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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello Members,

Firstly to mention some Planning and Development matters: the sub-committee has been incorporated into the main Executive Committee at the moment with Elaine Paterson as our CAAG representative. There has been some general approval of the development on Youngman's Corner which already improves the look of this very prominent site on Hide Hill. There is also a good response to the plans for a Premier Inn Hotel on the old Playhouse site - although we are rather concerned about the possible height of the building. Also, parking has the potential to cause problems. We continue to keep 'an eye' on the Dock Road Green area in Tweedmouth and, of course, Spittal Point which has the potential of being one of the finest sites in the Country if imaginatively developed.

In the last Newsletter I mentioned two very exciting projects which were happening in Berwick and in which I, and other members of the Committee are involved. The Neighbourhood Plan, which the Town Council are taking the lead and is chaired by Cllr. Eric Goodyer is taking shape after the first, well attended round of public consultations which included all the Wards in the town. Seven working groups have been appointed with leaders: Built Environment, Natural Environment, Employment and skills, Housing, Youth, Tourism and Transport. Probably, Built Environment which includes Heritage issues would be the group that most interests Civic Society members, but anyone who would like to join any of the groups, please let us know.

A successful Investors' Conference was held in the Guildhall on the 17th March. The Civic Society was one of the sponsors of this event and we run a stall.

The plans for the redevelopment of the Barracks to include the existing museums and provide accommodation for the Archives continues to progress well and it is hoped will be a major asset for Berwick. The feasibility study has taken place with consultants, Jura and Spence & Dower and some very interesting uses of the Barracks building have been suggested. However, Chairman of the Steering Group, Sir Philip Mawer, urges caution as this project will take a great deal of time, work and financing (an estimated figure of around £50M was mentioned). It is good to see an emergent co-operation with the Scottish Borders in these plans.

The Portas saga has come to an end with all available money now allocated. There have been a few worthy projects funded, but what began full of enthusiasm and optimism, when Berwick was one of the very few towns in the Country to receive this funding, soon became mired with trouble and controversy. At the end of the day the High Street is still receiving very adverse comment. It is a salutary lesson for the handling of any other large sums of money coming into the Town.

The seagulls on the KwikSave site look as perplexed as many of us! What is going to happen there?

THE CIVIC SOCIETY PLAQUE

We are now looking for nominations to receive the Civic Society Plaque award for 2016. Please let Catherine Seymour or myself know of any new building or restoration you would like to suggest.

EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

As you will see from Michael Cullen's reports which appear in the Newsletter, we have had very interesting well-attended meetings with some excellent speakers.

On November 11th last year we held our second Remembrance Service at the Main Guard where 651 Poppy Crosses were placed in the grass area in memory of all the fallen from Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal in the 1st World War. What makes this a very moving event is the participation of young people, the Cadets, Scouts and pupils from Longridge Towers School. We are also very grateful to the Rev. Matthew Knox for taking the Service, Mr. Peter Walton of the KOSB Association, Mr. Paul Marshall, Scouts Leader, Ms Debra Jerdan, Leader of Army Cadets and the piper Mr. Andrew Smith and Civic Society members who helped with this event.

On December 4th we held our annual Christmas Party in the Parish Centre. A delicious meal was provided by Ruth Forrest Catering which was enjoyed by a good number of our members. Before the dinner Canon Christopher Smith with members of the Parish Church Choir entertained us with a rousing selection of Carols and Christmas songs. We are very grateful to them and also to all who helped on this occasion including Peter Maule who did his usual excellent job in running the wine bar.

Thanks for all the work undertaken by the past committee members and welcome to the new committee members elected at the last AGM. The Executive Committee consists of: Zoreen Hill (Chairman), Catherine Seymour (Vice-Chairman), Michael Cullen, Sophie Hamilton, Georgina Hill, Catherine Kent, Elaine Paterson, Linda Pepper and John Webster.

There are many interested new members of the Society who hopefully will help to carry on our role in Berwick. Sadly, some of our long-standing members have died in the last few months: Lord Walton of Detchant, distinguished medical scientist, Miss C.A. Sutherland, former Berwick Veterinary Surgeon,

Denis Morgan, Master Decorator and just two days ago Andrew Dewar, a former member of our Executive and distributor of the Newsletter in his area.

