



*Appleby in Westmorland • Root and Branch • May it Flourish Forever*

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**Newsletter November 2007**

**No 74**

**Public Meeting 27 September 2007: Planning for an Emergency**

On Thursday 27 September an audience keen to learn more about his work welcomed Mr Chris Briggs, one of a team of Cumbria County Council's Emergency Planning Officers. After giving a little information about his background, he made a plea that no-one asked him about extensions, conservatories, etc. His was not that sort of planning and he knew nothing about it. What followed was a fascinating insight into what he did know about.

He began with a short film of soldiers demonstrating a beach landing, which actually revealed how not to carry out this exercise as one after the other the soldiers jumped out of their boat, expecting a safe landing on sand, only promptly to fall into dangerous quicksand/mud.

Although concerns about zeppelins in the First World War led to the first introduction of Emergency Planning legislation, Emergency Planning had been in place long before, provision being made for how best to deal with the difficulties of outbreaks of Black Death in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. During the Second World War, ARP wardens provided an Emergency Planning role, which was continued superbly by the Civil Defence Corps. But, with the changes happening in world politics (e.g. the Berlin Wall being taken down, the end of the Cold War, etc) it was decided to disband the Civil Defence Corps. However, events throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s demonstrated the need for continued consideration of Emergency Planning and a plethora of leaflets and T.V. adverts were produced to publicise dangers. We were then shown a sequence of slides of serious industrial disasters – just one category of emergency. He also showed slides of transport disasters. Such events led government to realise that perhaps the disbanding of the Civil Defence Corps may have been a “tactical miscalculation” and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 came into being. This Act specified duties to be carried out by the two categories of responders to an incident. Those for the Category 1 responders, which include the ‘blue-light’ services (police, fire, ambulance), the health authorities and local government, are ‘must do’, whereas those for the Category 2 responders (e.g. utilities, banks, transport providers) are ‘should do’. Cumbria’s Category 1 responders were already working closely together and so were in a good position to comply with the provisions of the Act.

But the allocation of resources is proportionate to population. Thus Cumbria’s financial resources and those of personnel and equipment give cause for concern. By superimposing an outline map of Cumbria over London, Chris clearly illustrated just how big Cumbria is and he contrasted the resources available to Londoners with those available to Cumbrians. Our county’s geography also causes practical difficulties with transport and communication systems, little understood by the ‘powers that be’.

Cumbria's Emergency Planners must consider several categories of potential dangers: chemical plants, nuclear plants, munitions depots, pipelines, busy flight paths, major rail and road links, coastal and inland flooding, coastal and river pollution, pleasure craft on several of the Lakes, not forgetting biological hazards and snow. Various Emergency Plans are in place covering all the contingencies and these are continuously rehearsed and evaluated. The Grayrigg rail crash was a recent test of an Emergency Plan. Procedures were carried out effectively and successfully and Chris was full of praise for the design and construction of the train, which saved so many lives. We learned something of command structures, the phases of an incident and responsibilities of control centres.

Chris ended by giving out some useful websites for anyone interested in learning more. These were [www.cumbriaresilience.info](http://www.cumbriaresilience.info); [www.cumbriaalert.info](http://www.cumbriaalert.info); [www.pfe.gov.uk](http://www.pfe.gov.uk)

It was a fascinating and thought-provoking evening, full of information, and delivered with enthusiasm and humour by Chris, whose active interest in the Keswick Operatic Society clearly helps with presentation.

### **From the Chairman**

#### **“Here is the News” --- But Where?**

In the replies to the questionnaire earlier this year, some people said they liked Graham's polemics because they kept them informed of what was going on in the Town and District Councils. The *Heart of Eden* Church Newsletter, which is delivered free to just about every house in town, was selected more than a year ago as the chosen vehicle by the Town Council for publicising its doings and discussions. It has, in the event, carried reports of Council meetings only sporadically over the last few months; for instance, there was **no** Council content in the November issue. The Council posts copies of Council Agendas on the notice board beside the T.I.C., not a venue calculated to engender restful meditation with one's bottom being brushed by passing traffic. Minutes are available in the T.I.C., sometimes a less than restful environment, and they get into the Library, a bit intermittently, to be viewed during the ever-diminishing openings of that establishment. They are also supposed to get on to the Council web-site. I think that being able to get a summary of Council events into one's own house, to read at one's own leisure, is a great advantage, and half of that possibility is already in place with the *Heart of Eden* (assuming that the Churches continue to support that project) and you do not need a computer to read it.

