



NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER NEWSLETTER

**Newsletter November 2005**

**No 62**

**Public Meeting**

**The Manor Court Customs of Westmorland**

This was the intriguing title of the most recent talk given to members of the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society. A good audience of members and visitors welcomed David Smaile for his third visit. The talk was based on the parish of Grayrigg, which includes the Manor of Whinfell, and was illustrated with many interesting slides.

Anyone who studies manorial records encounters many unusual terms e.g. emercements, greenhew, cattlegates, gressam, chivage (to name but a few) and these were all explained during the course of this fascinating talk. We learned how ordinary people had considerable importance in the manorial system. The tenants worked together to make sure the responsibilities of maintaining the land, walls, fences and hedges were shared out equally, as were the benefits. Although the Lords of the Manor may have owned the land, it was more likely to be the tenant who owned any buildings and this property could be sold. Manor courts dealt with all changes of tenancies and with property transactions. At the court, it was the tenants who chose the Jury and its Foreman. But fines were incurred if the tenant defaulted on payments of rents and for non-attendance at the Manor Court, without good reason.

All these aspects were well illustrated when members of the audience were encouraged to participate in a re-enactment of an eighteenth century manorial court. David took the part of the Bailiff and 'directed' proceedings. Other 'characters' included two Clerks (one recording proceedings for the Lord of the Manor and the other making a true record to be held locally), the Steward, a Foreman of the Jury and several tenants. Reading from prepared scripts, members of the audience played these parts enthusiastically. Watching the re-enactment really brought the event to life and made a rather complex topic very understandable.

David's summary of the manorial system ended in the Napoleonic era, by which time many tenants had become enfranchised and were able to buy the freehold of their land. Following Napoleon's defeat there came a slump and financial hardship for many farmers. But this provided an opportunity for a new breed of land owners, who were able to buy up freeholds. One such was John Thompson – "but that's another story". On this cliffhanger David's story finished – thus ensuring, of course, a fourth return visit by this very entertaining and informative speaker.

A report appeared in *The Herald* on 19 November (hopefully! – note from the Secretary).

## **From the Chairman**

### **Appleby Town Council**

It is now almost a year since the Appleby Ward lost two of its town councillors. At the December 2004 Town Council meeting members were told that one of the vacancies would be filled “early in the New Year”. The vacancies remained unfilled at the time of the annual town meeting in April. Only two members of the public attended that meeting. The *Cumberland News* reported that there were fourteen Councillors present. A 100% turnout of Councillors. At that meeting the Mayor said it was wrong to label our town “Apathy in Westmorland” as a great many people cared about it. True. Very true. Time passed and the vacancies had still not been filled by July. Town Councillors were reportedly “baffled” by the news that ten residents had called for an election but no candidates were forthcoming. Councillors resolved to find out the names of the ten and then ask them why they had done it. At about this time I received a letter from Eden District Council’s Democratic Services Department demanding to know with whom I had discussed a matter of local interest so that the Council could consider what action to take. You can imagine my reply! Throwing an 82 year old pensioner out of a political party conference made national headlines. Rightly. But a similar problem can be found much nearer home.

News that Appleby Town Councillors were “baffled” came as no real surprise but it did serve to underline the Council’s poor collective memory. In December 2003, just eighteen months earlier, the same thing had happened. Ten residents called for an election but no candidates had come forward. Councillor Langan, then Mayor, said it was annoying when people did that as elections cost money. Councillor Morgan is reported as having “attacked” the Mayor, claiming that he had never heard such an outrageous comment in the Council chamber.

In August this year Councillors decided to make a determined effort to attract suitable candidates but the Town Clerk probably went a bit too far when she sent me a nice letter inviting me to stand.

In September the *Cumberland News* Appleby columnist reminded us that not so many years ago there was always competition at election time and any subsequent by-election was always “fiercely” contested. I’m not sure to which era the writer was referring as “not so many years ago” the way to a Council seat was by co-option and THAT IS WHY RESIDENTS NOW INSIST ON ELECTIONS.

The good news is that the two vacancies are now filled. Now is the time to reflect. Applebians are not apathetic towards their town. Applebians are apathetic towards their Town Council. That must concern us all. It should be of particular concern to our Town Councillors.

The Cumbria Association of Local Councils, of which our Town Council is a member, has recently urged all towns and parishes to establish a council – including Penrith. Without representation “many communities feel powerless to influence the social and economic forces that are reshaping their surroundings and equally frustrated by the actions and inactions of public authorities that sometimes seem unable to respond to local needs.” According to C.A.L.C., “Local councils can make a difference.”

Setting aside the fact that Penrith seems to do very well out of Eden District Council, it is hard to see any benefits that have been bestowed on Appleby because we have a Town Council. Going back to the April town meeting, we are reminded that the Mayor complained that getting a response from the District Council was like, “beating your head against a jelly”. Agreed. The Society has

been making much the same point for years. Applebians might be a little less apathetic towards their Council if it could be seen to have influence and make the occasional difference.