Particular mention must be made about Felicity Cooklin who died last December after a long illness bravely borne. I first met Felicity when I joined the Society in 1996. At that time she was in charge of all the catering and a mainstay of the Main Guard. She had a lovely lively personality and was much loved by all who knew her. Marion Mead and myself attended a Remembrance Service for her at the family cottage near Coldingham recently. It was a very moving occasion. She loved Quince trees (many of us were recipients for her famous Quince jelly in the past!). So two trees donated by the Society are to be planted in the garden at the cottage in her memory. We shall all miss her greatly.

Please see our calendar enclosed for details of meetings and events for the 2016/2017 season and I hope to see many of you at our meetings and events in the summer months.

Zoreen Hill
Chairman

EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

THE COWE BUILDINGS

Many of us walking past the Cowe buildings must have wondered exactly what lies inside. Recently a somewhat controversial film gave a tour of the interior. Dr. Adam Menuge, of the Faculty of Architecture of Cambridge University, in a talk entitled, “The Merchant Community and its Architectural Expression - a Berwick-upon-Tweed Case Study”, gave us an erudite talk, focusing largely on its Eighteenth Century survivals.

Dr. Menuge stressed the significance of the site. Its proximity to the quay, in the period before the building of the Tweed Dock, made it well placed for trade, both up and down the coast and overseas. He stressed the significance of the under-appreciated North Sea and Baltic trade involving such items as salmon, grain, and eggs.

The property was seen as showing a typical Eighteenth Century mix of the domestic and the commercial. A reason for this was the need for anyone in business to be able to keep a constant eye on proceedings, which would often involve the supervision of apprentices.

The neighbouring property, “The Cockle Shop”, was built a little later, timber analysis suggested around 1770. It was built a little later, timber analysis suggesting around 1770. It was built to a complicated plan with thinnish walls which could have been to maximise interior space. Many of the lower rooms remain almost unaltered, something Dr. Menuge finds historically invaluable as it's something not found in the grand houses of the period.

GEOFF PAUL

At its meeting on January 13th Geoff Paul, Director of Planning, Economy, and Housing with the Northumberland County Council, reappeared to update us on the latest Local Government initiatives.

The first subject tackled, and for the longest time, was that of North-East devolution. Proposals are for a Combined Authority which would include the leaders of the seven regional countries. This Authority would receive a grant of thirty million pounds to be used as a loan repayment on capital over a period of thirty years.

There is though a compulsory requirement and that is for a

Mayor, elected every four years. There is a good deal of support for this from business but elsewhere some concern that he should not be too all-powerful but rather one of eight decision makers.

Then the talk switched to the new Ashington Council H.Q, to be occupied in September 2018, and to how things were to be ordered inside it. The move from Morpeth to Ashington would, it was calculated, make a saving of sixteen million pounds over twenty-five years. The fact that there was an ideal site in Ashington wasn't adequate reason for some.

Then the matter of County Council services in Berwick. The most vexed question was the relocation of the Tourist Information Office from its current central position in Marygate. Not all agreed with the assertion that the office was making a loss of £62K a year.

We were then informed of the process of the drafting of a Neighbourhood Plan (which Berwick Town Council are the lead on). The stages would include the setting up of a steering group, drop in sessions, the submission of a draft plan to the Planning Inspectorate, a referendum if it was signed off - and if it gets through these stages it would be the delivery plan for the Berwick area and a part of the County Core Strategy Plan.

As Transport is to be fully devolved to the region though that won't include rail or the A1 where some work north of Ellingham has been agreed but not dually north of Morpeth.

The numerous interjections from the floor showed the level of concern about the town's future and Mr. Paul deserves credit for his full, courteous responses to each.

QUESTION TIME

Following last year's well-received Question Time the Civic Society held another in the Parish Centre on Wednesday, February 10th. The panel consisted of Marcus Clinton, Principal of Northumberland College, Alan Irving, Chief Executive of the Harbour Commissioners, and Tony Houghton who has a local government background with transport his speciality and who is now leading a Neighbourhood Plan working group. Each was invited to make an initial presentation before taking questions.

Marcus Clinton stressed the range of activities now being undertaken by the College's 6,000 students: these include activities as diverse as engineering and health and beauty. The aim is to offer the best possible opportunity for youngsters. this

involves a far greater emphasis on employability skills than formerly with Ofsted now more concerned with outcome than data.

