



NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER

**Newsletter March 2005**

**No 58**

**Public Meeting 27 January 2005**

For some time now members have expressed concern about the effects of recent changes to the way in which household waste is dealt with so we thought a talk from Cumbria County Council's Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer would be helpful. Some fifty members, friends and guests turned out on a raw winter evening to listen to Ms Kim Williamson and no one went away disappointed.

"Once upon a time" a lot of Appleby's household waste was burned on the fire or in the garden. Anything that could not be disposed of this way was taken by horse and cart and buried at Fair Hill. Later on, the horse and cart was replaced by a lorry but the 'system' remained uncomplicated and local. Everyone knew how it worked. Then came central heating, bans on bonfires, double and even triple wrapping of purchases, plastic and the 'throw away' society. Household waste reached epidemic proportions and the holes were filling up. What was to be done?

Ms Williamson, who has previous experience in the private sector and with Lancashire County Council, recently became one of only two council staff with responsibility for waste disposal. She explained that, until November 2004, there was only one person doing a job that will soon be shared between nine. Cumbria County Council was obviously stung by a recent Audit Commission report! Her presentation was well delivered and, with the use of some good visual aids, she took us into the labyrinthine world of waste.

Those heady, far-off days when Appleby Corporation collected our rubbish and buried it in a field which it owned are gone forever. The 'rules' are now made in Brussels and administered by so many elected and non-elected agencies that it is a wonder that anyone can make head or tail of it all. Fortunately, Kim Williamson does understand it and, by the end of her talk, everyone present had a better appreciation of her world and its problems. Not only does she have to work with a huge number of governmental and non-governmental organisations who, between them, concoct a complex web of rules, but she also has to work with each of Cumbria's district councils and their different local arrangements.

Ms Williamson's talk prompted a host of questions, which she dealt with very well. Although a number of questions were aimed at the District Council, as Eden is responsible for Appleby's recycling arrangements, Ms Williamson did not seek to deflect her questioner with the customary, "That's not my problem" answer many politicians might have used. Instead, she promised to raise our concerns at one of her regular meetings with Eden District Council. The Society thanks her for that. Soon we might be able to have cardboard collected from our homes as it once was. Soon we might be able to send our plastic for recycling. Soon we might be able to revert to a 'free' collection of bulk domestic waste. Soon we might see the recycling centre in Appleby's car park

kept clean and tidy. Soon we might be able to be more environmentally friendly and not have to take the car to Flusco or Kirkby Stephen to get rid of rubbish that used to be collected free of extra charge from our house front. Soon ..... but then reality dawns and we wake up to the real world in which contracts and profit margins are more important than customer satisfaction and in which environmentally unfriendly car journeys are not part of the equation.

Kim Williamson's talk was well received. She takes her work very seriously – so seriously that she is prepared to root through bin bags just to see what we are throwing away. “You wouldn't believe what I've found in a bin bag”, she told us. It was at that moment that our collective heart went out to her! There is clearly more to rubbish than meets the eye.

A report of the evening appeared in *The Herald* on 26 February 2005.

## **From the Chairman**

### **Local Government**

I must begin with yet another apology. Sixteen pages of my hand-writing to be transformed into a readable Newsletter over the holiday period must have caused Vivienne to mutter under her breath. The floods and power cuts would not have helped, either. I wondered why there was so much to write about Eden District Council. It's the same every Christmas. Could it be that they try to bury bad news by holding back some 'difficult' reports until December meetings in the hope that people will be too busy to notice? For example, it seems that the adverse consultants' report into the District Council's support for the local economy and tourism was available long before it went to Councillors. So, apart from noting that Eden District Council's version of the Beano (Eye on Eden) will continue to be produced at an annual cost of almost £10,000, all that needs to be said about our District Council can be summarised as follows:

- In December 2004, Eden District Council's Resources Committee agreed to appoint consultants to advise Council Officers on how to contract out the Council's services. The Director of Technical Services told the committee that the Council had neither the staff nor the expertise to do it. Senior officers, he claimed, are under a lot of pressure.

In January 2005, a member of that very same committee suggested that the Council could save money by cutting down on the use of consultants and using its own staff more!

- In the previous Newsletter we drew attention to a 'Best Value Review' of the District Council's support for economic development and tourism. Members will recall that the external consultants (of course) brought in to do the work discovered that “there is no economic development plan or even an annual action plan” and “there is no strategic direction from officers (councillors) or senior officers”.

