

THE POINT

A Newsletter produced by Spittal Improvement Trust
Issue 80



EDITORIAL

Deadline for the next issue, which covers June and July, is Wednesday 23rd May.

NEWS FROM THE TRUST

We held our **AGM** in mid April and we have had no new members on the committee so the existing members have all agreed to carry on.

We usually think that the start to our year is quiet compared to later on but so far this year. We have already had a Burn's Supper Night, a very funny evening with the poet, broadcaster & comedian Ian McMillan, who performed with the composer and accordion player Luke Carver Goss, held our Spring Fair, and just recently, we had a brilliant evening of music by Ubunye, a Huddersfield based band.

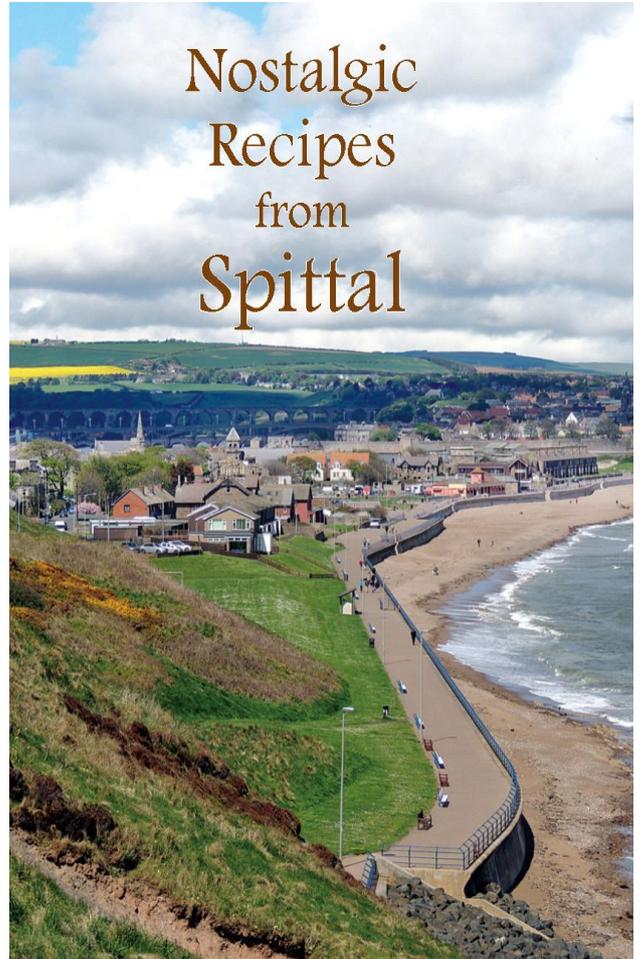
Ian McMillan and Ubunye came to us through the Highlights Rural Touring Scheme. Highlights are a network of 90 volunteer groups, including us, and they cover Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland. They organise over 160 high quality professional events per year in village halls, schools and community centres, these include theatre, dance, music and children's shows. In May we will learn about the acts available to us for the autumn and winter, which usually means anywhere from September of this year through to April of 2019. The 'Menu' usually has about 24 acts across the variety mentioned before but we have found that music gets the highest audience numbers for us. We have learnt that music from a variety of differing styles and countries is best for us.

The next event will be the **Gala**, which this year will be over the weekend of 9th & 10th June. We are again indebted to the Berwick Rangers Junior Football Team who will be hosting the **Gala 5-a-side Junior Football Competition**.

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the Trust will be 20yrs old in September and we will be having an exhibition of what we have achieved in that time. If you have any particular comments about any of the projects and events that we have undertaken in those 20yrs, or something that you think we should do in the future, then please get in touch.

Mike Greener, Secretary SIT

Nostalgic Recipes from Spittal



A new book "Nostalgic Recipes from Spittal" has been published. It has 57 old favourite recipes and all profits from the sale of the book are being donated to the Spittal Gardening Group. The book is available locally from the Spittal Shop, Grieves the Stationers in the town centre and also through our website at www.spittalisgreat.co.uk.

SPITTAL LITTER PICKERS

With the state of the pollution in our seas constantly in the news at the moment, we thought it was time to hear about the effort being undertaken by a few on behalf of all of us. Ed.



The days when we used to see the lads from the County Council cleaning litter from our

beaches and the path up to the cliff top is long over. So, over the last several years, volunteer litter pickers have been extremely busy throughout the year, and in all kinds of horrendous weather conditions, keeping the beach safe for dogs, children playing in the sand, and wildlife. Following the recent effects of 'The Beast from the East', and the heavy rain it brought with it, rafts of litter has come down the Tweed and washed back onto both the river and sea beaches, flowing in and out for weeks with the tide. This has weighed on average of up to 12 kilos per day, that's 2 stone or 28lbs in old money!

The rubbish sent to us from our neighbours over the Border includes drinks cans, syringes and needles, rubber gloves, items flushed down the toilet that should have gone in the bin, balloons with stings, fishing lines, netting and every piece of plastic you can imagine, especially plastic bottles, flower pots and disposable coffee cups. Items of clothing and carpet are also a regular find. These then breaks up into strings; a death trap to wildlife. Most of these items have been deliberately discarded and found their way into the water.

