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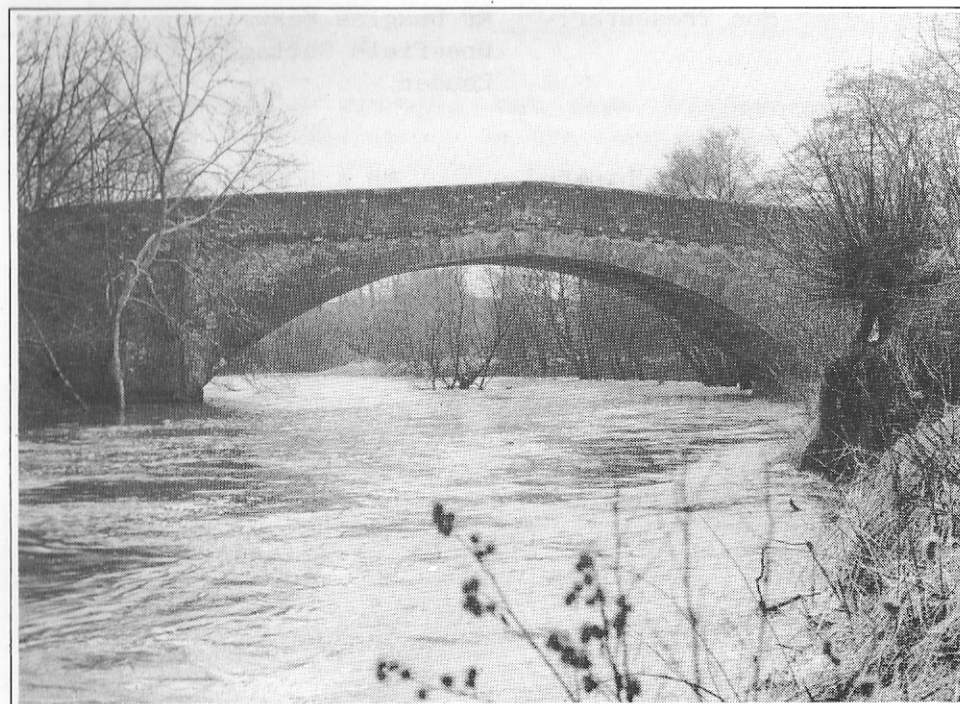
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The Berwickshire Civic Society

Newsletter No. 6

Spring 1984



The Mouth Bridge

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Lord Lieutenant of Berwickshire.

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THE SOCIETY

During the past twelve month period, and since the 1983 Newsletter was published, The Berwickshire Civic Society has been closely involved in a number of projects, many of which are ongoing but some of which have been instigated during the twelve month period.

The Borders Regional Council, with whom the Society has a very close working relationship, regularly seeks the advice and opinion of the Society on contentious planning applications and where listed buildings are concerned.

The Honorary Architects, who advise the Executive Committee on planning applications have been busier than ever this year and our thanks are due to them for all the work which they do for the Society.

1983 experienced a dramatic cut back in Government and Public financial assistance in the form of the withdrawal of certain forms of Grant Aid for improvements to residential properties. The loss of this valuable financial aid, coupled with the fact that V.A.T will now be levied on all alteration work, will have a very marked effect on both the extent and the standard of improvement work to residential properties. It is sincerely hoped that some form of grant aid may become available again in the future but, for the present, appraisals of improvement schemes will have to be made in the knowledge that nearly all the grant aid coffers are empty.

The 1983 Annual General Meeting was held in the Agricultural Centre, Duns, on the 27th April, when Lt Col W Swan, the President of the Society and Major General Sir John Swinton, the Chairman, reported on the work which the Society had covered during the last twelve months and its plans for the future. At the end of the formal meeting, members had the opportunity of listening to Mr Douglas Hogonin who gave a most interesting talk, with excellent slides, on Ancient Buildings, Monuments and Sites in the County of Berwickshire

The 1984 Annual General Meeting is to be held on the evening on Wednesday May 30th, at Thirlestane Castle, Lauder, by kind permission of Capt the Hon and Mrs G.E.I. Maitland Carew. The Captain has provided the Society with a marvellous opportunity for its members to have a private tour of this fascinating Castle and the Border Life Country Museum and we are extremely grateful to the Captain and Mrs Maitland Carew for offering to take members through the Castle. This Newsletter contains a note about Thirlestane Castle and members are strongly advised to avail themselves of the opportunity of visiting this beautiful historic building.