Over recent years a number of ‘new faces’ have appeared on the Town Council. Sadly, many have dropped out after a short time. Why? Instead of wondering why no one is interested and instead of wanting to interview residents who have called for an election, Councillors could have asked ex Councillors why they left. In this age of questionnaires and consultation exercises Councillors might have asked the residents what they expect from a Town Council – they might have been surprised by the results.

“Not so many years ago” Appleby Town Council resolved to provide the town with a Council centre along the lines of the one operating in Kirkby Stephen (1998); resolved to do everything it could to ensure that the Shire Hall was kept in the public domain (2002); resolved to produce a parish plan so that we could attract funding from the Vital Villages Scheme (2003); resolved to ensure that the Town Council and residents are indemnified against legal claims resulting from the use of Fair Hill during Fair Week (2003). I could add to the list and so could you.

Appleby Town Council insists on its ‘senior Councillor’ system which seems to give some Councillors more authority and influence than others. Seating arrangements in the Moot Hall serve to ensure that all Councillors ‘know their place’. Not only do they know their place in terms of seniority but also they know their place in the pecking order. More than once I have been told that the system works as it limits the time spent in debate. The problem is that the system does not work and may explain why so many new Councillors give up. Appleby’s system hinders democratic debate. So what if meetings take a little longer?

I was recently advised (in writing) that Appleby is fortunate to have two of its Councillors sitting on Eden District Council. I disagree but it is only a minor disagreement. Or it was until I read the Town Council minutes for 8 June, which state, “Councillor Morgan, as our Council’s representative on Eden District Council, agreed to ascertain what provision there is (for weed killing).” And that’s the problem. In previous Newsletters I have argued against the custom of leaving it to the two Eden District Councillors to do this or that. All that does is allow the rest of the Town Councillors to take their eyes off the ball. Seldom does anything happen. The Town Council clearly thinks that the District Councillors represent Appleby Town Council. They don’t. They represent us.

At each Town Council meeting the mace is ceremonially removed whilst our District Councillors provide a verbal update on proceedings in Penrith. That is the idea but not the practice. At the Town Council meeting on 14 September both District Councillors responded to questions about the new plastic seats on the Sands. Leaving aside the question of the use of plastic in a Conservation area – a point which Councillors did not make (try obtaining consent for plastic windows or doors in the Conservation area and see what happens) – neither District Councillor commented on anything relating to Appleby which had been considered by Eden District Council. But, on 1 September the District Council’s Community and Economy Committee had discussed the future of Coronation park and the service of an Enforcement Notice on the owner of a property in High Wiend. Surely, if the District Councillors are given a ‘slot’ in which to report on District Council actions which are relevant to Appleby they should at least make an effort.

Following a lengthy exchange of correspondence earlier this year, the Town Council agreed to use the Parish Newsletter as a means to inform us of Council proceedings. It worked fairly well for a few months but went back to ‘shorthand’ in September. When we asked why, the Town Clerk told us that she had been instructed not to include Committee minutes. Most Council business is conducted in committee. Without access to Committee minutes, we get to know very little about what is happening within the Council. We challenged the decision and the October report was

much better. The point is, the Town Council should not be looking for ways to prevent the public knowing what it is doing – not ever and certainly not if it wants to become a Quality Parish Council. (We can add this to the list of things agreed “in recent years”.)

We have now contacted four local bodies for information within the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. Three have had no problem with the request and have responded. Guess which one is the ‘odd one out’. We have been told to contact individual Councillors for details of papers they have prepared for discussion at Town Council meetings. When we write to other public bodies, paid officers do the leg work and collate a response. We have never been asked to trail round after individual Council officers or Councillors.

When ‘Jura’ (the consultants who looked at the potential of the annual horse fair) reported they pointed out that Appleby Town Council does not have a strategy or a policy aimed at tourism and business development. Why not? Appleby has sixteen councillors. Too many in my opinion but, if we have sixteen, why not use sixteen? If a Councillor from the Appleby Ward paired with one from Bongate Ward and each pair had a specific responsibility for which they would account to the Council and to residents, we might get somewhere. Areas of responsibility might be

- Public toilets, parks, open spaces and play areas;
- Litter, waste disposal and recycling;
- Planning – follow-up visits to see if what was agreed is being done properly, vacant premises, unsightly and boarded-up properties;
- Reading papers prepared by Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council, identifying items of interest to Appleby;
- Business, tourism and publicity;
- Council-owned buildings – maintenance and use;
- Appleby Alliance – to identify projects that might be undertaken for the Town Council which pays up to £3,000 annually to keep it going e.g. preparation of a town plan so we can progress a Vital Villages application;
- Policing and related issues.

These are eight easily identifiable ‘responsibilities’. If we all knew which of our Councillors had a special interest we could talk to them and monitor progress. Others might come up with different ‘responsibilities’. Good. All I ask is that our Councillors have something to do. At present, they can all turn up to any Committee meeting if they want to but few have a ‘job’.

Vital Villages continues to be a particular problem. In February 2004 the Town Council agreed to form a small sub-committee to progress an application. A year later, in February 2005, Appleby Alliance suggested a joint Committee of Councillors and Appleby Alliance to deal with the matter. The item was deferred. In August 2005 Eden District Council published a draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. The document might have had TOP SECRET printed across every page as you had to be very persistent to get a copy! That report states that Appleby Town Council is currently undertaking a Parish Plan Study in pursuance of its bid for Vital Villages funding. Is it?

