

# THE POINT

A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust  
Issue 72

October 2016

## EDITORIAL

Deadline for the next issue is 18<sup>th</sup> November.

## NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Most of our main news is reported on under separate headings. However, we also have our **Autumn Fair** coming up on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, the details are on the following poster. As with all of our events we would appreciate any unwanted items that you might have that we could use as prizes.

Also this autumn we have two concerts from the Highlights Rural Touring Scheme. The first of these is on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November with a duo called **Mochara** and they have called their concert '**Mo Music**'. The duo is made up of Maurice Dickson and Catherine Ashcroft and they will be performing a dynamic mix of original and traditional Irish songs and tunes, the duo promise audiences a night of spellbinding music and entertainment. Full details are on the poster in this issue. The second Highlights concert is on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at which **John Kirkpatrick** will guarantee to keep the spirits cheery and the cold at bay with his '**Carolling and Crumpets**' concert. Details are on the poster in this issue.

*Mike Greener - Secretary*



**SPITTAL  
AUTUMN FAIR**

**SATURDAY  
15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

**11am to 3pm**

**St Paul's Church Hall  
Middle Street, Spittal  
Tombola, Raffle, Stalls  
& Refreshments**

**Enquiries call - 07752 403409**

## GARDENING GROUP

Although Autumn is now upon us the work of the Gardening Group will not be slowing down. There is still much to be done,



there are many bulbs to be planted, the choosing and planting of Winter bedding and planning for next year's displays.

Berwick in Bloom gained a Silver Gilt in the recent county wide 'Northumbria in Bloom' competition. We are now looking forward to the Neighbourhood Awards in November, in which both Spittal as a village and Spittal Bowling Club are entered into this competition. The results will be published in the next issue of The Point so, (green) fingers crossed.

We recently entered Mr Len Shepherd in the 'Volunteer of the Year' category of the Best of Northumberland awards. He was short listed but unfortunately was not the winner however, he enjoyed the presentation ceremony which was held in Linden Hall near Morpeth. There was a drinks reception followed by a dinner with music and speeches. We were disappointed he was not the winner but he is a real WINNER in our eyes!

If you have any spare plants that you would like to re-home we would be delighted to take them off your hands. Contact me on 07748076527 or any of the Gardening Group.

*Mau Watkins*

## ST JOHNS COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS

The possibility of using part of the grounds of St Johns Church as community allotments is being explored. The idea would be to grow fresh produce for the local community, and to provide those that are less fortunate with healthy fruit and veg. There would also be a place for private allotments on the site, which would be available for rent. Generally there is a shortage of allotments in Berwick which has resulted in long waiting lists for the chance of a plot.

The Church is obviously interested in the idea, as is Spittal Improvement Trust, which has been piloted by an Inner Manchester parish. Spittal First School have also been advised of the idea and it is hoped that there will be opportunities for the youngsters to be involved.

There are also opportunities for other youth organisations, and for those pursuing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as well. It is also hoped that those who have experience in growing fruit and vegetables but may not now be able enough to do this on their own could also come and join in and pass on their valuable experience.

What do you think?

Your views and expressions of interest would be welcome at [nsumerling@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nsumerling@hotmail.co.uk)

## BERWICK UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

*Invites you to an afternoon of*

# Autumn Entertainment



*songs, instrumental music and a story, for all tastes followed by afternoon tea*

**3pm Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October**

*St Paul's church, Main Street, Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed*

*tickets £5 (children under 12 free) from St Paul's church*

*or contact Stephen Hewitt on 01289 763427 email [sandshewitt@hotmail.com](mailto:sandshewitt@hotmail.com)*

**In aid of:**



## A VIEW FROM THE PROM



The Prom railings are looking very smart, they seem to have taken to a lot of care with the preparation too. Long may they last!

Concerns have been expressed to the County Council about some holes in the Prom paving and the elm tree outside the school, which appears to be urgently in need of some pruning. They have responded and are looking into these matters. The Town Council were also informed about the poor condition of electrical boxes in the two bus shelters on Main Street. These were rectified within a few days.

It just shows what can be achieved when people work together with little fuss. Long may that last as well!

*Beachcomber*

*Mochara Live*  
MAURICE DICKSON & CATHERINE ASHCROFT

Performing a dynamic mix of original and traditional Irish songs and tunes, the duo promise audiences a night of spellbinding music and entertainment.

**FRIDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER at 7:30pm**  
BURC (FORMERLY ST PAUL'S), MAIN STREET, SPITTAL  
Tickets: ADULT £7.50 • U17'S £4 • Family £20  
on sale at SPITTAL FOOD STORE, call 07752 403409  
or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights) and [www.beboxoffice.com](http://www.beboxoffice.com)  
**HOSTED BY SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST**

*"Words are hardly adequate to describe the skill, quality and sheer class of interpretation this duo brought to the finest musical entertainment I have had the pleasure to enjoy for a very long time." (The Arran Banner)*

[www.mauricedickson.co.uk](http://www.mauricedickson.co.uk)

## SANDSTELL FISHING SHIEL

We reported in the last issue of the newsletter that plans were going ahead for the Shiel but we were short on detail at that time. The Trust has been paying insurance and minimal maintenance on the Shiel for several years as we pondered as to what to do with it. The first idea was to have it purely as a museum

depicting the story of not only the Shiel but of the salmon fishing on the Tweed. We eventually realised that this was not viable as, on its own, it would not be able to generate enough income to pay for itself. It would have only opened for short periods, high days and holidays as they say, and by appointment to (say) schools and visiting groups. The biggest problem was as to who was going to be sitting in the Shiel waiting for someone to walk in.

After some amendment to our ideas, we have now settled on using one side of the Shiel as a bunkhouse, for visiting walkers and cyclists a bit like the old Youth Hostels did, and the other as a cafe. Now, this might sound as if we are going to vandalise the building and totally ignore its valuable cultural heritage, I can reassure you that this is not the case. It is a Grade 2 Listed Building and this means that we can only do any work within it that is approved and is sympathetic to its heritage.

Whilst putting this newsletter together we have received the Listed Building Consent from Northumberland County Council. This is a small step but a major one as without it we could not have proceeded. To achieve this we had to prove that there were no bats in, or likely to take residence in, the Shiel, this came at a hefty price! Our next step is to get a Change of Use Consent, this time we have to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment, and probably another hefty bill. This might take a while as we have to find more funding to get us to a stage where we can actually do the physical work of restoration. We are currently just doing what could be termed administrative work, architectural drawings, preparation and submission of building applications etc, and nobody likes to fund this.

Two local ladies have indicated to us that they would like to run the two businesses proposed for the Shiel. Keeping the history of the Shiel alive features heavily in their objectives for the future of this great building. It is their intention to gather as much information as possible on the life of the building and its relevance to the community. They will then be able to recount this history to future visitors entering the Shiel in its new capacity.

In mid September the Shiel was open as part of the national Heritage Doors Open Days and the two ladies were there for both days. They had more than 200 visitors over the weekend, made up of people visiting the area and lots of local people. Some of whom had stories to tell of how the Shiel featured in theirs or their families lives.

It was a great opportunity for them to hear first hand accounts of how the Shiel and the fishing industry was such an integral part of the local community and reinforced their desire to try to keep this history alive for future generations.

It also gave them the chance to tell people of the proposals for the Shiel's future and they were delighted with the resounding support our idea was given. Giving us renewed enthusiasm to keep pushing on with what can seem at times a daunting challenge.

## OUR RIVER: STORIES OF THE TWEED

Can you help us?  
Do you have any  
memories or stories



of living and working beside The Tweed to share? Can you suggest any people might have?

We are a locally based company, Castle Productions UK, and we have just started a yearlong project to make a documentary which will look at the culture, traditions, history and natural heritage of the River Tweed and its catchment, from its source to its mouth. On this stretch of the river we are going to feature the salmon fisheries which have been such an important part of life here for over a thousand years and have now almost all disappeared. We would like to talk to anyone who has worked on the nets or who has memories of the fishing, or stories of how their families were involved.

We are also interested in any photos people may have, or perhaps you can help us put names to faces on the ones we've already got? As well as using the information we collect for the film and a book, we'll lodge it with the local archives and share it with the Trust's Sandstell Fishing Shiel project. If you have lived in other parts of the catchment, beside the Till, Teviot, Jed Water, Gala Water or any of the rivers that run into the Tweed, we are looking for stories and memories from those parts too.

We will be showing the film locally from the end of 2017 and it will also be available as a DVD.

