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Newsletter July 2006

No 66

Public Meeting 25 May 2006

We welcomed Mrs Elizabeth Thoele, Superintendent Registrar for Penrith Registration District, as our speaker and were entertained by her stories, as well as learning a great deal about the Civil Registration system of recording births, marriages and deaths. Elizabeth told us about the growth of family history research and, as the creators and custodians of the registers of these events, how registrars are 'writing history'. From hand-written entries and certificates, using special, non-fading ink, to the use of computers, we learned how the system is adapting to changes in life-style. Concerns about the security of and access to modern technology were also raised as Elizabeth explained plans for the future of the registration system. Lots of questions and discussion ensued and we had an enjoyable and informative evening.

Visit to the College, Kirkoswald 15 June

When a defensive pele tower was built at Kirkoswald in about 1450, the Eden was a broad swamp, impassable by horse or man. The only bridges were at Carlisle and Appleby, whilst the only road passed through Kirkoswald where there was a ford across Raven Beck. That crossing was of vital strategic importance.

The first impression of the seventeen members who visited what is now The College was, "What a splendid site for a home and what a superb view." Hard to believe that it was placed there to watch over a ford and that the view across the Eden Valley would have been of a tree-filled swamp.

In 1523, the tower was converted into a college for secular priests – hence its name. In 1547, it was suppressed and, in 1590, it was acquired by the Fetherstonhaugh family who have lived in it since.

Its present proud owner, Timothy Fetherstonhaugh, kindly gave of his time and hospitality to explain the various stages of building and rebuilding which combined to create today's 'jewel'. The rear aspect clearly shows the different developments and the front, entirely rebuilt as recently as 1696, is a typical design of the period. There is no record of its architect but the design suggests local builders may have been influenced by Christopher Wren. Much of the stone used to rebuild the front came from the nearby Kirkoswald Castle, which was being used as a virtual quarry at this time.

The interior is equally fascinating and members were privileged to see how a house of such size could also be a comfortable home. Anyone who missed out this time is encouraged to take the opportunity to visit should another arise. More information about The College is available in *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* (New Series vol 14 (1914) pages 196-237)

From the Chairman

I was pleased to accept an invitation from the Mayor to say a few words on behalf of the guests at this year's Mayor making lunch. I have personal reservations about events such as this, especially when we all know that the Town Council is strapped for cash. However, I have a great deal of time and respect for the Mayor and our Mayoress.

Vivienne warned me not to be provocative! As if I might have been! Perish the thought. This annual event is probably the only occasion during the year when the county town of Westmorland can entertain representatives of newly-created local government organisations such as Cumbria County Council and Eden District Council. Appleby's Council predates both by over 800 years so we should be able to teach them a thing or two.

Most of my chat was devoted to anecdotal tales of life in the police – an experience which the Mayor and I share. Both of us can be proud of our association with the oldest and, potentially, the finest social service in the land. However, I did make passing references to the Council and its traditions. *The Herald* had a stab at reporting what I said about tradition but didn't get it quite right. What I said was, "Today is a tradition; having a Town Council is a tradition; having a Mayor is a tradition; having sixteen Councillors is most certainly a tradition; and, above all, our Council's traditions are a tradition. All of which is fine so long as we are not bound by tradition and do not try to live in the past." I meant every word.

When thinking about what I might say, I took a look at what had been said by speakers in a similar position over the years. I was struck by the words of my counterpart of 1906, the Mayor of Carlisle. He hoped that Appleby would soon settle its differences with Penrith and he noted that Appleby had not had a contested election for a Council seat for many years! So what's changed? Also at that dinner, various speakers referred to the need for the town's market square to be refurbished, the need for better policing; cleaner streets and more housing. So, what's changed?

Chairman's Report to Annual General Meeting

As this is my tenth and last annual report, I hope you don't mind if I collect my thoughts and present my valedictory by way of an item in the Newsletter. There are three reasons for this. You will not have to listen to my ramblings at the meeting, Vivienne has given me a real job to do on the night and the new Chairman will have his (or her) ideas about what goes into your Newsletter.