Tony Houghton stressed that his views on transport were entirely his own and he began by pointing out the significance of the Neighbourhood Plan as an element in the core strategy. This, he said, is a democratic process involving a good deal of consultation.

He mentioned the competing claims of accessibility and the environment. One solution has been the ring road giving a degree of protection to sensitive areas. Inside this cordon it's possible to create an infrastructure that limits car use; the fuel crises and climate change have been additional reasons for doing this. It is then possible to create a safe environment for walking and cycling, and to provide an enjoyable town centre that people like to spend time in.

To sum up, the aim of the Sustainable Transport policy was to create an infrastructure fit for people rather than cars.

Alan Irving spoke of the harbour from his experience of being in and around the harbour for over forty years.

Back in the 1960's and 1970's it was possible for the Victorian dock to contain six or seven ships at the same time. Since then, though ships have got bigger, and with the harbour entrance widened, it can now deal with vessels up to 16 metres in width and 3,500 tons. Work is, though, required on the ageing structure, in particular on the wooden jetty. Should this collapse the port would be closed.

A need was seen to diversify the cargo. In past times the trade was mainly in fertiliser, cement, and timber. Nowadays, agricultural commodities provided the core business and a need was seen to diversify. Stone quarries and biomass were seen as possibilities.

However, we were urged to be realistic. Berwick was never going to rival the Tyne port or any of today's other super ports. The realistic aim is to make the most of what we have.



SANDRA PENDLINGTON

On Wednesday, March 9th, Dr. Sandra Pendlington addressed the Society on the Invasion of the North by Richard, Duke of Gloucester and subsequent King of England, Richard III.

She started by dealing with the image of “Bad King Richard” as portrayed by the likes of Olivier. He was no saint, but nor was he the kind of ruler the Tudors made him out to be.

Only 18 when he became Lord of the North, he set up courts for the regular dispensation of justice as well as the Council of the North, and ‘punched fairly and firmly’ against the Scots; in all this gaining a good reputation.

In 1482 an army of 20,000 men appeared outside Berwick’s walls and was admitted to the town without opposition, the



THE MARGARET GUILD MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Most members will recall that the Civic Society contributed £5,000 for the restoration of the Spittal Shelter on the Promenade which was part of the 'Borstal Boys' television project in September 2014. At long last, the plaque to commemorate, Margaret Guild, whose generous legacy to the Society enabled us to make this contribution, has been mounted. It looks very good indeed and thanks is due to Bob Hodgson, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, and his team for taking this work in hand.



Castle though holding out. The disunited Scots failed to fight and meekly bought Richard off. Following a siege Berwick castle finally surrendered and the Scottish garrison was allowed to march away with their weapons. From that date Berwick has always been English.

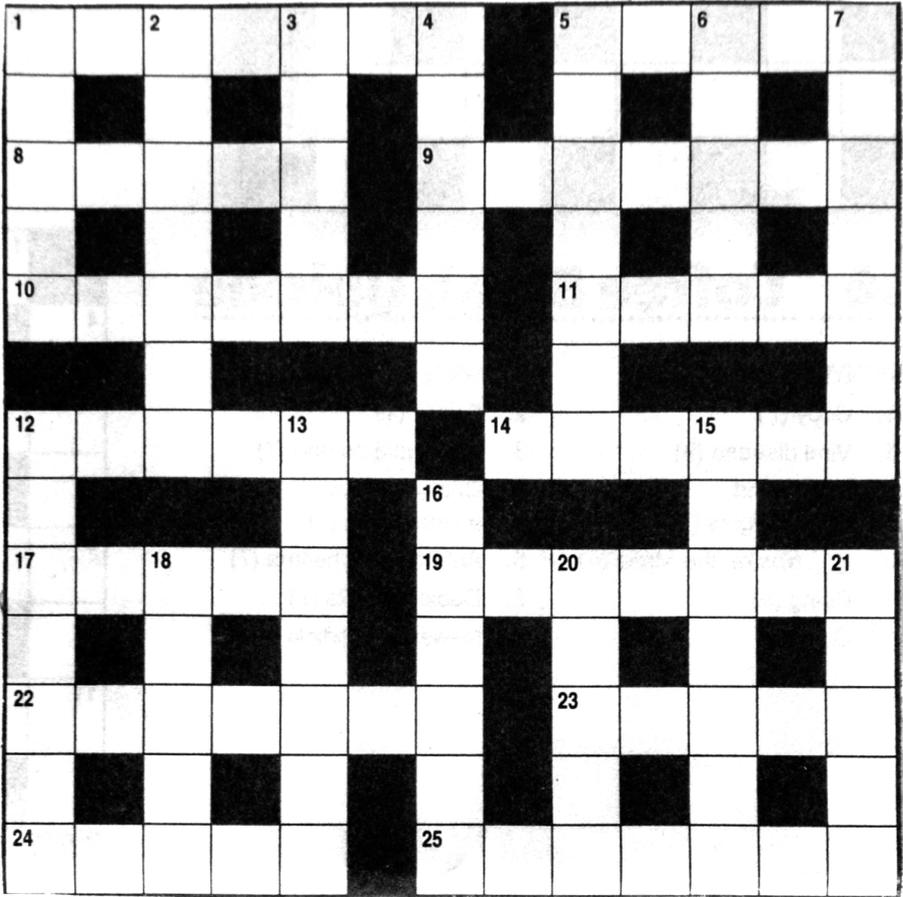
Following his death at Bosworth in which he fought 'like a spirited and most courageous prince' his body was displayed at Newark for three days then buried at Greyfriars Priory. Of the many rumours that later circulated one was that his body had been dug up and thrown in the river. there seems little doubt though that it was his mortal remains recovered from a Leicester car park.