GREENLAW TOWN HALL

The Society has been closely involved in the renovation of Greenlaw Town Hall, which is occupied by Daniel Brotherston, a local antique and furniture trader. In 1980 the Society managed to obtain a grant from the Historic Buildings Council, which enabled it to make the building wind and watertight and to carry out some of the urgently needed repair work. Daniel Brotherston has also carried out a considerable amount of work to the building, but there is still work needed to eradicate an outbreak of dry rot in the basement. The Historic Buildings Council are not able release any further money until the work has been completed and the society is currently in the process of trying to raise the necessary finance (which amounts to approximately £2,000) to complete the necessary work.

THE MOUTH BRIDGE

The proposal to demolish the attractive Mouth Bridge on the Blackadder Water, south east of Duns, has received considerable exposure in the local press. The Civic Society has made strong representations to the Borders Regional Council against the demolition of the bridge as it considers the course of action to be both drastic and unnecessary. At the time of going to print the future of the bridge, which probably dates from the late 18th Century, has yet to be discussed at a full meeting at Regional Headquarters, but it is hoped that it will be saved and that proposals to demolish will not be approved.

(Photographed by courtesy of the Tweeddale Press Group)

THE OLD MILL, COCKBURNSPATH

Both the Berwickshire Civic Society and the Civic Trust have been consulted about the unusual water powered sawmill at Cockburnspath. The buildings are in extremely poor condition and probably beyond repair. The new owner, Mr Bell, has had discussions with the Society and the Trust concerning his proposals to construct a house on the site of the old mill, incorporating some of the old building. Having made suggestions concerning the redevelopment for a private house we wish Mr Bell every success with his proposals.

THE POLWARTH THORN

Unfortunately the thorn, which featured in the the 1983 Newsletter and whose origin can be traced back at least 300 years, suffered from gale damage in 1983. However, the broken limbs have been removed, the area tidied up and the notice, giving details of the history of the thorn, is being erected by the Civic Society. We are extremely grateful to Mr Jack Andrews of Duns who has very kindly taken on the task of maintaining the area around the thorn, which occupies a central site in the old village of Polwarth.

KEEP BERWICKSHIRE TIDY CAMPAIGN

The 1983 competition was won by Gavinton, which has always been amongst the front runners in previous years. 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 done much to help and encourage the people of Berwickshire maintain the County in its outstandingly tidy state.

SINCLAIRS HILL COTTAGES

The Executive Committee of the Society had hoped that the National Trust for Scotland would acquire these cottages through their Small Houses Scheme, as the state of the properties, which are situated on the north side of Sinclairs Hill Hamlet, had been of considerable concern to the Society for almost ten years. However, whilst the

Society was trying to encourage enthusiasm in the National Trust for Scotland, the properties were purchased by Mr Brian Smith of Eyemouth, who has subsequently renovated the cottages and has almost completed a most attractive and highly commendable scheme. All who know them will be grateful to Mr Smith for taking on the task of repairing and modernising these cottages. (It is interesting to note that the improvement work to the cottages was greatly assisted by grant aid and it is unlikely that a worthwhile scheme would ever have been contemplated without such financial assistance. Mention was made earlier in the Newsletter about withdrawal of some forms of grant aid and Sinclairs Hill Cottages must be a clear example of the type of property which cannot be economically improved without such help).