It gets worse. A Penrith councillor recently asked each member of Eden's 'gang of four' (aka joint leaders) how the Council's budget for 2005/6 accorded with the Council's 'visions and ambitions'. One joint leader reportedly said that he was, “pleased although a little surprised” to be asked such a question. It was a difficult question to answer since, “Eden was governed by alternative arrangements”. Another joint leader responded by saying that he was unsure just why such a question needed to be asked as it was “not in the style of Eden”. A third said that the leadership was “moving in the right direction” and the fourth did not answer at all”.

- Remember that when your Council Tax bill arrives.

According to the *The Herald*, there was a flurry of activity at Appleby Town Council during February. For many years Appleby's only source of information concerning our Town Council has been *The Herald*. Thank goodness there is a *Herald*. A typical Parish Newsletter was able to sum up an entire Council meeting by informing us that Minutes Clxx to Clxx were approved. When I checked the folder marked "Town Council Minutes" in the Library in February 2005, I found just two pieces of paper, each dated November 2003.

We have written to the Town Council and I am pleased to report that the new Town Clerk has got a grip on the situation. Council minutes, I am assured, will be published for everyone to read in the Parish Newsletter. It remains to be seen whether minutes, including committee minutes, will be published in full. The Society will monitor the position.

In February 2005, we learned that Appleby Councillors are to look at whether to create a contact centre in the Moot Hall. Could this possibly be a continuation of the report carried in the *Herald* on 17 October 1998, which read, "The possibility of developing a council centre in Appleby like the one already operating in Kirkby Stephen was discussed by Town Councillors on Wednesday"?

Again, in February 2005, and again according to the *Herald*, we read, "Councillor calls for action over Shire Hall". Three years ago, on 16 February 2002, the same newspaper carried a report which told us that Appleby Town Council had resolved to appoint a working party to see how the Shire Hall could be retained as a public building. In November 2004, the Chairman of that working party told Councillors that his group had considered a number of issues but not the Shire Hall.

Councillor Morgan is quoted as having said that the Town Council had not resolved to take any action. "Our position in respect of the Shire Hall at the moment is simply as an observer. WE have not undertaken to do anything".

If we ignore the Council's decision to require a group of Councillors to undertake a review, which was not undertaken by all accounts, and accept Councillor Morgan's statement as a matter of fact, we are faced with a situation of some concern. Appleby Town Council knew in 2002 that the Shire Hall was redundant and that Cumbria County Council wanted to dispose of it. Is the Town Council really telling us that it has done nothing for three years?

There is an unfortunate parallel here. In June 2003, Eden District Council's Community and Environment Committee considered the future of the Council's Museum service. The review did not refer to Appleby's Shire Hall. Councillors thought it should and they required their Director of Technical Services to do the job properly.

A year later, in June 2004, Councillors learned that the review they had ordered had not taken place. If that wasn't bad enough, Councillor Morgan, a member of Eden District Council's Community and Environment Committee is reported as having told Appleby Town Council that Eden District Council did not have the capacity to do anything which would be time and officer intensive.

So, whilst Appleby's Shire Hall slowly falls to bits, neither Eden District Council, which is responsible for tourism and our museum service, nor Appleby Town Council has done anything about it for THREE YEARS.

#### On a lighter note

In February this year, Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport insisted that police chiefs should crack down on pubs and clubs which allowed binge drinking. She is reported as having said, "You need a new licensing regime because of these photographs of young girls showing their knickers in the street, out of their heads with drink." I can see how 'photographs' are

connected with the 'media' element of her job description. Would anyone care to guess whether 'showing your knickers in the street' comes under 'culture' or 'sport'?

### Townscape

The Society can claim a close involvement with the various proposals for the townscape over the past eight years. Our then Chairman, Keith Morgan, represented the Society on Appleby Alliance when it undertook the first consultation exercise in 1997. The recommendations contained in the Donaldson-Edwards report proved to be unpopular and the Alliance was asked to try again in 1998.

The Society sought the views of the membership and carried those forward to the next round. Since then the Society has campaigned to have the town centre restored to its traditional appearance.