The cans break up with sharp edges, the balloon strings can get tangled round wildlife causing death, whales and other sea mammals eat bags and balloons because they look like jelly fish, all animals can eat plastic pieces thinking they are food and suffer a long time before they starve clogged up with manmade fragments.

If you would like to make a difference please contact email: letstalkrubbish2@aol.com. You can join an organised group, or just pick up a few pieces as you walk about. We can provide pickers, bags, gloves. Please be aware of incoming tides and follow Health and Safety recommendations see www.coast-care.co.uk

Many thanks go to the daily litter pickers, some of whom come from far afield to help. *Raine.*

GARDENING GROUP NEWS

Unfortunately, the weather has been against us of late but as usual the team have been out at every opportunity, especially as Spring judging for Berwick in Bloom had been arranged for April 18th. Luckily the bulbs were doing well and were looking good for the judges.



All the proceeds from the Spring Fair, which was held on Saturday 7th April, will go towards gardening projects. Thanks to all of you that supported this event, the gardeners were delighted to see you all.

This year we are running a competition for the best doorstep floral display. It will be for lower Spittal only this year. If you have a floral display but do not wish to be judged please let us know. The judges will be appointed externally and the first prize will be £50, £25 for second and £10 for third. It would be lovely to see many entries making Spittal look beautiful.

We would like to thank everyone for their generous support. If you have any queries contact Mau on 07748076527, Sheila on 01289331994 or any of the group.

Mau Watkins

THE TRUST'S WEBSITE



Some of you may have noticed that with the help of Lucas Emmins at Northern Lab we have recently updated our website to a new software package which allows updating of information to be much easier and also hopefully makes finding and reading the information on the website easier for you as users as well as working better on hand held devices.

We are also able to publish news and events more easily therefore if you have any coming up that you think are relevant then please send them in via email to info@spittalisgreat.co.uk.

As a reminder we also have accounts on Facebook (Spittal Improvement Trust), Twitter (@Spittalisgreat) and Instagram (spittalisgreat), we are always happy to have more followers.

A VIEW FROM THE PROM



They say that life is full of surprises. Well, it certainly surprised most people, including the County Council it seems, when a nice new yellow barrier was put up across the road leading to the car park on Spittal Point. It has become a bit of a mystery and has brought a previous mystery to mind as well. It has been assumed that the new barrier has been put up to deter campervans staying overnight on the Point car park. The barrier has also stopped the Council cleaning out the public bins on the Point as their vehicle cannot get under the barrier.

So, as for the previous mystery, that entailed as to who actually owns Sandstell Road car park, which the County Council were so keen to sell off last year. The reason they had given for selling it, if it had been theirs to sell, was that there were deemed to be enough car parking spaces on the Point, which are about 20 in total. Now, the Sandstell Road car park also has barriers at both entrances, which would obviously stop anything more than a transit van getting under so are we now to see campervans milling around Spittal looking for somewhere to park up for the day?

Have you heard about Russell Crow, not the actor, an actual crow. He first appeared in Main Street in June 2017 as a young abandoned fledgling, very skinny with some white feathers and a foot bent upside down and backwards. He was picked on by other crows, collar doves and herring gulls. A resident took pity and fed him every single day since (on a loaf made from fat balls, seeds, sultanas, dog food and egg), until recently. Now he visits Main Street less and less, down to a few minutes, but he has been seen many times foraging the along the receding tide on the Point, and has joined a group of 5 other crows on the beach. In mid April he brought one of them with him (perhaps a lady friend) to dinner in the street. He then disappeared for 6 days, but has since returned infrequently. You may have seen him sauntering across the road near School Lane and playing chicken with the traffic.

Beachcomber

BERWICK SWAN & WILDLIFE TRUST



We have recently been living through the effects of 'The Beast from the East', a second mention in this newsletter, and 'Storm Emma', which was followed quickly by 'The Mimi Beast from the East'. As we have seen, this left a trail of devastation (read sand) along our sea and river fronts. In addition there have been many dead birds and animals washed up on both beaches and we know that some of you have found this very distressing. Even more distressing were the numerous numbers of seabirds, mainly Guillemots, Razorbills and Puffins, that were washed up exhausted from the battering that they had taken. These made their way up to the **Berwick Swan & Wildlife Trust (BS&WT)**, who are our local wildlife rescue centre. We thought that this would be a good opportunity to let you know more about them.

The initial impetus behind the creation of the BS&WT was an incident in the autumn of 1991 which led to the establishment of the Trust. A chemical spillage from a factory contaminated many of the swans, at that time the second largest herd of swans in the country, and only the swift action of a small band of volunteers under the direction of local vet David Rollo averted a disaster. It had long been realised that an environmental catastrophe of this nature could be disastrous to such a concentrated herd, such as we have on the Tweed, and not only to the swans but to numerous visiting birds and mammals as well. In this first major pollution incident several hundred swans were captured, decontaminated and rehabilitated locally and at animal care centres before being returned to the river. In the event only a handful of swans were lost, but had it not been for the dedication of this small team the story would have been very different.