THE BERWICK ACADEMY CIVIC SOCIETY AWARD

On December 14th last year, Chairman, Zoreen Hill and Vice Chairman, Catherine Seymour attended the Berwick Academy Prize giving where sixth form student, Euan Allen was

presented with the Civic Society Award for a pupil who has made an outstanding contribution to the wider community. Euan had been Head of Charities last year - a role which entailed meeting volunteers, supporting charities and co-ordinating fundraising events in school. Charities which have benefited from Euan's dedicated participation include: Cancer Research, Victim Support, Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, Water Aid, Children in Need, and Comic Relief. He has also been involved in fund raising events for Leukaemia and Lymphoma, the Prince's Trust and the 1st Flodden BP Scouts. Euan is a truly remarkable young man who richly deserved the prize.





ACROSS

DOWN

- 1. You could be in High or Low
- 5. This poet thought little of 5 Down
- 8. Better than brawn perhaps
- 9. Their conquest stopped at Bamburgh
- 10. Only a cannibal would do this (3-1-3)
- 11. Kings didn't want to die without
- 12. A tasty brig
- 14. You could cut a dash in these
- 17. Best time for surprise assault
- 19. The Brighton of the north
- 22. A very distant river
- 23. These induce good cheer
- 24. This speeded things up
- 25. a good thing to be

- 1. A sturdy craft
- 2. Northumberland village
- 3. Twisty and Narrow
- 4. Will Berwick Rangers ever ____ ____ (3-3)
- 5. See 5 Across
- 6. Too holey for some
- 7. 'Angels of Mercy'
- 12. Just decorative now
- 13. Gipsy presence here
- 15. Possible direction in Nature park (2-5)
- 16. Consider it ____ ____ (2-4)
- 18. Good use of 8 across
- 20. Heavily involved in world war two
- 21. John Balliol was one

CROSSWORD

Michael Cullen has compiled this interesting crossword which when completed should be sent to him for checking. Please cut out the page using the dotted line.

All correct entries will be collated and a winner will be drawn at the Question Time meeting on July 13th. There will be a prize of a good bottle of wine. Entries to be sent to Mr. Michael Cullen, 6b Main Street, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1QY.

THE BERWICK LITERARY FESTIVAL, 21ST - 23RD OCTOBER 2016

Two years ago members of the Society were circulated with the hope that they might support the inaugural Berwick Literary Festival (the steering group being chaired by Canon Christopher Smith) by becoming Patrons. Many of you did so and there have been two very successful festivals in 2014 and 2015. The 2016 Festival is going to be even more ambitious with one of the star contributors being historian, David Starhey!

Any member wishing to rejoin or become a new Patron at £25 each (with special concessions for some events), please contact Professor Michael Wright, Patrons Secretary, 20 Ness Street, Berwick upon Tweed, TD151HV, email: michael.wright@canterbury.ac.uk

A TRUE DESCRIPTION OF HER MAJESTY'S TOWN OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

This was the title of the talk given by Catherine Kent, architect and archaeologist. From it we learnt a good deal about mapmaking in the Tudor and Early Stuart period.