The 'townscape' became an agenda item at committee meetings in April 1998 and it is still there. Developments have been discussed at each and every meeting since then and an item has appeared in each Newsletter. I doubt if any other representative organisation in Appleby can claim the same.

It came as quite a shock to learn, via a third party, that Appleby Town Council has suggested that the town's input to the final stages of the plan now being put together will come from a joint Town Council/Chamber of Trade group.

Following the Town Council's meeting on 28 January, it was suggested to me that the Society was seeking to turn the clock back by wanting to see flagstone on the footpaths and flat topped setts on the market areas. I am not sure whether this is ill-informed comment or counter productive propaganda. Let's remind ourselves.

It is not easy to find early records of how Appleby might have looked in the days before photography but we do know that the lower end of 'Town Street' was "new paved" with flagstones in 1764. We also know that, when Appleby became a municipal borough in 1888, the Council set about stamping its mark on the place. For example, 'Boroughgate' was restored to its rightful name after a century of being called anything but; posts and chains were introduced along both sides of the road AND the pavements were re-laid using flagstone. There are several photographs in the archive that show the new footpaths in pristine condition. It is that look that the Society would like to see again.

Every proposal for the townscape since 1997 has referred to flagstone as a surface material.. Then, all of a sudden, and without anyone in Appleby having advance notice of it, a report went to Cumbria County Councillors in January 2005 and they approved the use of Lazonby sandstone on our footpaths. Just where did the idea come from?

When questioned about this at the Town Council's open meeting on 28 January, Jim Smith representing the County Council, said that, as the majority of buildings in the area were of sandstone, the same material used on the pavements would look "nice".

Sandstone is, indeed, much used as a building material in the area. Perhaps Capita, which has its headquarters in London, does not realise that Appleby is built on the stuff, as well as of it. It is much used, not because it is the best but because it is there. When Appleby was being built up over several centuries, I doubt whether anyone thought how 'nice' it would all look when tourists came to stare in 2005.

So why was it, with all this cheap and easily obtainable sandstone at hand, that our representatives of yesteryear opted for more expensive flagstone for the footpaths? Perhaps they knew that sandstone was not a suitable material for a footpath – the residents of Penrith certainly do!

‘Flagstone’ is defined as ‘a fine hard textured rock that can be split into slabs for paving’. Sandstone is not. We do not seek to turn the clock back. We are trying to inject a sense of reality and practicality into the debate before it is too late.

I am advised that Appleby’s last remaining example of ‘fell flags’ can be found in The Cloisters. The stone probably came from the Stainmore area, where it is still found. It is very hard wearing and has a life expectancy of 100 years or so.

Turning now to the setts on the market area. Appleby’s market area, which extends from the Cloisters to High Wiend, was the traditional ‘heart’ of Appleby. Nothing was allowed to encroach upon it and, in 1773, the council even agreed to the Moot Hall being pulled down to make more room for more of it! Photographic evidence suggests that the market area was surfaced with flat-topped, close-laid stone setts at a time when the main road was still surfaced with crushed stone. The stones probably came from the river. The best of them were spilt and laid, flat side up, on the market area. Cobbles were used as hard standing for carts. The last of Appleby’s cobbles went just before or just after the 1939-45 war – probably just after. Some Councillors mounted a campaign to save the last bit of old Appleby but the County Council won! Nothing much changes. Stone chippings, the left-overs, went on the roads.

Market areas always needed to have a flat, hard and well-drained surface. They still do.

Our County Councillor has assured me that the Society will be represented on the team that considers the final phases of the townscape and we will do our best to ensure that the requirements of the scheme approved by the Town Council in 2001 are met

Finally, I feel I can do no better than refer to Councillor Langan who, when she put Appleby’s case for a financial contribution to the townscape from Eden District Council, is reported as having said, “The money would be used to replace existing temporary speed ramps with permanent ones constructed in finishes suitable for the conservation area and integrated with the pavement alignments to improve disabled access; create a definition of the market square with a kerb line to differentiate between the road and the space used for the market, replace the concrete and tarmac pavements with materials appropriate to the setting of the listed buildings such as stone kerbs, stone setted gutters and stone flagged pavements; make an appropriate lighting scheme for the carriageway and pavements running from the Sands to the top of Boroughgate; and improve the setting of Low Cross and the Bull Ring.” (*Herald* 11 January 2003.)