To fill the gap, even temporarily, your Committee is considering running the present Society Newsletter in two parts; one part being Society and historic matters and the other being civic matters where, in addition to Graham's commentary, we would try to publish a summary of events in the Council Chamber(s), preferably from an independent reporter or reporters, until such time as the job is taken on by some regular form of Council contribution that is easily accessible to residents. It would indeed be only every two months and restricted to Society members, but it might act as a stop-gap. We are not certain whether or not this idea would be well received by you, our members, so please let us have some feed-back as to what you think of the idea. If you want to express your opinion, please could you let me, or Vivienne, or any Committee member know before Christmas.

### **Fair News**

Largely by accident, we happened upon a report by the new Chief Executive of Eden District Council to his Council to be considered at their meeting on 25 October 2007. In it, he recommends a total change to the recent consistent policy that EDC should avoid like the plague any involvement with Appleby New Fair, especially with regards to management of it. He rightly

points out that whatever the narrow legal reading of any trouble with the Fair, Eden will get the blame anyway, so they might as well organise some control over the event. There is much more, almost all of which your Society has been arguing in support of for many years. So we are pleased to welcome this initiative and await, with interest and, it must be said, some trepidation, the reception it receives by Eden District Council. (You will no doubt know what happened by the time you read this – our Editor's deadlines are strict, with unmentionable penalties for missing them!)

It is very interesting that we have heard that a another body, the Civil Contingencies and Protective Security Unit at Carleton Hall, wants to assume "...responsibility for all major event planning within Cumbria Constabulary ...", and this includes New Fair. Aren't we suddenly popular?

So we can rest assured that now all will be well – bigger Brothers are massing to rush to our succour and salvation; but it appears that someone with a bit of clout will be overseeing things – we hope.

### **Job Descriptions**

I said I would pursue the matter of job descriptions of Council employees – what we are paying for. Well, we now have the Town Clerk's official (last known) job description to hand, so comparisons can be made between what it stipulates SHOULD happen with what ACTUALLY is happening.

### **Exhibition 2008**

Again being master-minded by Anne Coles, next year's exhibition is already being planned. The exhibition will have, as its theme, the old shops in the town and we are looking for any images, papers, bills, artefacts, etc. to illustrate this theme. Do any current shopkeepers, ex-shopkeepers or their relatives have anything they would be willing to lend? Any Committee member will be delighted to hear from you.

### **Appleby Accolade**

We have read with great misgivings that Frank Harland will edit and produce his last *Heart of Eden* Church Newsletter with the Christmas/January issue 2007/8. It was only when we started to try and get replacement volunteers to produce the Newsletter that we really discovered how much effort is involved and just how much work Frank had been putting in, largely unsung. He edits the Newsletter, drums up advertising, prints it, collates it, handles all the correspondence for it as well as, in the meantime, doing other print jobs for other people and organisations, like the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society – he prints our Newsletter. All this for extremely low costs. *Heart of Eden* was nominated as the recommended vehicle for the Town Council to broadcast information about its doings, largely because of the excellent distribution system that takes the publication to just about every address in Appleby. Thus it is far more than only a church magazine – it has become a very important part of the fabric of life in Appleby. This is due in no small part to Frank's hard work and enthusiasm. Thank you, Frank – we hope enjoy your retirement.

R Ian Campbell

### **A Personal Message**

I have been told that the cancer which caused so much trouble this year is no more. Whatever is wrong with me, and I hope nothing serious is, it is not that! Which gives me an opportunity to thank a great many people for their care, support and kindness during a difficult period. My wife kept me sane(ish), the Appleby Medical Practice has been superb throughout and the District Nurses kept me going through some very hard days and nights. I hate to think what might have happened without them. Many members of the Society have sent or expressed their best wishes and others have helped in practical ways by providing transport. Both Anne and I would like to use the Newsletter to say "thank you" to each and every one of you.

