the lives of the nets men over the centuries. The story of how ice was used to preserve Tweed salmon during the long sea voyage to London in the 18th and early 19th centuries can also be told by providing additional interpretation at the preserved Bankhill ice-house in Berwick, which is owned by the Berwick Preservation Trust.

Family or friends visiting and not enough space?

We have comfortable cottages available. For details telephone **Brenda** on **01289 304175** or see our **website**

www.berwickcottageholidays.co.uk

And finally.... Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

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