A poor response to the need to increase the number of visitors to the Town was also apparent at the September Council meeting. Councillors supported the Mayor’s initiative which has resulted in coach operators coming to Appleby in order that their passengers can have a guided tour of the Moot Hall. I understand that local traders have benefited as a result. Coach operators run businesses. Businesses advertise. Businesses produce literature to attract potential customers. Coach operators will include the attractions of Appleby in next year’s brochures. In order to ensure that the Moot Hall might not be open as advertised, Councillors agreed that each successive Mayor should determine whether to continue the practice! The first coach load of people to arrive one

Saturday next May might find the Moot Hall closed if the next Mayor doesn't want to open it. That coach load of passengers might be the last as word gets round. As the consultants said, "Appleby does not have a policy or a strategy for business or tourism." How very true. How very sad.

#### Regional Government

Following the resounding "NO" vote in the north east, we were denied an opportunity to declare our views on how regional government might develop. Eden District Council, once very keen to cuddle up to Carlisle, is now having second and third thoughts. Unfortunately it is proving difficult to unravel contracts which Eden entered into which result in 'Carlisle' dealing with Appleby's car parking. Perhaps the £55,000 contract awarded to a contractor to help Eden write contracts might come up with something – we'll see. Other, voluntary, links with Carlisle are being scrapped as quickly as possible. (Sorry – slipping back into old habits – I do not mean 'scrapped'. I should have written 'further developed').

The sooner the 'consultant' gets a grip on Eden District Council's current contracts, the better. I have a letter from Eden District Council which points out that, "Insofar as this Council is concerned a sub-contractor is not responsible for the performance of a contract and this responsibility remains with the contractor." The letter is signed by the Council's solicitor. In a strict legal sense, he is right. Unfortunately for us the Council's officers have a slightly different interpretation and I have other letters telling me that the Council has no responsibility for sub-contractors (e.g. strimming in Coronation Park). Maggie Clowes has had similar letters regarding public toilets – once Eden District Council has given money to Task Force Eden, the Council washes its hands (if only we could in our public toilets).

There is an old Albanian proverb which reads, "He who pays the piper should take the blame." Old Albanian proverbs don't carry much weight in Eden.

The Council's solicitor's letter was in response to a request for information about the costs of this year's New Fair. He told me that Eden District Council did not reduce the amount paid to Task Force Eden for cleaning during the fair. We know that Task Force Eden appears not to have sub-contracted with Metcalfe's and that is why Cumbria County Council had to spend £835.68 for Metcalfe's to undertake emergency sweeping as the roads were "considered a potential danger to the travelling public". But wait a minute. Eden District Council says it paid task Force Eden. Task Force Eden did not organise road cleaning. Council tax payers have paid twice for the same service. No wonder brave souls are being jailed for not paying their council tax. My next letter might just be to the District Auditor.

But, whether we like it or not, regional government – an unelected regional government – is taking more and more control over our lives. There is a Cumbria and Lancashire Primary Health Care Trust, local regiments will be amalgamated to form one 'regional regiment' based in Preston. Cumbria's Fire Brigade Headquarters is to be moved to Warrington and now we learn that our police force may well be combined with others. Major decisions about housing are taken by the Government Office, North West and our local press is full of letters and articles pointing out the problems that is causing.

I know a little about policing. I know that no police force can expect to be resourced and equipped to tackle any and every problem that might arise. I have lived through two amalgamations – Wallasey Borough Police was dragged into Cheshire in 1967. In 1974 great lumps of Cheshire, including Wallasey, were forced to make sense out of a 'nothing area' called Merseyside. The cost in financial and human terms was tremendous. It did not make police forces any more efficient – unless you believe that absolute efficiency is no-one doing anything at absolute zero cost. It certainly did not make forces more effective. In 1978 I transferred to West Midlands Police which, with its 7,500 officers, was the largest outside the Metropolitan Police. During times of extreme

threat from riots and terrorism – they are not new phenomena – we ‘borrowed’ men and equipment from other police forces. During the miners’ strike we loaned men and equipment. West Midlands! That mutual aid system worked well. It still does. When Home Office officials and Home Secretaries are wanting to look busy, they re-organise something. Strangely, they never re-organise the Home Office.

“Once upon a time”, a mix of smaller and larger police forces allowed aspiring officers to learn their trade and move up. The fewer the number of forces, the greater the risk of inexperienced and unbloodied officers finding themselves ‘in charge’. Recent years have begun to identify gaps in the existing system and a number of Chief Constables have been found wanting. Reduce the number of chief officers, save a few shillings and, in a few more years, re-organise because there is “something wrong”. Police amalgamations are not inspired by a will to see the public served better. The public is being cheated now. It will only get worse. Police amalgamations are inspired by the need for Home Secretaries to have more ‘control’. But, unless they change the common law which forms the basis of our policing system, Home Secretaries do not have operational control – Chief Constables do. Watch this space – for that is where we are heading – a national police force controlled by politicians. We made a bit of a joke when Eden District Council’s Community Safety Officer told us that the Government Office North West is setting crime reduction targets for local councils. Its not a joke. Very soon the unelected Government Office North West will be setting targets for Chief Constables. Very soon local politicians will be controlling constabularies. The present system is in need of repair. Appleby is not well policed – not in my terms. But I would rather our Chief Constable carried the responsibility. God forbid Eden District Council getting too close.