By this time map-making was getting more common as was the birds-eye view method of doing them. They were often hung on the wall to be looked at, the illustrative decorations skilfully done. Berwick was well-mapped, two striking examples being that of Roland Johnston around 1560 and that of John Speed about 1610. As Crown Surveyor Roland Johnston had a particular need for an accurate drawing of the town's defences.

A striking feature of Speed's map is its attention to town detail being almost a tourist map. On it one can see well painted ships out at sea, one flying the Royal Standards, and salmon fishermen hard at it at Tweedmouth. Of the built environment there is much clear detail of the houses, some thatched others tiled, the castle in a rather derelict condition,

the church with gable ends, and a belfry at the West End buyout also in a poor state, and an isolated gunpowder store. Tracking around the town one could see the Shambles, a Fish Market, a Bake House, a Brew House, and the garrison offices. There is also what looks like some kind of permanent structure for the Scots' Market. The Maison Dieu quay showed the importance of merchant shipping.

The map's high degree of accuracy was demonstrated by superimposing it on top of a current map. Where it was a little out with a bit of a bulge it was suggested that the reason was to fit all the houses in. A curiosity of measurement was Johnston's use of Berwick yards, consisting of 37 inches. Speed on the other hand measured in classical Roman paces.

Thanking Catherine Kent, Zoreen Lady Hill commented on the in-depth research which had made possible this highly informative look at a very distant Berwick.

1936: 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT BERWICK, PENNSLVANIA

Getting an invitation to attend these celebrations the Mayor (Philip Spowart) was at first a bit dubious on the grounds of his age (65) but the Sheriff (Joseph Fleming) was insistent that they should go. They were very glad they did.

Arriving in New York aboard the Aquitania there were 'gasps of amazement' at the skyline, the Mayor so struck that he remarked 'God Save the King', and a formal reception in its lounge. On disembarking they were given a gun salute and escorted by a police motor-cycle brigade.

In the days that followed the were able to attend the pageant which went on for several days, a reception which featured 48 beautiful girls, one for each of the American states, a boxing match, and a school performance of Hansel and Gretel. While there a car and an aeroplane were put at their disposal. The sheriff demurred at taking to the skies but the Mayor flew over Berwick and proclaimed himself 'an enthusiastic devotee of flying'.

They received a message of good wishes from President Roosevelt, were given a commemorative scroll to take back to Berwick, some 'Tweed perfume' for their wives, and a baby born during their visit was named Philip Spowart Cononico. The local paper, The Berwick Enterprise, reported that 'the impression that they have left has been most happy and the honour they have done us has been most appreciated'.

The Sheriff's attention seems to have wandered from time to time, as, according to the Mayor, 'he paid more attention to the ladies than to the speech-making'. Also, that he would have to keep a close eye on him on the way back on the Queen Mary 'to see that he does not take the liberties he took on the Aquitania'. He must though have appreciated the 48 girls.

The Mayor was enthusiastically received back in Berwick, U.K. and was cheered on the Town Hall steps.

IN MEMORY OF CHRIS GREEN

I was deeply saddened to hear at the end of October, 2015 about the death of Chris Green, ex-Curator of Berwick Museum and Art Gallery.

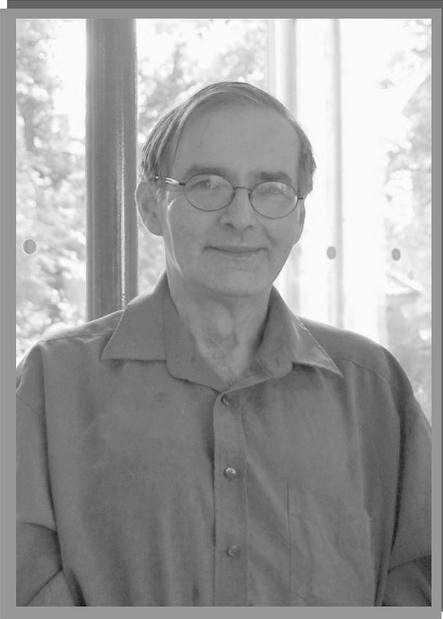
I had the great privilege of working with Chris Green at Berwick Museum since 1997 although I had known him earlier through local amateur theatre. He then left Berwick for York to be with his partner, Celia Frisby, and continued exploring his ideas there. I was only too pleased to be asked to take part in a couple of his heritage plays in York.

