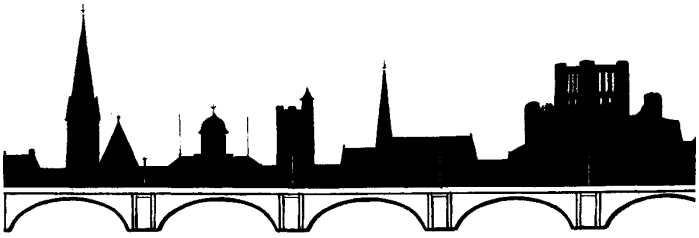
KELSO HERITAGE SOCIETY

PATRON: HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE



Logo courtesy of A. Binnie

December 2021

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the December 2021 issue of our Newsletter.

The monthly newsletter will be produced over the autumn and winter with articles of local historical interest, information updates etc. We would welcome your feedback. Contributions to the Newsletter are also welcomed.

We took a break from Speaker Events in December but plan to resume on 17th January 2022 at Kelso Rugby Club at 7.30pm (and via Zoom) when the Conservation Team for the Union Chain Bridge Project will present a talk.

The **Union Chain Bridge** or **Union Bridge** is a suspension bridge that spans the River Tweed four miles upstream of Berwick, straddling the border between England and Scotland. When it opened in 1820 it was the longest wrought iron suspension bridge in the world with a span of 449 feet (137 m), and the first vehicular bridge of its type in the United Kingdom. The bridge is currently undergoing a conservation project and is closed temporarily.

We will hear the story of the bridge and of the work going on to conserve it for future generations.

Booking for this event is essential – Please email: info@kelsoheritagesociety.co.uk

The following extracts from 'Border Cavalcade' which was written by Frederick Moffatt in 1989 give us an insight into 19th century Kelso.

The townspeople used to be aroused by a drummer and piper at 5.00am each dawn, but eventually a bell was used. A bell also summoned mourners to a funeral.

Main trades were the dressing of lamb and sheepskins and the tanning of hides; hats, stockings and flannel were also manufactured. A distillery was built, but coal had to be brought many miles by horse and cart.

There were various Fairs and Markets during the year. Friday was market day and the "corn sales" were the best attended in the whole area. There were also 12 "High Market Days" per annum, for the hire of men and women and the sale of horses. St James Fair was the main fair on 5th August, having been originally granted to the town of Roxburgh. There was great resentment of the fact that Jedburgh, being a Royal Burgh, did financially better out of the Fair than Kelso.

Politically the Duke of Roxburghe supervised the town as a Burgh of Barony, but in 1856 it became a Police Burgh with 12 Police Commissioners, who, in 1892 became the Burgh Council.

Kelso Gas Company was proposed in 1831, and situated at the Knowes. There were 317, shares with capital of £1585. A local coppersmiths was the first premises in Scotland to have gas illumination. In 1866, there were 133 lamps, lit every night for nine months of the year by the leerie. Street lighting went electric in 1958.

(more extracts will be printed in a later Newsletter)


Last of the Lamp Lighters (1958) Mr. Hugh McCraw, Abbotseat Kelso.

Subscription fees

A reminder that subscription fees are due to be paid in early January 2022. The fees can be paid by BACS, Cheques (sent to the Treasurer) or in person at the Speaker event on 17th January 2022. For further information on how to pay please contact the Secretary on Tel. No. 01573 224 951

The membership for Kelso Heritage Society fees are now £12.00 single and £20.00 joint membership.

Online

National Museum of Scotland *
Various exhibitions to view
https://www.nms.ac.uk/

National Library of Scotland – Map Library
Well worth a visit!!
https://maps.nls.uk/

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcomed
Email info@kelsoheritagesociety.co.uk
Tel. 07766 781 555
Deadline for January issue 31st December 2021