That is pretty well what the Society has campaigned for and, as far as we know, that’s what Eden District Council thinks it is contributing towards.

## **History Slot**

Back to the tale of gas and electricity. This is part 5.

Throughout the war years there was a gas showroom in one of the shops below the Moot Hall. In January 1947, the Town Council thought it should be moved. It was agreed that the National Farmers’ Union, which had an office at the entrance to the public hall, should be asked to permit its office window to be used as a showroom. Alderman Slack had never heard anything quite so absurd. The town did not need a showroom. There was little or no profit from the sale of gas appliances and goods could easily be sold from the gas works. However, the majority view was that a showroom was essential so the move to the N.F.U. office was agreed.

1947 saw the first (we think) post-war coal strike. Local newspapers went back to a wartime format due to the shortage of electricity. The gas works coal stock was reduced to about eight days supply. There was little or no coke being produced. Councillors agreed that residents wanting small quantities of coke should take precedence over non-residents.

In December 1947, the Factories Inspector recommended that there should be a bath at the gas works' manager's house. The Town Council rejected the very idea.

A sad event occurred at the gas works in January 1949. Thomas Corby Dawson, manager of the gas works for some 25 years, took his own life. An inquest, held in the Shire Hall, was told that he was worried about the long hours and hard work. For some time he had had to run the works without a stoker, who had been off ill. Mr Dawson, who suffered with a hernia, had to stoke the gas ovens throughout the day and night, as well as undertake his other responsibilities. A verdict of suicide was returned – he had gassed himself.

In February 1949, the Council offered the manager's post to a Mr Lawton, deputy manager of Barnard Castle gas works, but he declined. The Council agreed to appoint a second stoker and a labourer to see if that would make the manager's job more attractive. It must have worked as Mr W J Mason of Manchester was appointed at £7 per week plus free house, coal and gas. Whether or not he arrived in Appleby is unclear as Mr S N Wright from Masham was appointed on the same terms the very next month.

But there was a snag. Mrs Dawson, widow of the former manager, was still living in the house at the gas works. The Town Council's Gas Committee agreed that she should be given a lengthy period in which to find alternative accommodation and the Council would help her in any way it could. One month later the same committee determined to inform Mrs Dawson that the house was required "within seven days". Some Councillors expressed concern but Miss Brown, Chair of the Gas Committee said the Council had done all it could.

At the end of April 1949, Appleby's gas works was nationalised. The Northern Gas Board's first act of concerned socialism was to apply to the Magistrates' Court for an order to evict Mrs Dawson, which was granted.

It seems as though the Town Council might have left its 'mark' on the gas works. Its final appointment, Mr Wright from Masham, seems not to have been the best choice. In March 1950, Stanley Neville Wright, gas works manager, was charged with embezzling monies belonging to the Northern Gas Board between May 1949 and February 1950. He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. It appears that he divided money collected from gas meters on a 'one for them and one for me' basis.

In April 1950, the Northern Gas Board appointed Mr T W Kirkbride from Penrith as works' manager. The record shows that Mr Kirkbride was 29 years of age, a former motor mechanic, who had received training in gas works' management.

We can add to that brief story – thanks to Bill Kirkbride, the works' manager's son. Bill still lives in Appleby and we asked him about 'life at the gas works'. Our note of the interview with Bill follows:-

When father left school he trained as a mechanic. As WW2 approached he volunteered for the R.A.F. and spent the war in Canada. His occupation was not reserved. On demob in 1946, he found work as a stoker at Penrith gas works. He was sent on a manager's course. He came to Appleby as gas works' manager in 1950 – retired 1986.

'On duty' all the time. Father did everything. Went round town emptying slot meters. Was the clerk and accountant. Did relief work as stoker when required. Works office doubled as a saleroom for mantles, coke, etc. The only place that Bill recalls selling gas mantles. Not a showroom – appliances had to be bought in Penrith.

House had only two bedrooms but in mid 1950's an extra room was built above the laundry. Mother took no part in management of works – was a wife and mother.

The works yard – as seen from Bill's bedroom – two green gas holders. When aged 4 or 5 he remembers the small gas holder being run empty. The water was pumped from the well which was 20-25 feet deep. One of the men carried him down each day and gave him a brush and a pot of red lead paint. Mother considered him quite safe as she knew where he was. The men bought him an ice-cream each evening for helping. Paint went everywhere – all over his face and hands and in his hair.

