

THE POINT



A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust

Issue 69

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EDITORIAL

We would appreciate any views about the content of the newsletter. If there are any issues or items that you think we should be covering, please let us know. We will try to cover them.

Deadline for next issue is 21st May 2016.

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Our AGM had not taken place whilst putting this newsletter together but we have been pleased with the response for new committee members. This will give us a much needed input of new blood, and with it we hope some new ideas. It will take them a little while to bed in but we appreciate their time and commitment.

We are starting to gear up for another busy year now that the dark days of winter are over. It is always a turning point once the clocks change. With new members on board we can get back to looking at some of the project work that we have put on the back burner, some for too long!

Mike Greener - Secretary

SPITTAL BOWLING CLUB



Spittal Bowling Club have recently acquired a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) for our community through the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). This will be sited in their car park, opposite the Amusement Arcade.

An awareness session for members of the local community and wider public was held at the club on Monday 4th April within which the NEAS demonstrated emergency life saving skills, which included the use of the defibrillator. These skills and equipment save lives, for further information please call the club on 01289 307039.

GARDENING GROUP

The **Spring Fair** is on the 9th April in the Church Hall, see the following poster for further details, and all proceeds are going towards the Gardening Group's efforts around the village.

This year as well as the various craft and gift stalls there are table top stalls for rent at £10 each. The Gardening Group will be having their own stall and would be grateful for any donations, however small. Good timing for a spring clean!

There will also be a raffle, tombola, and refreshments with homemade soup, quiches, cakes and biscuits, donations also be welcome.

To book a stall please phone Mau Watkins on 01289 308813 and for any donations to be collected please phone Sheila Heckels on 331994 or Rhona Beresford on 330450.

We do hope you can take the time to join us.

Mau & Sheila

Spring
has sprung

SPITTAL SPRING FAIR

(in aid of Gardening Funds)

BUR CHURCH HALL

(formerly St Paul's Church Hall)

MIDDLE STREET, SPITTAL

SATURDAY 9TH APRIL

11am to 3pm

Stalls, Tombola, Raffle,

Teas/Coffees

& Home Baking



VISIT TO THE LEBANON

From Monday 28th March to Monday 4th April, Rev David Herbert, the Minister at Berwick (St Paul's) United Reformed Church here in Spittal, is making a trip to the Lebanon. He writes:

In the late 80's I worked with a delightful colleague who had lived in Lebanon in the 1970's, and her stories about the country made me want to visit one day. The civil war dominated our news headlines and consciousness: Beirut sadly provided the images and became a byword for the destructive capacity of war in the latter part of the 20th Century from 1975 to 1990. And yet, through all of that, Lebanon's tremendous history, both biblical and extra-biblical continued to inspire with a momentum of the glory of former civilizations. Continuity came through the ongoing supply of what I believe to be the finest wines in the world, produced for over 3000 years from the Bekaa Valley, expensive, but wonderful to taste, not least because of the indomitable spirit and determination of the vintners to continue through very dark, turbulent, and dangerous times. The Beirut of my former colleague seemed beyond restoration. However, with increased stability, much rebuilding has happened, and Beirut is returning to its former glories, though somewhat chastened, and much more circumspect. Lebanon is a small country with a land area comparable to Wales, but with more than double the population of Wales at 4.5 million people, adds a total of just short of 2 million refugees at present onto that population, and one can only imagine the current pressures being brought to bear on the Lebanese government.

Going back 57 years to Hillhouse Congregational Church in Huddersfield, I grew up singing carols each Christmas from The Bethlehem Carol Sheet, printed by a charity which used to be called The Bible Lands Society. In between the carols would be photographs of vulnerable children and adults benefiting by projects supported by The Bible Lands Society in biblical territories across the Middle East. The Christian development agency after 158 years changed its name to Embrace the Middle East in 2012. It still produces the annual Carol Sheets for people to sing from, but also many other things besides, to continue funding their partner projects on the ground.

