



## Berwickshire Civic Society Autumn 2020 Newsletter

Dear Member,

Thank you very much for your membership and support for The Berwickshire Civic Society.

The Society Office Bearers and Committee were elected at the AGM in February 2020:

President and Acting Chairman: Brigid, Lady McEwen

Vice Chairman: Judy Torrance

Secretary: Joy Dobie

Treasurer: Derek Janes

Committee members: Caroline Douglas-Home, Shelagh Townsend-Rose, Alexandra Richards, Jill McColl, Will Ramsay, Brian Payne.

The Committee has been meeting regularly and we would like to let you know our plans.



## Chairman's Report October 2020

After what can be described as a very surreal spring and summer we have all been making tentative steps to normality. The current upsurge in the Covid 19 virus will be a worry to everyone as many of our normal activities and interactions seem once again to be curtailed.

We would however like to welcome you to our autumn newsletter. As you know we had a very successful AGM in February and have welcomed new members to the committee. This has generated a new enthusiasm for the Society which we have been harnessing with regular virtual online meetings of the committee.

We have been reappraising our previous activities and looking at our role in the future. We continue to comment and appraise planning applications and are currently looking at events to record the 50th anniversary. We have lots of ideas which we are starting to investigate and hope to share with you shortly. Clearly we are looking at events that can be adapted to the potential restrictions of Covid 19.

We now have a presence on Facebook and have been regularly updating our website <http://www.berwickshirecivicsociety.org> with local interest and links to the activities of the Scottish Civic Trust including their first virtual Doors Open Days 2020.

We shall continue to keep in contact with you through regular updates. As you can imagine it is getting very expensive using traditional post and while we are happy to do so with those members who do not have email addresses, we would appreciate those who have not already registered your email address with us to do so by contacting our Secretary Joy Dobie on [secretary@berwickshirecivicsociety.org](mailto:secretary@berwickshirecivicsociety.org)



We hope you are staying safe and healthy and on behalf of all the Committee we wish you all the best in this challenging time.

**Brigid McEwen**

## **50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERWICKSHIRE CIVIC SOCIETY**

The forebear of the Berwickshire Civic Society, the Civic Trust “for improving the urban and village environment of Britain” was inaugurated in July 1957. Following this 200 Civic Societies sprang up. Twenty years later there were 1200, largely spread through the network of Lord Lieutenants under whose aegis Earl Haig was approached for a Berwickshire initiative. After some initial meetings Lord Haig, himself a considerable painter with an eye for the beauty of the environment, called a meeting at Bemersyde in October 1970 when, under the guidance of the Scottish Civic Trust, the Berwickshire Civic Society was finally formed with a written constitution.

The objects of the Society were to promote and encourage the following by charitable means:

1. Stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the county of Berwickshire.
2. Encourage preservation, development and improvement of features of public and historical interest.
3. Encourage high standards of architecture and planning and to comment on plans.
4. Pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions etc and accessing plans from the local authorities.

It soon became clear that the Berwickshire Civic Society fulfilled a real need particularly in light of reorganisation and the change from local to more centralised government, and in its 50 years of existence the Society has done a good body of work. It saved the Mouth Bridge at Hume from closure and dereliction, not to mention the innumerable occasions when the Society, with its watching brief, has noted and commented and often acted upon matters concerning the environment, including the appropriate siting of wind turbine developments in the Berwickshire countryside. The Society initiated the Keep Berwickshire Tidy campaign and its biannual Architectural awards with recent winners being the Luckenbooth in Coldingham and development at Birgham.

As the Society reaches its 50th anniversary, the constraints we have all faced with Covid 19 has given pause to our activities. It does however also give us to time to reflect on the role of the Society and how we could develop our activities to best serve our members and the broader Berwickshire community.



**Past Chairman of the Society:**

Lord Haig 1970/73  
Sir Robert McEwen 1973/75  
Major Adam Lothian 1975/78  
Lt Col WB Swan 1978/ 97  
Sir John Swinton 1997/2006  
Lt Col S Furness 2006/2009  
Dr Ian Maitland Hume 2009/2012  
Mr Matthew Gibb 2012/2017  
Mr Mark Rowley 2017/19