

Working in Spittal, for Spittal

# THE POINT

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

### NEWS FROM THE TRUST

Well, a belated happy New Year to you all. This is the beginning of our first full year in the Spittal Community Centre (SCC). The number of people and groups using the SCC steadily rose during the course of 2023. Spittal Variety Group began their rehearsals for their upcoming panto with us last August and are now completing their rehearsals in The Showbar at the Berwick Holiday Centre, where their production of 'Sleeping Beauty' will be on from 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January. We wish them all good luck. No doubt tickets are going quickly so book now whilst you can!

We still have ongoing issues with the heating system in the Main Street side of the SCC. A new gas main has had to be put into the building, this entailed digging up the road and footpath. They were going to carry this out in early January but managed to do the work two weeks before Christmas. The next stage was waiting for the gas meter itself to be install, that arrived on 9<sup>th</sup> January. At the time of writing (15<sup>th</sup> January) we are now waiting for the plumber to come to connect the gas meter to the plumbing pipework. The problem we have had is in keeping those groups using the front of the building warm. We have had to use both electric and butane gas heaters to get it warm enough. The only problem with that is the need to keep moving the heaters between the different rooms that were used. It would have been nice to have had all this completed in 2023 and start 2024 with one less thing to worry about! Still, hopefully, that will all be behind us soon.

There are potentially some more groups about to join us but it will not feel like a Community Centre until we are able to open the doors, even for a few days of the week, so that anyone can just walk in off the street, have a tea or coffee, have a chat or read a book, we have plenty, but we are not there just yet.

One thing we must start doing soon is putting together applications for funding to purchase the building. It was a condition of our lease that we would be taking this route. This will take some time but there are funding streams out there, we just need to start putting pen to paper. So to speak!

*Mike Greener - Secretary SIT*



Congratulations to Scott Weightman, a resident of Spittal and a committee member of Spittal Improvement Trust, who has been recognised in the King's New Year Honours List for his exceptional contribution to the Berwick Youth Project. Scott was the founding chairman and a trustee of Berwick Youth Project, has been awarded an MBE for services to young people.

Scott was brought up in the Alnwick and Shilbottle area and went on to become a teacher at Berwick Grammar School and Berwick High School. He is also a former County Councillor and magistrate. He also founded the Sri Lankan charity 'Every Penny'.

He told the Northumberland Gazette "I'm delighted but would stress that Berwick Youth Project has been so successful as a result of the excellent leadership and management skills of John Bell, the project leader since its foundation in 1995. John is supported by four full-time staff and by an enthusiastic and fully pro-active management committee. The BYP has helped thousands of young people, including over 270 local youngsters who have been directly accommodated by the charity in time of need."

## BRITISH DIVERS MARINE LIFE RESCUE

Following a call from a Spittal resident, 2 members of the local BDMLR came to Spittal beach and removed a large fishing net wrapped around one of the groins. They did this to prevent a seal, dolphin, whale or any other marine life becoming entangled in it. From their website, see the link below, their mission is to aid to marine mammals and other species in need of help. They do this through the training of specialist volunteer Marine Mammal Medics, which provides them with the basic knowledge, skills and expertise to enable their team to respond to a callout and act on behalf of that animal's best welfare interests.



BDMLR responds to callouts it receives, when necessary, whether that is simply advising over the phone about a seal reported by a concerned member of the public to a full blown environmental disaster such as an oil spill. The charity has Medics and various pieces of specialised equipment located around the UK coast and works with rehabilitation centres and experts in many fields of animal rescue, rehabilitation, science and welfare.

Over the years BDMLR has built a reputation for its high standard experience and knowledge, and has been contacted by many overseas organisations and governments to assist with training personnel and providing rescue equipment. BDMLR's training programme provides knowledge of marine mammal biology, first aid, health assessment, decision making and the use of specialist equipment to ensure a successful response. Their Marine Mammal Medics are all volunteers and can become involved in the organisation as much or as little as they want. BDMLR also provides ongoing training and skills development to ensure Medics are as highly trained and knowledgeable as possible.

If you see a trapped or injured marine mammal, please call them on 01825 765546. The number is also on Berwick's Tweed and Coast Nature Trail's blue butterfly panels. You can find out more about the BDMLR and how you can volunteer at [www.bdmlr.org.uk](http://www.bdmlr.org.uk). You can also find more about the Berwick Nature Trail at [www.tweedandcoast.org](http://www.tweedandcoast.org).

## SPITTAL INDOOR CAR BOOT SALES

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January between 10am and 1pm, our Community Hall will see the first of, we hope, many of these sales. The organisers only wanted to do this one first to see how things go but the demand was so great that they have already booked two more dates. These are 17<sup>th</sup> February and 16<sup>th</sup> March. February has now also been fully booked and the bookings for March are well on the way of being taken up as well. Refreshments will be served and there will be a few tables where you can sit and enjoy a cuppa.



The idea for an 'Indoor Car Boot Sale', it's really a table top sale as we cannot get a car through the doors, as the ones held outside have to close during the colder months. Tables are supplied and the 'Booters' pay only £5 per table. The intention is that all monies raised will be distributed to local causes, after expenses are deducted. It promises to be a very good morning event and if the others are successful as well, they could be followed by more monthly sales. Email [spittalicbs@gmail.com](mailto:spittalicbs@gmail.com)

We hope you will come along and see what is for sale and hopefully go away with some purchases. You never know, there could be a treasure waiting to be bought. Well, you do see that happening on the 'Antiques Road Show', 'Flog It' and 'Bargain Hunt'!



