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## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Hello Members,

The summer has flown past. The Main Guard was open for four months with Dr Catherine Kent's; "The True Description of her Majesties Towne of Barwick" on display for the first time. It was preceded by the annual Preview Party which was, as usual, very enjoyable with around seventy five attending which included The Mayor and The Sheriff. We had a successful season with the Elizabethan exhibition receiving much acclaim. It will be repeated next year. The addition of the beautifully made children's Elizabethan costumes proved extremely popular with many children delighted to try them on. We are grateful indeed to all who acted as stewards this year.

On Planning and Development matters, Michael Gallico is chairing a new small sub-committee who regularly view all the planning applications. Of great concern, has been the 'planning creep' on The St Aidan's House site where

an additional three houses have been added to the original approved plans. There are also worries about the future of The Community Hall in Palace Street East.

55 Hide Hill (formerly, Youngman's Corner) was awarded our Civic Society Plaque in March when we learned for the first time that the ground level site had been bought by Limoncello as their restaurant was moving from The Kings Arms. There has been much dismay at the extra building on this site. No doubt Limoncollo is a very popular restaurant and we have the usual cry of "at least it looks much better than it did before" but it is a sharp 'learning curve' of making sure that there is no planned extra building anticipated before we award our plaque!

A question I am often asked is "What is happening to The Premier Inn due to built in Sandgate. Good question - anyone know the answer?"

There are welcome and positive statements in The Neighbourhood Plan's Sustainable Development and Built Environment draft policy on the protection of Grade I and Grade II \* listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Also of heritage assets where

development must preserve and enhance the characteristics of the asset.

The Barracks project which The Civic Society supports seems to be progressing well with enough financial backing to cover the estimated cost of the next phase. It is generally agreed that this could be a great tourist attraction, if successful, although it will have to be really outstanding and imaginative and the town itself will have to be enhanced (particularly the High Street) to match this great attraction.

It was great news that the Tree Preservation Order on the trees at The Goody Patchy which runs between Tweedmouth and Spittal has been retained and a Woodland Trust are going to oversee future enhancements. I walked there myself recently for the first time in years and was struck how magical it was. It was commented on at the planning meeting that Berwick really has few trees and unless diseased should be preserved where possible. Apart from their own intrinsic beauty, they can often act as a bulwark against any inappropriate development.

Berwick was full of excitement earlier this month with the Netflix filming of "The Outlaw King" about

Robert the Bruce. It was positively surreal to see medieval costumed figures rowing on the river and mounted horses charging over The Old Bridge evoking ghosts of the past. Some people asked, seriously, if the stall set on the quayside was Berwick's market - a bit of an improvement !



*The Quay during filming*

I attended The Longridge Towers Founders Day Prize-giving in July where I met the new headmaster; Mr Jonathan Lee. Cynthia Waters, a third form pupil, was presented with our annual award for services to the wider community. She was described as a role model for her peers.

We were pleased to give donations to The Tweedmouth Feast and The Spittal Gala.

Good news ! Eirlys Lloyd, a new member of our Executive, has

offered to take over the position of Hon. Secretary.

Our Christmas Party is on the 8<sup>th</sup> December. An information sheet and ticket application sheet is enclosed. I do hope to see many of you there and may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and Festive season.

## EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

The new season of meetings began in June with a talk by the eminent classicist and columnist, Dr Peter Jones entitled; "What we owe the Romans; Language, Culture and Politics". This was Dr Jones' second visit to the society and, like his first in 2015, he gave a brilliant and humorous presentation.

In July we had an in-depth vision for the future of The Maltings Arts Centre with the Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Matthew Rooke and the Chairman of The Maltings Trust, Graham Brown. There has always been a very warm relationship between The Civic Society and The Maltings so it was good to get this detailed description of the plans and aspirations for the Centre.

Our last meeting in October was the annual combined meeting with The History Society. There was a packed Parish Centre to listen to Sir Philip Mawer, the Chairman of The Barracks Heritage Hub and Alan Irving, Chief Executive of The Harbour Commissioners who gave a brief history of the Port of Berwick and details of the planned replacement of the jetty.

Michael Cullen's excellent reports of these meetings are included in this Newsletter.

### *Heritage Open Days 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Sept.*

The Civic Society's sole commitment to this event was the extended opening hours of The Main Guard with a commentary on her exhibition by Dr Catherine Kent at the end of her tour. This was very successful with a good number of visitors who were fascinated with the new exhibition on Elizabethan Berwick. Many were extremely complimentary.

