

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust
Issue 63 October 2014

EDITORIAL

Deadline for next issue 20th November.

If you have any relations or friends that would like to receive The Point by email, then please let us know. They will get it in colour!

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

The **Seaside Festival** has taken place but it is still in our minds. Although this year's Festival was well attended it was not a financial success. As the Festival is free to enter, we rely heavily on grant funding and the generosity of the main food vendor and the fun fair. This year we suffered from the adverse weather predicted for the Sunday, hurricane force winds and rain if you remember. The high winds never turned up but the rain did, but not until 3pm. This meant that both traders and visitors alike chose not to come on the Sunday.

Putting that behind us now, we are taking steps to ensure we are better funded next year. The first thing that we have already begun to analyse is whether we need to reduce the area in which we hold the Festival. The Prom and grassed areas at both ends are about a mile long and it is a big space to fill. The second step is that we also need to freshen up the Festival so that it remains an important fixture in everyone's summer calendar. If you have any ideas regarding what you would like to see and do over the weekend and what food outlets that would get the taste buds flowing, then we would be pleased to hear about them.

Our first Highlights promotion of the Autumn is on shortly. This is by '**The Oxford Concert Party**' who are described as Europe's only Baroque and Tango Orchestra and one of the most entertaining, mould-breaking groups around. They are a lively, highly entertaining group of six first-rate musicians with a unique repertoire which ranges from Vivaldi to Piazzolla, via Argentinian Tango, Jewish Klezmer, French café music and from Russia, Eastern Europe, Ireland and Scotland.

Our next event is the **Autumn Fair**. All proceeds from this event will help towards bringing Santa and his reindeer back to Spittal again this year. I'll mention our usual plea at

this point that we always appreciate any items that will fill up our bottle and gift tombola's or go towards our raffles.

Highlights Rural Touring Scheme
presents:

The Oxford Concert Party
Friday 3rd October @ 7:30pm
BURC (formerly St Pauls)



Tickets Adult £7.50/u17's £4 and
includes refreshments!
On sale in Spittal Food Store
or call 07752 403409

In time for Halloween, we have a play by the acclaimed writer Alan Ayckbourn by courtesy of the Queen's Hall, Hexham, entitled '**Haunting Julia**'. The play is about musical prodigy Julia who was found dead and twelve years later her father Joe is still trying to come to terms with what happened and tonight he wants answers! In her old room, a psychic, her boyfriend and father finally unravel the mystery, as the walls begin to give up the secret of what really happened to Julia. Haunting Julia is chilling ghost story that manages to encapsulate Ayckbourn's trademark timing and wit. A twisted study of grief, obsession and the supernatural, that will have you jumping out of your seat.

Our 2015 calendar is now on sale in Spittal Foodstore, just in time for a Christmas stocking filler! Talking of which (Christmas not stockings) if you want to help the Trust raise much needed funds then you can do this by a just click of the button. Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk, pick

us as your chosen charity to support and then continue shopping. There are a surprising number of retailers that give a small donation to accepted causes.

Mike Greener – Secretary SIT



**SPITTAL
AUTUMN FAIR
SATURDAY
18TH
OCTOBER**

10am to 3pm
BURC (formerly St Paul's)
Main Street, Spittal
**Crafts, Gifts, Tombola, Raffle
& Refreshments**

Enquiries call: 07752403409

A VIEW FROM THE PROM



As we all now know, the people in Scotland recently decided to stay within the UK family. If they had opted out Berwick would have once again become a border town, some said that this was a missed opportunity.

It was reported in the local paper that missing out was mentioned by a member of the public at a recent Town Council meeting. This actually referred to the fact that the Town was guilty of 'missing a trick' by not having a media policy in place to deal with all the questions posed by news hungry journalists from all over the world.

It goes wider than this one news event though, we can only 'miss out' for so long otherwise the world will pass us by. Ok, we have another international coffee shop chain opening up but we need a spark of inspiration from somewhere. The revolving door of consultants that come through these parts every two years or so should be briefed into putting aside the traffic flows and issues about parking and channelled into teaching us to how not to 'miss a trick'!