The sheer scale of this rescue operation highlighted the need for some form of permanent support for the swan herd, and more volunteers were recruited to help set up a Charitable Trust, which would care not only for the swans but all wildlife from both north and south of the Border. Since then sick and injured animals have been brought to BS&WT from as far afield as Newcastle and Edinburgh, the Lothian's and the west of Scotland. The location for their initial rescue centre was through the generosity of local businessman William Leith, who kindly gave them permission to use an empty lobster shed on the Berwick quayside.

The Lobster Shed - unofficially christened 'the Swan Hilton' - was soon in use, and over the next seven years over 700 swans were treated there. It was, however, only a temporary solution, and in 1998 the council announced plans to demolish the building as part of a quayside development scheme. It was imperative that suitable new premises were found quickly and BS&WT launched an appeal to raise funds to buy a permanent treatment centre in Berwick. Donations flooded in, including a generous grant from Northumbrian Water Environmental Trust (NWET), which finally allowed the BS&WT to complete the purchase of premises on the outskirts of the town. The NWET Swan House was officially opened in April 1999 by the then Berwick MP Alan Beith. NWET's generosity has also enabled BS&WT to adapt and equip the building, plant trees and create ponds on the site, and build recovery sheds and aviaries. Following the death of their founder and vet David Rollo, it was decided to rename the Swan House "The

David Rollo Centre” on the occasion of BS&WT’s 21st birthday in June 2013.

The BS&WT cordially invite you to their Open Day on Saturday 26th May from 10:30am to 2:30pm. They will have a variety of stalls and there will be refreshments and homemade cakes. They are not usually open to the public so this will be a chance for you to see the wildlife that is currently undergoing care at their centre. Otherwise please note that to keep disturbance to a minimum; visits to the Swan House are by appointment only. They look forward to seeing you. www.swan-trust.org.

To find out ways of helping them, you can contact the BS&WT through their website at www.swan-trust.org.

NEW BUSINESS’S

Not so much as a new business but a relocating business. Here is something about them. Ed.

Callerton Kitchens & Interiors



Local businessman James Herriot, and a Callerton director, posed the question: - “Could you possibly be a 3rd generation Callerton director”? James and his longstanding business partner Gordon Stanger-Leathes founded their kitchen furniture manufacturing business some 35 years ago. The reason for the question is Callerton are looking for a new recruit to work here in Spittal.

Callerton have had a long standing presence in Berwick stretching back many years. For the last decade this has been in partnership with Lockwood Patterson under the guiding hand of Tracey Lockwood and her team. An exciting development is that Tracey has joined forces to work in association with her much larger neighbour in Newcastle – ‘Callerton Kitchens & Interiors’. Tracey will continue to lead the Berwick operation with a number of major exciting developments, the first of these being a totally revamped and much enlarged studio in Main Street, Spittal, showcasing the very latest, innovative kitchen designs and concepts from Callerton’s exciting 2018 product line-up. The second is the ability to share in Newcastle’s much larger operation providing an expanded design, installation and administrative service, plus the major advantage of greater buying power and lower prices. The third is the introduction of ‘Brown & Hood’ a brand new kitchen & bedroom product and service aimed at the local builder, developer and trades market. The final one relates to providing both ‘Callerton’ and ‘Brown &

Hood’ products and services to a wider audience encompassing the whole of Northumberland and Berwickshire.

We held an Open Day at 135 Main Street earlier in April, as a preview of the new showroom prior to the official launch in May. It was an opportunity to thank the neighbours for any disruption they may have been put through during the refurbishment of the premises and let them view the outstanding results. It also relates to looking for that new recruit and intriguing concept; could they become a 3rd generation Callerton director? Callerton have run a Graduate Trainee and Design Technician Apprenticeship scheme for many years. The success of this can be seen via Callerton Kitchens & Interiors (Newcastle), Operations Director Anthony Kippax, who began his working life on this scheme 14 years ago. Callerton Interiors (Berwick) are looking for a new ‘Design Technician Apprentice’, could they be a future director of the business? You can contact us at 01289 306784.

Callerton have always seen themselves as part of the community and wanted to reiterate their credentials regards this by hosting the Preview/Open day in aid of Spittal Improvement Trust’s Gardening Group. Callerton held a raffle for a NEFF dishwasher and a case of wine to help raise funds for this very worthwhile cause.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

May 10th – Berwick Art Group’s will be having a “**DARKNESS INTO LIGHT - REDUCTION TECHNIQUES WITH CHARCOAL**” session with Gill Walton. For this please bring charcoal (preferably willow), kneadable rubber, cartridge paper and - as it can get messy - plenty of wet-wipes if you have them! This will be held in St Paul’s Church Hall, Middle Street, and there is a £4 entry fee for non-members. For further future events, please contact them through their website at www.berwickartgroup.co.uk.

And finally....

What did the tree say to Spring?

What a re-leaf.

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