There have been other ‘difficulties’ during the year. A Town Councillor wrote to me accusing me of lying about my attendance at a Council surgery but once he had realised his mistake, he apologised. Two other Councillors told a Standards Board investigator that I had passed confidential information, obtained from a Councillor, to the media. They were also given an opportunity to apologise but declined. The matter is back with the Standards Board. At least the first Councillor had the guts to accuse me direct. I’m not sure what to make of Councillors who made unfounded accusations that I was not in a position to refute. No-one interviewed me about the allegation. Perhaps someone will now.

Graham Coles

## **History Slot**

### **Town Council Traditions**

The expression ‘Senior Councillor’ has re-surfaced recently. Time to slay the dragon once and for all? At its January 1975 meeting the Town Council agreed that the former aldermanic robes and benches could be used by the four Councillors with the longest unbroken service BUT THEY WOULD HAVE NO OTHER TITLE. The first Councillors to qualify were C P Hirst, F Brown, D Macdonald and J G Sanderson. At the same meeting, the Mayor, Audrey Wappett, created another tradition by instructing, without debate, that, henceforth, Councillors would sit in neat rows with Appleby Ward Councillors on one side of the chamber and Bongate representatives on the other. She received one or two mocking salutes. Only one Councillor refused to move but his defiance was short-lived once it was pointed out that his preferred seat was exactly where the Mayor wanted him to sit.

### **Chariots of Fire (Part 3)**

In the May 2007 Newsletter Maggie Clowes introduced us to Appleby’s volunteer fire brigade and to ‘The Tufton’, a steam-powered, horse-drawn fire pump kindly donated by Sir Henry Tufton which arrived with all due ceremony on 18 April 1879. The July Newsletter reminded us of the local politics of the time and of the considerable disquiet which surrounded this free gift which might cost a few pounds a year to run.

Turning now to the human interest element of our story – you can’t run a fire brigade without firemen – and to another meeting in the Tufton Arms early in 1879. Almost fifty men turned up from whom twenty were chosen by ballot. The names are worth recording if only because of the number of traditional ‘Appleby’ names to be found. They were William Baxter, Dargue Steadman, William Hebson, John Wappett, John Nichol, Thomas Noble, Thomas Rigg, Joseph Noble, Frank Story, A C Whitehead, William Noble, John Story, J H Martindale jnr, William Steadman, John Metcalfe, John Baxter, William Tydd, John Shaw, William Story and John Crow. Members were allowed to appoint their own Captain, the first being a Captain Noble.

We know that The Tufton’s first trip was to the Castle on the day it arrived but a week later it was taken from its lodgings (the coach house of the Tufton Arms) to the riverside where hundreds of residents saw it in action. Later it was taken to the Market Square and successfully connected to the water hydrants – also very new in Appleby. Fortunately it worked. Later still on that busy day, it was back to the Castle where Admiral Elliott, Sir Henry Tufton’s agent, said how well the men managed, given that they had almost no training. During the evening, back at the coach house, the engine was shown to representatives of the press. For those who are technically-minded and to complete the record as best we can, this is what the reporters were told: “The engine is capable of pumping three hundred gallons a minute and weighs about one ton. It is mounted on high, wooden-spoked wheels suitable for town or country roads and has a brake applied to both rear wheels. The machine is drawn by two horses in a similar manner to a gentleman’s carriage. Ten members of the brigade can ride on the engine. The engineer rides behind the engine on a small footplate behind the furnace door so that he may get up steam whilst the engine is travelling. The cylinder is 5½”

diameter and the pump has a diameter of 4½” with a stroke of 12”. The pump, valves and working parts are made of gun metal to ensure strength and prevent corrosion. Besides carrying the men and coal for the boiler the machine has a box to carry all the tools. The hose is carried beneath the seat the men ride on and alongside the engine there are brackets to carry the suction pumps. The boiler is self-feeding. It will take its supply direct from the main pump or, in the event of working with foul water, will feed itself from a bucket if need be.”

Whilst Sir Henry Tufton was mentioned a great deal and why not, as he was the benefactor, he did not see the engine until 1895 following a fire at the Castle. We will learn more of this fire in a later History Slot.