I would like to begin and end with a great big "thank you".

It all began with a daily telephone call from our then President, Dorothy Hinchcliffe. Dorothy phoned me at exactly 8.45 a.m. every day for several weeks to ask if I would take on the Chairman's role as Keith Morgan no longer wanted to continue. Dorothy, for the benefit of those who never met her, could be very persuasive. It was not that I didn't consider it a privilege to be asked. Any reluctance on my part was due to the fact that I was a 'new boy', both in Appleby and on the committee. How I came to be on the committee in the first place is another story – suffice it to say that it came as a surprise, albeit a pleasant one.

Dorothy was not only persuasive, she was also impatient. She wanted the Society to 'get things done'. She was of the opinion that I did not owe allegiance to any vested interest in Appleby and that I was bloody minded enough to try. Perversely, her first direct instruction was a negative. When I visited her in hospital just before she died she made me promise not to let 'them' stop the church clock chiming at night. It still chimes.

In January 1997, the then Chairman cancelled a committee meeting as there was no business to conduct. I became Chairman in February that year and we haven't been short of business since. Looking back at the Committee in 1997, I am struck by its stability. John Heelis is now President. Vivienne, Olive, Rosemary and David Furniss are still there. Sadly, some committee members have died. Others have moved from Appleby. Fortunately for the Society in general and for me in particular, Vivienne returned to the Secretary's position shortly after I became Chairman. Olive became our treasured Treasurer. We have rejected huge transfer fees for her services recently. Our finances are in the black and stable. Appleby Town Council and Eden District Council please note. David is Vice-Chairman. Back in 1997 we thought we would like to publish a regular Newsletter. We did and we do. What started as a couple of sides of A4 is now a regular 12 pages. It was up to 16 pages but postal charges and Vivienne's occasional reminder that she has a job and a family to manage as well as me, led us to settle for 12. Our Newsletter goes across the globe, by post and over the Internet. It is often quoted in the press. It has even been the subject of debate in the Council Chamber. Again in 1997, we had audiences as low as 6 or 7. Now, our 'speaker meetings' attract audiences averaging over 50 and have been up to 75. Subs have increased by just one pound in all that time.

One of my first tasks was to circulate a questionnaire to members seeking their guidance. Overwhelmingly, the membership sided with Dorothy and wanted us to become more proactive in current issues affecting the town. Becoming more proactive led us into occasional confrontation with local politicians. More than once we were told that the Society was formed to support and assist the Town Council. I have never been able to trace the authority for such a statement – perhaps it is just wishful thinking on the part of the few. Now we find ourselves being consulted by both the County Council and Eden District Council. Our role as Appleby's civic society is secure.

Appleby Town Council is less inclined to seek advice but, contrary to the views of the minority, including the new Town Clerk who has written to tell us that we should rejoice in our Council and not grumble all the time, there have been a number of occasions on which the Town Council has asked us for support. (List of at least twelve separate occasions, ranging from the Millennium to the public toilets, available on request.) On other occasions, certainly more than twelve, we have given advice to the Town Council without being asked! That's different.

So, if things are going so well, why give up the Chairman's job? Its a fair question and one that has been asked several times over the past year. The answer, if there is one simple answer, is that it is because things are going well. The Society is well established. It has a rising membership. Our opinions might not always be welcomed but we are treated with respect. We have found our way around several labyrinths. We know how to get an important building listed. We know how to win an argument and how to take a case to the Ombudsman for Local Government. The Society is here to stay. That makes it a good time to hand over. I have never subscribed to the view that experience counts for everything. Experience is, like everything else, subject to the law of diminishing return. Most of one's experience is gained in the first two or three years. After that, it is practice. After that, if you are not careful, comes repetition. Repetition becomes 'tradition' and, before long, you are living in the past.

I am immensely proud of the Society and I thank every single member, past and present, who has helped make it what it is. Your support for what we do, whether it is being called upon (coffee mornings, for example) or turning out on cold wet nights for public meetings and 'outside visits' (remember the evening in Shap – that was devotion), and that all-important moral support when the going gets tough, is much appreciated and is not taken for granted – nor must it ever be.