#### Cumbria Police Authority Eden Area Community Liaison Forum 12 October 2005

When this august body last met in Appleby only two members of the public turned up. It was better this year with some 30 people present. Most of us had gone to hear about the proposed police reorganisation. Clive Alcock, Clerk and Chief Executive of Cumbria Police Authority, outlined the Government’s thoughts. (If Mr Alcock is the Chief Executive, does it not suggest that there might be other executives on the Police Authority? Why can’t Cumbria manage with a Clerk to the Police Authority? Perhaps it is Police Authorities that should be the Government’s priority for reform. But I digress.)

Its worse than I thought. The bad news is that the Home Secretary is determined. It is not “if”, but “when”. The very bad news is that Bleary Hazel alias Hazel Blears is mixed up in it so clarity of thought and speech will not form part of the Home Office approach.

It will not be a simple amalgamation of Cumbria and Lancashire, even though the agenda for the meeting suggested it was. The Government has established ground rules. The new police areas must adhere to Government Office and regional boundaries. Forces cannot be split – e.g. North Cumbria (us) cannot be combined with a North East force. A coloured map, also provided by the Home Office, suggests that Cumbria might be combined with not only Lancashire but also with Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Cheshire and result in a force some 20,000 strong – Cumbria has just 1,260.

The Government says it has allowed ample time for consultation!! Its proposals were announced in mid September, the public will be “consulted” before the end of October, police forces must submit their views to the Home Office by 23 December (who on earth do they think will read them over the long Christmas and New Year period?), there will be a shadow police authority in place by April 2006 and the reorganisation will be complete by April 2007.

The meeting I attended will probably be it. It might have been Appleby's only chance to be 'consulted'. There were a number contributions from the floor, most notably from people with experience of policing and police authorities in other parts of the country. The consensus was that we should not fool ourselves. The Home Office is determined to progress the Government's rush to regionalisation no matter what the cost in social or economic terms and the underlying agenda is to move control of police forces from locally appointed Chief Constables to nationally appointed politicians.

A regional police force with a strength of some 22,000 police and 10,000 support staff will be something akin to the Metropolitan Police, which is commanded by a Commissioner (who is a Home Office appointee and a civil servant, despite appearances to the contrary). Along with a Commissioner comes a Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Assistant Commissioners and Commanders before, finally, we get to a rank we can recognise in Cumbria, the Chief Superintendent. North Cumbria is headed by a Chief Superintendent which puts the other ranks into perspective. No wonder the Association of Chief Police Officers supports the Home Secretary. A better example of jobs for the boys would be hard to find. Far from there being fewer chief officers, as forecast by Mr Alcock, there may be far more, most of them on a much higher salary.

Political control of a Home Office appointed Commissioner of Police for the North West Region will be easy. The Government already uses the police service as private security guards to prevent us from demonstrating peacefully near Parliament or at Gleneagles. Add the current move towards somewhat draconian laws disguised as 'anti terror' but moving closer to Orwell's '1984' all the time and we will soon be blaming ourselves for 'letting it happen'. We might have to blame ourselves privately since open debate might also be curtailed. Who knows, 'innocent' publications such as the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society Newsletter might be banned.

Fantasy? I'm not sure. Are you? Remember the 82 year old pensioner who was ejected for shouting, "rubbish"? The local police had no worries about using anti terror legislation to prevent him going back in. Someone eventually apologised for that. But just how easy was it for one of Brighton's local bobbies to even contemplate using anti terror laws in such a way?

Towards the end of the meeting there was an opportunity to ask questions about policing at national, county or local level. I had gone to the meeting wanting to ask just four. For the benefit of completeness, I asked:

- Why was it, when the force knew that it could not recruit the 300 extra police officers it wanted, it went ahead with the appointment of a second Assistant Chief Constable who costs the equivalent of six constables? I have asked that question before and have not yet received a real answer. This time I was told that it was in order to make the Chief Constable's command team "resilient".
- Are there plans to appoint Community Support Officers in Eden generally or in Appleby specifically? "The situation is kept under review but the police are committed to community based policing."
- In November 2004, Appleby Town Council agreed to establish a regular police liaison forum in the town. What happened? Our local sergeant, Grant Warwick, told the meeting that he had given the Town Council a number of dates for consideration but he had not heard from the Council since. (That was a year ago.)

- Earlier this year the Town Clerk was asked to produce a proforma on which residents could leave messages for the local police. The proformas would be available in the Tourist Information Centre. What do they look like? Sergeant Warwick had heard nothing further from the Town Council but he was concerned as it was his idea in the first place.

All of this makes me think that if only Appleby Town Council was put in charge of police re-organisation we could all rest easily secure in the knowledge that nothing would ever happen.