Readers will recall that the March 1879 meeting of the East Ward Union agreed that the cost of the engine should be borne by the whole Union and not just by the Appleby and Bongate Special Drainage District and that the Local Government Board would be asked to issue the necessary Order to put this into effect. Before the ink was dry on the letter to the Local Government Board, Mr Sanderson gave notice that he would seek to have the resolution overturned when the Sanitary Authority (part of the Union) next met. He did exactly that and, in May 1879, he proposed that the original resolution, passed by ten votes to four, should be rescinded and that the engine should be based in Appleby and charged to the Appleby and Bongate Special Drainage District. That same meeting considered a letter from the Local Government Board which asked for the views of Sir Henry.

When the East Ward Union met in June it was addressed by the Rev Bellas (Vicar of St Michael's, Bongate), the Ven Archdeacon Boutflower (Vicar of St Lawrence) and Mr John Pearson, Union representative for Bongate. They also argued in favour of the cost of the volunteer fire brigade falling on Bongate and Appleby. Sir Henry's agent, Admiral Elliott, had been required, yet again, to justify his employer's gift. Letters from several residents were read at the meeting, the general theme being that they had not been consulted. Mr Pearson thought there was no need for a fire engine and Mr Lancaster argued that it should be sent back. Admiral Elliott wrote, "In offering the steam fire engine, Sir Henry was anxious to supply a want which had been seriously felt by the inhabitants of Appleby and Bongate. Sir Henry had put it in the custody of a responsible body with power to maintain it. It was his wish that it should be used over as wide an area as possible. The annual cost of the maintenance should not exceed £20 and it had not occurred to Sir Henry that such a trifle would cause difficulty." Messrs Bellas, Boutflower and Pearson wrote independently to the Local Government Board seeking to counter the resolution of the Union agreed at its March meeting. The matter was not finally resolved until September 1879 when the Local Government Board approved an Order which permitted the East Ward Union to "exact due recompense" from parishes outside the Special Drainage District for "providing all necessary means and appliances for extinguishing fires".

The niggling continued for months. In December 1879 the Clerk to the East Ward Union wrote to Appleby Corporation to enquire the terms on which it would allow the fire engine right of way to the engine house which "Sir Henry Tufton had permitted them to use". The Council agreed to allow the engine to travel over its property for one shilling a year.

So, just where was the engine being kept? The Tufton Arms was built in 1873, six years before the engine arrived. We know it first used the coach house at the hotel, but for how long and, more importantly, where did it move to? The Midland Railway ceased to use its pumping station (shown in the background of the photo in the previous Newsletter) in about 1876 when it took its water from the town mains. However, it was not until 1 July 1883 that the railway company ceased to 'require the road to the old engine house on the Sands'. The engine could have moved to the old pumping station very soon after it ceased to be used but there is no evidence to suggest that Sir

Henry Tufton owned it at any time. Conversely, there is no evidence to suggest that the 'road' to the Tufton Arms stables was owned by the Corporation.

In 1931 (yes, we are jumping ahead) Alderman Rigg, of whom we will learn a great deal more in relation to the fire brigade, told Appleby Borough Council that he had used the road/footpath from the Sands to the Grammar School for many years to exercise his horses. Indeed, he used the "roadway to the engine house for driving the fire engine for 28 years". Since the 'new' fire station on Chapel Street opened in 1901 and the fire brigade was formed in 1879, "28 years" doesn't tell us a lot except that the Midland Railway pumping station did, in fact, become Appleby's fire engine house for a number of years.

To be continued .....

Maggie Clowes and Graham Coles

## **Current Affairs**

### **Appleby New Fair Joint Committee 9 October**

When this august body met in July, its Chairman promised that all meetings of the Committee and its Working Groups would be advertised on the Council's notice board at the Tourist Information Centre. We were also promised that meetings would be in the evenings to encourage public participation. I duly reported on these helpful promises in the September Newsletter. Alas, I misinformed you. Meetings will not be in the evening (except perhaps the one following next year's Fair) and no meetings of Working Groups will be advertised. Indeed, finding out about the October meeting took some time and only the TIC manageress and I were there to represent the public.

