



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

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Newsletter February 2016

No 115

Fundraising for those affected by the Floods

In a change to the usual order of things, I need to bring to the attention of members the change of venue for the Table Top Sale that is being held on Sunday 20 March, 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. Instead of at the Bowling Club, the sale will take place in the main downstairs room of the Public Hall. As indicated later in the Newsletter, the proceeds from this and the Coffee Morning being held in the Supper Room on Saturday 2 April will be divided between the Bowling Club and the Appleby Flood Fund. Please support these fundraising events.

Public Meeting 26 November 2015: Christmas Special:- “Do you recognize

The meeting began with further discussion about the future of the Society as Ian gave details of his thoughts and ideas. As the Chairman, Secretary and three Committee members wished to retire, it was suggested that one way forward would be to have small groups concentrating on the archive, the website, finance, membership, publicity and exhibitions respectively. Secretary Vivienne Gate noted the names of those members willing to be involved in the future running of the Society on this or a similar basis with a view to organising a meeting of these members sometime in February. When asked, those members who attended this meeting made it clear that they wanted the Society to continue.

Next, came the fun part as we puzzled over the photographs taken by Ian of various premises, properties and features of the town. Well-known places photographed “out of context” caused lots of head-scratching and deep discussion as members perused the images. Choruses of “Of course it is” were heard when the answers were given. Those who weren’t able to join us at this event will be able to have a go at identifying the locations as there are plans to create a quiz sheet using the pictures.

The finale was food, glorious food and members enjoyed savouries and sweets provided by Committee members. Thanks go to everyone who helped in any way to make this another entertaining and enjoyable evening.

The next public meeting will be held in the Supper Room on 31st March, starting at 7.30 p.m. when popular speaker, Andy Lowe, will return to talk about ‘Woodland Crafts’.

Val Kendall

From the Chairman

Floods

This will be my last "From the Chairman", and I would like to float a suggestion that we might like to work on for future disasters like the recent floods, based on my personal experience of the events before Christmas.

There were many things done to alleviate peoples' disasters and difficulties that were not circulated quickly and accurately through the town, and I would like us to consider how best to get notification to everyone resident in Appleby of these sterling efforts to help. We need a central point to which people who are organising things can submit particulars of their scheme and prompt an immediate reaction so that as many people as possible can benefit, or offer help. In this instance I am concerned with information about efforts being made at short notice, to help people fast; longer-term support can be dealt with by present means. I have in mind using modern technology to get such information to the maximum possible number of residents FAST.

It seems to me that a small committee of computer-literate people could discuss the best way to achieve this – for instance, would it be best to:

- utilise a current system like Facebook with a dedicated internet page to put this info on and only such information?

- let anyone get to place material on it, or use it for only dedicated and named people representative of organisations in the town?

- establish a person or office, readily available, that can be contacted with information and then have a set list of addressees to which this information can be sent instantly, including addresses like Facebook, Twitter, our website, the Town website, &c., &c?

Using the internet would get the messages to a large number of readers, so that they at least will know about it and be able to pass it on to friends and neighbours who do not use the internet.

But we might want to include non-internet means of publication, if they are fast enough.

Such a scheme will need careful thought and some preparation, but things like the bus service avoiding the closed bridge I knew nothing about till it had finished; or the shopping bus to Kirkby Steven Co-op about which all sorts of rumours circulated as to its availability; or medical service arrangements - these are examples, and just examples, of what I am thinking of.

Comments?

Website Arises from Somnolence!

We have spent a lot of time and effort revitalising the Society website so that we can actually use it sensibly as a major activity for our Society. Search for "Appleby-in-Westmorland Society", and have a look at it.

We are not experts in websiting or whatever it may be called, but we are employing people that know about these things. We are open to suggestion for improvements. Contact Ian Campbell or Vivienne Gate if you have any ideas - we do not guarantee your idea WILL be used, but it MAY be a wonderful improvement we cannot do without. Like all websites, ours thrives on input, so please submit historical articles, reminiscences, points of view, accounts of experiences, anything that you think could possibly be of interest to members. Submit them initially to Ian or Vivienne (e-mail for Ian: campian79@hotmail.co.uk, e-mail for Vivienne: viviennegate@aol.com). We will try to set up a smoother system as we gain momentum, which I dearly hope will be gathered very soon.