Beachcomber

1930's SHELTER

Anyone who knows the Spittal Promenade will probably have commented on the sorry state of the last remaining original shelter. The shelter, built in 1930, backs onto the Bowling Club. It was in danger of having at least the seats removed, if not total loss.

This shelter was built by the Forte brothers who erected the Venetian Pavilion in 1926. They needed to extend their kitchen, so came to an arrangement with the then Borough Council to demolish the existing wooden shelter facing the tennis courts and replace it on the Promenade. The pre-cast concrete shelter was erected by Messrs. Burns, Joiners of Sea Road, costing about £50 in total.

Northumberland County Council still owns the shelter and Prom, having passed responsibility for the seating to Berwick Town Council. It's not, and never will be, a listed building because of the loss of the surrounding Promenade features. After enquiries about repairs with both the County and Town Councils last autumn, it was the usual tale of recent years, "No money in the budget". So, it was a case of "self-help".

In November 2013 it was understood that the Berwick Civic Trust had received a bequest from a former member and Spittal resident, Margaret Guild, and were considering small projects to fund. Miss Guild was a hospital almoner who retired to Commercial Road in Spittal, where she lived for many years. She died in 2010, aged 89, generously dividing her estate between 3 charities.

So, armed with a few old photos of Spittal in her glory days, a local resident pitched up at the Civic Society, begging bowl in hand. To this person's delight, £5,000 of Margaret Guild's bequest was allocated to the project. Emboldened by success they then approached Berwick Preservation Trust who inspected the shelter and offered £2,000! Job done!

Well not quite. Northumberland County Council are a cautious bunch, and there followed much discussion concerning the legality of "private" work on council property, insurance, public liability, etc. etc. Talk about looking a gift horse in the mouth! In the end it took a direct appeal to the Chief Executive of the County Council. In the meantime they set about trying to get quotes from builders and decorators. They were optimistic that the shelter would sparkle for Easter 2014 but this soon faded, as summer approached and then all but passed.

Then the miracle of Reality TV appeared in Berwick! Only in your wildest, cheese-induced dreams could a production company making a programme at Ford Castle with young volunteers on Borstal training in the 1930's, have been looking for a small project dating from that era! A project with its date on the pediment, requiring newly acquired joinery and painting skills, and with photogenic sea views to boot! Thank heavens it wasn't a programme on re-building castles or medieval ship building or herring fishing!

A telephone call and meeting one Wednesday led to a further meeting on Thursday, project start on Sunday, finished by Thursday! A positive whirlwind, nay, hurricane of activity from everyone involved! And in un-typically balmy weather to boot! Thursday dawned with the Shelter more or less finished, a red ribbon in place, a small crowd milling around and voila! Ribbon cut by the Chair of the Civic Society and Spittal's moment of telly fame was recorded forever! Even if the paint was still wet!

Thanks are due to the two societies for their patient support, Peter Gautry & his team of painters, Keith Thompson of Premier Building, Wall to Wall TV Productions, (crew & cast), and, of course, Margaret Guild.

Watch out for the full programme in January, and play "spot the neighbour!"

ST JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

Life continues in the church as usual with the regular round of services and events. The new service First@Four takes place on the first Sunday of each month at 4pm, a time of relaxed, informal and family oriented worship. At 9am on the other Sundays is Holy Communion and Creative Church for families is at 3pm on the last Sunday. The building is left unlocked for visitors and private prayer every Friday during daylight hours so do please call in if you wish. Our loyal gardeners have kept the grounds looking splendid throughout the summer months so huge thanks to them for all their hard work. Some special events are coming up to which everyone is invited and it would be lovely to welcome you. These are:
Sunday 5th October at 6pm Harvest Songs of Praise followed by the harvest supper.

Sunday 2nd November at 6pm a service to remember those loved ones who have passed away recently and to celebrate their lives.

Sunday 9th November is Remembrance Sunday. There will be services at 9am in Church and 12.30pm at the War Memorial.

Saturday 15th November Coffee morning in Church, 10am to 12.00 with refreshments/stalls.

God bless you all,

Revd. Matthew Knox & Revd. Ann Peters

WALKING FOR HEALTH

Would you be interested in walking along the Promenade on a Friday afternoon? Then why not join like minded people who meet at 1:30pm in the car park behind the Amusement Arcade. They walk to the end of the prom, there are many seats available en-route to take a breather, and then it's back to the cafe where hot drinks are available if required. Winter nights are approaching so anyone on their own will appreciate the company for a small walk, at your own speed, but come well wrapped up!