Being your Chairman has brought several privileges. I consider it a privilege to have met so many 'real' Applebians who have sat me down and told me about the town and what makes it tick. There

is no such thing as an ordinary Applebian – although modesty dictates that almost everyone I meet thinks he or she is ‘ordinary’ – believe me, you are not. The Society archive, particularly the all-important slide collection, is only there because of the kindness of people who have allowed me to copy their precious photographs. I thank everyone who has contributed. We have not lost anything entrusted to us. One thing above all else – Applebians are passionate about their town, slow to take up arms but watch out when they do. About half of our members are born and bred Applebians. Few civic societies can boast that.

The past ten years have seen failure as well as success. We still don’t have a museum and the Society must keep trying. If we’re not careful, there will be no museum anywhere in Eden. It will not be easy. Perversely, if the Penrith Museum closes and the Council’s Museum Service ceases, it might make Appleby’s case stronger.

As I bow out, I would like to raise a glass to Vivienne and to Anne. Anne has been a constant support and chief critic. I wish I had a penny for every time she has said, “Vivienne won’t allow that”. Anne has taken on the job of exhibition organiser – something she does well and occasionally admits to enjoying. Vivienne has kept us out of trouble for ten years. She knows just when to reign in my enthusiasm and when to give me a run. She very carefully edits my draft letters and the Newsletter but occasionally surprises me by adding something I would not dare to write! To recap the ten years. Our role as civic society is secure. Perhaps it is time to re-emphasise our history interests. These have not been neglected by any means but there is still much to do.

What of the PAST YEAR? Success with the toilets campaign. The townscape will not please everyone but it is a far cry from some of the daft ideas that we were threatened with. The Town Council has accepted the need for a more businesslike approach to New Fair – at long last. Coronation Park is almost there. The Council are unlikely to ignore the rules when it comes to elections in the future. Next year? River bank erosion. Supporting Maggie Clowes in her campaign to restore the travel voucher scheme. Campaigning for a Museum. That is something I will not give up on, Chairman or not.

One final plea, if I may – I would like the Society to make its annual promise to support the Town Council if or when it seeks to become a Quality Parish Council and/or do something about Vital Villages.

Thank you.

Freedom of Information

In January 2006, the then Mayor undertook to investigate our complaints concerning the manner in which the Society’s requests for information had been dealt with. At the Town Meeting in April, I asked whether the Town Council had authorised its staff not to comply with the Freedom of Information Act and I was told that no such instructions have been issued. In June, the Town Clerk wrote to offer her ‘sincere apologies’ for what had happened. We are still waiting to hear from Cllr Harland who has been sent a ‘reminder’.

Appleby New Fair

I think we have a better understanding of the various committees responsible for New Fair.

In October 2005, the Appleby Fair Joint Committee was disbanded. In the words of the assistant Town Clerk, this ended the Council’s involvement in any organisation of the Fair. The Council will, in future, concern itself only with matters relating to its ownership of Fair Hill. Given the area now covered by the Fair, Fair Hill is now a very minor part of the overall picture.

In a report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Town Council, the assistant Town Clerk, who, to give credit where it is due, has worked very hard in an effort to untangle the web of uncertainty surrounding the Council's responsibilities, said that the traveller representatives on the Appleby Fair Joint Committee intended to form a new body to organise the running of Fair Hill. N.B. The Appleby Fair Joint Committee was not the same as the Appleby New Fair Joint Committee, which still exists.

When Appleby New Fair Joint Committee met in October, Cllr Morgan explained that the Town Council had resolved to distance itself from the organisation of the Fair and that there would be no Councillor representation on the new committee.

When the Appleby New Fair Joint Committee met again in April 2006 there was a vacancy for Chairman as Cllr Morgan had resigned at a previous meeting. The Town Council regards the New Fair Joint Committee as an 'outside body' (despite the fact that its minutes still appear on Town Council letter-headed notepaper in contravention of a Council instruction in May 2005). The new Chairman is Cllr Langan, who was proposed by Cllr Patterson and seconded by Cllr H Potts.