We did learn a few things. Eden District Council will start to take the Fair seriously again. Its Scrutiny Committee is already examining EDC's role and responsibilities. The Health and Safety Executive has told the District Council that its writ does not run to the 'flashing lane', nor does it cover agricultural land when it is being used for non-agricultural purposes. That should concentrate a few minds. The EDC representative on the Committee also mentioned that, whilst her Council had taken a soft line when it came to the use of land for caravans, the new Chief Executive intended to adopt a firmer stance. She also told the Committee that EDC had asked the RSPCA to think again about the ramp.

Towards the close of the July meeting I asked the RSPCA to supply some information about the gradient of a horse box ramp and a representative of the travellers promised to bring his copy of the 'charter' authorising the Fair to the next meeting. There was no RSPCA representative at the meeting and no 'charter' was produced.

In the September Newsletter, we reported that EDC spent £11,962 on this year's Fair. That figure was supplied to the Town Council by EDC. A report to the District Council's Scrutiny Committee in October 2007 stated that the cost was £85,000. A report by the Chief Executive of Eden District Council, also in October 2007, claims that the annual cost is £40,050. I suspect that no one really knows how much it costs us to support the Fair.

### **Appleby Town Council and our Newsletter**

In September the Town Council finally got round to considering our May Newsletter. By then most of the matters we had raised had been resolved. Councillor Thwaytes, who had been asked by the Mayor to prepare a paper for discussion, told his colleagues that the Town Clerk now omits verbatim exchanges from the minutes; individual Councillors will not be given delegated authority; vague agenda items which give Councillors no opportunity to prepare for debates are now a thing of

the past; the Finance and General Purposes Committee will end the practice of passing resolutions and will submit its recommendations to the full Council; the Clerk will cease to treat the Annual Town meeting as a Council meeting and a change to the Code of Conduct should mean that Councillors will not feel obliged to report each other for alleged misconduct. Councillors were asked to approve four recommendations – the omission of ‘Correspondence’ as an agenda item; that Councillors should not act as press reporters; that Council minutes should be displayed on a public notice board and that the rules of debate are followed.

The Council has since agreed to provide a notice board in the Public Hall Arcade which will be used to display agendas, Council minutes and Committee minutes. It seemed strange that Councillors were asked to agree that its rules of debate should be followed but, as they seldom are, a timely reminder was sensible. Fur and feathers flew at the very idea that Councillors should not act as reporters. This despite the fact that a Councillor, using the nom de plume R E Porter both contributes to and edits the *Heart of Eden* Parish Newsletter. (This long-standing practice is soon to end.) The way in which Councillors debated whether or not they should act as press reporters is considered next.

### **Appleby Town Council and the Media**

When I wrote my ‘Current Affairs’ piece for the May 2007 Newsletter I drew attention to several areas where I considered our Council’s procedures to be wrong in law or practice – sometimes both. As stated above, most of the matters have been or are being addressed but, for some reason, the matter which attracted most concern from Councillors was the suggestion that a Councillor might have acted as a press reporter.

In the Newsletter, I took what I thought to be a satirical swipe at the very idea that Councillor Langan might have overturned 800 years of Council tradition and then boasted about it to *The Herald*. I was at pains to point out that she would not do such a thing and twice pointed out that she could not have written the article. Why, then, were Councillors so concerned when Councillor Thwaytes suggested, “Councillors should not act as press reporters as their impartiality in acting in dual roles can be called into question”? Perhaps it was because *The Herald* had sent a reporter to the Council meeting on 12 September that so many column inches were devoted to such a minor matter under the headline, “Town Councillors Shouldn’t Act as Reporters.” I thought at first she was doing a bit of job protection. Unfortunately, her article contained a number of factual errors. When I wrote to the Editor to draw attention to the other, far more important, matters discussed by the Council that evening, I was disappointed to see that *The Herald*’s printed version of my letter contained typographical errors which made a confused situation even more confusing. Still, *The Herald* reporter got the important thing right. Councillor Patterson had said that no Councillors acted as press reporters and that, whilst the husband of a Councillor sometimes contributed reports, all details were obtained from either the minutes or the Town Clerk. No suggestion, then, that he obtained information from his wife. So far, so good.