If one thing has served to bring many of the Society's concerns into sharp focus, it was an article in *The Herald* on 8 October 2005. In order to put the article into context, we need to go back to 20 February 2004. That was the date on which the Society made its submission to the Boundary Committee. We ended our letter by arguing, "But nothing will work effectively to the advantage of local residents unless local councils swallow their pride and amalgamate with others to form significant Quality Councils with increased powers and locally accessible council centres."

We copied the letter to Appleby Town Council and, on request, to Kirkby Stephen Town Council.

Now we see that sixteen parish councils in Upper Eden have come together. Kirkby Stephen Town Council is in the lead. Funding has been obtained from Voluntary Action Cumbria and from DEFRA. Applications have been made to Cumbria County Council and Eden District Council. Soon the group hopes to appoint a co-ordinator. Spokesmen for Kirkby Stephen Town Council say that it is, "an exciting project" and a "chance for the area to shape its own destiny." All comparisons are odious but Kirkby Stephen has had a council centre for some years. It has completed its Vital Villages Parish Plan and is busily spending the money it has been able to draw into the town.

Whether or not the initiative was influenced by our letter is a moot point but the FACTS are that Appleby does not have a council centre, has not begun its Parish Plan, has not tried to co-ordinate its activities with local parishes and has taken no steps towards becoming a Quality Parish Council.

#### Should We Encourage Visitors to Park Unlawfully?

Local authorities are now so concerned at the likely shortfall in income from parking tickets that, in order to minimise the loss, they will consider charging residents for parking permits. I am not sure whether there is a moral case for requiring law-abiding residents to dip into their pockets because there are fewer unlawful parkers but I would much prefer to see the salaries of the Council officers responsible cut back first.

#### Roll Up, Roll Up, Pay More, Get Less!!

I drew attention to Eden District Council's proposals for financial savings at the Annual General Meeting and in the previous Newsletter. I had hoped that District Councillors would call a halt to the Council's "nonsensical proposals to cut services whilst the same number of employees do less and less." I hoped in vain. It is Eden's proud boast that we have more sheep than people but it is becoming increasingly obvious that a lot of those sheep are disguised as District Councillors. Do they say, "Thank you kindly, Sir" when they collect their expenses or do they simply bleat?

#### History Slot

We begin with a request from Border TV, which is looking for film/video material relating to celebrations, major family events, holidays and days out, nights out, fashion and weather. Film or video dating from 1900 to the 1980s will be used for a new series of "The Way We Were". Members and readers/listeners who think they can help should contact Heather Larcombe at I.T.V. Border Research, Television Centre, Brunel Way, Carlisle, CA1 3NT. Phone – 01228 829303. E-mail – [heather.larcombe@ITV.com](mailto:heather.larcombe@ITV.com)



### Margaret and John Griffith

During this year's horse fair, Graham received a phone call from John Griffith. John and his sister, Margaret, had come to Appleby from Wallasey on a day trip, looking for old haunts and had been encouraged to contact the Society by the staff at the T.I.C. Graham met them for a few minutes before their coach whisked them away but they promised to keep in touch. Fortunately they did and it is their story which follows.

Margaret and John were evacuees to Appleby in 1939. This was intriguing, as most evacuees that we know about were from the north east. John explained that Mary and Bob Nelson, who lived at Croft Cottage, Bongate, were distant relatives of their mother and that they had spent time in Appleby on a number of occasions before the war.

In September 1939 they were living in Birkenhead, a short distance from Cammell Lairds shipyards and the Mersey docks – both obvious targets should there be a war. So, on 1 September, accompanied by their mother, they left Liverpool Exchange Station bound for Appleby. Mother returned to Birkenhead soon afterwards, leaving the two children in the care of Mary and Bob Nelson. They stayed a short six months and, although neither mentioned it, they must have returned to Birkenhead just in time for the first raids on Merseyside. A combination of home sickness and 'other factors' led to them returning home. They had not settled well.

Mary and Bob Nelson had a son, Joe, who was away in the army for most of the evacuees' stay. Mary worked at Appleby Castle. Neither can recall Bob having a job – perhaps he was already retired. Both Bob and Joe Nelson were keen fishermen and they often fished the Eden together at night. An early memory was listening to Neville Chamberlain announcing the declaration of war on 3 September.

The children were made comfortable. Although food was rationed, they do not recall being kept short. Yorkshire pudding with Golden Syrup was something new to both of them! The Nelsons grew vegetables in the garden, including sprouts (why is it that all children remember sprouts?). The scullery at Croft Cottage was off the living room. It had a cold slate slab. On a wall near the larder was a fish in a case. They both attended St Lawrence's C of E school but were not there long enough to have lasting memories. Margaret had a friend living at Cross Croft. She remembers that her friend's father kept a ferret in the coal place, the first ferret she had seen. They went to St Michael's Church. Margaret was always amused by the hymn, "As pants the hart". They walked to school and, despite being warned not to go over Jubilee Bridge, they sometimes took that route.

The winter of 1939/40 was particularly cold and snowy. They picked snowdrops in St Michael's churchyard and took them to school. In common with other children, they remember where they bought sweets – there was a house/shop on Bongate near the Royal Oak and sometimes they would choose something from the halfpenny and penny tray at the shop on the corner of Doomgate.

