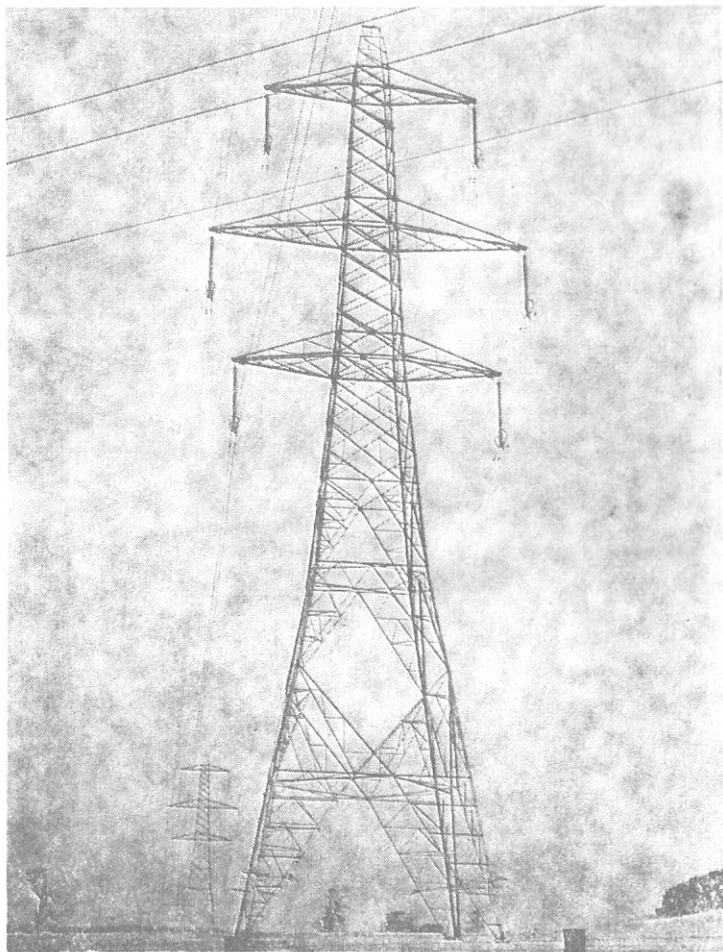


# The Berwickshire Civic Society

Newsletter No. 2

Autumn 1974



TORNESS

Welcome to Berwickshire?

## THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| EX-OFFICIO<br>MEMBERS   | T. D. Thomson, Esq., The Hill, Coldingham.<br>D. P. Douglas, Esq., 25 Deanhead Road,<br>Eyemouth.<br>Greenlaw & District Community Association<br>(A. Dewar, Esq., Bank House, Duns Road,<br>Greenlaw).<br>Chirnside Community Council<br>(D. K. Swan, Esq., Harelaw).<br>Coldingham Amenity Association<br>(George Ross, Hallbank).<br>Ayton Amenity Association<br>(R. Caine, Esq., Bank House).<br>Eyemouth Conservation Society<br>(W. S. Gillie, Esq., 2 Tod's Court,<br>Eyemouth). |

## THE SOCIETY

As this is only the second Newsletter it was considered that it might contain some information on the Berwickshire Civic Society, itself, as it was felt that this might be of interest to some readers.

The Society was formed in 1971 under the guidance of the Scottish Civic Trust and operates under a written constitution. The objects of the Society, perhaps the most important contents of the constitution, are noted as follows:—

“The objects of the Society shall be to promote and encourage the following objects by charitable means, but not otherwise:—

- (a) To stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history and character of the County of Berwickshire.
- (b) To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- (c) To encourage high standards of architecture and town and country planning in Berwickshire and comment on plans or decisions of Local Authorities.
- (d) To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, conferences and publicity, and the promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.”

The officers and executive committee, who are nominated at the A.G.M., meet regularly, normally monthly, to consider and deal with the various topical matters before them. Such matters cover a very wide range and include, in the main, the numerous controversial planning or highway proposals made by the public, the Local Authorities and Public Bodies. Such items as river pollution and historical digs are also among the very large number of matters which the Society looks at closely in pursuance of the ‘objects’ specified in the constitution.

The Berwickshire County Council, with whom the Society enjoys a close relationship, supplies the Society with details of all controversial planning applications and invites its comments, thus ensuring that all applications are dealt with justly and at the same time, endeavouring to maintain a high standard in design.

