



NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER

Newsletter January 2006

No 63

Public Meeting 24 November 2005

More New Slides of Old Appleby

Despite the temptations of 24 hour drinking and late-night shopping in Appleby, a large audience of members and guests attended the special Christmas Evening. Graham and technical assistant, Brian Holmes, again treated us to an interesting and entertaining 'tour' of our town.

The slides included images of past and present aspects of several well-known parts of Appleby, as well as images of members of well-known Appleby families. Graham recounted many stories and anecdotes plus there was a lot of audience participation as faces and occasions were remembered. We are grateful for these additions to our knowledge of Appleby's history. However, one or two questions still remain.

At the end of the slide show Alice Palmer gave a vote of thanks to Graham and Brian and then visitors enjoyed the refreshments provided by Committee members. Many thanks to all those who helped in any way to make the evening another enjoyable and successful evening.

A full report, including a list of raffle winners, appeared in *The Herald* 14th January.

From the Chairman

Let me start by wishing you a Happy and Healthy New Year. Let me continue by saying how much we enjoyed our pre Christmas evening. It is worth all the effort that goes into scrounging photographs to put onto slide. As ever, may I urge everyone to carry on the good work by pestering relatives and friends for some more. We need about 200 'new' slides each year if we are to make a decent evening from the very best of them. 'Thank you' also to the many members who beavered away 'back stage' to ensure that it all ran smoothly and that everyone had something to eat and drink.

You will see from the Committee minutes later that ever-rising postal charges have led us to putting a cap of twelve pages for future Newsletters. (The ever-widening smile on your Secretary's face has nothing to do with that decision!) That means that some things that I would love to get "off my chest" will have to stay there. That should please a few!

This Newsletter was ready to go off to Vivienne to type a few weeks before Christmas but there was such a late flurry of activity in various corridors of power that I had to start again!

Best news of all was that Eden District Council, after three and a half years of deliberations and at considerable cost to the Council tax payer, agreed to retain all its public toilets. It is hard to believe that the Council's Scrutiny Committee first agreed to a review on 11 July 2002. Having seen his

first proposals, the Society wrote to Mr Huddart, Eden District Council's Director of Technical Services, and pointed out that his recommendations, which were based on a flawed consultation exercise, were 'an example of administrative folly worthy of a place on any management training course as an example of how not to do it in local government'. And so it proved to be. The Society would like to congratulate everyone who stood firm. Maggie Clowes was first to raise the alarm and she deserves most of the credit. Other residents supported her, as did your Society. Councillor Ella Langan, then Mayor, appointed a Town Council working party to resist the District Council and invited the Society and community representatives to join it. Councillor Morgan was the only 'independent' member of the District Council to call for a second review. As an example of 'people power' it would be hard to better. Councillor Langan must have been very proud when she chaired the District Council meeting which agreed to keep the toilets. Councillor Morgan voted in favour of saving them. We must now hope that no one seeks to overturn that decision.

At the same District Council meeting, however, Councillors agreed to scrap the present assisted travel scheme, which allows pensioners reduced rate travel on buses, taxis, trains and access to the voluntary car scheme and to replace it with a government brainchild which applies only to buses and which stops at the District Council boundary. The consultation exercise which 'supported' that decision was far worse than the 'toilets' one. Far, far worse in fact. Our Mayor, Frank Harland, attended the District Council meeting to seek a delay in implementing the recommendation so that proper research could be undertaken. He was not successful – but he went and he tried. Should the Town Council appoint a working party to fight the District Council, the Society will be pleased to assist, if asked.

The Society received a number of letters during the run-up to Christmas as local bodies set about clearing desks before the holiday. One arrived on 23 December but was very acceptable. The Police Authority sent us a copy of its submission to the Home Secretary regarding police force amalgamations. Full marks for keeping the public informed. Most of the other letters were in response to correspondence sent much earlier and which had required several 'follow up' letters to elicit a response. You will find several 'Chairman's Notes' later in the Newsletter.