Bill recalls a large brass recorder housed in a shed. This recorded gas pressure over a 24 hour period. The paper roll was changed daily and sent to Penrith.

There were two banks of five retorts, each with its own fire door – "big red tunnels of heat as far as you could see". 5 used in summer. All 10 in winter. Repairs and re-lining carried out in the down period. Coke was extracted with a poker about 35 feet long, which ended in a flat plate about 10" x 24" formed at a right angle. Coke was loaded into wheelbarrows and cooled from a hose pipe. The coke store was near the entrance (alongside the fire station), where there was a set of scales and weights up to one cwt. The retorts were used to dispose of carcasses brought in by local vets.

Coke was sold mainly to local residents who would bring carts, pushbikes and old prams for the purpose. Bill recalls one regular who came with a horse and cart. His load had to be weighed on the weighbridge outside the office. The horse would refuse to move on until given a piece of bread.

Coal supplies came from the top station. Loads were weighed in. That was dad's job as well. It was done by the yardman if dad was out, but dad always had to sign the sheet.

There was a tar pit next to the small holder – tar drained into it from the retorts. Every month or so it was pumped into 45 gallon drums and taken away to Penrith.

There was a stationary engine at the back of the yard which was fired up during the winter to supply steam to heating pipes which ran round the gas holders to stop the water in the wells from freezing.

Right up in the far right corner was a large oxide pit. This grey/green powder precipitated out of the gas as it was fed to the holders. There were heavy metal covers held fast by huge wing nuts. This was taken off by lorry at intervals. Bill does not know what it was used for or whether it was simply a waste product for disposal. If it was a waste product, it was the only thing wasted – even the clinker went for road fill.

Courting couples enjoyed the outside (warm) walls of the retort banks.

Appleby converted to butane gas in 1962/63. NGB purchased land where Holme Court is now. Butane delivered by road tanker and mixed (what with)? before being piped to gas works for distribution. Town still on butane when dad retired.

The rough sketch of the works is as Bill remembers it from his bedroom. It is not to scale and the relative sizes and locations are only rough estimates. Nothing is left of any of this. If any member or reader would like to 'improve' the sketch we would be pleased to hear from you.

Following on -

In December 1950 Appleby received the magnificent sum of £219 as compensation for the nationalisation of the gas works. The price of gas went up – a lot.

In January 1951, Mr J Knowles, a stoker at the works, received £1,300 compensation for injuries received when a part of a furnace fell on him.

Also in 1951, Appleby Town Council finally turned its back on gas and resolved to begin the process of converting the street lights to electricity. It became a slow, gradual process – something Appleby was getting used to – it seems to have taken as long as the current townscape proposals (about seven years) to get the job done. The 'new' council houses at Scattergate were equipped with electricity from the start.

In October 1952, the North Western Electricity Board, which took over the Westmorland and District Electricity Supply Co. on nationalisation quoted £2 8s 5d per annum per lamp as the cost of street lighting 'from dawn to dusk'. This prompted a letter to the *Herald*. "I was interested to read in last week's Herald that Appleby Borough Council has obtained an estimate of the cost of having the town lamps lit from 'dawn to dusk'. They are to be congratulated for proposing such a comprehensive service".

Also in October 1952, one year after deciding to convert to electricity, the Council instructed its Surveyor to obtain quotations for converting some of the lights. That was extended to all of the lights in January 1953. In early 1954, a scheme was approved and tenders were invited but it was not until July 1955 that a tender to convert the main streets in the town was let at a cost of £4,346.

To be continued .....



### Help Wanted

We have been asked to participate in a national survey of allotments. Any information about location, land ownership, rent books, etc. will be appreciated. Members and readers who can help are asked to contact Graham who will either put them in touch with the survey team or pass on details.

### Committee Meeting

#### Outside visits

Nothing to report at this meeting. GC advised that Alice Palmer has volunteered her services for the visit of the Shap History Society.

#### Coronation Park

Nothing heard about the children's play area. We reminded ourselves that Eden District Council wrote to us in June 2003 informing us that they were seeking quotes for the removal of three overgrown conifers. We wrote several more letters on the subject, which resulted in Eden District Council telling us, in September 2004, that arrangements have been agreed with a contractor for the removal of three trees. Still we wait. Still the trees continue to grow. We agreed to try again.