The Society also has an association with other local Community, Amenity and Conservation Societies within the County and, through these, keeps in touch with local opinions on matters of general interest and offers assistance, if required, on larger matters.

Perhaps the most important matter being investigated by the Society at the present time is the effect on Berwickshire of the possible introduction of a Nuclear Power Station at Torness. This is covered in some detail later in this Newsletter, but it might be noted now that the Society is looking into the matter in very great detail as it is believed by the executive committee to be one of exceptional importance and magnitude.

It is anticipated that the Civic Society will produce and distribute Newsletters twice a year, in the Spring and in the late Autumn or Winter, and it is hoped that these will keep the Society members informed about some of the work being carried out by the Executive Committee and some of the current and more topical matters which are considered to be of general interest within the County. Members of the Civic Society are invited to supply the editor with information on any matter which it is felt might be included in the forthcoming Newsletters and which might be of interest to readers.

## TORNESS

The proposal to construct a Nuclear Power Station at Torness must surely be the most important and largest proposal of our time. Should the proposal become a reality, its impact on East Lothian and Berwickshire will be immense. The construction of such an enormous Power Station and the position of such colossal overhead lines will have a tremendous impact on the landscape of the countryside, the balance of labour in the Eastern Borders and East Lothian and the general social and economic characteristics of this part of the country, as we know them today.

The proposals for Torness comprise the construction of a large Power Station in two phases, the first to be completed in 1984 at an estimated cost of £600 million, employing some 2,500 workers for its construction and a permanent staff thereafter of some 600. The second phase, costing a further £600 million, is to be completed by 1994.

The new Power Station is to supply power to the National Grid and two transmission lines will be required to link up with the existing ‘English’ line which passes through the county in a line Coldstream - Eccles - Greenlaw - Gordon - Earlston - Lauderdale, and into Midlothian. The South of Scotland Electricity Board are suggesting that one of these lines will join the ‘English’ line in Midlothian after passing through East Lothian (and not affecting Berwickshire) and that the other one could affect a substantial part of Berwickshire.

Briefly, the matters which are of most concern to the Executive Committee include the following:—

## The Countryside

The transmission lines from the proposed Torness Power Station will be required to carry 400 Kvs, which is *eighteen* times the amount of power carried by the existing lines between Eccles and Dunbar. The power cables can either be supported on overhead pylons, or they can be laid underground. However, as the cost per kilometre for laying cable underground is at least fourteen times greater than overhead cables, this could only be justified in areas where overhead lines are completely unacceptable.

The Electricity Board are now able to use two types of pylon. A 'slender' pylon which is 160 feet high (the pylons on the existing 132 Kv line are 90 feet high), and a 'lower' pylon which is 100 feet high but has a cross piece of 110 feet span. It can be seen from these dimensions that the size of either of these two types of pylon makes them impossible to conceal in the landscape, and extremely difficult to fit into the scale of landscape in Berwickshire.

From an economic point of view, the transmission lines should be as straight as possible, since the cost of angle towers to allow for changes in direction considerably adds to the cost of the transmission line. Angle towers are more bulky and therefore, from the visual point of view, more prominent.

Berwickshire is largely a rural area and, as such, the landscape will be considerably affected by large transmission lines crossing the county.

The County Planning and Development Officer has considered, in great detail, the different types of landscape that can be identified in Berwickshire and, as a result of his detailed study, it is now possible to identify two possible routes for the proposed transmission lines. The determining factor in locating any route for the overhead line is that it must connect with the proposed Torness Power Station and a sub-station located on the 'English' line. The Electricity Board have identified two alternative sub-station sites on the 'English' line, one at Eccles (adjacent to the existing site) and one at Midburn on the west side of Lauderdale.

The main considerations in determining the two alternative routes were the effect of the transmission lines on the landscape. The visual aspect is therefore the dominant factor, but the effect upon agriculture and the local population has also been considered.

The two routes, which are shown on the attached plan, are called the 'North-South' route and the 'East-West' route. It is not possible in this Newsletter to describe each route in detail nor to outline their advantages and disadvantages, but it might be noted that the County Council have shown a preference towards the North-South route.

Neither route provides a completely satisfactory solution from the landscape point of view. The magnitude of the pylons required to support a 400 Kv line are impossible to completely conceal in any landscape. It is felt that from a visual point of view the North-South route between the proposed power station and Eccles would be the most preferable line to take. It is considered that the advantages gained from removing the existing 132 Kv line north of Duns outweigh the disadvantages of introducing another transmission line into the area south of Duns. On balance, such a solution would be preferable to introducing an overhead line into the Lammermuir Hills, an area largely untouched by man and at the same time allowing the whole of the existing 132 Kv line to remain.