And so it came to pass that the draft of a much revised Newsletter was delivered to your secretary on Christmas Eve by a heavily disguised man with a white beard!

I gave the poor old Town Council a bit of stick in the previous Newsletter and you won't be surprised to learn that I didn't get a Christmas card from the Mayor this year - but he did thank the Society for its help with the public toilet campaign.

In our November 2002 Newsletter, I criticised the Town Council for co-opting a man who had only recently been rejected by the electorate. I thought that was wrong in principle. I still do. The then Town Clerk wrote to the Society to point out that, if ten people do not call for an election, the Council must co-opt. In recent years, residents have called for an election on most occasions – much to the annoyance of some councillors! In his letter of December 2002, the then Town Clerk agreed that my "argument against co-option is sound and that is why Cumbria Association of Local Councils is presently running a project to encourage local councils to become Quality Parish Councils, for which status, incidentally, all members will be expected to be elected rather than co-opted." Appleby Town Council followed the advice of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils and agreed to seek Quality Parish status. That was three years ago. As far as I know it still intends to get round to it one day. In fact, the Council invited an expert to advise it on the matter at its meeting on 14 December 2005.

What happened next was a bit of a surprise, even to me! There was an election in the Appleby Ward in September last year. Two of the three candidates were duly elected. Perhaps because he did not distribute any pre-election literature about himself, I don't even know the name of the

candidate who came third. On 12 December I was alerted to the fact that the Town Council proposed to co-opt him into a vacancy on the Bongate Ward – even though the matter was not on the Council’s agenda. Enquiries revealed that one solitary notice had been stuck to the window of the Tourist Information Centre to ‘advertise’ the vacancy. There was nothing in the Parish Newsletter and no notices were displayed in the Bongate Ward despite previous advice by Eden District Council’s elections officer that it is ‘best practice’ to advertise in the ward concerned.

It is doubtful whether that one notice satisfied the basic test of conspicuity – notices have to be placed in conspicuous places and conspicuous means “clearly visible and attracting attention”. How many of Appleby’s residents stand with their back to the traffic on Boroughgate to read a notice stuck to a shop window in the Tourist Information Centre? Fortunately a resident of Bongate Ward contacted Councillor Hughie Potts, who persuaded the Council not to co-opt.

Hopefully, the two vacancies (another councillor resigned that evening) will be better advertised and filled by elected councillors in due course.

I never have to search for material when it comes to our Town Council – it comes on a plate! It is not the Society which resolves that the Council will do this or that. Councillors do. It is not the Society which relaxes when a District Councillor promises to do this or that. Councillors do. It is not the Society which distributes minutes that are almost impossible to decipher. The Council does. The Society recognises that the Town Council does not have a lot of power these days but that is not an excuse for it not to become a powerful pressure group on our behalf. We will encourage it in such an endeavour. But production of decent minutes, progress on the Vital Villages project, an accessible council centre, Quality Parish status and council elections ARE the responsibility of the council and we will remind them of that.

It is common knowledge that some Councillors really do believe that what the Town Council does or does not do is ‘off limits’ to the Society. Three years ago it wrote to say so. I thought there was a better understanding of our role these days. Apparently not. An e-mail from the Assistant Town Clerk was received before Christmas asking for copies of our Committee minutes and our Newsletters, presumably so that she can be satisfied that we are behaving properly. In our response we pointed out that we already provide free copies of our Newsletter to the Tourist Information Centre and the Library. Each Newsletter contains an item relating to our most recent Committee meeting. Society minutes are just that – they are available to members. The Town Council has no more right to vet them than it has to oversee the deliberations of Round Table, Rotary, etc.