COLDSTREAM

The Civic Society had some reservations on the demolition of the east most block of property on the south side of the square in Coldstream, where new Sheltered Housing has since been constructed. The Society felt that the old frontage to the square was of some importance and that it was unlikely that a redevelopment of this area would provide the same form. However, the Society's reservations on this matter have clearly been satisfied by the construction of the Adam Thompson buildings, which have been built in sympathy with the surrounding buildings. Part of the redevelopment of the area involved the demolition of the old bible factory but we understand that the Regional Council is encouraging the District Council to erect a plaque on the site of the old factory which may, at least, preserve the memory of the building for future generations.

THIRLESTANE CASTLE

As Thirlestane Castle has been made available to the Civic Society for the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday May 30th, it was thought that some information about the Castle would be of great interest to members who might like to know something of its history before the A.G.M.

Thirlestane's history has its roots in an older fort which knew the stormy Wars of Independence and was raised on solid rock above the silver windings of the Leader. Hearsay shades into history in its early story, but the de Matulants who dwelt there appear in Scottish annals at the start of the thirteenth century. Sir Richard de Matulant, who flourished in the lifetime of Alexander III (1241-1286) was one of the most considerable barons in the land and, if tradition speaks true, he defended his home against the English invaders. It is known that his son, William of Thirlestane, was a follower of Robert the Bruce (1276-1329).

From this stock sprang a line of men prominent in the service of Scotland - statesmen, soldiers and sailors who were bound to its monarchs by ties of personal affection and offered unquestioned ability. History singles them out even in early Scottish history; A Maitland of Lethington fell at the battle of Neville's Cross (1346) when the Scots King was freed from his long English captivity. Yet another is praised as a man of valour and an intimate friend of James IV (1437-1513). Maitland followed him to death on the field of Flodden. Later centuries brought the family greater eminence still.

Thirlestane then, was a loyal stronghold, a centre of military importance, and it is not surprising that it changed hands more than once during the Scots' struggle for

Independence. As late as 1548 the "Auld Enemy," in the person of Protector Somerset, strengthened the castle to hold the English garrison. But by the end of the century it was back in its rightful owner's hands; and there began the re-edification of the castle as it is today, when the oblong part of the great stone "T" which it forms was built by Chancellor Maitland (1545-1595).

But it was the Duke of Lauderdale, powerful statesman and intimate friend of Charles II, who impressed his personality most strongly on the Castle. He built the jutting wings which flanked the entrance on the west front, and to which, in the nineteenth century, still further wings were added, completing the cross bar "T" shape. He made the final transition from fort to mansion-house, bringing skilled craftsmen from the royal employ and from Holland to model and carve rich garlands and crowns of the Restoration on the walls and ceilings of his Scottish home.

In the past eight years the castle has undergone extensive renovations, and a new chapter in its long history has been started with it being opened for visitors to enjoy.

Thirlestane Castle has been in the Maitland family to the present day, Captain The Hon. Maitland-Carew being the grandson of the 15th Earl of Lauderdale. Following extensive negotiations over a long period of time, the ownership of the main castle was transferred to a Charitable Trust at the end of 1983, the Trust being endowed by the National Heritage Memorial Trust, thus securing the future of the Castle for the Nation. Captain Maitland Carew continues to live in the North wing and acts as Curator of the Castle.

THE BORDER COUNTRY LIFE MUSEUM

By agreement with Captain Maitland-Carew, the Border Country Life Museum established its base in the Castle's