The New Fair Joint Committee was told about the new (first) licensing arrangement whereby the Town Council effectively rents the field for the duration of the Fair. The travellers will pay the Town Council £1,200, obtain public liability insurance and tidy up after them. If they fail to clean the field to the satisfaction of the Town Clerk, the travellers will have to reimburse the cost of cleaning. For the first time ever the Council has put its relationship with the travellers on a business footing. Something that was first suggested by a Councillor 38 years ago!

So far so good. The Town Council has a legal agreement with the travellers and there is no councillor representation on the Fair Hill Committee, as it is now known. Which makes it hard to understand why Cllr Morgan was shown as a representative of the Fair Hill Committee in the minutes of the New Fair Joint Committee and why he spoke on behalf of the new committee.

So there you have it. Everything is now clear. There are two committees responsible for the Fair. There is an Appleby Fair Hill Committee comprising traveller representatives (and Cllr Morgan who, because he cannot be there as a Councillor, must be there in some other capacity). Then there is the Appleby New Fair Joint Committee, to which the Council sends four members and is an 'outside body', apart from the facts that its Chairman is still a Town Councillor and its minutes continue to appear on Town Council notepaper.

The licence agreement makes interesting reading and I am sure that the Town Clerk will make copies available to interested parties – and there should be many – on request.

What of the future?

Appleby Town Council will receive £1,200 in rent for the field. The travellers will clean the hill to the satisfaction of the Town Clerk. Eden District Council has made it clear that it will not pay to have the hill cleaned in the future – usually costing £2,000. Eden District Council claims it will spend £42,630 on the Fair this year (figures provided to the Society suggested £47,440). Next year Eden District Council intends to cut its expenditure by 50%. It is by no means clear who is expected to plug the gap.

In October 2005 the District Council's Scrutiny Committee was invited to make Appleby Fair a "work plan topic". The committee agreed to put it on the reserve list and to scrutinise its involvement, responsibilities and its expenditure on the Fair if there is time. Much of the information in the committee report was provided by Cllr Morgan. The Society wrote to the

District Council in November 2005 to point out the many inaccuracies in the paper. The letter has yet to be acknowledged.

In May 2006 Cllr Morgan proposed that Appleby Town Council should ask Eden District Council to make the Fair a subject of a scrutiny review. If at first you don't succeed The Society has written to the Town Clerk to remind our Council of the recent history.

Following the shortcomings during last year's Fair, the Society wrote to the District Council and received assurances and clarifications. The following paragraphs are direct quotations from a letter signed by the Council's solicitor:-

“ A District Council has a responsibility to keep land and highways in its district clear of litter. A local authority which provides public conveniences would have a responsibility to maintain them in a proper condition insofar as reasonably practicable.

The Council has entered into a contract with TFE Accord for the cleaning of its streets and collection of litter and for the cleaning of the public conveniences.

The Council's arrangement is with the contractor. Insofar as the Council is concerned a sub-contractor is not responsible for the performance of the contract and this responsibility remains with the contractor.”

We queried the final paragraph and later received clarification. In December we were told that the Council would be 'interested' in any work undertaken by a sub-contractor and would raise issues with the contractor. Regarding the amount of work undertaken by the contractors during Fair week we were told, “In addition, TFE Accord engage a number of additional people to attend to their duties”.

All of which explains why the toilets were in such a pristine condition this year and why there was no litter whilst the Fair was here. The speed with which the town was tidied up afterwards proves it can be done.

River Ramp

The 'old' river ramp was in use again this year and, from what I saw and was told, it caused no problems to horse or man. However, the minutes of the April Appleby New Fair Joint Committee suggest that it has not 'gone away' so we must continue to be vigilant.

Responsible Finance Officer

By law, the Town Council has to have someone to blame if its financial affairs go pear-shaped. In Appleby, this has been the Town Clerk. The present Town Clerk was appointed in January 2005. By March, she was raring to go and she proudly reported that she would assume responsibility for the Council's finances in April 2005. Which is why I was surprised to hear all the praise for sorting out the finances being heaped on Cllr Budding at the Town meeting in April this year. I asked for clarification and was told by the then Mayor that the Town Clerk was responsible for the finances. The minutes of the meeting duly recorded this exchange.