For the benefit of the Assistant Town Clerk it is worth recalling, yet again, that at the Society’s 1993 Annual General Meeting a member queried whether the Society should involve itself with matters such as public toilets. The Society’s first chairman, Mike Langan, also a Town Councillor at the time, reminded members that the Society had a duty to concern itself with all matters affecting the town. The Town Council was not exempted. When I became chairman I circulated a questionnaire to the membership asking, among many things, whether the Society should be more proactive in local affairs. Overwhelmingly, the membership said, “Yes”. If the membership ever changes its mind about the Society’s role we will take any necessary action but we will not be influenced by the whims of Assistant Town Clerks.

Sadly, it is not the quality of the minutes which worries Town Councillors, rather it is the order in which their names appear on the attendance list. Does it really matter? Why on earth did such a trivial matter take up so much time at the Council meeting in November? If Councillors want to squabble about trivia, they should do it off the record and, before claiming that “tradition” requires names to be recorded in order of seniority, the speaker should first have looked at a random sample of previous minutes. Whilst some put ‘senior councillors’ at the top of the list, they don’t all – not

by any means. When the new Town Clerk began to produce the minutes in February 2005, it would have been obvious to her that there was no precedent, so she did the sensible thing and put the names in alphabetical order. It was not until November that anyone noticed and then there was a row about it during the public part of the meeting!

Back in 1997, a Town Councillor with previous experience as a legal adviser to a local authority suggested that Appleby Town Council looked as though it was being run by a 'clique of senior councillors' and this denied the opportunity for other councillors, often with expertise which could be put to good use, an opportunity to contribute.

Roll forward to 2005 and Appleby Town Councillors are insisting that their names must be recorded in order of 'seniority'. At this meeting, where was the discussion about Quality Parish Council status, Vital Villages or a council centre – all matters that have been on the 'agenda' for years? Our letter urging the Council to do something positive to protect the cemetery chapel was written on 25 September – there have been two Council meetings since then and the letter has not been acknowledged, never mind considered.

A Council Centre for Appleby?

We reminded members that the Town Council suggested a council centre for Appleby in 1998 (November 2005 Newsletter). I know that the matter was discussed at a Town Council Planning Committee on 1 August because I was there to listen to the very important discussion about the townscape (yorkstone v sandstone). I waited patiently for the minutes of the meeting to appear in the Parish Newsletter. They never did. We wrote to the Town Clerk, requesting a copy of the minutes referred to but received nothing, not even an acknowledgement. So, in an effort to update members on the likelihood of Appleby ever getting a council centre, my notes will have to do.

Appleby Alliance had written to the Council offering to open a council centre in a redundant shop in Boroughgate. The Alliance was seeking support and financial assistance. Cllr Morgan (Chair) thought that any council centre should be in council-owned property. Cllr I Potts reminded the meeting that Cllr N Swinscoe was looking to provide a council centre in the Moot Hall when the lower part was reorganised. Cllr Elliott asked if the Alliance had been made aware of that and Cllr Morgan thought it had. The Town Clerk suggested that the Alliance project manager might really be looking for an office for herself. Cllr Elliott proposed that the Alliance should be told to be very careful and not to tread on the Council's toes if it wanted funding to continue. On 31 October 2005 the Finance and General Purposes Committee agreed to shelve Cllr Swinscoe's proposals for a Council centre.

Eden District Council

In the previous Newsletter I drew attention to an Eden District Council draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy paper which claimed that Appleby was currently undertaking a parish plan study as part of its Vital Villages application. We asked the District Council to tell us more. We heard nothing but the next version of the draft which went to E.D.C.'s Community and Economy Committee in November omitted the reference to Appleby! We are now told that Alston and Kirkby Stephen have completed their Vital Villages applications and are busily spending the resulting income. Go-ahead parishes such as Ainstable, Culgaith, Threlkeld, Langwathby, Lazonby, Shap and Tebay are undertaking parish plan studies but Appleby-in-Westmorland, the county town, can't be bothered. We should all be ashamed of ourselves.

The draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy paper contained a long and impressive list of 'consultees'. We noted that Appleby Alliance, Appleby Chamber of Trade and Appleby Town Council had contributed. We were a bit miffed that we had not been invited but we did manage to contribute nonetheless! We were intrigued to know what contribution had been made by Appleby's

three consultees so we wrote and asked. No reply. We wrote again under the Freedom of Information Act and discovered that Appleby Alliance had written about the lack of 'employment land' in Appleby and the risk of Appleby losing more jobs if Eden District Council continues its present policies. The Alliance letter deserved the support of everyone, especially the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade but neither the Town Council nor the Chamber of Trade made any contribution to the draft strategy paper. I'm not sure what is worse: the fact that they didn't or the fact that Eden District Council suggested they had.

District Council's Best Value Policy

It is amazing what turns up in Eden District Council's Committee papers. It is even more amazing that neither of 'our' District Councillors tells us about them. However, for the benefit of those members who are also in business, the following might be of interest. Under the heading, "Procurement Guidance" Eden District Council has agreed to encourage its contractors to employ local sub contractors, to avoid packaging work to the disadvantage of local suppliers and to include a local supplier when seeking tenders or quotes. I expect that Appleby's potential sub-contractors knew that anyway, but just in case

Cumbria County Council

Cumbria County Council is moaning about a shortfall in government funding – it reckons it needs another £6 million. Five years ago, Capita beat off other competitors and was awarded a lucrative contract by Cumbria County Council. Part of Capita's attraction was its promise to provide 1,000 new jobs throughout the County and to pay £1,000 for each one that failed to materialise. They managed 219. Capita owes Cumbria County Council (us) £781,000. A sizeable contribution towards next year's council tax. What did the County Council do? It awarded Capita a further five year contract and decided not to enforce the penalty. I hope the District Auditor does something about that. Obviously the councillors do not intend to. One councillor (reportedly!) went so far as to say, "This is a partnership and we have to work it through together." Sorry. That's not true. It is a contract and contracts are enforceable. For a council that says it is short of £6 million and that will look to us to find the money, that decision was very foolish. And by the way, Capita expects to make a pre-tax profit of £170 million this year.

Policing

Much to say – short of space – where to start? I have to be careful not to stray too far. This is the Newsletter of the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society and what we include relates to Appleby directly or indirectly. National arrangements for policing are, perhaps, a little remote from everyday life in Appleby but, nevertheless, what happens to Cumbria Constabulary is very relevant to each and every one of us. So are recent Acts of Parliament. The Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 is there to combat serious and organised crime – or so you might think. In December a twenty five year old woman with no previous record, became a criminal when she stood next to the Cenotaph and read names of British soldiers killed in Iraq. On January 1 2006 all offences, serious or not, became arrestable for the first time ever. A Home Office spokesman pointed out that this does not mean that you will be arrested for speeding but you might be if a policeman feels like it.

Mind you, if what we hear about the level of policing in Appleby turns out to be true (that our very limited police cover will be reduced even further), no one will have to worry about being inconvenienced by the police – not even those who have done something wrong.

Given what happened to that young woman in London, I am becoming increasingly convinced that this government wants to prevent criticism far more than it wants to prevent crime.

For those who want to know what Cumbria Police Authority wrote to the Home Secretary please see my note under the Committee report later.

History Slot

We had hoped to continue our tale of gas and electricity but, once we arrive in the 1950s and nationalisation, information becomes hard to find. We will keep looking and we will return to the subject. So, whilst we put gas on the 'back burner' we can snuggle down in the back row of Appleby's

Cosy Cinema

The idea of a cinema in Appleby was first floated in the early 1930s when the Borough Council accepted a tender from Messrs Anderson and Kirkup to construct a fire-proof cinema in the Public Hall. In 1935, a Mr Towers, whose family had a cinema in Gretna, opened the Cosy Cinema. A few years later the cinema was acquired by the Teesdale Cinema Company. The first projectionist was Billy Green, who lived in Middleton in Teesdale and who used to travel back and forth with the films.