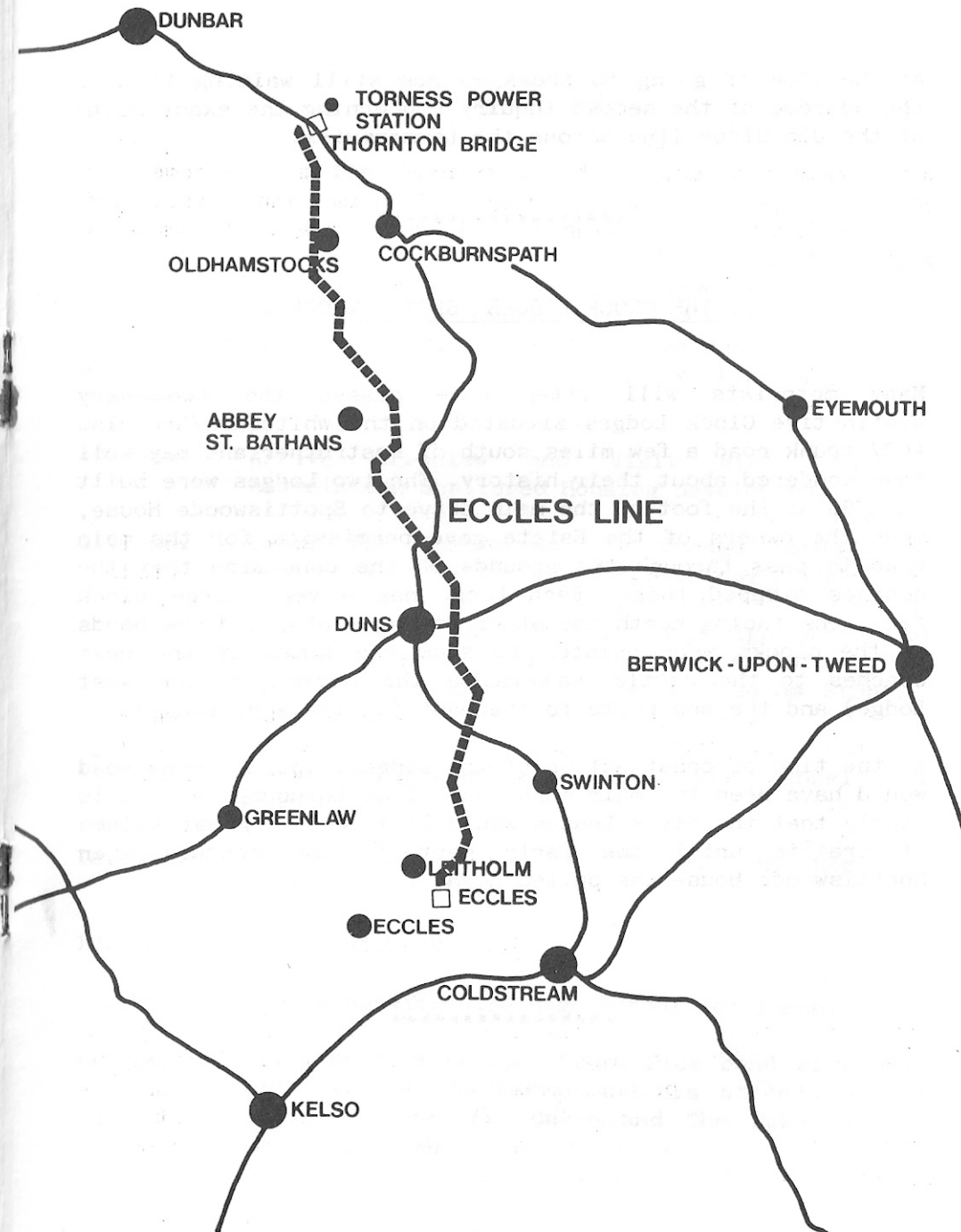
courtyard wing in 1982. The Museum provides displays illustrating all aspects of rural life in the Borders, from pre-historic times, to the present, and is the home for family history records, photographs, maps, and plans, and other information relating to the Border area. It is well worth a visit on it's own.

LAMBERTON TOLL

The Civic Society has been constantly pressing the Local Authorities, both north and south of the Border, and has made some headway during the last twelve month period. However, it appears that no proposals for Lamberton Toll can be considered until the Ministry of Transport in Newcastle have decided on the details of their road improvement scheme which affects the area. It is understood that the re-alignment of the trunk road will not be put in hand for at least two years and, accordingly, it is very unlikely that any improvement will be witnessed at Lamberton Toll for some time.