The Mayor could have added, “but not for much longer” but he refrained. In May Cllr Budding was appointed Responsible Finance Officer. Cllr Budding cannot be paid to do this. In 2004/5 the Council's wages bill was £50,055. In 2005/6 it shot up to £59,634. The increase - £9579 - is almost exactly the amount of additional precept we were asked to find. Over £6,000 of the increased wages bill was shown under Moot Hall administration (the Town Clerk and her assistant).

If Cllr Budding is now doing a major part of the Town Clerk's work – for nothing – we should be told the amount by which her salary was reduced. But what did we see instead? The wages of the Tourist Information Office staff being cut by £3,000. Town Council minutes record that savings will be achieved by sending “the second person home when the T.I.C. is quiet”. How's that for staff relations? Do residents really want our Council to treat its staff in such a manner? Remember, the T.I.C. staff are employed by the Town Council in our name.

It is worth bearing in mind that the Town Clerk is the manager of the T.I.C. staff and that she is responsible for them. The minutes do not record her opposition to this nineteenth century method of staff relations. All we have to go on is her report to Councillors last December in which she agreed that part of her duties was “to oversee the workings of the Council's organisation and its staff”.

Whenever the Society tries to ‘dig’ the Council closes ranks. In May this year Councillors were warned not to discuss items of a ‘confidential nature’ outside the Council chamber. It is getting more and more like central government. The Council decides when something is ‘confidential’ and then prevents elected members from talking about it, even to each other, when outside the Council chamber. The Society will not stop digging.

A Fitting Tribute?

There was a nice picture in *The Herald*, which showed the outgoing Chairman of Eden District Council, Appleby's Cllr Langan, receiving her ‘prize’ – a facsimile of Penrith's official town seal – how fitting. Appleby's other District Councillor is now Vice Chairman of the District Council but he will have to wait another two years (elections in 2007 permitting) before he gets one. Earlier in the year there was a photograph of Cllr Langan proudly receiving an award for the way in which Eden looks after its cemeteries. Given that £100,000 earmarked for Appleby's river banks was used to enlarge Penrith's cemetery and that both of Penrith's cemetery chapels are to be repaired whilst Appleby's is threatened, it must have been hard for her to raise such a splendid smile on the day.

Police Matters

Charles Clarke and Hazel Blears described the current policing arrangements as ‘unfit for purpose’. Cumbria Police Authority swallows its brave determination not to give in and lies on its back to have its tummy tickled by a bribe. Charles Clarke and Hazel Blears have been removed from the Home Office. The new Home Secretary describes the Home Office as ‘unfit for purpose’. Is there anyone out there?

The team working on the amalgamation with Lancashire has forty personnel attached to it. When Liverpool and Bootle Police was amalgamated with parts of Cheshire and Lancashire in 1974, the management group comprised three – one from each force. No wonder the set up costs of the new force are estimated at £22 million!

History Slot

A bit more about the Fair.

In mid-1973, the shadow Eden District Council, as it would be known from 1 April 1974, started work. By now only North Westmorland Rural District Council and Appleby Borough Council were ‘managing’ the Fair as Westmorland County Council had opted out the previous year.

Cllr C P Hirst of Appleby was appointed first Chairman of Eden District Council's Environmental Health Committee. At its first meeting in August 1973, Councillors agreed that planning for next year's Fair was a priority and could not be left until the Council became ‘official’. Reference was made to the New Fair Joint Committee, the informal group that had managed the Fair in recent

years. It was agreed that this group could not be relied on, particularly as the Westmorland County Council had opted out. Councillors also agreed that Fair Hill was too small and that additional land might be required. The 'new' Eden District Council could do nothing about that as it was not yet a purchasing authority. However, later that year North Westmorland Rural District Council raided its bank account and purchased 12.866 acres of land along Brampton Road and just over 6 acres adjoining Fair Hill for £11,000. This land transferred to Eden District Council in 1974. In February 1974, the acquisition was reported to Eden District Council's Environmental Health Committee, which formed a sub-committee to consider the implications of the Fair. Councillors wanted to know the financial arrangement, how long the site should be used, whether it needed improving and overall environmental impact.