On 1 April 1951 the business was transferred to Mr Hebron Morland of Kirkby Stephen and a native of Co Durham. For many years he had been both a church choirmaster and organist. In 1932 he became the owner of a cinema in Kirkby Stephen where he 'installed' his father as manager and his sisters as assistants. In 1934, when the Gaumont Cinema opened in Doncaster, Mr Morland became its professional organist.

In March 1939 Appleby Borough Council considered an application from Teesdale Cinemas to place a neon sign outside the cinema and to make minor alterations to the paybox. They also proposed to put up a fire curtain and to install coloured footlights on the stage. All this if the council would replace the carpet in the gangways.

It is possible that very little of this actually happened in 1939 as war was declared in September of that year. However, in June 1949 the company agreed to an increase in rent from £100 to £150 a year in recognition of the work done by the council to improve the cinema. This had involved redecoration and other improvements which included some new seats and a new carpet. The Mayor, Miss Brown, reported that she had examined the books and could confirm that the cinema was only making a small profit. It was open four nights a week then: Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

In June 1949 the council agreed to Appleby Dramatic Society installing new side and back curtains on the stage of the Public Hall at a cost of £108. The cinema company agreed to convert the screen into a roller which would not obstruct the curtains when not in use.

In June 1950 the council rejected a suggestion that the cinema rent should go up to £830 per annum. In 1959 the rent was actually from £350 to £300. By 1960 it was down to £250.

February 1960 was almost the end. New government regulations required all cinema seats to be bolted to the floor; new doors; clear gangways; emergency lighting; a rebuilt projection box with remote controlled steel shutters and the full time attendance of a fire officer. The cost would have been prohibitive. The alternative was for the cinema to become what was known as a Part 3 cinema which meant it could only open on three nights per week, use non flammable film and limit attendance to 400 people. That is what happened and the Cosy opened on Monday, Friday and Saturday only.

On 29 July 1961 it closed for the last time. Its then owner was Mrs Mabel Morland who told the press that audiences had dropped from an average of 400 to 500 a few years ago but were now down to less than 40. She blamed television.

Those are the known facts. What do Applebians remember?

Randall Balmer, the baker at Edmondson's (Battlebarrow) was the projectionist for a long time. His assistant was 'Laddie' Stinson, son of a local vet. His job was to rewind the films and to be generally useful. Mary Furness was the cashier and her husband, Harvey, was doorman. We think Randall was paid £4 per week.

Besides the main hall there was a balcony seating about 40, mainly 'courting couples', so we are told by those who know about these things! The final prices charged were 6d in the hall and 1/6 in the balcony. We know from some of our refugees that there was a 6d cinema on Saturday mornings. If the film broke before half time, entrance money was refunded. One early projectionist was Tommy Northgraves who started work in 1935 but had to leave in 1939 when he was required 'elsewhere'. He recalls that the projector was lit by a carbon pencil.

Photographs in the Society archive tell us that the "Cosy" got its neon sign but we have nothing showing the interior of the Public Hall in use as a cinema. Have you?

The Teesdale Cinema Company's monthly pocket programme for August 1939 – the only one we have seen – states that the cinema was open once on Friday at 8.00 p.m. and twice on Saturday at 6.15 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. Admission was 6d, 1/- and 1/3d (half price 3d, 6d and 8d). Tickets could be booked by telephone on Appleby 11.

"That's All Folks" – unless you can tell us more.

Committee Meeting 5 December 2005

Members spent some time looking through a splendid collection of exhibition quality photographs which had been given to the Society by Binney Associates. The display panels which, between them, cover almost every significant building in Appleby were put together in 1975 as part of Appleby's contribution to the European Architectural Heritage Year. The photographs, which are all black and white (by far the best medium in which to capture the finer points of architecture) were taken by Chris Binney and Gordon Wood. An historical commentary, written by Martin Holmes, accompanied the exhibition. It would have been difficult to find anyone better than those three to record Appleby in print and on photograph. The town is truly indebted to them and to William Binney ARIBA, ARICS who co-ordinated their activities.