TORNESS

Sadly for Berwickshire the result of the Public Inquiry which was held in Haddington at the beggining of 1983 was to fix one of the proposed routes for the power line across the Merse in Berwickshire, and it is understood that the construction of the power line, which incorporates massive pylons, will probably commence next year.



At the time of going to press we are still waiting to hear the outcome of the second Inquiry concerning the exact route of the Dip Slope line across the Lammermuirs.

THE CLOCK LODGES SPOTTISWOODE

Many motorists will often have passed the two very distinctive Clock Lodges situated on the Whiteburn/Greenlaw A697 trunk road a few miles south of Westruther and may well have wondered about their history. The two Lodges were built in 1796 at the foot of the main drive to Spottiswoode House, when the owners of the Estate gave permission for the main road to pass through the grounds on the condition that the coaches stopped there. Each Lodge has a very large clock face, one facing north the other facing south, and the hands on the clocks were painted to show the times of the next coaches to the cattle markets to the north (on the west Lodge) and the sea ports to the east (on the east Lodge).

At the time of construction of the Lodges, the Greenlaw road would have been the main road south from Edinburgh and it is likely that the clock Lodges would have seen a great volume of traffic until the early part of the century when Spottiswoode House was pulled down.

THE QUEENS VISIT

The greatest day for Berwickshire this year must surely be Monday 5th July, when The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh are spending a whole day in the County.

Lieutenant Colonel W.B.Swan, the Lord Lieutenant of the County, has very kindly provided the Newsletter with the draft programme for the visit. This may be subject to minor alteration but it is doubtful if there will be any major changes.

- 10.45am. Arrive Greenlaw and Visit Bield Housing Association Sheltered Housing development
- 11.10am. Leave for Coldstream via Orange Lane where residents of Leitholm and Eccles may gather.
- 11.30am. Arrive Coldstream. Drive along High Street to Henderson Park. Visit new Tourist Information Centre. See Coldstream Guards Freedom Stone. Coldstream Pipe Band will play.
- 11.55am. Leave Coldstream for Duns, via Lennel and Swinton.
- 12.20pm. Arrive Hamish Morrison Ltd new Hatchery at Station Road, Duns.
- 12.40pm. Leave Hatchery.
- 12.45pm. Arrive Berwickshire High School for lunch.
- 2.30pm. Royal British Legion, Duns, Pipe band will lead cavalcade of the Reiver and his attendants and followers past the Queen and The Duke in the School grounds

- 2.40pm. Visit Borders Region Sports course in School Grounds.
- 3pm. Leave Berwickshire High School for Craigswalls on Chirnside Road.
- 3.10pm. Arrive Graigswalls grain Complex belonging to J.B.Forrest Ltd. and P Wilson Ltd. See demonstration.
- 3.35pm. Leave Graigwalls for Eyemouth via Chirnside and Ayton.
- 4.00pm Arrive Harbour at Eyemouth. See fishing fleet in Harbour and possibly board a vessel.
- 4.15pm. Open Swan Court, Royal British Legion Sheltered Housing Accommodation.
- 4.35pm Proceed to the Eyemouth and District Disabled Association Workshop and see members and premises .
- 4.50pm Tea.
- 5.pm. Leave Eyemouth by car travelling to Edinburgh via Coldingham and Grantshouse

Let us pray for a fine day to show our County at its best.

JOHN DIPPER'S WELL

" The sweetest water in Berwickshire"- So said John Dipper, who was gamekeeper to the Duke of Roxburghe in the 1850's on the Dukes grouse moors in the Lammermuirs above Longformacus. But hereby hangs a tale :-

The said John Dipper, hoping to gain popularity with his "guns" suggested that they lunched at Scarlaw where the head waters of the Watchburn rise - a secluded spot but with access along the Herring road from the North and South. Here they would meet and John would offer water from the Spring, and it was unanimously voted indeed the "Sweetest water in Berwickshire." But unbeknown to the "guns", John Dipper had arrived first at the picnic spot and had emptied a bottle of whisky into the spring.