Eden District Council's 'first' Fair was in June 1974. It must have been one of the 'better' ones. Westmorland's MP, Michael Jopling, described Appleby as 'Dodge City'. An ex-Appleby Councillor, John Winter of Clickham Farm, told reporters that he had tried to have the Fair stopped in the past. If the damage to his farm was not put right, he would deduct the cost of repairs from his District Council rates bill.

In September 1974, the District Council accepted that the Fair was becoming its thorniest problem. The Council's Chief Executive reported that, without increased legal powers, it would be difficult to stop the "annual invasion". He accepted that travellers would not welcome a move to another location unless it was very much better in every way and, if they did move, there would be problems with a new set of local landowners and residents. The Council agreed to meet with the M.P. and the Chief Constable. In the meantime, the District would have to accept the fact of the Fair and manage it the best it could.

Interestingly, Eden District Council was claiming ownership of fair Hill at this time and Appleby was resisting. (There was considerable disagreement between the two authorities during the transition – one day we will capture some of it in the History Slot. Suffice to say, at this early stage, that our then Councillors fought very hard to retain everything which, with the benefit of hindsight, should have been passed over to Eden, whilst giving up everything it should have kept under its control.)

In February 1975, the Appleby Licensed Victuallers voted narrowly against closing all the pubs during the next Fair. Not all publicans were members of the Association and, as some of them would be staying open, the others agreed to follow suit. Ron Howarth, of the Hare and Hounds, told *The Herald* that closing would not affect residents as they 'hibernated' during the Fair. Peter Satterthwaite of the A'Board Inn, wanted to put an end to the event because of the mess and damage caused. His quote about toilets is worth repeating given what happened in 2005 and again in 2006. He said, "The state in which they leave the toilets is unbelievable."

In April 1975, Eden District Council's Environmental Health Committee agreed to draw the Fair to the attention of the Cumbria Tourist Board, which had been "idiotic" when it advertised the Fair as an attraction. Councillors wanted the "shocking details" of the Fair to be drawn to the Tourist Board's attention. Also in April 1975, the District Council agreed to let what was now its land for the Fair. Two fields next to Roman Road were let to W Brough for £20 during the Fair with a further two fields being let for a further £20.

It is jumping the gun – but it is interesting to contrast Eden District Council's initial acceptance of responsibility for the Fair with its current stance – have nothing to do with it. To be continued
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Committee Meeting 5 June 2006

Graham reported that he and Anne had been invited to represent the Society at the Mayor's luncheon on 10 May. In addition, Graham had been asked to make a short speech 'on behalf of the guests'. There is mention of this under 'From the Chairman' earlier in the Newsletter.

Outside Visits

Vivienne confirmed that arrangements were well in hand for the visit to The College, Kirkoswald on 15 June.

Coronation Park

Mr Emmerson, Eden District Council, has written to apologise for suggesting that the Society was responsible for placing crosses on trees earmarked for felling. Two of the six trees have been removed. The remaining four should be gone before members read this report.

Note: The remaining trees have now been removed, as promised. Job done!

Shire Hall

Nothing heard. We noted that Cllr Warburton told the annual Town Council meeting that the County Council was in discussion with "interested parties".

Cemetery Chapel

Two parish councils have declared in favour of its retention. Appleby Town Council is also in favour. The local undertaker has suggested that it might be used by relatives of deceased persons who have been cremated i.e. the interior (or exterior) walls could be used for commemorative plaques.

Note: The Mayor and Mayoress, together with four Town Councillors and Graham, visited the chapel on 13 June. The interior is in a very good state of repair given that it has been used as a store shed. The all-important roof shows no sign of leaking. There is some wearing of the softer sandstone corner blocks but, overall, the cemetery chapel appears to be in better external repair than the Cloisters.