Three paragraphs from the 'conclusion' to the exhibition are included below. Your Committee considers them to be a reminder of why the Society was formed and of the hard work still to be done. Bear in mind that they were written in 1975.

"The two major threats to the continuing heritage of the town are the piecemeal erosion of character, individually barely significant but, by accumulation as destructive as total demolition, and the impact of the motor car.

It is essential to the continued wellbeing of the town that the motor car should come to terms with Appleby and not vice versa. Technological advance should be a benefit to society, not an altar at which the environment can be lightly sacrificed. To risk irreparable loss of an unique part of our heritage to accommodate what may well prove to be a relatively short term expedient is foolhardy in the extreme.

Ultimately a civilisation is judged by the heritage it leaves. Whether that left by the twentieth century will be a desert of destruction or the enhanced heritage of their forebears rests in the hands of all the people!"

Should the Society mount an exhibition in the Tourist Information Centre next spring many of the photographs will form a centrepiece – members and residents will be able to see just how well (or badly) we have looked after our built environment.

The Committee agreed to send a letter of grateful thanks to Leonard Coulthard, present head of Binney Associates, for making the material available to us.

Outside Visits

Two evening visits have been arranged - for Thursday 15 June 2006 to The College, Kirkoswald and for Thursday 17 August 2006 to Newbiggin Hall.

Coronation Park

Shortly after our previous meeting, we received a letter from Paul Emmerson, Eden District Council, in which he pointed out that everything the council had undertaken to do was now complete. This was so manifestly untrue as to be almost laughable. The concrete emplacement holding the railings in place above the children's play area was not repaired and a number of trees still remain to be culled. Since his letter, the concrete was repaired but the trees are still there. This was reported in the previous Newsletter. We agreed to ask Mr Emmerson to make sure of his facts before writing.

Chairman's Note: On 19 December Mr Emmerson wrote to say that the confusion stemmed from the fact that there were two different sub-contractors dealing with the railings. He failed to say that he had not checked his facts before writing to say that repairs had been completed. He went on to say that he would consult further with the arboriculturalist to see if any more trees are to be culled. He failed to respond to our complaint that there are four trees marked for removal that are still there. Once again he promised that the contractor would not trim flowers in Coronation Park. I don't think this man actually reads letters before he replies and he certainly repeats any rubbish that his contractors tell him.

Public Toilets

Nothing heard from Eden District Council. Ian Campbell told us that Maggie Clowes had pestered the District Council into cleaning Appleby's toilets properly and then to meet with her and representatives of Task Force Eden to discuss the future. Maggie thinks that she broke through Eden's defensive barrier when she sent the Chief Executive a colour photograph of a filthy toilet seat for him to consider with his coffee and biscuits. She has not stopped there. She has been promised further information on contract and performance monitoring controls. It seems clear that Eden District Council has adopted a cosy relationship with T.F.E. Hopefully things might change. (They did! See previous report.)

Townscape

We know that work did not begin on 31 October as promised. We think we know that Cumbria County Council's contractor sub-contracted the work to a Preston-based firm whose employees have been sighted in Appleby. We think we know that the sub-contract was not awarded until late October after which materials would need to be ordered – so there was no real prospect of work beginning 'on time', despite Capita trying to rush us towards the end. We know that the delay suited some of the town's traders but by no means all! Your Committee agreed that the Society's role has been and should continue to be to monitor the scheme as it progresses to ensure that the design and materials used conform to agreements reached.

Chairman's Note: John Hodge and I received a last minute invitation to a meeting on 13 December at which we were able to meet the contractor (W Pye of Preston). It was a useful and informative meeting with no nasty shocks – unless you happen to be in business. Work is due to begin on 9 January and end about 22 May, with a one week break at Easter.

New Fair

Still nothing heard from Appleby Town Council despite more letters being sent to them. An e-mail was received on 2 December from the Town Clerk suggesting that the Assistant Town Clerk will draft a reply “when she’s next in the office”. The December/January Parish Newsletter contained references to four more documents circulated to councillors on the subject.