I'd like to think that we developed a very close working relationship. He was always concerned for his staff and encouraged me to develop my skills and interests. The exhibitions we mounted were extremely ambitious given the lack of financial resources at his disposal, but his flare and imagination more than compensated, tackling large "world" subjects such as The Story of Money, The Four

Elements and Tales From The East, by combining items from the Burrell Collection with more local items in the collection and modern items to relate the history to today's audience.

Whenever possible, he involved the museum in town festivals such as the 2003 Union of the Crowns and The Golden Age of Northumberland. At a couple of the Union of the Crowns events, I got to dabble in what might be called "experimental archaeology", building a working medieval trebuchet to besiege Berwick Castle!

He was also keen to engage local people and groups and we often displayed exhibitions by local groups, one of them being an exhibition by BAS. My association with BAS started when Wallace Rae got wind that I had some knowledge about the castle and invited me to contribute a piece to the medieval walls report. In the end, I was privileged to take over the project from Wallace when ill health prevented him from continuing.



But I would not have had this knowledge had Chris not asked me to investigate a peculiar drawing in the museum collection purporting to be of Berwick Castle. This led me to become interested in archaeology and researching Berwick's history.

I hadn't seen him for some time and had not known of his terrible state of health until relatively recently, so I am grateful to have seen him and help him in one last show (as it turned out) for

the Berwick 900 celebrations, playing the gaoler of Berwick Town Hall being rebuked by his Mayor. By coincidence, I was in York with my wife the following week and we had a meal with Chris and Celia. He looked a little under the weather that night but sounded relatively upbeat the next day, so it came as something of a shock to hear a week later, of his passing.

Former boss and friend do not adequately sum up our relationship and what I felt for Chris; he was so much more. I regarded him almost as an elder brother and a mentor. Definitely that. I would not do what I do now, researching and writing about Berwick history, without him having instilled that passion and excitement for discovery.

I will miss you dearly, Sir.

Jim Herbert

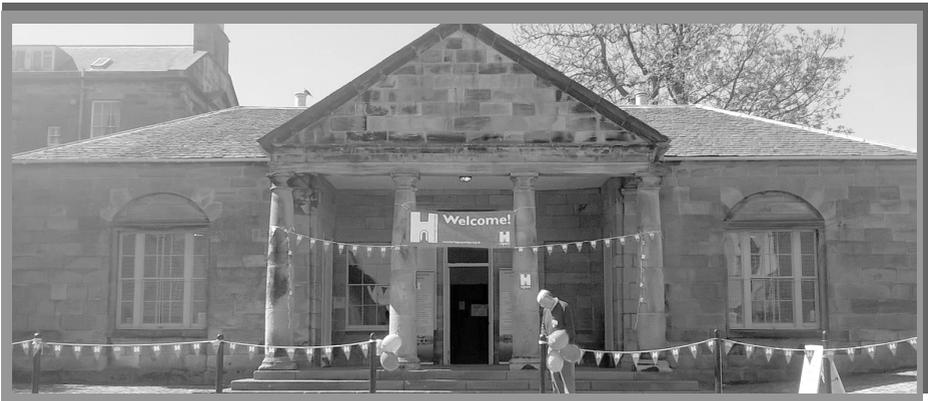
MAIN GUARD SUMMER 2016

The Main Guard summer opening will start on 1st June and, as in previous years, will be open from 1-5pm every day except Wednesday until the end of September.

Last years much acclaimed exhibition on Guild and Governors governance of Berwick is to continue on to this year, with additions.

The Main Guard Committee is always looking for volunteers to staff the Museum during opening hours – if any members can spare a couple of hours in the afternoon occasionally, please contact Catherine Seymour at 01289303919

It can be an interesting afternoon if you like people and enjoy hearing about other Civic Societies and past social history of Berwick from visitors to the Museum who lived here in previous decades.



Registered Charity No. 508953
www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Office-Bearers 2014-2015

Chairman.....Zoreen Hill
Vice-Chairman.....Catherine Seymour
Hon. Secretary.....TBA
Hon. Treasurer.....TBA
Membership Secretary.....Catherine Seymour

Please feel free to e-mail any of the Society or to request a membership form at: contact@berwickcivicsociety.org.uk