Litter Pick

We agreed to have another try just before judging for Cumbria in Bloom on 26 July. Graham undertook to contact Barbara Wilson. (Done)

Penrith Museum

Vivienne reported that she had written to the Town council suggesting that the Town Clerk might contact Eden District Council and ask for a definitive list of documents and artefacts which have an Appleby connection. The Town Clerk kindly did so and she is awaiting a reply. She also copied our letter to Cllrs Morgan and Langan. Cllr Morgan responded by suggesting that the removal of the Museum to Rheged was by no means certain. The Town Clerk wondered why the Society has not organised visits to the Museum if we are that interested. We agreed to remind her that we have done exactly that and that we have a good working relationship with the Museum staff – that is partly why we are so concerned. The Society is very much aware that the District Council's Museum Service is at risk – not just the Penrith Museum. We also agreed to contact Eden District Council direct and ask to be considered as an 'interested party' during the next phase of public consultation.

Note: EDC made a questionnaire available. We responded, to establish the Society as an 'interested party'. Details/a copy of our response can be obtained from Vivienne.

Treasurer/Membership

Olive was pleased to report that the coffee morning had produced a net profit of £122.45, which was up on last year. The big winners were the cake stall and raffle so our thanks are due, yet again, to all those who made that possible. The year end report is with the auditor but we will be able to

report that our income exceeded expenditure by a responsible amount. The committee agreed to retain subscriptions at their present level.

Oral History

Davina's prime town centre location is proving to be an asset for the Society. Visitors are inclined to chat and if they have anything interesting to say, they are often persuaded to write it down. Yet another wartime evacuee made himself known recently and his wonderful account of his two years in Appleby (1941-43) will shortly be reproduced in the Newsletter. The list of volunteers agreeing to be interviewed on tape continues to grow. They are not forgotten. As soon as the Society can obtain a round tuit, we will be off again.

Planning/Townscape

The works in the town centre continue, albeit at a much slower pace than we had all hoped. John Hodge represented the Society at regular trouble-shooting meetings chaired by our County Councillor, Mary Warburton. In the main, the meetings have been successful. The Society is aware that the Town Council has declared itself to be supreme when it comes to the townscape, despite the fact that it is a County Council scheme. Fortunately the 'difficulties' this has caused have not impacted on the Society or its role.

Note: The Town Council had no objection to the removal of a mature tree from Rivington Park. We did. Eden District Council refused consent for it to be chopped down.

Public Toilets

The Town Council's working party has not been wound up despite two attempts by one of our Councillors to put it out of business. There has not been a meeting recently but Graham has been advised that the Town Clerk is in the process of collating minutes and reports of both Appleby Town and Eden District Councils which have a bearing on ownership and responsibility.

Note: Graham attended a meeting on 28 June at which Cllr Clowes was appointed Chairman. Davina Osman attended as a 'town member'. The suggestion that the Town Clerk was collating information proved somewhat premature. The Society will now try and do this on behalf of the Town Council.

Town Council Liaison meeting

Graham reported on the meeting held on 31 May at which the minutes of the previous meeting on 29 March were circulated. These minutes will be circulated to committee members along with minutes of the Society meeting. He reported that he had raised four items on behalf of the Society. Recent Council minutes had suggested that there might be a 'council' version and a 'public' version. We received an assurance that this was not the case. The Society was concerned at the undue secrecy which seems to surround the Town Clerk and her duties. This was described as a 'delicate matter'. The Society is still waiting for the result of the former Mayor's investigation into our complaint regarding Freedom of Information. Cllr Harland undertook to resolve the matter in January. In April we were told that no action could be taken as the Town Clerk was in hospital. It is now June and we have still not heard anything. The present Mayor agreed to expedite the matter. We also asked for a copy of the agreed lease between the Town Council and the travellers. (Since supplied) The next Liaison meeting is planned for 28 June.