A URC minister, Rev Brian Jolly, who was in college training for the ministry with myself, has

been the Chair of the Trustees of Embrace for some time now, and when I decided in the summer of 2015 to visit Lebanon after a chance meeting with a Maronite Christian at Istanbul airport, I thought rather than be a tourist, my visit would have more meaning and bring about more good if I contacted Embrace and asked if I could visit any Lebanese projects, meet and greet, take photographs, and come home with the human stories that lie behind the huge issues we read about daily in the news. If I could be an advocate, then maybe any monies raised could help lives continue to be changed for the better in a demanding and volatile region. I spoke with Brian Jolly and his colleagues, and Embrace embraced my suggestion, and the charity is currently putting together a programme of visits to three or four projects on the ground while I am out there. It is important that I can also enable people to see on the ground in refugee camps and other places that they are not forgotten, and that we think of them daily, and want to stand alongside them in their hour of need. My intention is to return and share my first-hand insights, and by doing so, further the work of Embrace. I am keen to speak with any group, small or large, local or not so local upon my return, and hope to be accepting bookings for the coming months and years. Berwick Scout Group have also offered to make Embrace their chosen charity for 2016, and I will also be seeking to make contact with the scouting movement in Beirut with a view to linking uniformed organisations in two very different parts of our world.

It is so easy to feel overwhelmed by seemingly huge and intractable issues across the globe; even so, we can still make positive changes in people's lives in distant places we may never personally visit. And most of us, given the chance, are glad to do so rather than feel helpless. I hope readers will feel able to share my enthusiasm for this opportunity to do so.

For further information on Embrace the Middle East check out their excellent website. To contact myself, either email me at daveherbert@btinternet.com or write to: The Manse, 5 Nursery Lane, Belford, NE70 7NW.

Rev David Herbert



A VIEW FROM THE PROM

It would seem that concerns have been raised, yet again I hear you say, about the state of Spittal beach and

Promenade ahead of the start of the tourist season. The issue was raised by a local resident at a recent meeting of Berwick Town Council. This seems to imply that it is okay for us to endure it for the rest of the year, so long as it is made all nice and pretty for the tourists! Apparently the discussion centred around the way in which the recent works had been conducted in removing the sand from the Prom, when the beach was described as '*absolutely appalling*' and '*an absolute tip*'. However, it was thankfully cleared away before the Easter weekend.

Meanwhile, another Spittal resident, who did not want to be named, had expressed disgust at dog fouling on the Promenade. They quite rightly stated that "*The minority of dog walkers who are irresponsible make it so hard to promote our lovely town to outsiders and spoil life for us residents too*". They then went on to say that consideration should be given for a move towards further restrictions with dogs on leads at all times on the pavements and the Promenade.

I am sure that I speak for most people and that is the last thing we all want to see. There is nothing better than for a good walk on the beach or Prom on a glorious day with man's best friend. Although it is the best friend that leaves the mess, it's up the responsibility of man, or woman, to pick it up.

It would be really helpful if as many people as possible report this problem to the County Council. You can do this by following this link - <http://alturl.com/7gh2r>.

Beachcomber

WALKING FOR HEALTH

Would you be interested in walking along Spittal Promenade on a Friday afternoon?



These have now resumed, weather permitting, so why not come and 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. Better days are (hopefully) here so anyone on their own may appreciate the company for a small walk, at your own speed, but come prepared for the prevailing weather!

SPITTAL FIRST SCHOOL



It is a time of growth and change at Spittal School.

Work has begun on our two new classrooms with foundation trenches being excavated. Archaeologists have been on-site drawing and documenting for posterity any evidence of the foundry that once existed on the school site. We thank you for your understanding and patience as work commences.

In school the children have continued to focus on their reading with many completing our Easter reading challenge. We have had a visit from Zoolab which allowed the children to observe animal changes in spring time. Our children have experienced democracy in action with attendance at a pupil voice conference. This allowed them the opportunity to air their thoughts and ideas. Many children also participated in inter-schools cross country and tri-golf competitions with pleasing results.