Ewbank's farm was all around and on both sides of Bongate. They occasionally heard animals being slaughtered. They also carried milk from the farm dairy. The A66 was always very busy with military vehicles.

On occasions they 'got into trouble'. Once, for helping to carry a bier from the cemetery at Cross Croft back to St Michael's church and on other occasions for teasing 'old Eggy' at his smithy on Howgate Foot. Entertainments included dancing lessons for Margaret at Kingdom Hall and Saturday mornings at 'the pictures' in the Public Hall. Tickets cost 3d and seating was on wooden benches.

They kept in touch with home by postcard (1½d stamp), which they posted in a wall box near St Michael's church. Margaret still has a card she sent to her father on 4 September, three days after their arrival. It shows a fluffy black kitten with a red ribbon. She had written, "Dear Daddy. I am being a good girl. Love Margaret."

Apart from homesickness, there may have been other reasons for wanting to go home. They think it possible that the age difference between them and the Nelsons might have been too wide for comfort. Other factors might have included regular doses of brown sugar and onion juice to guard against colds, having their chests rubbed with goose fat and being treated with a mix of cayenne pepper and honey. Goose grease was a well known winter treatment at the time and, although they would not have stood out at school because of it, imagine all those children with goose-greased chests huddled round the stove at St Lawrence's. And just what was the mix of cayenne pepper and honey used for? Hitler's bombs might have seemed a better option at the time.

Margaret was born 15 November 1931 and John on 20 March 1933. Both would love to hear from anyone who remembers them and who can add to their story. We shall put you in touch.

The Society is grateful to the staff at Appleby Tourist Information Centre for putting us in touch.

Margaret and John kindly sent some photographs of their time in Appleby and it is hoped to show some of these at our next meeting.

### **Committee Meeting 4 October 2005**

We began our meeting by welcoming Barbara Wilson who had come along to update us on the voluntary litter pick which she had organised on behalf of the Society. Her report follows.

#### **"Alps Community Litter Pick"**

It was a particularly warm summer this year in Appleby. Apparently. It must have been, or why else would two pairs of ladies' knickers have been found in Coronation Park during the community litter pick? The undergarments were just a "small" selection of unusual litter collected by volunteers during the week beginning September 17. Other items included gas bottles, tent poles, numerous odd socks and literally hundreds of drinks cans. Whoever runs the local off licence must be making a healthy profit!

The first community litter pick got off to an excellent start with an enthusiastic assembly at Appleby Primary School. Michael Graham, the town's street cleaner, told the children he collected about 60 bags of litter each week from the town. Richard Suddaby, from Local Agenda 21, gave a lively performance as he "magically" converted waste into compost before presenting the school with a compost bin and Barbara Wilson, a member of the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society, directed a play in which the children demonstrated how easy it was to turn bad habits into good ones.

We hoped for a good turn out for the mass litter pick on Sunday, September 25 and we were not disappointed. Over twenty members of the public turned up with rubbish they had collected earlier in the week. Two young girls from local schools came for the whole day, collecting over eight bags of rubbish between them. Our final total for the week's collection was a staggering forty seven bags.

The Society sponsored a poster competition, which attracted over seventy entries. The main winner had a striking illustration and a simple, but rhyming slogan: "Bin it, or recycle – Please help Michael!" It has been on display in the window of the T.I.C. and will, hopefully, inspire a few people to think before they throw litter on the ground.

(Both winning posters are reproduced – sadly, only in black and white.)

Many thanks to everyone who participated in any way. Particular credit must go to Eden Recycling for providing litter sticks, gloves, bags and very fetching fluorescent jackets; to Task Force Eden for collecting the rubbish promptly; to the Guides and Brownies who gave up an evening of fun and games to sweep the Broad Close area; to John Wilson who spent almost a full day cutting back overgrown vegetation on Scattergate; to the T.I.C. for distributing black bin bags, and to all of you who turned out on Sunday to help pick up litter.

Please look out for the next litter pick, to be held in the Spring. We hope to hold them three times a year!"

From the Chairman: Barbara is so right. A few days after the litter pick there were so many empty cans and bottles in the Children's Play area at Coronation Park we seriously thought Eden District Council should apply to itself for a 24 hour drinking licence for the area.

We had invited Barbara to our meeting in order to thank her for the hard work she had put in. The event can be regarded as a success and we will be happy to repeat it next year. Your Committee would like to thank not only Barbara, but also all members and non members who turned out on the day – especially the youngsters and there were lots of them.

We received a 'thank you' from the Mayor, in which he said, "Please thank the Society for the initiative to start ALPS. It will be a splendid activity to further Appleby in Bloom next year." Whether this means that the Town Council's Appleby in Bloom sub-committee proposes to take it over, we're not sure but, given the absence of civic dignitaries on the day, we are not counting our chickens.

We also welcomed Ian Campbell, who has agreed to join the Committee.