R Ian Campbell

Appleby Accolade

Goes to Appleby – for the way its residents reacted to the floods and their aftermath. Here's to getting back on track.

Vivienne

History Slot

WHERE'S THE HOSPITAL?

Appleby was justly proud of the Red Cross hospital based in the Red House, which looked after many convalescent soldiers in the First World War. But where did local people go for treatment?

In the second half of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century there were usually one or two doctors in a town the size of Appleby but since they expected payment, people who couldn't afford the fees had to rely on homegrown remedies. Operations, if needed, would be carried out in the doctor's house;

my own father in London in the early 1900's was taken in a wheelbarrow to the doctor's house to have his tonsils removed.

Where could the ordinary person go? Workhouses offered very basic medical care as most of them had some sort of infirmary but they were served, usually reluctantly, by a local doctor and any nursing was done by often illiterate and drunken inmates. Conditions did improve gradually as more nurses were trained, but, in spite of being the county town, Appleby did not even have a workhouse; the nearest ones were at Shap and Kirkby Stephen.

Penrith's workhouse dated from 1838, a fever ward being added in 1848. Its Jubilee Cottage Hospital was opened in 1898 and an Isolation Hospital was opened on Fair Hill, just outside the town, in 1895.

Kendal had a workhouse as early as 1769 when it held 136 people. By 1849 the numbers had risen to a staggering 335. There was a hospital set up by voluntary subscription in 1869 but, since not many subscribers came from Appleby, they weren't keen to admit Appleby patients and in any case they only planned "to assist those above the classes from whom the workhouses are filled". The Westmorland General Hospital was not built until 1908.

Carlisle's Cumberland Infirmary had been built by subscription in 1830. Local newspapers in Westmorland refer to collections made in parish churches to support it in spite of the fact that it was in Cumberland. The Union Workhouse (which became the City General Hospital) had a fever ward attached to it but there was also a Voluntary Hospital for Infectious Disease started as early as 1820. It is interesting that, when it was suggested that a cottage hospital should be built in Appleby to mark the Queen's Jubilee, one Alderman said why bother when it was so convenient to go to Carlisle!

Thanks to the initiative of the indefatigable Lady Hothfield Appleby had a qualified nurse to tend to the poor. In 1893 she set up the Sick Nursing Association with the object of collecting enough subscriptions to pay a nurse. The money rolled in and the fund was boosted by a splendid concert in the Public Hall. Well attended by local notables, the hall was packed and the programme was reckoned to be one of the best held in Appleby for a long time. It raised £20 (over £1,000)

Within a year a nurse had been appointed - Miss Annie Barber - and accommodation provided in the Castle Lodge. She was kept busy - in seven months she had paid 640 visits to the sick poor. Patients were referred by a doctor or by a member of the Committee. A special service was held in St Lawrence Church where the Reverend Canon Matthews appealed eloquently for funds to maintain the nursing service in Appleby. He hoped that there might be at some time a cottage hospital as, "In [his] experience there had been much sickness in this place. Not many years ago that little town was visited by a terrible disease, and many very valuable lives were lost simply because they were unable to deal properly with the sickness." Ultimately the nurse was provided with a house and the role gradually turned into that of Health Visitor in response to concerns about infant mortality.

The "terrible disease" was smallpox and, although it was well known that cases had to be isolated to stop the spread of infection, there was a singular failure locally to provide suitable accommodation. Local Boards of Guardians were set up in 1834 to deal with problems created by poverty, one of which was recurring infectious diseases. In 1875 the Boards of Guardians became Rural Sanitary Authorities. Appleby came under the East Ward Guardians but it is difficult to see how much of their work was actually done by the town council; all complicated by the fact that many of the same people served on both bodies. As early as 1839 the chairman of the East Ward guardians reported that a committee set up to provide "efficient and economical accommodation" recommended that a wooden building should be erected on Fair Hill and equipped with both beds and attendants.

In 1871 there was a serious outbreak with 51 cases reported; an observer commented that, in spite of Whit Monday being a hiring day, the town was like a desert. Four years later the county Medical Officer reported that there had been 17 cases and 6 deaths in a little group of overcrowded cottages (26 people had to use one privy) in Bongate. Efforts were made to prevent the spread of the disease. Mr. Chapman, the local surgeon, offered to vaccinate people at no charge and advertised this by posting handbills round the town.

