



BERWICK 900 ARTY-FACTS OPEN DAY

Visitors to Saturday's Berwick 900 Arty-Facts Open Day in the Town Hall were able to see a wide variety of art and crafts projects inspired by the town's history and cultural heritage and find out about the events being planned for the Berwick 900 festival.

Several of the projects represented at the Open Day are creating banners, costumes and props based on the various Berwick 900 themes that will be used in the several colourful processions that are being staged, including the Mayor's Parade on Spring Bank Holiday Sunday in May. Berwick 900 will welcome enquiries from community groups and individuals of all ages who may be interested in taking part in these and other events during the year.

Naomi Kenny and Alan Knowles added period nostalgia with their 1940s costumes and a "make do and mend" stall promoting their part in organising the Berwick 900 events marking the 70th anniversary of VE Day in May. They are also keen to enlist volunteers to help produce costumes and props for the festival.

Also represented was St. Andrew's Wallace Green Church, which is one of several churches creating banners and displays for the Berwick 900 "Christian Story" theme.

During the day Linda Bankier, the Berwick Archivist, held an introductory session for volunteers interested in taking an active part in the Berwick 900 Families project which aims to explore and present the stories of families living and working in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal over the centuries. There was also a meeting that provided an opportunity for representatives from many community groups to discuss how the annual events they organise will fit with the themes in the Berwick 900 festival programme.

Ruth McNeely from Berwick Slow Food Group, which organises the annual Berwick Food and Beer Festivals in September, commented: "It was lovely to be part of an event where everyone works together. From a Slow Food perspective we were very pleased with the number of interested volunteers who came to our stand and we are exploring suggestions for a Berwick 900 themed competition in association with this year's Food Festival."

Another of the imaginative projects on show was "Dress a Bear for Berwick". Sandra Dodds brought a selection of teddy bears from her extensive collection to illustrate the potential for themed costumes that anyone can sew, knit or crochet for a bear belonging to one of their family members. Prior Park First School is joining in the project and Berwick 900 can provide advice and help to encourage people of all ages to make costumes. The costumed bears will all be invited to attend a Berwick 900 Teddy Bears' Picnic during the summer.

Annie Robinson, who co-ordinated the Arty-Facts Open Day for Berwick 900, said: "The day was a huge success from the Arty Facts point of view. The artists and craftspeople who presented displays and demonstrations were delighted with the attendance and the level of interest and support from members of the public for the different projects. The comments received from visitors were so positive about how well we can all work together as a community, as well as lots of enthusiasm for Berwick 900."

Anyone interested in finding out more about how they can join in the Arty-Facts project can contact berwick900@gmail.com.

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