Whether the North-South or East-West routes are adopted, the Civic Society are very aware of the impact of the transmission lines on the countryside and will closely follow the progress which the Local Authorities make with the Electricity Board should the proposals for the Power Station be formally adopted.

## Employment

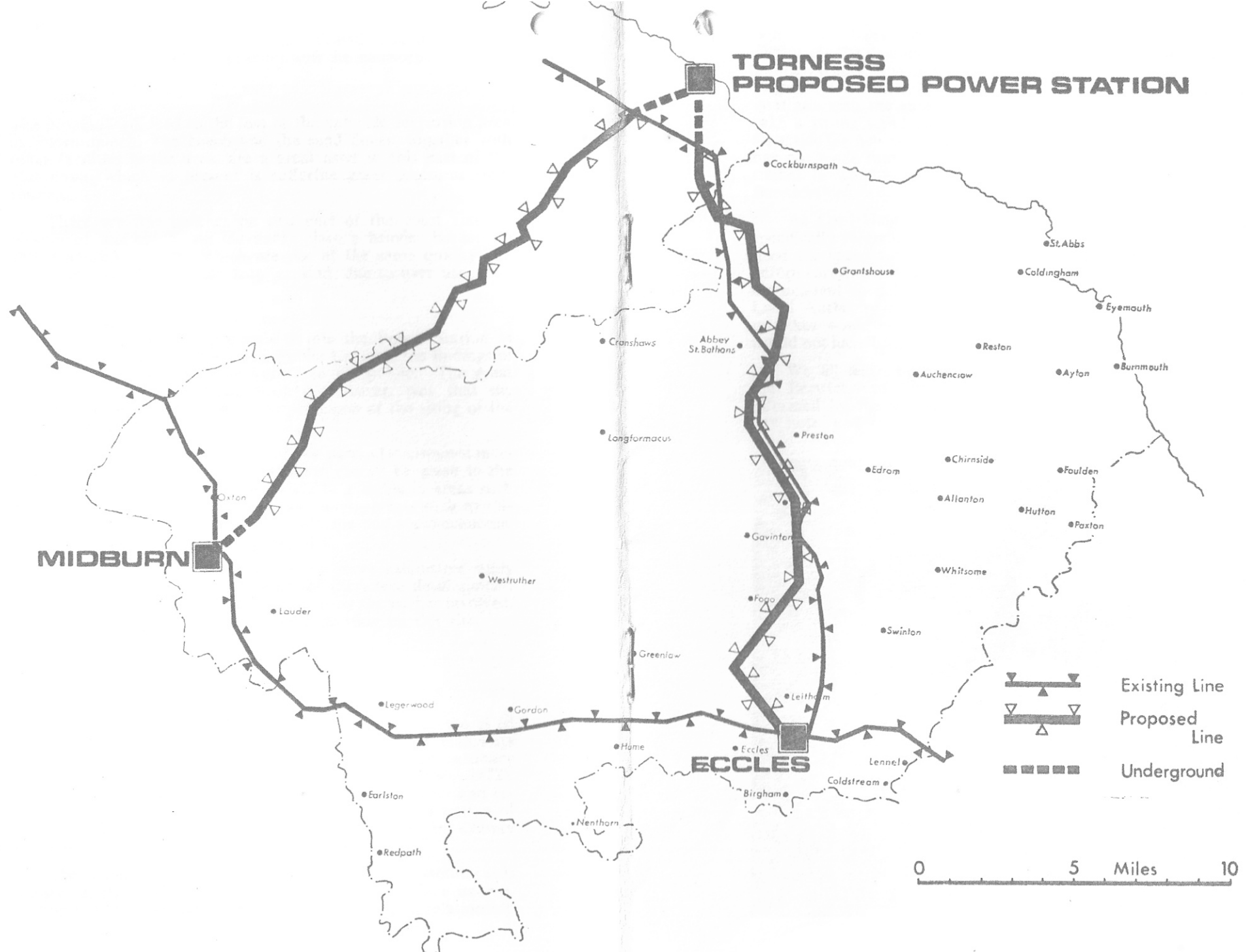
Berwickshire has suffered depopulation of such magnitude, during the past century, that it has seriously impaired the physical and economic attractiveness of the county, and has at the same time produced seriously imbalanced employment and population structures.