17TH to 18TH October 2014

It's a story waiting to be told...

Berwick's first ever festival of books will mark the extraordinary wealth of writing and illustrating talent concentrated in our beautiful town and its surroundings. Over two days in October, Berwick Literary Festival will bring together a host of award-winning authors and illustrators in an exciting programme of talks, readings and workshops.

Because so many acclaimed children's writers and artists are based here, this year's inaugural event has a focus on writing and illustrating for young people – but you can also find prize-winning adult fiction writers on the programme too. There's something for every taste – and it's all free!

Two events being held in Spittal, these are:

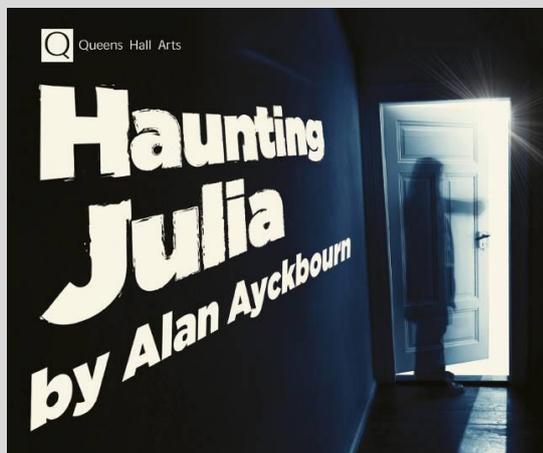
Friday 17th at 10am & 11:30am – **'How a book is made'** tour of Martins The Printers.

Saturday 18th at 11am – **'Discovering Old Spittal'** walkabout with local historian Michael Cullen. Meet at outside St John's Church

The organisers hope that the Literary Festival will become an annual event. You can check out the full list of activities on their website at www.berwickliteraryfestival.com or through the local paper. We wish the organisers well.



Our first winter meeting is on Wednesday 15th October at 7.30 p.m. in Berwick United Reformed Church (formerly St Paul's), when volcanologist Ian Kille will give a talk on the 'Whin Sill'. For details please contact Fiona on 330591 or mail3@berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk



**Saturday 25th October
at 7:30pm**

BURC (formerly St Pauls)

Tickets Adult £7/u17's £4 and includes refreshments!

On sale in Spittal Food Store
or call 07752 403409

Hosted by Spittal Improvement Trust

DID YOU KNOW?

If you know of someone with sight problems that wants to keep up with news and events in Berwick, then the **Berwick & District Talking Newspaper** is on hand to help. News, letters, announcements, sport and other items of interest are recorded from the Berwick Advertiser. Memory sticks are sent out to clients who can listen in the comfort of their own home. They will also supply a player for the memory stick, what's more, the service is completely free of charge! For more information call 01289 382238 or 308171.

HISTORICAL SNIPPETS

Probably no single legislative Act caused as much resentment in Spittal as the Tweed Acts of 1857, 1859 and 1863. The Act of 1857 was

an Act to "consolidate and amend the Acts for the more effectual Preservation and Increase of Salmon, and the Regulation of the Fisheries in the River Tweed".

The Close Season was the biggest issue when fishing was halted to give the salmon a chance to get up the river to spawn. Prior to 1857, the close season was six weeks but this was increased to six months in the new Act. This obviously greatly affected the earnings of the Berwick Salmon Fishing Company and its employees, who mostly lived in Spittal. Worse was the banning of a large number of nets. It was an offence not only to use the nets but also to own them. Armed with a search warrant, police or bailiffs could enter or search houses.

Trouble erupted on a stormy day in 1859 when large numbers of salmon were driven into the Tweed. As reported in the local paper of the time, nearly the whole village turned out, "not only to a man but to a woman". Eight boats were launched supported by on land by people armed with slings. Thirteen bailiffs were driven over to the Berwick side and their boat sunk. Just who the culprits were was never established "as they were disguised in their wives bed gowns!"



And finally....

Why does a round pizza come in a square box?

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