Since the minutes are usually agreed long after the relevant press report appears, it would seem that the husband concerned obtains his information directly from the Town Clerk. As I sit through countless and often pointless Council meetings in order to write my piece for this Newsletter, it crossed my mind to ask if she would do the same for me. Before I could ask, the Town Clerk telephoned me at home to clarify the situation. She allows the husband of a Councillor to read her verbatim notes of Council meetings so that he can write for the press. No suggestion that he was writing on behalf of the Council or that individual Councillors were aware of the practice. Hopefully, Councillors might seek clarification. The Town Clerk’s job description on appointment was clear. She is required “to prepare, in consultation with the Mayor or appropriate committee chairmen, press releases about the activities or decisions of the Council”.

Much of this would be in the 'passing trivia' category had it not been for the way in which one of our Town Councillors was accused of leaking confidential information to the press via me. It is now a matter of public record that the Investigating Officer told Eden District Council that, "In the absence of any evidence to support the allegation, the allegation must fail". I will not add to his findings at the moment as the matter is again being considered by the Standards Board.

However, since the Town Clerk is not subject to a Standards Board investigation I can point out that she told the officer investigating the original complaint against an ex Councillor that, "There have been a number of confidential meetings concerning the staff employed by the Town Council and apparent details of those meetings have appeared in the local press." When I wrote to ask what she had read and where she had seen it as I was trying very hard to ascertain what decisions had been taken behind closed doors, she wrote to say, "It would be entirely inappropriate for me to enter into any correspondence upon this subject with you, as I am sure you will understand." When she wrote that, in June 2007, I did not understand.

Perhaps I do now. If details of Council meetings are allowed to be seen by the husband of a Councillor who then contributes to local newspapers, why on earth was this not pointed out to the Investigating Officer?

### **The Sting in the Tail**

Our September Newsletter contained a 'Stop Press' item which said that the Town Council had "accepted that the criticisms (feedback) contained in our May Newsletter were valid, would do its best to improve and thanked the Society for drawing their shortcomings to attention." Those words were penned the morning after the Council meeting on 12 September 2007 and before *The Herald* published its report on 22 September 2007. The report was not up to the usual *Herald* standard and contained a number of errors, not least confusing Cllr Thwaytes with Cllr Morgan. *The Herald* account includes the following quote, said to be by Mr Thwaytes, "I thank the editor of the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society for raising these points, although some of the criticisms were not valid criticisms and a certain amount contained a number of inaccuracies on which comments were based. However, they have been highlighted and debated and acted upon and we should draw a line under them." The underlining is mine. The words attributed to Cllr Thwaytes were, in fact, spoken by Cllr Morgan.

When the draft minutes of the Council meeting arrived (the Town Clerk routinely sends the Society a copy) they read, "The Council resolved to note Cllr Thwaytes' comments and comments made in the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society Newsletter, act upon them where appropriate, thank the editor of that Newsletter for raising these points for Council's attention (even though some of the criticisms were not valid criticisms – a certain amount contained a number of inaccuracies on which the comments were based) and draw a line under the whole incident."

The similarities between the phraseology of both *The Herald* and the Town Clerk version of events suggests that it is not only the husband of a Councillor who is briefed by the Town Clerk. The important difference is that Cllr Morgan did say that Cllr Thwaytes' recommendations had been acted upon whereas the official record casts doubt on that. I was there. I heard what Cllr Morgan said.

I also heard Cllr Morgan's words of qualification. As he had not seen fit to explain what he meant to his colleagues, I interpreted them as being an 'off the cuff' remark. If he had been serious and had concerns about accuracy and validity, surely he would have alerted Councillors to the 'inaccuracies' on which my comments were based. My comments were based on Council minutes. If the minutes were inaccurate, he surely had a duty to say so. It would appear that the Town Clerk was equally confused as she put the Councillor's qualifying words in brackets. As Cllr Thwaytes



had informed his colleagues that the Clerk no longer included unnecessary verbiage in the minutes, I took Cllr Morgan's words to be just that – verbiage.

An attempt to have the words in brackets removed from the record failed when the Council next met. Cllr Morgan again declined to elucidate to his colleagues. It is not just that the words in brackets are set to remain as part of the record of a public body that should trouble Councillors, it is also the way that the decision was reached. Our Mayor played a part in this fiasco. Having agreed in June that the feedback in our Newsletter should be considered by Council, he had not attended any of the three subsequent meetings when the matter was on the agenda. Having taken no part in discussions which led to the draft minute, he felt able not only to vote against removing the words in brackets but also to use his casting vote to ensure that they would remain as part of the record. Just what Eden District Council's new Chief Executive, who was at the meeting, thought of it all is not known.

