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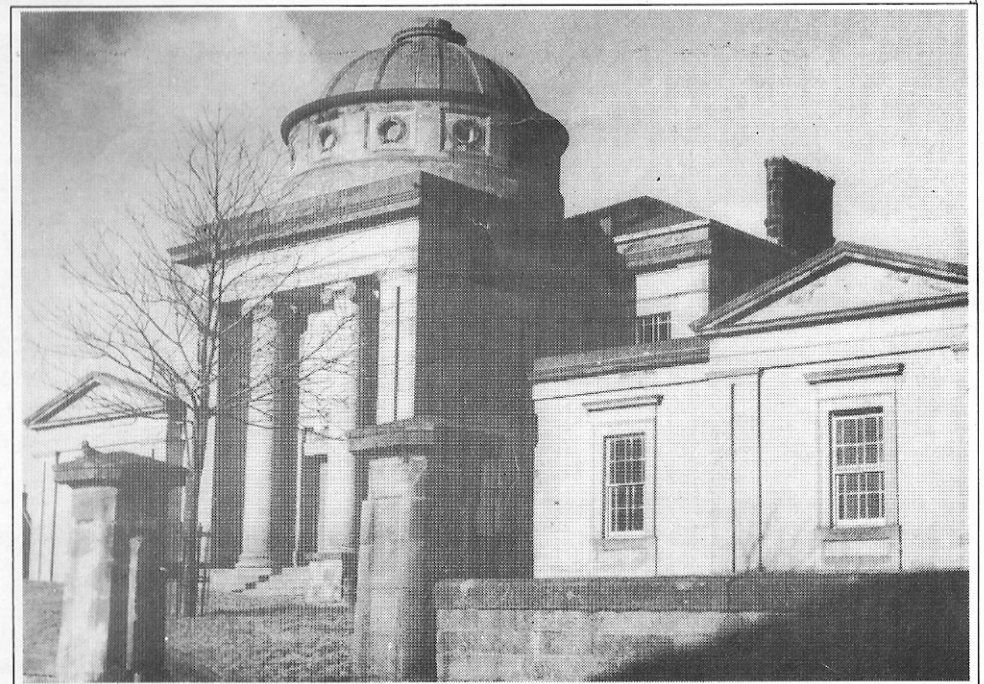
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MAKE BERWICKSHIRE BEAUTIFUL IN 1983

The Berwickshire Civic Society

Newsletter No. 5

Spring 1983



GREENLAW TOWN HALL

PRESIDENT:- Lieutenant Colonel W Swan
Lord Lieutenant of Berwickshire.

EXECUTIVE
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Kimmerghame House
Duns.

Hon Secretary:- Mrs D Hugonin
St Marys Cottage
Duns.

Hon Treasurer:- Mr Douglas Maxwell
C/o The Royal Bank of Scotland
Duns.

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OF THE
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Mr P J A Leggate	Mr J McLean
Mr W Gillie	Mr A McCreddie
Lt Col S Furness	Mr D Hugonin
Lady McEwan	Mr A Lorimar
Mr W Clegg	Mr D Marquis
Mr A Swan (Co-opted October 1982)	

THE SOCIETY

During the last few years the Berwickshire Civic Society has been actively involved in a large number of projects and has continued to work closely with the Borders Regional Council in advising on controversial Planning Applications, and with many other concerns, including the Historic Buildings Council, the National Trust for Scotland, and The Berwickshire Branch of the Scottish Council of Social Service over a number of projects which have been pioneered by the Society itself. Further cut backs in Government and Public finance, coupled with rising costs and inflation, have meant that the Society has often been thwarted in its attempts to further its ends, but a good measure of success has been achieved in many cases and some of the more interesting projects are mentioned in this newsletter.

1982 Annual General Meeting. The eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Duns on 20th May when Douglas Wright, the Director of Keep Scotland Tidy Group gave a most interesting talk, and when Members of the Society also had the great pleasure of listening to Lavinia Derwent, the well-known Authoress and Broadcaster. Everyone present at the meeting was extremely sad to learn that Major Adam Lothian wished to retire as Chairman, having held the post for seven years, and having given more than ten years of dedicated service to the Society. Adam Lothian will be greatly missed by the Society, having devoted countless hours attending to the day-to-day work and using his wide professional knowledge with much skill. Since the inception of the Berwickshire Civic Society, no one has held the post of Chairman for such a long period, and the Society is deeply indebted to him for all his work. The Society is very fortunate to have Major General Sir John Swinton as its new Chariman, and we wish him every success.

The 1983 Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Wed. 27th April in the Agricultural Centre, Duns, when members will have the opportunity of listening to Douglas Hugonin, who will be giving a talk, illustrated by his excellent slides, on Ancient Buildings, Monuments and Sites in Berwickshire.