On 2 December 2005 Eden District Council finally replied to a letter we had sent on 11 August. In it the Council’s solicitor told us that, “The Council would remain interested in any work which was undertaken by a sub-contractor but would raise any issues it may have with the contractor.” We have included those words in order that others might use them whenever Eden District Council staff tell them that they have no control over the work of sub-contractors!

Eden District Council has confirmed that none of its Community Safety budget is spent in connection with the Fair. That is something the Council might like to discuss with its Community Safety Officer who has indicated otherwise. The £47,440 that E.D.C. spends on the Fair is further broken down. £17,000 goes on supplies and services and £30,440 is staff costs. No comment!

Chairman’s Note: Far from drafting a letter for the Town Clerk to approve, the Assistant Town Clerk wrote, signed and sent one of the most extraordinary letters we have ever seen. There was no apology for the Council not replying to previous letters. She told us to write to individual Councillors and to traveller representatives if we wanted to know what they had written to the Council. She told us that the Council was considering charging us for replies. She told us that, by being persistent, we would be regarded as ‘vexatious’ and that we were not to write to the Council again. She seems to have no comprehension of the Freedom of Information Act or of the Council’s duty to assist enquirers. The Council cannot charge for providing information under the Act, save in very exceptional circumstances where the cost of collating the information required exceeds £450. She seems not to recognise the fact that other local authorities use paid staff (and she is one) to collate information required and do not pass the buck back to enquirers. Most worryingly is the fact that she seems not to have cleared her letter with anyone before sending it. We have replied. We will not stop writing to the Council. We will continue to send reminders if it fails to respond and, if the Assistant Town Clerk thinks the persistence is vexatious – tough!

2006 Exhibition

We wrote to the manager of Appleby’s T.I.C. to say that we are prepared to put on an exhibition provided the Town Council reimburses the Society for any out of pocket expenditure if the exhibition area becomes unavailable. We note that plans to rebuild the lower part of the Moot Hall have been shelved but we are mindful of the fact that last year’s exhibition was spoiled when the commercial activities of the T.I.C. overflowed into the exhibition area. We would not want that to happen again.

Membership/Treasurer

The balance at the end of September was £4575.88. Since then £425.85 has been banked. Raffle proceeds from the November meeting amounted to £67.50. A suggestion was made that an entrance fee should be charged for the November meeting but it was agreed that this meeting will remain free of charge.

Oral History

VG and DO had met and Davina now has a list of people who have already been interviewed. Although the stories may not relate strictly to ‘our area’, it was agreed that Ian Campbell would interview a farmer from Patterdale who has lots of interesting tales to tell.

Appleby Cemetery

Nothing heard from the Town Council in reply to our letter of 25 September.

Medical Centre Lamps

Nothing heard from Prime UK in response to our letter of 20 November. VG to send a reminder.

Chairman's Note: As part of the flurry of activity I mentioned earlier, Prime UK replied on 15 December. They apologised for the oversight which led to the old gas lamps not being removed to the medical centre and that it would be difficult for them to do it now even if funds permitted. They have offered a generous contribution to the cost of completing the project if the Society is prepared to manage it.

Police Reorganisation

We wrote to the Cumbria Police Authority. Members will have seen the main points raised in our letter in the November Newsletter. We were invited to comment further so we did. Copies of both letters have been sent to our Member of Parliament.

Chairman's Note: On 16 December the Cumbria Police Authority wrote to the Home Secretary. It pointed out that its members have a legal duty to ensure the best possible policing arrangements for the county but doubted whether the Home Secretary had yet identified a problem, never mind the best solution. The authority also objected to being 'blackmailed' (my words, not theirs) by being told that they could have extra funding if they fell in line but would be penalised if they did not. The Authority 'respectfully' questioned the legality of such an approach to the allocation of public funds. In summary, the Authority thought that the Home Secretary's proposals were best summed up by the expression, "To those that hath shall be given; from those that hath not shall be taken away." The Police Authority has determined neither to withdraw from the debate nor to refuse to help but, in essence, it seems that Cumbria, like most other police authorities, will force the Home Secretary to use his powers under the Police Act 1996 if he wants to go ahead. This means that there will be proper and full debate in both Houses of Parliament and more time for public concern to be taken into account. Above all, it will require the Home Office to make its case and not pretend that it has one!