What happened failed to surprise me, which is sad, for I have been a 'Council watcher' for longer than most Councillors have been in post. Once upon a time I found the Council ever so slightly amusing and I still try to inject a light-hearted note into my 'Current Affairs' pages. But I am no longer light-hearted. It's a dull business, commenting on our Council's machinations and watching some of our brightest and best Councillors being cast aside either out of boredom or malice. Appleby Town Council appears to be accountable to no-one and nothing. As a Parish Council it is not subject to the Ombudsman for Local Government. Eden District Council's Monitoring Officer, who was ever so active when ex Cllr Clowes' reputation was on the line, is on record as telling me that he has no remit to monitor the way our Council conducts its affairs. Once upon a time, the Council enjoyed the services of Ted Robertson, Ted the Red as he was popularly known, from his time as a shop steward at Appleby Dairy. As far as I can ascertain, Ted was the only Town Councillor to be elected on a party ticket. He took his job seriously and was a delight to watch in action. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the rule book made him a bit of a nuisance at times as he would insist on things being done properly. Now he's gone and there are very few with more than a passing knowledge of or interest in the rules of local government.

Having accepted Cllr Thwaytes' report in September, however grudgingly, Councillors went straight back to custom and practice in October. For example, having agreed that delegating authority to a single Councillor was not to happen, Councillors gave authority to a single Councillor to engage an architect to design a bus shelter for the Sands and to agree a fee for his services. That single Councillor has thus been given the power to commit Council expenditure. Illegal, but so what? Incidentally, most councils select street furniture from one of several readily-available catalogues and do not waste money on one-off designs. Another example - in June this year, Councillors were reminded that working parties should report to one of the two main Committees and not direct to full Council. In October this year they agreed to a proposal coming direct from a working party. If that can happen, what is the point of the Finance and General Purposes Committee?

This begs a further question. My well-thumbed copy of the *Good Councillor's Guide* gives a long list of things which should concern town councils. The list ends by saying, "Of course, your Council could always decide to do very little; but you and your electors might wonder why the Council exists at all."

Graham Coles

### **Book Review**

**1314** – written by Adrian Rogan, his second about Andreas de Harcla, a warrior knight of the time of Robert the Bruce. It is a skilful blend of years of patient historical research and a love of the

Borders, an area continually fought over during the Middle Ages. Packed with well- and little-known facts, some of which will surprise you, and interlaced with human interest, this is a book which puts life into the derring-do of history. It is also a jolly good read.

Published by Hayloft Publications, 194 pages, price - £10.00.

Graham Coles

### **The Future of the 561 Bus Service**

Until April 2007 Cumbria produced a twice-yearly comprehensive bound public transport guide called 'Getting Around Cumbria': it included all bus and ferry service timetables in the county plus railway information, though this was sometimes out of date. Now this has fallen victim to County Council economies. The A4 stapled booklet produced by Stagecoach now carries the Cumbria logo too, and that is all that is available. Called the 'Cumbria Rider', it is limited to the 'main bus service network' and does not include the 561, 573, 625 or 943. However, Cumbria did produce a timetable leaflet for the 561 Appleby-Kendal, which has been distributed to nearly every home in Appleby and Bongate. If you didn't get one, there are copies in the TIC, Post Office and Library and Andy Connell also has some.

The best hope for the future of this once-a-week link between Westmorland's two historic capitals is that it can run without need for subsidy from Cumbria. Regular passenger loadings of thirty to forty, which were typical over last summer, will achieve that; so it is vital that you don't just express sympathy, but do actually ride the bus - better still, make a habit of it. The ride is picturesque; the coach is comfortable, the operators, Robinsons, are friendly and helpful, as are your fellow-passengers; Kendal is a fine town to visit; and, arriving back in Appleby before half past three, you haven't given up a whole day.