The fever hospital was still functioning in 1873 when a cart coming from Aisgill Moor drove into the town and deposited two patients at the hospital and hastily departed. The local policeman bemoaned the fact that the driver couldn't be charged, saying, "Had it occurred under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act the delinquent would have been brought to justice."

By 1875 the hospital needed repairs but nothing seems to have been done as, when smallpox patients were brought to Appleby from one of the navvies' camps, the Westmorland Gazette reported that the building "needed the immediate attention of the authorities to render it in any way fit to receive sick patients."

By 1893 the original wooden building must have been totally neglected as, when smallpox was detected in a lodging house in Scattergate, there was nowhere to isolate the patient and his contacts. We read that the Medical Officer of Health, who had been summoned from Kendal, set out with a Mr Bland from the Corporation (not the East Ward Guardians) to Windy Hill (Fair Hill?) where they commandeered an empty building. Two days later the occupants of the lodging house, including five Italian musicians, various vagabonds and the family who ran the accommodation processed to their new abode together with a donkey, a monkey and a barrel organ. Locals were delighted that action had been taken so quickly and there seems to have been no further cases, but they were not amused when the rates rose by 2d in the pound nor by the fact that the inmates seem to have enjoyed their incarceration. All their wants were supplied without "being put to the trouble of following their usual avocation as cadgers"!

Finally an isolation hospital was built at Ormside in 1899, ironically when smallpox had been virtually eliminated.

[Information from the Heelis Scrapbooks and the Westmorland Gazette available on the British Newspapers website.]

Maggie Clowes

From the Secretary

A request for help

Has been received by Vivienne – and is as follows:-

"I was wondering if your society has any information about the following family members. My ancestor John Ellison (1797-1868) was born at Barwise Hall, Hoff. His wife was Elizabeth Thornborrow (1801-1873) born at Dufton. Barwise Hall (on the census it appears as Barras Hall) which I understand is near Appleby. They always lived in the Colby district. His eldest son Robert (1830-1905) married Isabella Stephenson (1833-1911) from Dufton whose father Thomas (1802-1858) was a lead miner. Once married they lived at Dufton and later Orton.

In addition to information about the Ellison and Stephenson families, the person asking for help would also like information about Barwise Hall and about the lead mines of Dufton?

Please let Vivienne know if you can assist.

Committee Meeting 6 January 2016

Matters Arising from Minutes for 21 October 2015: Society Archive: Activities somewhat curtailed by floods and Christmas. Consideration to be given to the 2016 Heritage Open Days exhibition. Fundraising: Coffee Morning to be held Saturday 2 April 2016. Arrangements for the Table Top sale planned for 20 March in abeyance pending news of the availability of the Bowling Club but it was agreed that proceeds from both events would be divided between the Bowling Club and the Flood Fund. Website: new website now 'live'.

Reports: Treasurer: Balance as at 30 November 2015 was £5738.08. Rent for the Archive Room is due to be paid. Membership: 84 members re-joined. Planning/Townscape/Dilapidated Buildings: Situation with regard to Appleby Castle to be monitored.

Future of the Committee: names of Committee members and names of other Society members willing to continue were noted. A meeting of those wishing to move things forward will be arranged for a date in the week commencing 22 February 2016. The final decision will be taken in March and members will be notified.

Change of date: it was noted that the date of the talk to be given by Phillipa Turnbull has been changed to 19 May 2016.

Next meeting: will be the special meeting in week commencing 22 February 2016, 7.30, 5 Friary Park (NB: Anyone interested in reading the notes of the meeting held 22 February can do so by contacting Val Kendall.)

Next Meeting

**Thursday 31 March 2016
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

“Woodland Crafts and Industries” – Andy Lowe

We welcome a return visit by this popular speaker, who will give a talk illustrated by slides, looking at a variety of countryside crafts.

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Website: www.appleby-in-westmorland-society.org.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 £10 individual 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, September (our A.G.M. meeting) and November at 7.30 in the evening. We also invite corporate members; subscription £20 per annum.

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