Please get in touch by phoning 07986 047901, emailing [castleproductions.uk@gmail.com](mailto:castleproductions.uk@gmail.com), or by messaging our Facebook page, Our River: Stories of the Tweed.

We really want to hear from YOU!

## TIDELINE RUNNERS THEATRE COMPANY

The Tideline Runners Theatre Company is the first associate theatre company of The Maltings Theatre in Berwick, and I have the amazing job of being its official writer and Artistic Director.

My name is Robert Wilkinson (soon to be Flynn) and I write under the name RJ Wilkinson and I have lived in the village for almost 40 years now. In my time working with the Tideline Runners I have overseen the production of four original studio plays and two larger-scale community musicals (Including this year's 72Hrs in Moscow).

My last studio production was The Smallest Story Ever Told, a comedy-drama about recovering from grief that told the back-to-front love story of Charlie and Amy Donnelly. After a run in London at The Kings Head, it is making a return visit to the Maltings in April next year with many of the original London cast for the premier if its national tour. The play is being produced with help from Alzheimers UK and Friends of Dementia who have been running training sessions with the cast and creative team, the idea being that, as well as taking in more traditional venues, the play will give precedence to venues where help and assistance with dementia is limited.

There will be a free event on Friday 14th October at 6pm at the Maltings where members of the London cast will present some of their favourite scenes from the play, and provide an opportunity for the audience to talk and ask questions with the cast and creative team.

The Tideline Runners are planning to take part in the Spittal Seaside Festival in 2018 when we revive our acclaimed war-time musical Sam & Isla Forever, so you can expect to see the Promenade littered with Tommies and land army girls. (And if you've seen the play before... PLEASE DON'T SPOIL THE ENDING!)

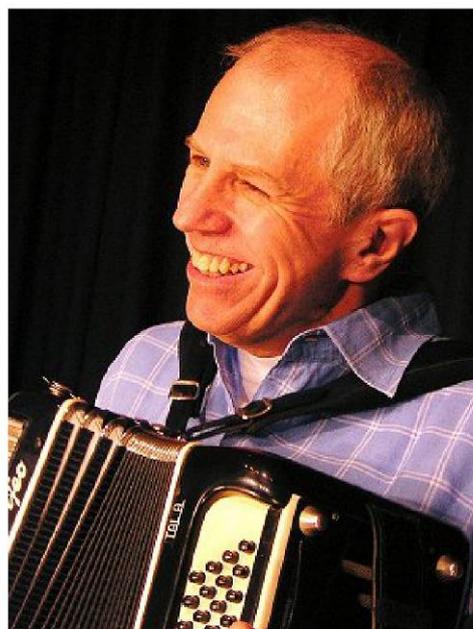
## FROM THE ARCHIVES

This was taken from the 15th October 1859 edition of the Berwick Journal. What you might find amusing is what it says in the last sentence. It doesn't say much for the women of the time as we assume that most of the men would have had beards or moustaches!

**'RIOTS AT SPITTAL** - *There was a rather serious riot at Spittal, at the mouth of the Tweed, on Monday night. The day had been stormy which had the double effect of bringing*

*large quantities of salmon from the sea into the river, and of preventing the procession of the white fishing. So, pretty nearly the whole village of Spittal turned out, not merely to a man, but to a woman, to engage in salmon-poaching. Eight boats were manned, and were supported by the populace on shore, all armed with slings. They not only drove thirteen water-bailiffs over to the Berwick side, but gave chase, captured the bailiffs' boat, and sunk her. The men were disguised in their wives' bed-gowns, and there is likely to be some difficulty in identification.'*

## John Kirkpatrick 'Carolling & Crumpets'



**FRIDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER at 7:30pm**

**BURC (FORMERLY ST PAUL'S), MAIN STREET, SPITTAL**

**Tickets: ADULT £7.50 • U17'S £4 • Family £20**

**on sale at SPITTAL FOOD STORE, call 07752 403409**

**or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/highlights) and [www.beboxoffice.com](http://www.beboxoffice.com)**

**HOSTED BY SPITTAL IMPROVEMENT TRUST**

### And finally....

As Halloween is almost here...

Why don't witches like to ride their brooms when they're angry?

They're afraid of flying off the handle!

#### **SIT Contacts:**

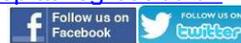
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