#### Outside Visits

The proposed visit to Sedbergh is unlikely to go ahead as there had been so few positive responses. Vivienne will make enquiries about a visit to The College, Kirkoswald. The college derives its name from the conversion, in 1523, of what was then described as "an old Pele Tower, an adjunct to defence of Kirkoswald Castle", into a college for secular priests. It has been the home of the Fetherstonhaugh family since 1590.

#### Coronation Park

Since our previous Newsletter, one more tree has been felled. Four to go. The broken railings fronting onto Garths Head Road have been repaired and there are no longer spear-like protrusions over the footpath. The badly damaged and dangerous railing overlooking the children's play area has not been repaired. (Note: repairs carried out 2 November.)

We considered a very odd questionnaire currently available in the library which has been circulated throughout Eden but seems to refer only to Coronation Park, Appleby and Castle Park, Penrith. Coronation park was the subject of a local consultation exercise last year and Castle Park is currently being reviewed by consultants. We simply could not understand the proforma. We have written to Councillor Langan asking her to enquire into its purpose.

We noted that Coronation Park had been discussed by Eden District Council's Community and Environment Committee on 1 September. Members of that committee were advised that the residents of Appleby wanted to retain and improve the park but no funding had been included in the Council's budget because the District Council wanted to close it. As a result of local pressure, the District Council has agreed to retain it "for the time being." The paper considered by Eden Councillors was one of the worst our Committee had seen – and we have seen some awful ones. Councillors were advised that it will cost £5,000 to improve the play area and £0,000 to landscape it. We do not believe that and we hope that Eden District Councillors didn't. Unfortunately the matter was not drawn to the attention of Appleby Town Council when it met almost two weeks later, despite the fact that one of our District Councillors sits on the Committee concerned – in fact he is its vice-chairman.

Note: Eden District Council's Adrian Cozens later told us that the figures should read £35,000 and £9,000 respectively

Some two hundred English bluebell bulbs were planted in Coronation Park on 2 October 2005. They were donated by a local resident. Our 'volunteer' task force included a nine year old – hopefully she will be able to enjoy the results for many years to come.

We noted that Eden District Council has entered into an agreement with the parochial Church Council in Crosby Ravensworth which should result in large areas of the churchyard and adjacent meadows being left alone until late July each year in order to give wild flowers a chance to seed. We have been pleading with Eden District Council to do the same in Coronation Park. We resolved to try again.

#### Public Toilets

As reported in the previous Newsletter, the Town Council's toilet sub-committee met on 12 September to consider Eden District Council's latest proposals. The Eden District Council report was embargoed until 5 October, the day after our Committee meeting. Graham was only able to tell us that Appleby had fared better than expected as had Dufton and Shap, which had joined us during our campaign.

Chairman's Note: I am drafting this on 5 October so I can report that Eden District Council's Scrutiny Committee is proposing that Eden District Council retains both Broad Close and Market Arcade toilets. They do not consider the toilet for the disabled in the T.I.C. to be essential and they propose to close the Shire Hall toilets. The Town Council's working party agreed to accept the compromise. The Town Council will incorporate the toilet for the disabled into an internal toilet for staff use and have asked that the Shire Hall toilets be maintained in proper working order until they close.

#### Townscape

Nothing new to report. The work is still due to commence on 31 October 2005. The Town Council has been told that Capita will be able to provide samples of actual materials for display in the T.I.C. before work starts.

#### Shire Hall

The Society was represented at a meeting of Appleby Alliance/Appleby Town Council on 7 September 2005 at which it was agreed that all efforts to save the Shire Hall for public use had failed and that Cumbria County Council should be so informed. The Society was promised a copy of the letter which, we are surprised to learn, was to be sent by Appleby Alliance rather than by the

Town Council. No copy letter had been received by the date of this Committee meeting so we agreed that Ian Campbell should contact Appleby Alliance to seek clarification.

Chairman's note: In response to Ian's letter, Appleby Alliance has confirmed that it wrote to Cumbria County Council and Eden District Council shortly after the 7 September 2005 meeting.

#### Appleby New Fair

We are still waiting for a reply to letters sent to Appleby Town Council asking for information relating to its relationship with and responsibility for the Fair. Whilst the Town Council has not supplied the information requested, we note in the October Parish Newsletter, that Councillors are still unclear. However, it appears that Councillors are reading the correspondence as they are discussing the need for a rental agreement for the hire of Fair Hill and, at long last, seem to understand that there needs to be insurance to indemnify the Council and the town against legal claims arising from the Fair. Sadly, the summary of the Council's deliberations contained in the Parish Newsletter defied comprehension but your Committee remains hopeful.

We have previously reported the results of our bids for information relating to the cost of the Fair. The costs incurred by the police and by Eden District Council were reported in the previous Newsletter. Having agreed to bypass our County Councillor and write direct to the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council, we have had two letters. Its direct additional cost as a result of this year's Fair was £4287.15. The County Council was keen to point out that this included £835.68 paid for emergency road cleaning (Eden District Council failed to do it this year) and £1238.21 for costs associated with closing Long Marton Road (something Eden District Council used to do and now refuses to do).