Finally, I am delighted to have been appointed permanent Head Teacher. I have taught at Spittal for a number of years and I am excited by the opportunity this appointment presents.

We hope you all had a happy Easter, from the staff and children of Spittal school!

Wendy Kiff – Head Teacher

INSPIRED!



Two local Spittal music producers, Iain Petrie and Anna Emmins, have joined forces to form Inspired! the Creative School for Young musicians.

Iain, who has been writing, arranging, producing and performing since he was a boy, has released two albums, a number of EP's, and toured extensively. In his current role as a producer, Iain has released music with Electric Penelope, Tasha Blackmore, Gary Miller, and many more. His website has many examples of his music.

Anna, aka Electric Penelope, grew up in London where her family ran one of the most exclusive live clubs in town. She has been writing, recording and producing for 10 years, has starred in many theatrical productions, and released her debut album 'A New Day' to critical acclaim in 2012. She is currently working on a second album.

From the initial seed of the idea, they partnered with the Berwick Youth Project and set up, with its help, a charitable trust. More than £32,000 was needed to get the project up and running, with over half of the funds required being supplied by Arts Council England, the Community Foundation and the Northern Angel Fund. They also received donations from The Maltings Theatre, NorthernLab, Unisong, the Berwick Watchtower, Iain Grieve, Printspot, Greaves, West and Ayre, and many donations from local people.

The school was set up at the end of 2015 to help youngsters prepare to carve out careers in the music industry. They have recruited 10 talented young singer songwriters through an audition with the lead artists. Iain was inspired by the huge amount of young musical talent in Berwick and wanted to give people the skills they would need to fulfil their potential. The project started in January and will run until May, giving students the opportunity to learn about recording songs in a professional studio environment, rehearsing for and performing live shows to large audiences and conducting radio and press interviews. The idea is to nourish and mentor young musicians in the community and give them an outlet to express their music, and also to give them training in all aspects of the music industry.

The result is a full album of original work that will be released at the Maltings Theatre on 21st April.

Says Iain 'The quality and depth of the music and performances is beyond everyone's expectations. Everyone who has come into contact with Inspired has been profoundly moved by each individual's music, and the supportive and loving quality of the group as a whole. Its been a magical experience for all' The Final show is going to be quite exceptional, and will be an evening to remember!

Tickets for the show are available at the Maltings Theatre and the Malting's Website

Further information about Inspired is available at www.inspiredmusic.co.uk.

FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES

This snippet was seen on a newspaper cutting from 1942 being offered for sale on the online auction site, Ebay. Some may remember this.

"Still hale and hearty after their long trip through life together, the brothers Peter and James Smith of Middle Street, Spittal, celebrate the 76th anniversary of their birthday on Sunday.

Born at Thornton Mains, near Berwick, on March 15th 1866, the brothers, who must be the

oldest twins on the borders, enjoy the unique distinction of having never been separated except for a very brief period.

For 15 years they worked on the Haggerston Castle estate near Berwick and they have resided in Spittal for 15 years. They dress the same, walk the same, and it is a very rare thing indeed to see one without the other. They are devout worshippers and despite their advancing years attend both services of Spittal Congregational Church each Sunday without fail".

DO YOU GET THE HUMP?

Concerns have been raised about the condition and necessity the of speed humps on Billendean Road in Spittal. This was expressed in a recent edition of the Berwick Advertiser after a local resident had raised the issue with Northumberland County Council and local councillors last June. Nothing has happened since but they had been advised that it will be included in this year's Local Transport Plan.

The resident had stated that "The surfaces of the humps are pitted and scoured, follow a caravan in the summer and you can hear the contents crashing around." It must also affect the likes of the buses, delivery and emergency vehicles.

If you would like to add your opinion to this matter, would you please email the County Council to express your views direct at: highwaysearch@northumberland.gov.uk

The more people who bring this to Council's attention the more likely something will be done about it.

And finally....

One for the Gardening Group:

Gardening Rule: When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

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