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GREENLAW TOWN HALL

The condition of Greenlaw Town Hall had greatly concerned the Berwickshire Civic Society for some time, and investigations were put in hand to establish whether any financial assistance could be obtained to assist in the repair of the building, and whether a good use could be found for the Town Hall. Until fairly recently the building was in a neglected state and, having no part to play in the Town, was deteriorating quickly.

In 1980 the Society managed to obtain a grant from the Historic Buildings Council, which enabled it to make the building wind and water tight, and to carry out some of the urgently needed repair work. As a result of this initial work being carried out, Daniel Brotherston, a local antique and furniture trader, took a lease of the building and subsequently carried out extensive renovations and refurbished the building internally. The Town Hall, which occupies a prominent central position in Greenlaw, is once again a respected building, and much credit is to be given to Daniel Brotherston for the work and effort he has put into the project.

In December last year, the people of Greenlaw marked the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Town Hall with a special ceremony in the Hall, and a dance in the Castle Hotel. The erection of the building originated from a desire of the Police Commissioners, who acted as the Local Authority in those days, to have new County Buildings in Berwickshire and, as Greenlaw was the County Town at that time, it was appropriate that the new County Building should be built on the Green. The foundation stone was laid in August 1828 and the building, which was completely financed by Sir William Purves Hume Campbell of Marchmont, was completed in December 1831.

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(Front cover photograph by courtesy of David Mylne, Architect)

KEEP BERWICKSHIRE TIDY CAMPAIGN

The campaign which was initiated shortly before Regionalisation by the Civic Society and the Berwickshire Branch of the Scottish Council of the Social Service has now become a regular "annual" in the various communities in Berwickshire, and this year the trophy has been won by Cockburnspath.

Since the campaign was started each community has been separately judged on a point system in both the spring and autumn, but it is now felt that, perhaps, one judging in the summer might be sufficient, and that the villages, rather than communities, should be judged independently. There are instances where one village within a community can let down other villages in the same area, and accordingly, it is felt that the separate judging of the towns and villages in Berwickshire may prove to be a fairer way of judging.

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BEAUTIFUL BRITAIN 1983

The Keep Britain Tidy Group has designated 1983 as "Beautiful Britain Year". The Civic Society has committed itself to take an active part in the campaign, and has already had offers of support from the Borders Regional Council, the Berwickshire District Council, the Berwickshire Council of Social Service and a number of Community Councils. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage everyone to assist in making the appearance of our countryside even more beautiful, and the District Council will be making available bedding plants, shrubs and bulbs, and the Regional Council will be very happy to give advice to communities and villages on the layout of garden areas with trees, shrubs, flowers etc.

Polwarth (from Gaelic 'pol' & Cambro-British 'pul' meaning 'muddy' & Saxon 'worth' or 'warth' meaning 'village' or 'farmstead') gets a first mention in the title of Sir Adam de Polwarth who married Eva, sister of Sir Alexander Seaton of Wintoun in the reign of Alexander II (1214-49). In the reign of Robert II (1371-90) their descendant, Sir Patrick de Polwarth, had an only daughter Elizabeth, who bought Polwarth and the lands beyond as a Dower to Sir John Sinclair of Herdmanston. Their grandson in turn had only daughters, Marion and Margaret, on whom devolved Kimmerghame & Polwarth respectively. The heiresses wished to marry the brothers George & Patrick Hume of Wedderburn, and the double wedding took place in Polwarth Kirk, the festivals afterwards including dancing round Polwarth Thorn. This is the first historical instance of a custom which certainly lasted 300 years and may have very ancient beginnings. The last couple who had danced round the Thorn at their wedding fifty years before, left the village at Whitsun 1854. Whatever its origins or its supposed luck bringing qualities, Polwarth on the Green was famous for its Thorn and celebrated in songs and poems, the best known being that of Alan Ramsay who acknowledged that he had used the melody and the first two lines of something much older.

In the mid nineteenth Century, Polwarth still had 288 inhabitants living in the thatched cottages scattered round the green. It had been noted for its shoe makers who tanned their hides in the Swarden Burn, and doubtless sold their wares at the twice yearly fair held in honour of St Mungo, patron of the nearby Church. Unfortunately the village of Polwarth is now semi-derelict and, until very recently, the Thorn was overgrown and almost hidden from view. However, the Civic Society has cleared and tidied up the area and is shortly to erect a notice giving details of the history of the Thorn. The village, itself, which covers about 9½ acres and comprises two remaining semi-derelict cottages and the remains of some outbuildings, is being offered for sale with the benefit of Planning Consent for the erection of up to 10 houses. The Civic Society would be extremely interested to see the village restored and would be happy to give every assistance to a builder or developer who was willing to bring forward an attractive and sympathetic proposal.