Note: Adjourned sine die. No reason given

Settle-Carlisle Anniversary

Arrangements are well in hand for both the exhibition (1-8 July at the T.I.C.) and for the 'Settle-Carlisle Country' slide show (14 July). The Society will ensure that both events are mentioned in the July Parish Newsletter, the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle line will publish a publicity brochure containing details of our events and others along the line and we will put posters up in town.

Centenary Motorcade

Still waiting to be advised where the Town Council intends to put the exhibition it has asked us to mount.

Arrangements for A.G.M.

All current Committee members, apart from David Furniss, have agreed to stay on if asked to do so by members. David has been on the Committee since July 1995 and has been a much-valued member. He is currently Vice-Chairman. Your Committee tried to 'twist his arm' but we recognise that he has a job of work to do and that this has to take precedence. Olive has agreed to stay on as Treasurer but asked if we could find a 'volunteer' to look after the catering at public meetings and coffee mornings.

Broad Close Trees

Our letter to local newspapers and the publicity given in the Parish Newsletter resulted in a flurry of information. A professional botanist has offered to visit Appleby and advise on age and what needs to be done. He has also sent us a very informative booklet on lime trees, which contains everything you would want to know and a great deal besides. As to the reason for planting the trees, we think we know. Tony Wilford was working in the Borough Surveyor's Office in the early 1950's. He recalls the visit of The Princess Royal in August 1956, when she came to open Broad Close Playing Field. The Borough Council was worried about the view of the run-down Ribble bus garage in Holme Street and the trees were planted as a screen. Both the timing and the known age of the trees fit. It may have been a co-incidence that there were the same number of trees as there are names on the war memorial. We will now consider how best to look after the trees and we might go as far as to place a commemorative plaque on the site to celebrate 50 years of both Broad Close and the trees.

Appleby Castle

We reminded ourselves that, in November 2004, Eden District Council told us that the razor wire would be removed "shortly". The information was contained in a letter from the Conservation Officer. We agreed to ask her for a definition of "shortly" and to mention the unsightly notices on the front gates which do nothing for the appearance of Appleby and which have surely passed their 'sell-by' date by now.

Note: EDC has replied. It says it can do nothing about the wire but the Enforcement Officer will look at the notices.

River Banks

We noted with concern that the river banks are in a poor condition. We understand that the threat to cause even more damage by putting in a new concrete ramp for horses is not dead. We know that funds earmarked for river bank repairs have been diverted to other causes – i.e. the extension of Penrith cemetery. We agreed to put this item on our agenda.

From the Secretary

Outside Visit has been arranged for **Thursday 17 August** to **Newbiggin Hall (nr Temple Sowerby)**. Please see enclosed 'flyer'.

Cumbria Local History Federation news – AGM and "Printing and Publishing" Study Day to be held Saturday 16 September 9.30am – 4.00pm, Eden Conference Room, Newton Rigg. See Vivienne if interested/want more details/want to book.

FOCAS (Friends of Cumbria Archives) news – suggestions sought for features members would like to see incorporated into the new Record Office being planned for Carlisle. See Vivienne for further details and/or with ideas.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Situations Vacant

As indicated earlier, we need a **Refreshment Co-ordinator** to organise provision of refreshments at our public meetings, to organise the Coffee Morning and to assist with refreshments at special events/meetings e.g. 'Christmas' evening. If you think you can help and/or would like to discuss the matter, please contact Vivienne.

Also, as well as the vacancy on the Committee created by David's resignation, we still have three other possible vacancies. Enclosed with this Newsletter are the papers for the A.G.M. which include a nomination slip. Please give some thought to filling these vacancies.

Subscription Renewal It is also time to renew subscriptions and a renewal form is enclosed.

Next Meeting

**Thursday 27 July 2006
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

followed by
"A Westmorland Neet"

Members of the Lakeland Dialect Society will perform songs, poems and recitations. Graham will show slides of Westmorland to accompany the performances

There is still time to have a go at the Westmorland Quiz (closing date 15 July).

Quiz sheets available from Dent's paper shop and the T.I.C.

Many thanks to staff at both places for all their help and support in this. It is greatly appreciated.

Website: www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk

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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