

KELSO HERITAGE SOCIETY

PATRON: HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE

Logo courtesy of A. Binnie

April 2023

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Spring issue of our Newsletter. The winter/spring section of our speaker's programme has just flashed past and here we are in mid-April preparing ourselves for our summer break.
I had promised a Newsletter in March but I am afraid time has caught up with me so apologies for this late edition.

Speaker Events 2022-23

January 2023

David McLean made a welcome return to Kelso Heritage Society after the cancellation of his talk in March 2020. He covered 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.

February 2023

Margaret Fox our scheduled speaker for February had to cancel for personal reasons and Christine Henderson stepped in the present a very interesting talk on The Reivers. In particular covering their involvement in the Kelso and District area.

March 2023

David Jones also made a welcome return to Kelso Heritage Society after the cancellation of his talk in the spring of 2020. He told the story of Dere Street and its many uses over several centuries.

April 2023

The final talk for this season was presented by Geoff Parkhouse who gave an entertaining account of the discovery and dating of a mediaeval bridge at Ancrum. Which he and a few other colleagues from Ancrum and District Heritage Society had worked on along with experts from Historic Environment Scotland. Funding had been obtained from various sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Fallago Environment Fund. Geoff took us on a historical journey linking the completion of the bridge with the Bishop's Palace at Ancrum (excavated in 2019) and the Border Abbeys.

This marked the end of the 2023 season. We will resume again on 18th September when Kenny McLean will present the **Evacuation to the Border Counties 1939-1945: Myth and Reality**

Kelso and District Civic Committee (activities January – March 2023)

The Committee makes comments on planning applications and issues affecting the town and pursues matters of concern raised by individuals in the town.
From January to March 2023 30 planning applications were received from Scottish Borders Council, 21 of which were for replacement windows. There were no objections to the replacement windows apart from a small request to make sure all windows matched in the application at Maxwellheugh Terrace.
Among the 9 other applications there was an interesting application to restore property in Oven Wynd to form 4 flats. This should be an improvement on a very run down building.
Finally, along with the Community Council KADCC raised a complaint against a sign which had been put up on a restaurant in Horsemarket without planning permission. Following investigation and a retrospective application from the owner the request was refused. The main objector was the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) who are routinely consulted on all aspects of conservation areas.
AHSS commented as follows -*The new sign has significantly more impact than the previous signs, and does not enhance or preserve the character of the traditional building it is found on, or the wider conservation area. The new light is modern in appearance and similarly detracts from the traditional character of the building. More appropriate signage and lighting should be sought.*
The restaurant owner has the right to appeal and we await further developments.

This complaint has highlighted an issue regarding the lack of planning applications from owners of property in the Conservation Area which has been occurring over a number of years resulting in inappropriate colour schemes, signage etc. and detracting from the attractive buildings in this part of the town Most owners/tenants claim to be unaware that there was this requirement. Our 3 local Councillors have taken the matter up on behalf of the Community Council and

ourselves and a review of procedures is currently being addressed at a senior level in SBC.
Kelso is not the only town/village affected by this issue.

Kelso Abbey – ongoing closure issues

The Trustees continue to work with Heritage Environment Scotland (HES) during the period of closure. A meeting is planned for the near future to discuss ways of publicising the abbey. In the meantime, an inspection of the Abbey is scheduled to start on 26th June following which HES will be able to programme potential remedial repairs

Kelso Abbey Community Orchard

The trees are all springing into life and we hope to have a good crop of fruit again this year.
We hope to hold an Apple Pressing day in the autumn in conjunction with other community orchards. If any of our members have experience or such events, we would appreciate your help and advice.

The Kelso Guides with help from Mayfield Garden Centre continue to plant bulbs and flowers in the orchard, raised bed and wooden troughs. This is much appreciated.

In 2022 the Four Border Abbeys U3A celebrated 20 years of the organisation being set up in Kelso. At the same time the national U3A movement celebrated 40 years of the movement being set up in the UK. To mark these events, they planted a mixed hedge along the fence which marks the boundary with the Glebe Field. Last Tuesday a plaque was placed beside the hedge with a small ceremony attended by the Chair and Committee Members of the U3A, Paul Roberts representing the Community Council and Hazel Woodsell representing Kelso Heritage Society.



Tree Planting

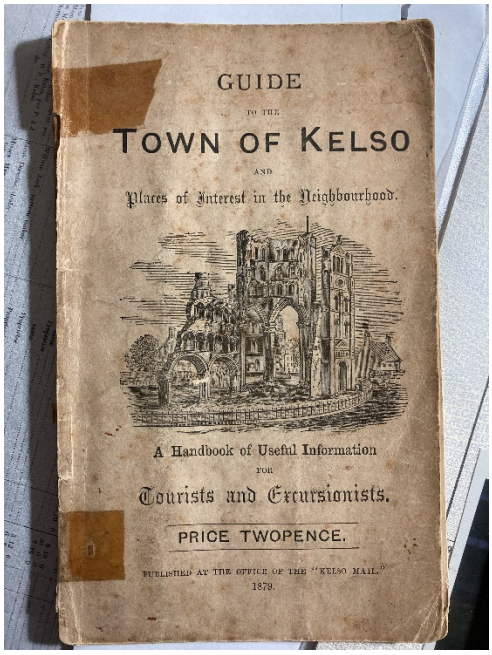
We have been fortunate again this year in obtaining 4 trees through a grant from the Borders Tree Planting Trust. Our plan is to plant 1 tree in Shedden Park to mark the Coronation of King Charles 111 and 3 trees in Bridgend Park* to mark 70 years since the park was opened. We are awaiting agreement from the appropriate department in Scottish Borders Council to plant the trees and will update our members when the planting ceremonies are arranged.

*Bridgend Park

The park was opened on 2nd June 1953 to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth 11. There was a parade of officials, youth groups, school children led by bands from The Square to Bridgend Park where trees were planted in the middle of the park. The Provost and Bailiffs were given new robes for the occasion (still used today)

Guide Book to Kelso – Kelso Mail 1879

As part of a wider enquiry from someone whose ancestors originally came from Kelso the front cover of this booklet was attached. We have been unable to find any copies of the book in our archives and are asking our readers if any of you have a copy on your bookshelves or tucked away in your attics. Please contact Hazel Woodsell on Tel. 01573 224 951 or Email info@kelsoheritagesociety.co.uk



Time Capsule (under the Bullring in the Square)

As part of the celebrations to mark the Coronation of King Charles 111 the Provost and Community Councillors have arranged for SBC to raise the Time Capsule which is buried under the Bullring in The Square. The Capsule was last buried in July 1962 which the Queen visited the town. It contains coinage and mementos appropriate to the year it was buried. The contents will be displayed in a window of the Town Hall and reburied along with new artefacts later this year.
The SBC staff will start working on the Bullring in week commencing 24th April and it is planned to raise the Time Capsule around 1.00pm on Friday 28th April work progress and weather permitting. Watch out for updates on the Community Council Facebook page.

Survey

Earlier this year we carried out a survey of our members with the aim of establishing what areas of history they wanted the society to be involved in. For example – research into the history of the town, revising the Town Trail, holding exhibitions and possibly carrying out some archaeology. We thank everyone who took part. Currently we are reviewing the responses and will report on progress later in the summer.

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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