The County Council's second letter was unsolicited. The Council said that a number of school teachers give their free time to liaise with the travellers; the Fire Service spends some time giving advice and the County Trading Standards Department has a role. Thus, it seems, the County Council sees itself to have a role and a responsibility towards the Fair – unlike both Eden and our Town Council.

#### Society Committee

In furtherance of our bid to ensure that each Committee member has a 'job' we were pleased when John Hodge agreed to 'look after' all matters associated with planning and townscape.

#### Oral History

Davina and Vivienne will liaise to compose a list of possible interviewees.

#### Membership/Treasurer

Treasurer reported no bank statement available for this meeting but income from renewed subs was coming in steadily. Approx £70 had been given in donations. A small number of members had not renewed and these will be followed up.

#### Heritage Weekend 10/11 September

Once again, and perhaps for the last time, we found ourselves having to ring round at almost the last minute to ask for stewards for the Shire Hall. Thank you for the response. All volunteers were sent a thank you letter. The weekend got off to a slow start. Appleby did not find its way into English Heritage advertising. Some posters were displayed in the town and we perhaps received some visitors who intended to tour the police station as it was 'advertised' as being open. It wasn't. Saturday was particularly slow and most of us were able to watch shoppers at the Co-op playing draughts with the no waiting cones that the police used to prevent parking in front of the Shire Hall – no chance. (On Sunday, shoppers resolved the problem completely by putting the cones into a

pick-up truck which had been left on the forecourt for several days.) Sunday saw about two hundred visitors, many of whom had come off trains simply to visit Appleby. Luckily we had put up a poster at the station. Visitors were given a guided tour of the complex and our historical displays attracted much interest. We even managed to attract a few new members.

### Planning Matters

We have objected to a 14 foot high illuminated column on the forecourt of the Sands garage. Apart from being unsightly, we think it poses a danger to pedestrians. (Note: this application was refused by Eden District Council on 5 October 2005.) We have supported the bid to restore the Business Centre in Bridge street to something approaching its former glory. (Photographs from the Society archive were used as a starting point.) We have written to Appleby Town Council seeking clarification about the cemetery chapel. We know that the Town Council discussed the matter in June and agreed to ask Eden District Council to repair and retain it. A report considered by Eden Councillors in September did not even mention the Town Council's views.

Typically, Eden District Council agreed to sell a cemetery lodge in Penrith and use the income to repair two cemetery chapels in that town whilst, almost in the same breath, agreeing to sell or demolish Appleby's chapel. Your Committee understands that the chapel is not used – perhaps it is a chicken and egg situation. Perhaps it is not used because it is in a state of disrepair. Has anyone asked? When the chapel was consecrated in 1910 it was provided as a multi-denominational resource not only for Appleby but also for Colby, Hoff and Crackenthorpe. There is no record of those other parishes being asked for an opinion nor, does it seem, were the various church authorities consulted. We have written to the Town Council asking them to resist the District Council.

When Prime UK sought planning consent for a new medical centre in Appleby its proposals included an undertaking to resite the Borough coat of arms from the old fire station within the complex and to use two redundant gas lamp posts from Boroughgate, suitably lit, at the entrance. Eden District Council included those proposals in the planning consent. The coat of arms is fine. Due to an "oversight" the lamp posts remain in Boroughgate and prime UK is seeking to renege on its commitment. We will do our best to keep them to the bargain.

### Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Graham was recently given an article from the *Telegraph*, which explained how Hastings Borough Council had served 160 enforcement notices on the owners of scruffy buildings and how the town has been transformed with a bit of paint and TLC. Appleby does not have 160 scruffy buildings but, as we all know, it has more than its fair share. Your Committee had resolved to discuss the matter at our meeting and it was on our agenda when we saw that Eden District Council had agreed to serve a notice on the owner of a "property in High Wiend". We were unable to discover just which property but we had our suspicions. However, we learned that the notice Eden District Council had agreed to serve was under the Housing Act as the property is deemed unfit for human habitation. Not quite the same as being found wanting within the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act. However, we saw it as a start. We will monitor the situation to see what effect Eden District Council has then we will give them a list of untidy buildings in the Conservation area and remind them of their powers if we have to.

### Programme 2005/6

Included with this Newsletter.

### Exhibition 2006

We have been approached informally and asked if we will put the annual exhibition up in the T.I.C. next spring. We are mindful that the latter days of this year's exhibition were spoiled by sales items

overflowing into the exhibition area. We also know that the Town Council is considering ways in which to expand the shop. We agreed to seek a formal written request, coupled with an undertaking to reimburse the Society for any costs incurred if we agree to stage an exhibition which is then cancelled by the Town Council.

#### Society Christmas Evening 24 November 2005

Graham reported that he has enough 'new' old slides to make the usual slide show worthwhile. The Committee agreed the evening would follow the now traditional pattern – light supper, mulled wine, etc., raffle. Olive will twist arms – er, sorry, ask for volunteers.

#### **From the Secretary**

#### Next Meeting

**Thursday 24 November 2005  
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

**Special Christmas Evening  
More New Slides of Old Appleby**

Graham shows some of the latest additions to the Society's photographic collection.  
A light supper and mulled wine will be available and a raffle will be held.

WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS, READERS AND LISTENERS  
A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

#### **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.