In an effort to stimulate growth, Berwickshire County Council and the Eastern Borders Development Association have appointed Development Officers who have been actively engaged in attracting industry to the area by developing industrial sites. These bodies have met with some success, particularly in Eyemouth and Duns, two settlements which will inevitably be affected by the proposal.

These settlements and their hinterlands will certainly come within the sphere of influence of the proposed Power Station and at present, there is little unemployment in the area. Industries already established are experiencing difficulty with labour recruitment and in an effort to assist these industries, Berwick County Council, Duns Town Council and Eyemouth Town Council are committed to an essential house building programme, both local authority and private, for incoming workers over the next five years.

These are real fears which are of great concern to the Local Authorities and which should be of very great concern to most employers of labour within a substantial radius of Torness. In a very brief survey carried out in the Torness and Berwickshire coastal areas, it does appear that local inhabitants and traders seem to welcome the possibility of the Power Station being constructed at Torness, the main reason being the increased pros-

# TORNESS PROPOSED POWER STATION



perity and trade that the development will bring to the district. It was disappointing to learn that there seemed to be little concern for the preservation of the beaches and the landscape.

### Recreation

The proposal will lead to the loss of the valuable recreation area at Thorntonloch. The beach and the sand dunes, together with other facilities in the area, are a great asset to this part of the east coast, which at present is suffering great pressures from tourism.

There are few beaches on this part of the coast and the closure of this beach will inevitably place a heavier burden on the remaining beaches, which are not of the same quality and which are already suffering from erosion, due to over use.

### Conclusion

As will be known, the proposals to site the Power Station at Torness has been the subject of a Public Enquiry, the findings of which are very shortly to be known to the public. The great disappointment to the Civic Society, however, was that the enquiry was restricted solely to the principles of the siting of the Power Station.

It is considered that because of the particular circumstances affecting the two counties, consideration cannot be given to the Power Station in isolation. This might be possible in areas such as the Central Belt of Scotland where developments such as this are more easily absorbed, both in landscape and socio-economic terms, but this does not apply in this case.

We therefore contend that a much more exhaustive study should be undertaken on the impact of the *whole* development, the Power Station and the overhead lines, by the parties involved, before the Secretary of State makes a decision on this site.

### A.68 ROAD ALTERATIONS

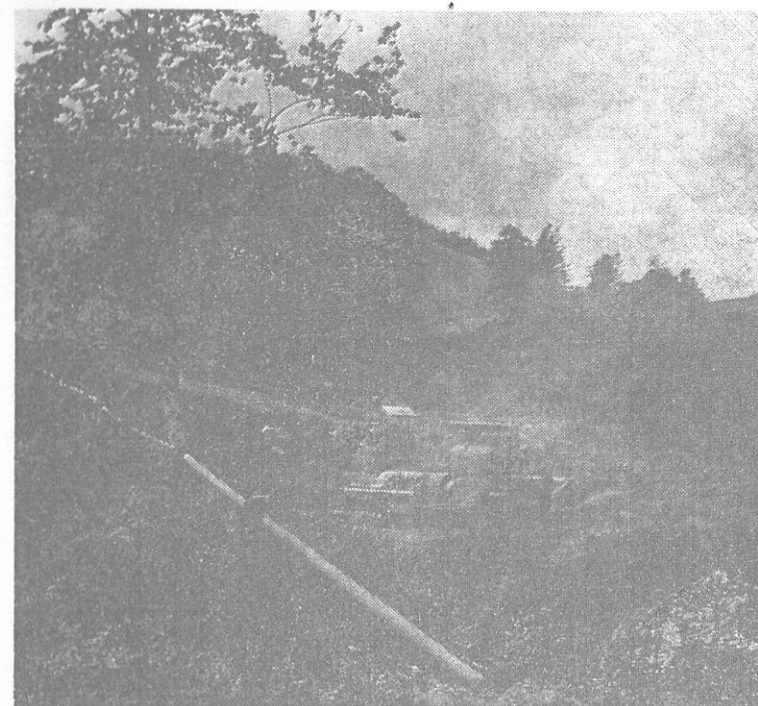
When the original proposals for the improvement of the A.68 trunk road north of Earlston were adopted by the Highways Authority, the Civic Society, regrettably, was not in existence although representations were made later (December 1972), possibly too late, and the newly formed Society's views and recommendations with regard to landscaping and the retention of existing trees as a screen were made to the Berwickshire County Council.