We all know how hard it is to get a tradesman these days as they are all so busy.

Well, here is an ode to them.

### How we treasure what we have

What a town this would be  
Without well-known tradesmen  
Who fix so much for us with a fee  
Plumbers who are so good  
It makes you shudder  
They try to come to you almost on call  
Especially to one in the area  
Who has had a fall  
Not able to clean or dust!  
What should she do?  
Hubble knows she is famous for blocking toilets  
Sinks and all  
And can't now get a wash or a poo!  
They come with gusto speed  
As fast as they can the tradesmen here  
Builders, plumbers, Sparkies too

Arrive looking tanned and full of plans  
Which fly away in their hands!  
The Electrics down and nothing works  
Here they arrive with spanners in hand  
Had a good time they say  
While I been away  
I know the flights are all to pot  
But whether they fix the drains  
Or mend the wires, or the bricks they hold,  
You can be sure their skills are gold  
So, folk of Spittal, Tweedmouth and beyond  
treasure what you have  
It's possible with other opportunities they  
may flee  
They may not be here for long so guard  
them dear or give a song  
*Anne Bradley*

### FEEDING WILD BIRDS IN WINTER

Here are some tips for feeding the birds whilst we are in the grip of this cold weather, and there is yet still more to come! Feeding birds in winter is vital to their wellbeing throughout the colder months, as food is scarce, and energy is precious. Start by noting which birds already visit your garden. Different birds have different tastes and favourite foods, so feeding the birds you know already frequent your garden is a good start, plus it will encourage them to keep returning.

Sunflower seeds, which are loved by many birds, including goldfinches. Black sunflower seeds and black oil sunflower seeds are especially popular.

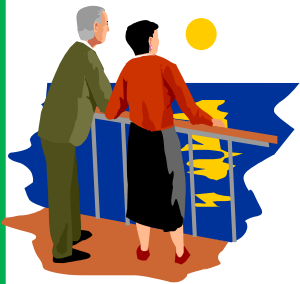
Niger seeds, which are tiny and need a specially designed bird feeder. They attract finches and siskins.

Peanuts, which are a good source of energy for birds. They should be unsalted and put in a mesh feeder to avoid choking hazards.

Mealworms, which are a favourite of blackbirds, robins and thrushes. They can be live or dried.

Suet balls, which are an ideal food source for birds in winter. They provide fat and protein and can be hung from trees or bird tables.

And remember to break the ice on the bird bath, or any water bowls that you put out for the birds.



## A VIEW FROM THE PROM

A resident has got in touch and has suggested that if anyone has an interest in Drag Racing they recommend coming along to East Street between 8:30am and 9am Monday to Friday. I can assure them that it also takes place on both Main Street and Middle Street as well. So much for Lower Spittal becoming 20mph!

The police were informed last year of residents concerned about this situation. They promised to come down and have a presence during the day, which they did. The drawback was that they have to display that they were there, high viz jackets and a banner, but they still caught people exceeding the speed limit. One of the main concerns is when the children are arriving and leaving the school. Let's hope it doesn't take an accident before something is done about this.

We have seen the brunt of several storms over the last few months. This has brought in a lot of debris onto both the sea and river beaches. However, there has been several people and groups taking the time to try and clear as much of it up as possible. We would like to thank them for doing this.

They have brought up onto the Prom heaps of car tyres, and other large items, and also lots of smaller debris, which has been put into black bin liners. Of course, there are, or were, stacks of tree trunks and logs as well. These are steadily disappearing, either taken back out to sea to continue their journey down the coast, or home to heat the house in a log burner. The incoming tides finish off the process by constantly 'sweeping' the beach and it will not be long before it ready once again for the holiday makers.



### Photographic Competition

Organised by Berwick and District Camera Club in association with Berwick Bridge 400 and Create Berwick

Thank you to everyone who entered the Autumn Season of the Bridge 400 photographic Competition. The winners have now been selected.

The Winter Season is now open for entries. Images need to be taken between 22nd December 2023 and 21st March 2024 (Closing date 22nd March 2024)

For full details:

<https://www.berwickcameraclub.co.uk/club/bridge400-photographic-competition>

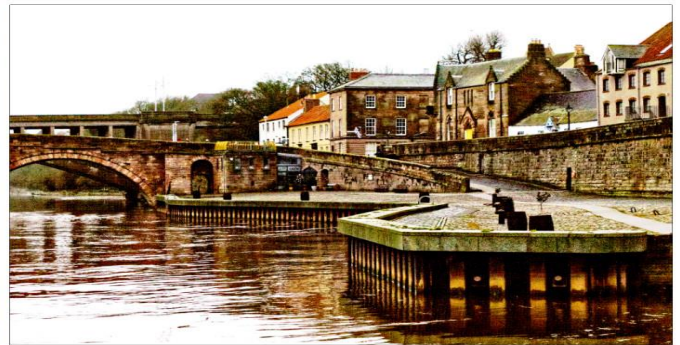
Season 1 - Autumn - Winners



Lani Patterson



David Towson



Julie Riley

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If you, or someone you know, would like to receive 'THE POINT' monthly by email let us know by emailing [mikegreener84@gmail.com](mailto:mikegreener84@gmail.com).

To avoid disappointment, please note that the deadline for the February 2024 issue is January 24<sup>th</sup>.