The spring is there to this day, with a slate commemorating John Dipper, and until recently there was a half coconut so that passers by could drink from the Spring. Alas, although very fresh and undiluted by chemicals, the water from the spring has not quite the taste supplied by John Dipper.

CHAPEL STREET EYEMOUTH

The derelict property has now been demolished and turned into a temporary car park. The site of 17 Chapel Street, next to Swan Court has been reserved for a new Seamans Mission. The site on the other side of Chapel Street and the open area behind the Auld Kirk are reserved for the replacement of Peelwalls old folks home, which will be started in 3 years time. At the behest of the Community Council, Eyemouth Conservation Society and The Berwickshire Civic Society, the Secretary of State gave permission to demolish the property, which was in a conservation area. Normally such permission is not given unless there are detailed plans of replacement buildings. However, due to the dilapidated state of the buildings and the long time scale for building on the site, on this occasion permission to demolish the buildings was given against a detailed design brief, which will have to be followed when rebuilding takes place. This brief has been seen and approved by all concerned.

EYEMOUTH MUSEUM

The Eyemouth Museum Trust, must surely be congratulated on establishing one of the most interesting and widely acclaimed Museums in recent history. The Museum is situated in the Auld Kirk in the centre of the town and is about to be opened for its third season.

Last year was remarkably successful. The Museum had about 10,000 visitors, the same as the previous year and mounted two popular exhibitions - "Eyemouth at War" and "Eyes Glued to the Page" - which was based on the Eyemouth Scrapbooks. These have now been rebound and photocopied, and so will be available to future generations. The Museum received recognition in the form of no less than four awards:-

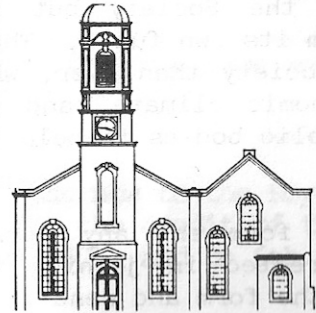
The Museum of the Year Award - Special Award.
The Guild of Travel Writers Annual Award.
British Tourist Authority Certificate of Distinction
The Eastern Borders Development Association Annual Award.

This year the Museum plans to hold an exhibition - "Eyemouth Railway" - Which will be held throughout May. It will also have an exhibition called "Travelling The Herring", which has been prepared by Tessa Jackson for the Collins Gallery in Glasgow, where it was very well reviewed. It will travel around Scotland this summer, and will come to Eyemouth from 7th July to 4th August. Many of the exhibits and photographs in this exhibition are of Eyemouth and were provided by the Museum.

Many of the permanent exhibits in the Museum have been improved and re arranged so it is well worth a return visit. A special open evening for members will be held after the AGM, which is on Tuesday 12th June, in the Museum at 7.30 pm.

Next winter it is planned to extend the mezzanine floor to cover over most of the exhibition area. This will provide more room to show the many exhibits now in the reserve collection, and to host more travelling exhibitions. This will be an expensive undertaking, but it is hoped that it can be financed largely from grants and existing funds, without another major fund raising exercise, provided the Museum continues to be supported by its members and the local people. On the museum's recent Newsletter, the Trustees stated that they are depending on the existing members renewing their sponsorship which are at the same rates as last year, and that many new members as possible are recruited. Support for the various fund raising efforts, such as the coffee morning on the 12th May, is also sought, and it is hoped that members will bring their friends to see the museum.

We wish the Eyemouth Museum Trust the continued success which it truly deserves, and cannot recommend the Museum too strongly to those who have not yet paid the Auld Kirk a visit.



EYEMOUTH MUSEUM

Open Easter Week and Every Day from May to October

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The Subscription costs less than a bottle of whisky but the effect is much longer lasting

MEMBERSHIP

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 F D Maxwell, Braefield Cottage, Lauder, Berwickshire TD2 6SF.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Ordinary Members - £3 Corporate Members - £5

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

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

Date

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Name (A/c No)

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Signature