The second stage of the improvement scheme—southwards towards Earlston—is presently in cold storage but since its conception the Civic Society has built up a good working relationship

with the Highways Authority and, particularly, with Mr. Dryburgh, the County Road Surveyor, who has been most helpful to the Society, and it is proposed to hold meetings at an early stage with the new Regional Authority when it is planned to continue with the scheme. At that time the Civic Society will take a strong stand on the retention of trees wherever possible alongside the new roadline, as it is thought that the present scheme has not made sufficient allowance for the retention of road-side timber in what is, perhaps, one of the most scenic valleys in Berwickshire.

As Lord Haig said in the House of Lords last June when specifically referring to these road works, "... because of a need for speed there has been a failure to consult the public before carrying out plans . . . . . Had the Scottish Development Department consulted the Countryside Commission and had the Local Authority consulted the Berwickshire Civic Society these mistakes would not have been made and this beautiful scenery would not have been ruined."

We all learn by mistakes and it is earnestly believed that the Berwickshire Civic Society will, in the future, be well informed by the various Local Authorities of all proposals of any note, and their considered views requested.



## EYEMOUTH FORT

The Eyemouth Conservation Society, under the supervision of Mr. George Williams, an archaeologist from Eyemouth, have embarked upon the excavation of the Eyemouth Fort, one of the most interesting and important military sites in Scotland. According to a letter received from the Department of Environment, Edinburgh, Sir Richard Lee's fort of 1547-8 is absolutely critical for any study of the introduction of Italianate fortification into Britain; the Belvoir plan together with visible evidence of masonry indicate that its structure will be complex. Further news on this excavation will be included in further Newsletters.

## THE LAUDER FACELIFT

After Lauder had been designated as 'outstanding' for the purposes of conservation by the Historic Buildings Council and, as such, became eligible for grant aid from the Secretary of State, several meetings have been held in the Burgh to proceed with implementing a Facelift Scheme. The main instigators of the scheme are the Town Council, the Provisional County Council, the Architectural Adviser to the European Heritage Year Committee, Mr. David Douglas, the Regional Planning Officer, and Mr. Douglas Abrahams, the Architect who has been appointed to draw up the proposals. These proposals, which involve, in the main, making properties within the Facelift area sound and restoring features such as gutters, windows, lettering and numbering, will receive a 50% Grant Aid, the individual owners of the properties being responsible for contributing the other 50%. The success of the scheme, which is voluntary, relies on as many property owners as possible taking part but, from the various meetings which have been held in Lauder, it would appear that the proposals have been met with considerable interest and support, and it is hoped that, in time, considerable benefit will be seen from the introduction of this scheme.

The rest of the work in the Facelift area will be the responsibility of the Local Authorities with contributions from the Historic Buildings Council, the County Council and the Lauder Town Council. The additional work will include the creation of pedestrian areas, provision of car parking, the introduction of tree and shrub planting within the town centre and the rationalisation of the use of road and direction signs. Some of the overhead electricity and telegraph wires will also be placed underground and new street lighting will be introduced in sympathy with the architecture of the surrounding buildings.

May we wish the promoters and participants of this Facelift Scheme success in this most exciting and worthwhile venture.

## MEMBERSHIP

The rapid growth in the number of Civic Societies and Amenity Societies associated with the Scottish Civic Trust, who care about their environment, reveals not only the growing pressures on it today but also the growing realisation that environment is for people and people should have a say in what is going to happen to it.

The value and strength of the Society depends, to a very large extent, on its membership and on its financial resources, and it is hoped that its numbers will continue to increase as it becomes more involved in the environment and in the preservation and development of the County.

Members will recall that the annual membership subscription of the Berwickshire Civic Society falls due for renewal on 6th April of each year. Members whose subscriptions are automatically renewed by Banker's Order will naturally require to take no further action, but those who wish to renew their membership and who pay by means other than by Banker's Order should note to remit the subscription (a minimum of £1 for individual members and £3 for corporate subscription) at an early date. For ease of administration, it would be appreciated if members would kindly detach, complete and send the appropriate undernoted slip with their subscription. A form of Banker's Order is also annexed and members' attention is drawn to this as a convenient method of annually renewing membership.

Also annexed is a membership application form and any person reading this newsletter who is interested in joining the Civic Society is invited to complete the membership application and send it to the Treasurer, Alan M. Lamb, W.S., 11 Murray Street, Duns, with the appropriate subscription. All other subscriptions should, of course, be sent to the Treasurer as well.