Andy Connell

### **Committee Meeting 9 October 2007**

**Matters Arising from Minutes for 7 August 2007:** Memorial Trees – more damage was reported; Explorer Films – further meeting of sub-committee to be organised to progress the project; Vice-Presidency – it was confirmed that Olive has accepted our invitation to be a Vice-President; Future Programme – 2007/8 programme complete and suggested outing considered; Publications – in progress.

### **Reports:**

Treasurer/Membership – balance as at 5 October 2007 £5391.28. In addition £234.62 remains of grant funding and £65 donation for a talk given by Ian has been ring-fenced for use on the Lady Anne DVD project. 'Gentle reminders' have been sent for subscriptions. The only outstanding commitment is to Andy Connell/Appleby Grammar School for photocopying material about New Fair.

Oral History – a suggestion has been received that Peter Sowerby should be interviewed for his knowledge about the buildings on Doomgate previously housing a blacksmith's.

Planning/Townscape – discussed ramp on the Sands, multi-activity area for play proposed for King George's Field, Eden Local Housing Plan, Townscape Working Party, road crossing on the Sands.

Appleby New Fair Joint Committee – continuing representation discussed. It was decided that the Society would continue its involvement. Initiatives by the new Chief Executive of EDC and by Cumbria Constabulary's Chief Inspector were welcomed.

Shire Hall – item to be removed from the agenda.

Cemetery Chapel – Ian’s concerns about lack of Treasurer and accounts have led him to resign from this Committee.

Chamber of Trade and Community Association – it was agreed to continue to support this group. It is hoped that the group might be able to help with our 2008 exhibition.

**Ramp on the Sands** – EDC is asking RSPCA to reconsider its proposals.

**Play Wall** – location plan for the multi-activity area for play inspected. It was noted that its location was different to that initially suggested when Sue Fell briefed the Town Council.

**Membership on Outside Committees** – Ian to continue to represent the Society on the New Fair Joint Committee but will resign from Cemetery Chapel Committee. We would look to support a Parish Plan.

**2008 Exhibition** – in hand. Theme – Appleby Shops. Poster in preparation.

**Society Archive: IT update and Accommodation** – brief report given of meeting held 24 September between Carl Bendelow, John Reid, Tony Greenwood, Vivienne and Ian. Tony and Vivienne to test the prototype data-input form created by John. Funding will be required to progress the project. Accommodation needed urgently – to house the archive initially, as well as for the computers, etc to be used by volunteers to create the database.

**EDC Local Housing Plan** – consultation meetings had been held in other places. Letter to EDC to ask why no meeting at Appleby. Response – other parish councils had requested meetings. There had been no such request from Appleby Town Council.

**Correspondence received** – from Asby History Group giving details of forthcoming events; Heskett Local History Group requesting a guided walk round Appleby; FOCAS Newsletter 64, details of its AGM 20 October 2007 and list of events planned for 2007/8; Windermere and Bowness Civic Society Newsletters 89 and 90; Cumbria Police Authority Eden Area Community Liaison Forum agenda for meeting to be held 10 October 2007 at Newton Rigg plus minutes of meeting 11 July 2007.

**Any Other Business** – Ravenstonedale Local History Group new premises at High Chapel now open to visitors; no progress with the bus shelter on the Sands; proposal to divide Newsletter into a ‘heritage’ section and a ‘civic’ section; arrangements for Christmas Special evening 10 December.

**Next meeting** – 4 December 2007. This date has since been changed to 27 November 2007.

### **From the Secretary**

#### **Next Meeting**

**Thursday 29 November 2007 7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

#### **“Milestones Past and Present” Speaker – Mr Colin Smith**

Mr Colin Smith, Cumbria representative of the Milestone Society, will give an illustrated talk about the work of this Society, founded in 2001 to identify, record, research and interpret milestones and other waymarkers.

#### **Special Christmas Evening**

Don't forget, **Monday 10 December 2007**, in the **Methodist Meeting Room, The Sands** starting at **7.30 p.m.** **Graham's "Christmas Special" Slides of Appleby.** Light refreshments will be provided and there will be a raffle.

As this is the last Newsletter before Christmas we take the opportunity to send compliments of the season and

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

**Website: [www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk](http://www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk)**

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.

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The Appleby-in-Westmorland Society Newsletter is published by the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society and is edited by Vivienne Gate, Secretary, tel: 017683 51597