Police Cover in Appleby

Your Committee has been alerted to a threatened further cutback in Appleby's police cover in February 2006. The 'discovery' did not come about by way of a consultation exercise. If unnoticed it would have gone ahead without discussion. It still may go ahead but Appleby Town Council has agreed to resist. Your Committee agreed to support the Town Council and to supply it with any background information at our disposal. This has been done. Hopefully the Town Council will shortly establish the Police Liaison Forum it promised in November 2004.

Shire Hall

We noted that things have gone quiet. We agreed that Ian Campbell would contact Appleby Alliance to see if it has heard anything. If that doesn't get us anywhere, Ian will write to Cumbria County Council for an update.

Newsletter

Increases to postal charges mean that a sixteen page Newsletter gets very close to the weight limit for the basic rate. If we add a loose flyer and increase the weight, the postage rises significantly. We agreed to limit future Newsletters to twelve pages. We'll see how we get on and, if considered necessary, we will chat about it at the next A.G.M.

From the Secretary

New Record Office Planned for Carlisle

Cumbria Archive Service is planning to relocate the Carlisle Record Office from its present location in The Castle to a new, purpose-built archives building in the grounds of Lady Gifford House, just off London Road. A bid for assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund is currently being prepared. The cost of building the new archives repository is estimated to be about £5 million and up to 75% of the cost is being sought from HLF. The new office is planned for summer 2009. Plans can be viewed at Record Offices. It is important to the success of the bid to HLF that public support for the proposals can be demonstrated and there is an information leaflet about the proposals on which members of the public can pledge support. Cumbria County Council has committed £1.25 million towards part funding the Lottery bid. The leaflet also gives an opportunity to pledge a donation (however small) to increase the amount of part funding the Archive Service can contribute (no money required at this stage). If anyone wants a copy of the leaflet and/or further information, please contact Vivienne.

Society Website

With grateful thanks to our willing volunteer who is working to update and look after our website, Newsletters can now be accessed electronically. The address of the website is:

www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk

Still to Come in the North Westmorland Arts 2005-6 Concert Series

Sunday 12th February 2006:

Young Musicians from Wells Cathedral School

With their Director of Music, internationally renowned viola player Philip Dukes, these young string players are the professional musicians, and possibly stars, of tomorrow.

Sunday 19th March 2006

Benjamin MacDougall

Although still at school, this young local flautist is already playing and entertaining at a professional level. He was invited to play at James Galway's 60th Birthday Gala Concert, has played on BBC Radio 3, at the Bridgewater Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall and has recorded for Sony Classical.

Concerts are in Appleby Public Hall, starting at 7.30 p.m. Admission is £8 at the door.

North Westmorland Arts Secretary: Patricia Clough 017683 53552

Society Next Meeting

**Thursday 26 January 2006
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

Andrew Ratcliffe – “Confessions of a Portrait Painter”

Andrew will show slides of paintings that he has produced over many years and will recall the people, some well-known, some less well-known, that feature in them.

Please Note

If you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter and are not already a member of the *Appleby-in-Westmorland Society*, you could have it delivered free to your home six times a year simply by joining the Society.

A £6 individual/£10 family subscription also entitles you to attend six bi-monthly meetings free. These are usually held in the Supper Room of the Market Hall on the last Thursday of January, March, May, July (our A.G.M. meeting), September and November at 7.30 in the evening.

Application forms are available at the Library; from our Secretary – tel: 017683 51597; from our Chairman – tel: 017683 53063.

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