

KELSO HERITAGE SOCIETY

PATRON: HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE

Logo courtesy of A. Binnie

December 2022

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the December 2022 issue of our Newsletter. The autumn section of our speakers programme has just flashed past and here we are in mid-December preparing ourselves for Christmas.
This is the second newsletter of the year. Further publications will appear in March and June 2023.

Speaker Events 2022-23

The talks began on 19th September when Ian Hill gave a presentation on the excavation work (started in 2018) carried out in Hume on behalf of the Hume Castle Preservation Trust. Ian is a Director of HARP, the archaeology team who were commissioned to carry out the excavations, and his organisation were assisted by an enthusiastic team of volunteers in excavating the area surrounding the castle. Complimentary booklets explaining the project were made available to the audience. (copies can be obtained on request to Hazel Woodsell)

On 17th October Phillip Munro presented a talk on The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project which aims to reinforce the small, isolated and vulnerable population of Golden Eagles in the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. Through a series of translocations over a period of 5 years, they are looking to increase numbers and prevent the loss of this majestic bird from southern skies. This talk provided a brief introduction to the iconic golden eagle whilst exploring the background to the project and an update on progress.

The talk on 21st November, which was preceded by the AGM, was presented by well-known local historian Christine Henderson who told the story of the town of Roxburgh and explored the reasons for its demise.
The talks were also live on Zoom for those members unable to attend the venue. The Zoom presentations gave rise to a few technical problems resulting in delays to the

start of the in venue talks and a bit of frustration for those attending via the link. As a result of these frustrations and the dwindling interest from our members in the use of the Zoom link we have reluctantly decided to discontinue the offer of the Zoom facility effective from the January talk.
If the weather over the next few months gives rise to the cancellation of the in venue talks we will make urgent arrangements to offer the Zoom facility to everyone.

Listed below is the programme for the remainder of the year and details of the January 2023 event.
We look forward to seeing you all there.

Programme January – April 2023

16th January 2023	David McLean	Votes for Women in South East Scotland 1870-1920
20th February 2023	Margaret Fox	Scotland's Law Lords versus Northumbrians Behaving Badly – a look at cross-border crime
20th March 2023	David Jones	Dere Street
17th April 2023	Geoff Parkhouse	The Lost Medieval Bridge at Ancrum

January Speaker Event – Monday 16th January 2023 at 7.30pm in Kelso Rugby Club.
Votes for Women in South East Scotland 1870-1920

David McLean makes a welcome return to Kelso Heritage Society after the cancellation of his talk in March 2020.
He will cover the development of votes for women in the fifty years period leading up to and immediately following the passing of the Parliament Act of 1918.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) – 21st November 2022

The AGM was held immediately before the talk when the Trustees Annual Report was presented by the Chair, Neil Rawlins, on behalf of the Trustees. John Dellow, Treasurer, presented the Financial Report. The reports were accepted by those present.
All eight of the Trustees made themselves available for re-election. All were re-elected unanimously.
At a meeting following the AGM the previous office bearers were re-elected by the other Trustees.
The Office-Bearers and Trustees for the year 2022-2023 are therefore as follows.

Chair	Neil Rawlins
Treasurer	John Dellow
Secretary	Hazel Woodsell
Trustee	Ian Aitchison
Trustee	James Boulton
Trustee	Colin Henderson
Trustee	Harry Tomczyk
Trustee	David Welsh

A proposal to raise the membership fees to £15 for single membership and £25 for two people at the same address was adopted unanimously.

Membership Fees.

Membership fees are due for renewal on 1st January 2023. A notice advising of this date and of the revised fees will be issued soon. Information on how to make payment will be given in the notice.
We are in the process of claiming Gift Aid from H M Revenue & Customs for the period since we changed our name to Kelso Heritage Society. We will use the members authorisation signatures we have on file to make these back dated claims.
However in order to ensure that all our information and authorisation is up to date we are asking members to complete a membership form again this year. This will ensure that the information held is as accurate as possible. The forms will be sent out with the reminder notice.

Kelso Abbey – ongoing closure issues

Many of you will be aware that Kelso Abbey, along with many other historic buildings in Scotland, has been closed to the public by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). This is due to the deterioration of the building, caused in the main by climate change, and the subsequent health and safety risks. The closure and the unsightly fencing surrounding the Abbey are seriously affecting the views of visitors to the town
The trustees wish to assure you that, along with Kelso Community Council and Visit Kelso, we are in discussions with HES to ensure a safe and appropriate plan for reopening of the Abbey as soon as possible.

Postal Services in late 19th Century

Before 1840, the British postal system was highly complex and very expensive. **Letters were charged by distance and the number of sheets of paper they contained**. Normally, the charge was paid by the recipient. As a result people often 'cross-wrote' their letters to save money.

Sir Rowland Hill, KCB, FRS (3 December 1795 – 27 August 1879) an English teacher, inventor and social reformer, campaigned for a comprehensive reform of the postal system, based on the concept of the Uniform Penny Post and on his proposed solution of pre-payment facilitating the safe, speedy and cheap transfer of letters.

Hill made the case that if letters were cheaper to send, people, including the poorer classes, would send more of them, thus eventually profits would go up. He proposed an adhesive stamp to indicate pre-payment of postage – with the first being the Penny Black*. In 1840, the first year of Penny Post, the number of letters sent in the UK more than doubled. Within 10 years, it had doubled again. Within three years postage stamps were introduced in Switzerland and Brazil, a little later in the US and by 1860, they were used in 90 countries.

Hill later served as a government postal official, and he is usually credited with originating the basic concepts of the modern postal service, including the invention of the postage stamp.

*The Penny Black

The Penny Black was the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system. It was first issued in Great Britain in May 1840. The stamp featured a profile of Queen Victoria.



Post Office Building Kelso – opened April 1911 – Grade B listed building
(current use – Royal Mail Delivery Office)

The new Post Office at Kelso, was opened for public business in April 1911. Prior to that date the local Post Office had been situated in private property and with the gradual extension of postal work frequent changes had be made. At length, tired of shifting about to premises, which at best, were ill adapted for requirements, the authorities resolved on building a suitable place for themselves. A site was obtained

in Horse Market Street, and here the new office was erected.
(information based on an extract from Southern Reporter 20th April 1911)

This building served as The General Post Office until the late 20th century when the postal services split from Royal Mail and the Counter Services moved to Brown's Newsagents, Woodmarket, in Kelso.



Online sources of information

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

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

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcomed-

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