A few years ago the Berwickshire Civic Society learned that a tree had fallen on the Ann Smith Memorial, which is situated in a small wood on the outskirts of Gavinton. The necessary work was put in hand by the Society to repair the Memorial, clear the area and provide an access path from the public road. A direction sign has also been erected.

Ann Smith was a maid servant at Langton House at the turn of the 19th Century and served under Lady Elizabeth Pringle for more than 40 years. Such was her service to the family that a special Memorial was erected to her in "Wattie's Wood" after she departed this life at Ninewells on 27th December 1867.

There is an inscription on each side of the Memorial, the more interesting one on the north side reading

"For more than forty years she lived with Lady Elizabeth Pringle at the head of the establishment and fulfilled her trust with such fidelity as caused her to be a valued friend to all the family and made her loss to her grateful mistress irreparable".

The Society is extremely grateful to Mr Laurie Cleat of Gavinton who has very kindly taken on the task of maintaining the path and general area surrounding the Memorial, which must be one of the very few Memorials, if not the only Memorial, of this type in Berwickshire.

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FOULDEN VILLAGE GREEN

The Department of Agriculture wish to give up the ownership of the village green at Foulden, which is an extensive area on the south side of the village. The future maintainance of the village green is of concern to the Civic Society, which has been in contact with the Berwickshire District Council over the problem. It is hoped that a satisfactory solution will be found before too long.

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TORNESS

In March this year a public enquiry was held in Haddington over the Torness transmission lines and, at that enquiry, the Berwickshire Civic Society was represented by Major Adam Lothian.

The Society made a strong objection to the Eccles/Duns Torness power line on the grounds of amenity and conservation of the countryside, and stated why the "Dip-slope" line across the Lammermuirs would be less objectionable. The Borders Regional Council also made a similar representation and credit must be given to their team for their excellent presentation to the Secretary of State's Reporter.

We have yet to hear the outcome of the hearing.

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SINCLAIRS HILL COTTAGES

The state of these cottages, on the north side of Sinclairs Hill hamlet, has been of considerable concern to the Society for almost a decade. They have been uninhabited for some time and have changed hands on a number of occasions during the last ten years, with no sign of any renovation work being put in hand.

There is no record of the date of the construction of the cottages, but they are very distinctive architectural buildings and are Listed as being of considerable architectural and historic value. Through their "small houses scheme", the National Trust for Scotland has shown interest in the acquisition of the cottages and it is hoped that, in due course, the vendor and the National Trust for Scotland may be able to agree terms for the purchase of the properties.

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LAMBERTON TOLL

Lamberton Toll, which is situated on the A1 Trunk road entering Scotland, has been an eyesore for many a year, and has been the subject of continual correspondence between the Civic Society and the Local Authorities. The Civic Society has recently written to the Borders Regional Council with some fresh thoughts on how the area may be renovated and subsequently cared for, and an encouraging reply from the Regional Council has given the Society a little renewed hope for the future.

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MEMBERSHIP

The rapid growth in the number of Civic Societies and Amenity Societies associated with the Scottish Civic Trust and 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 that people should have a say in what is going to happen to it.

The value and strength of the Berwickshire Civic 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 Berwickshire. Many of the projects in which the Society is involved are not only initiated by the Society, but are financed, either partly or wholly, from its own funds. These funds are now more important to the Society than ever when viewed against the hard current economic climate, and the corresponding lack of finance from public bodies to help the Society in carrying out its work.

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 form and send it to the Treasurer:- Mr J D F Maxwell, C/o the Royal Bank of Scotland PLC, 12 Market Square, Duns, Berwickshire, TD11 3DA.

If each EXISTING Member of the Society could find the time to introduce just one new Member, this would double the membership and the income of the Society and greatly facilitate it in its work, and in taking on the numerous worthwhile projects which it constantly comes across.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ordinary Members - £3

Corporate Members - £5

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APPLICATION FORM (to be completed in Block Capitals)

I (full name)

of

..... (full postal address)

hereby apply for Membership of the Berwickshire Civic Society and agree to be bound by the Constitution thereof. I deliver herewith the subscription applicable.

Date

Signature

BANKERS ORDER

To the Manager of

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(insert above the name and address of your Bank in Block Caps)

Date

Please pay now to the Royal Bank of Scotland PLC, Market Square, Duns, for the credit of the Berwickshire Civic Society (Account No 00111667), and on 6th April annually hereafter the sum of

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Address

Signature