Following a three year campaign to safeguard the wild flowers which try very hard to re-establish themselves in the area but are strimmed to ground level three or four times a year, we agreed to ask Eden District Council to place a sign to indicate that the area should be left in peace. The problem has been Eden District Council's inability to control its contractors and their subcontractors.

#### Public Toilets

No developments to report.

#### Cloisters

Members will recall that, following Eden District Council's reluctance to get involved when we sought help in April 2004, we made an informal approach to English Heritage. English Heritage outlined its substantial powers to ensure the protection of listed buildings. Appleby Town Council asked us not to involve English Heritage until it had exhausted its attempts to persuade Cumbria County Council to repair the damage. The County Council did nothing. We contacted English Heritage again, this time with a formal request for help. As so often happens, English Heritage was not quite so forthcoming when asked to do something. We were told that we should go back to Eden District Council and ask the Conservation Officer to intervene. We wrote to Eden District Council and sent some photographs of the damage to the Cloisters. Ms Elizabeth Murphy, the District Council's Conservation Officer, thanked us for the photographs but declined to take any action.

Your Committee reluctantly agreed to stop banging its collective head against a brick wall. In the meantime, vehicles will continue to bang their heads against the once fine sandstone corner of the Cloisters. Who cares? Eventually Appleby Town Council, which owns the building, will end up having to pay for the repairs. Which means that the town precept will rise. Cumbria County Council continues to deny responsibility. It has nothing to do with the traffic ramp – the damage is being caused by passing vehicles. End of story.

#### Spring Exhibition

Members and friends have responded well to our request for information and exhibits. By the time the Newsletter reaches members the exhibition will be about to go up. It will be in its usual place – exhibition space in the Tourist Information Centre. It will run from 20 March to 27 May. It is

never too late to contribute and space can always be found for that ‘special’ exhibit. Please go along – take your friends – and your stories.

### Townscape

Your Committee was represented at the Town Council open meeting held on 28 January and several members were present. We had prepared a written submission, which the Mayor circulated to everyone who attended. Copies of our original response (to the public consultation exercise) and to the plans agreed by Cumbria County Council on 19 January have been placed in Appleby Library.

Previously, we had asked Cumbria County Council to let us know how members of the public could comply with the rules and give eleven days notice of questions about the townscape when the Councillors who made the decision about Appleby received their copy of the proposals less than eleven days before the meeting and the public notice of their meeting appeared in the press only four days beforehand. We were told that there had been a public consultation exercise. The question was totally ignored. It was back to heads against brick walls again.

Eden District Council’s Community and Economy Committee met on 6 January. Councillors were advised about the public consultation exercise. Councillors who wanted to comment on the proposals were recommended to contact Cumbria County Council personally. On 12 January, Appleby Town Council was told that Eden’s Community and Economy Committee had, “endorsed and supported the Town Council’s views on the enhancement scheme.”

Your Committee agreed to seek clarification since it was unclear just what the Town Council might have communicated to the District Council on the subject. If the District Council has simply reminded itself of the decision it took in July 2001 – which was to support Appleby Town Council’s proposals for the townscape – that was one thing. But if the Town Council has made a submission to the District Council which was not in accordance with proposals previously agreed in Appleby, by Applebians, that was another matter entirely.

We have invoked the Freedom of Information Act in an attempt to find out who said what, to whom and when and WHY.

The Town Council meeting on 28 January was told that Cumbria County Council was prepared to join with a small group of representatives from the town to discuss the final stages. As the Society has been represented throughout a seven year campaign to see the town refurbished (not ‘enhanced’ – that word has only recently crept in), we fully expected to be included. It came as a bit of a surprise to discover, via a third party, that the Town Council had proposed a team of two councillors plus a representative of the Chamber of Trade. Your Committee was not amused.

Chairman’s note: County Councillor, Mary Warburton, has since confirmed that the Society will continue to be consulted.

### Shire Hall

Sadly, nothing to report. Letters sent to the Town Council and to a District Councillor remain unanswered. We have requested copies of relevant Council minutes. All we have to go on at the moment is a press report of 16 February 2002, which suggests that Appleby Town Council had agreed to require its Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider how best the Council could retain the Shire Hall in public ownership. Then, in November 2004, the Town Council was told that a working group had examined a number of issues but not the Shire Hall. We are still seeking clarification.

