

**NOTES FROM CAAG MEETING WITH DAVID BRUCE A MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBER OF EUROPEAN WALLED TOWNS (EWT) HELD ON FEBRUARY 23<sup>RD</sup> 9.15 THE WILLIAM ELDER BUILDING.**

The following permanent members of CAAG were present. Catherine Kent, Marion Mead, Bob Steward, Ian Hay, John Robertson, Julien Lake, Dorothy Slater, Stephen Scott, Margaret Shaw.

The invited visitors were Zoreen Hill, Gordon McLean, Joe Lang, Ross Weddel, Derek Sharman, James Bruce, Bernard Shaw, and Pat Miller.

David indicated that he hoped that the session would be interactive with contributions from the group.

**Question posed. How to get people to stop in Berwick? Should/could the Walls be the draw?**

- Walled Towns near to borders are distinctive. There is the obvious defensive aspect and also the relationship that exists between the communities. May have different heritage and cultures e.g. Derry.
- The population of towns where the Walls have remained tend to have a pride in their heritage. This doesn't mean that they work easily together.
- DB is particularly interested in the town within the Walls as opposed to just the Walls.
- The emphasis should be (European) Walled Towns not Town Walls.

**The EWT report by John Ebejer says the organisation must:-**

- Serve the needs of its members.
- What are the purposes and the objectives? Need to be clarified.
- A key role is to enhance learning/ mutual learning between members to try and ensure EWT is successful

**Some characteristics of Walled Towns.**

- Those that have expanded beyond their Walls and this has implications on conservation status. E.g. Newcastle.
- Those that are contained within their Walls and have been capital towns historically. They remain in their own little state.
- Some Roman and Ecclesiastical Towns have kept their Walls for social reasons. E.g. York, Chester.
- Some towns were Medieval Fortresses and this fact was imposed on the people e.g. Conwy.
- Berwick with its two sets of Walls, Medieval and Elizabethan is particularly important.

**Question posed. How many EWT members are there?**

- This varies between full members and associate members and is in the range of 40-70
- UK town members include/have included Conwy, Tenby, Caernarvon, Chester, Derry, Canterbury, Stirling, and Carrickfergus. The most active member is Chichester.

**The value of Berwick with reference to its Walls.**

- Historically the UK was poorer than Italy and the Rhineland and less Walls were built
- Berwick has the potential to be a leader.
- It is the best conserved and was a powerful Walled Town in Britain and Ireland.
- Berwick in the Middle Ages was the centre of espionage.

**Potential problems for Walled Towns general and specific.**

- Traffic management
- Conservation-Berwick reliant on Historic England. Concerns expressed about the level of investment.

- The economics. Improved marketing of the town.

**(Question posed. What value is there in being a member of EWT?)**

- Berwick has been promoted through power point presentations at EWT meetings held in Gmund Austria, Valetta Malta, Narva Estonia and Derry N Ireland.
- A DVD has been produced of the use of Berwick Walls today ready for the next meeting.
- Towns in Austria for example have promoted joint publicity including colour coding their leaflets.
- Named contacts available in member towns.
- Some towns have acquired European funding for their own projects (Valetta reconstructed gate in the Walls). Other towns have bid for joint project funding across a theme such as Military Heritage
- Suggested that it is necessary to remain in EWT post Brexit because we are part of Europe geographically.
- Where towns have been successful in achieving funding pose relevant questions such as What did you do, How did you do it, Has it worked, Who opposed it and have their changed their views, What arguments worked?

**Question posed. Would a UK Walled Town organisation be more beneficial?**

- Suggested that UK Walled Towns could form a Chapter within EWT.
- Chester has tried to promote a Marches and Midlands group but didn't wish to increase the geographical locations.
- What would be aimed for here-local, regional, national groupings
- Where would funding come from?
- Perhaps aim to link with towns relatively near e.g. Stirling, St Andrew's Newcastle, Hartlepool, York, and Carlisle.
- Possibly approach the Northumberland AONB re possible links as Holy Island Castle was the lookout for Berwick.

**Other Factors to consider.**

- Need to have a clear evidence base of issues before any funding bid is likely to be successful
- The concept of a Timestone Town.
- Must involve residents, traders and tourists prior to any project being submitted.
- Consider sustainable tourism, disability tourism.
- Consider having an 'Education Coordinator' for the numerous groups who use Berwick as a resource base.
- Chichester is the leading UK town within EWT as it receives its funding for participation comes from Chichester City Council.
- Some European towns receive an income from entry fees to their Walls –not apparently practical for Berwick.
- It was suggested that successful projects are those that do not increase vehicle traffic and don't antagonise permanent residents.
- Analysis of the tourist within an historic walled town-why have they come?

These notes may be incomplete but I'm indebted to Margaret Thomas and Catherine Kent for trying to ensure that is not the case by taking notes during the meeting. Many thanks. Margaret Shaw.

