



# POND HALL ACTION GROUP

NEWSLETTER NO 4

DECEMBER 1995

The Pond Hall is now a pile of rubble. For more than 60 years, it has been a part of our heritage, a prominent landmark, the focal point in the Burgh. Almost everyone who lives in Cockenzie and Port Seton has memories of the Pond Hall - of the dances, the weddings, the indoor bowling and all the other activities that took place there. We have all been saddened by recent events. So too are the thousands of visitors for whom a trip to Port Seton meant a trip to the Pond Hall, to the swimming pool.

Sixty years of memories will not disappear as quickly as the walls and roof did on that cold and drizzly December day when, despite all our efforts, the bulldozers moved in.

Only a handful of people turned up to watch the demolition process. There was not a demonstration, no waving of banners. Most people stayed at home, they could not bear to watch their Pond Hall being destroyed.

## THE LEGACY OF THE POND HALL

The demolition of the Pond Hall marks the end of an era. Just now, many of us feel very sad, can hardly believe that the Pond Hall has actually gone, that we'll never see it again as we walk or drive down the coast.

Despite these feelings, it was very clear at the well attended meeting held on Wednesday, 6th December 1995, that we cannot live in the past. We must look to the future.

Although the Pond Hall has gone, many things have not changed:-

- The results of the survey of over 1,500 households carried out last April remains valid;

- This is a growing community. The 480 houses being built at present will increase the population by 1,500. We need more day nursery places, more facilities for teenagers and a day centre for the elderly;
- The community does not want special needs and amenity housing on the Pond Hall site. This would alter the whole character of the village. There are at least 2 other much more suitable sites for housing in the Burgh;
- The community does want the Pond Hall site used for leisure and recreational purposes;
- We do want to negotiate with the District Council. So far, they have listened with deaf ears and closed minds. We must keep trying!

The legacy left by the Pond Hall is a determination to make Cockenzie and Port Seton a good place to live in, a place with amenities for all age groups and a place on the East Lothian Coastal Trail which is attractive for tourists.

## **OUR PROSPECTUS - A BASIS FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATION**

It is recognised that the plans in the Prospectus will have to be changed following the demolition of the Pond Hall. Despite this, it has been very well received by a number of important bodies, including the Scottish Tourist Board. The S.T.B. say that it fulfils all the criteria for Millennium funding except one - it does not have the backing of East Lothian District Council.

**WHY NOT?** Why is East Lothian District Council rejecting this chance of investment in East Lothian? Why is it rejecting the opportunity to increase the number of tourists coming to East Lothian?

It is very difficult to understand why. We must continue to try to find answers to these questions, to fight for our community and for our Burgh.

## **OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW**

Although the community has been unsuccessful in its efforts to save its heritage, there is still a need to fight for the amenities that were identified in the survey.

The title "Pond Hall Action Group" is no longer appropriate.

In January, the name will be changed and the battle to have leisure and recreational facilities built on the Pond Hall site will go on. A new name has been suggested - The Pond Hall Memorial Trust.

The possibility of acquiring charitable status is already being investigated. Hopefully, the new group will become affiliated with the Community Council.

As with the Pond Hall Action Group, all the residents in Cockenzie and Port Seton will be welcome to participate.

## **FUND-RAISING**

The new group will need funds for its activities, but before that, there is one last task for the Pond Hall Action Group - to raise all of the funds necessary to pay the legal fees for the action raised in the Court of Session.

Many people have already been very generous. £123 was collected at the meeting on 6th December. The Christmas Bizarre on 9th December raised the magnificent sum of £302.

## **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

For those wishing to give donations, the following arrangements have been made:-

1. Collecting cans have been placed in Topps Gift Shop, JKT Fish Shop, Rose's Fruit Shop, Knit Knax, Links Road Garage, the Thorntree Inn, the British Legion, the Bowling Club, the Ship Inn and Ranzaan's General Store;
2. Money can be paid directly into the Pond Hall Action Group's bank account No. 470183, held at the Clydesdale Bank in Musselburgh;
3. If anyone is unable to get to one of these places and would like to make a donation, please telephone Sheila on 812 410 or Marlene on 811 788 and arrangements will be made to visit you at home.

## **A WORD OF WARNING!**

The Pond Hall Action Group is not a registered charity. It is illegal for us to make door-to-door collections. Do not give money to anyone going around the doors.

## **FUND-RAISING EVENTS**

During 1995, we all enjoyed a variety of fund-raising events - a sponsored walk, fashion shows, discos and the Jamboree. A full programme of events is being planned for 1996. Meantime, dates for your diary:-

- Tuesday, 30th January - Burns Supper - Ship Inn Function Room - 7.00 pm - Tickets available in the new year;  
Friday, 23rd February - Race Night - Community Centre - 7.00 pm;  
Friday, 29th March - Scots Night - Community Centre - 7.30 pm.