Chairman's note: The Town Council discussed the Shire Hall after your Committee met. An item is included under "From the Chairman" earlier in this Newsletter.

### Oral History

VG reported the purchase of another recording machine. Transcripts to be checked for any references for 1930's and 1940's that might be useful for the exhibition.

### Membership/Treasurer

OA reported the balance as at 7 January - £4340.57, which includes £234.62 grant money still to be spent. Outgoings were £273.38 for the tape recording machine, £21.95 Newsletter expenses and £132.00 for hire of the Supper Room, leaving a balance of £3912.84. New members continue to join.

### Appleby Smarter

Success! Vivienne has been in touch with Mr Mounsey at Eden District Council. Mr Mounsey gave an assurance that black bags of litter collected under the volunteer litter-picking project will be collected as and when, not just once a year. Further discussions will take place with co-ordinators and Mr Mounsey to come up with the definitive arrangements.

Success! The sign is up on the wall of High Wiend – there should be no clutter on the footpath outside Toddle-In in the future.

Of interest – we have a copy of Cumbria County Council's instructions to its workforce regarding their powers and responsibilities to remove unauthorised signs from pavements, etc. It runs to eight pages. The copy is held by Graham if anyone wants to have a look but it is worth drawing attention to one duty placed on Council staff. If a sign is a danger that should be removed without delay, such as an A board dangerously sited in a footway or a sign likely to distract drivers – REMOVE it. If only they would.

Not such good news – in November 2004 we were told that the razor wire on the Castle wall would be removed 'shortly'. In January 2005, Appleby Town Council was told that Eden District Council was discussing the matter with the owner of the Castle. Its getting a bit like the trees in Coronation Park. There is no doubt that the wire adversely affects the setting of a listed building. Not only does it detract from the overall attractiveness of the Castle but it also spoils the general appearance of the whole area.

### Planning Matters

John Weir, General Manager of the Training and Heritage Centre, asked if he could draw the Society's attention to proposals to extend the facilities. He met with a sub-committee of the Society on 8 February and outlined his ideas, which would involve the building of two purpose-built single storied buildings on the Kirkby Stephen side if the old goods shed (roughly where the railway coaches are now) and the removal of the coaches to the railway station side, where they would continue in use under a canopy closely resembling the present set-up. It would be a major development alongside the railway, which is a linear conservation area. We were not asked to declare an opinion. Mr Weir was simply seeking to liaise with the Society on an important matter. We thanked him for that. The next step, which may have happened before you see this, is to invite residents whose properties are near the centre to a meeting at the site.

## **From the Secretary**

### **Help Requested**

We have been asked if anyone can help with a 'barrel and fusee' school clock, inscribed **Presented to FCSS by Joseph Graham Mayor of Appleby 1889**. Do you know anything about its origins? Do you know what FCSS stands for? The writer of the request is Zylpha Thomson who is Trixie Balmer's niece. Her mother was Greta and her grandparents were Fred and Hannah Balmer. Fred was Town Clerk for many years and received the Freedom of the Borough. Her uncle Randal and his wife Elsie used to live at Far Bank End, before moving into Appleby. Uncle Randal died recently, but he was the baker for Edmondson's and he and Aunt Elsie used to run the cinema in Appleby. Her Aunt Ada and her husband used to run the Joiner's Arms at Warcop.

Any information on the clock and/or FCSS will be gratefully received.

### **Cumbria Industrial History Society**

Is holding its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring One Day Conference at St Martin's College, Ambleside, on Saturday 23 April 2005. I have a small number of booking forms/programmes, should anyone want further details. Our next speaker, Michael Davis-Shiel is giving a talk on the process of making gunpowder, as well as there being three other talks.

### **Next Meeting**

**Thursday 31 March 2005  
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

**"The Bloom Smithies of the Vale of Eden"**

**Well-known Industrial Historian, Mike Davis-Shiel, tells us about iron smelting using water power – at Brougham, Blencarn and Dalston**

### **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.

The contents of this Newsletter may be freely used to the advantage of Appleby-in-Westmorland but, in order to comply with their wishes, the **personal histories** of living persons MUST NOT be used in whole or in part without the written consent of the Society which retains the copyright.