

Last year we built a new playground and we often wonder what schools did with their pupils before as the equipment disappears under a swarm of two legged ants.

This year Ray Bell has moved his Crafthouse into the old Tearoom, Ginny's (Gadsden) Kitchen is in another redundant cottage and we think that we have stopped growing, though not upgrading, but I doubt it.

It has all been a lot of fun but dealing with the public and the various controlling bodies is becoming more and more difficult and demanding.

We, and all our colleagues in the tourism industry, are constantly asked to attract and entertain visitors but at the same time we have to comply with an ever increasing list of rules and regulations, are highly rated on our efforts and are charged Vat on our admissions.

The great majority of our visitors are interested and appreciative but almost without exception they imagine that we make an enormous amount of money by being open to them and their expectations are harder and harder to fulfill.

They are "very surprised that a place like this has potholes, weeds, no tearoom on New Year's Day, etc, etc". One came on a day when we were moving cattle and thought I "should know how bad cowpats are for tarmac". She came back next year, on a day when the cattle were quietly in the fields, and was "so glad to see that you have taken my advice". Another knocked on my door to tell me that our loo rolls were hanging the wrong way round in their holders.

'The customer is always right' is often very hard to remember; it certainly was when I was told at the height of the season, "It is awful to see this place so run down. It is hoped that the next generation of Homes takes some interest in it". However it must be remembered if we are to have any success in making our great heritage as necessary and interesting and entertaining to future generations as it is to so many of our own and that, as it was fifteen years ago, is still the aim of the Hirsell Homestead Museum and Craft Centre.

The Hon. Caroline Douglas Home

I stood upon Eyemouth Fort,
And guess ye what I saw?
Ferneyside and Flemington
Newhouses and Cocklaw,
The fairy-folk o' Fosterland,
The witches o' Edencraw,
And the bogle in the Billymyre,
Wha kills our bairns a'.

From the popular Rhymes, Sayings and Proverbs
of the County of Berwick: 1856