However, apart from Linda Bankier's Facades of the Fifties exhibition in The Guildhall, the rest was somewhat chaotic with sites not open, tours cancelled and no programme. This reflects badly on Berwick, so next year it is hoped that a small group to include Catherine Kent will organise the

event in the town. There is no doubt that we miss the old favourites such as - The Lighthouse, The Customs House and The Wine Cellars underneath the old Blackburn Price site (incidentally, I wonder what is happening to those?), which are not opened for various reasons. However, it could all be revitalised next year.

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### *Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> November*

A talk by Dr Adrian Green, Lecturer in History at Durham University entitled;

"Little Happier than Hell - Housing in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Berwick-upon-Tweed and Northumberland

### *Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> November*

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE at The Main Guard, 11am

### *Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> December*

The Christmas Party

# CIVIC SOCIETY NEWS

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Society has been keen to increase its oversight of planning applications that affect listed buildings and conservation areas on both sides of the river, given some recent poor developments (e.g. Pets at Home), new challenges to the historic environment, and the personnel changes in the County Council's planning team.

It is important that the Society is not simply an objector to any and all change but will support sympathetic developments, the appropriate re-use of existing buildings, and the use of traditional materials, for example.

At the same time, it is important that developments are properly approved in advance: for example, recent extensive work to 16 & 17 Quay Walls went ahead without permission, which has been sought in retrospect but too late to affect the (poor) quality of the completed work.

As a result, the Executive Committee agreed to re-establish a Planning & Development Subcommittee which has begun to review relevant applications and where considered appropriate lodge comments in support or objections on the NCC planning website. It has recently objected to both applications to build three new houses adjacent to the Ramparts at St Aidan's House; but has supported (for example) a shop front renewal in Castlegate and a well-designed doorway in Palace Street East.

Initial membership is small - the Society's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Hon. Treasurer and Judy Nicholson - but we would like to expand this group: so if you feel you would like to contribute to the Society in this way, and particularly if you have experience in planning or historic buildings, please contact Michael Gallico, the Chairman of the Subcommittee.

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## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE

Society Members may be wondering what has happened to the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) but it is a complex affair and members of the various sub-groups have been working away over the last year or so. Here is an attempt to bring everyone up to date with the latest activities and to give an idea of when the whole process should come to an end.

Members of the NP group met with two AECOM consultants who are engaged through a NP Design Coding package to look at the sites agreed at a recent meeting of the NP Steering Group. The sites include Berwick Quayside, Spittal Point, the Railway Station area (transport hub), the Hospital, and the Maltings car park. The AECOM consultants are spending 2 days in Berwick to digest the sites and information provided. They will come up with draft proposals for consideration in around 2-3 months. AECOM will do the final version (within 6 months from now) and the design codes for the sites will become NP draft policy. The draft Built Environment policies (members of the Civic Society have been involved in this work) refer to design codes and link to the AECOM codes as appendices,

but the codes should carry policy weight.

In parallel to all this Eric Goodyer, Chair of the Steering Group, is applying for consultant help to pull all the draft policies together in consistent format in one draft NP, ironing out any duplication/overlap between topic areas. This may also take around 6 months. The remaining draft policies for tourism and housing are due to come before the steering group by the end of October. Once the draft plan is put together then wide public consultation can be done on the draft plan before the production of the final plan for examination, a referendum, and adoption.

So I would guess at least a year and maybe longer before examination, and at least another year to adoption given the lengthy nature of the processes involved, but remember most NPs covering several topics take around 4-5 years from start to finish and we have only been going for just over 2 years. It should also be remembered that we are classified as a "complex" area for the purposes of accessing N Plan consultant packages and so can access more package time than many NPs. Hope this helps to keep people on track with the process and keep going!

*Elaine Paterson*

# RECENT TALKS

**Michael Cullen** reports on talks given to the Civic Society over recent months.

## WHAT WE OWE THE ROMANS

On the evening of June 14<sup>th</sup> **Dr. Peter Jones**, the well-known Classicist, returned to the Society, taking as his subject this time: What we owe the Romans; Language, Culture and Politics. The enthusiastic reception for his earlier talk prompted an extremely well attended meeting.

He began with a reminder of their legacy. This included the alphabet, the progression of writing from the cumbersome scroll to the wax tablet and then, in the first Century A.D., the book. Their discovery of a way of making stronger concrete along with the use of arches and barrel vaulting, made huge buildings possible. Then there were aqueducts and 56,000 miles of roads. Latin came very much into vogue during the Renaissance, greatly enhancing the vocabulary of English.

He stressed how Rome developed from a small community, rather as though Berwick should embark on a war of conquest and subdue neighbouring regions.

The Roman Empire nearly came to grief at the hands of Hannibal and the Carthaginians but an utter refusal to yield saw eventual success. Extreme aggressiveness combined with strategic mastery were the Roman hallmarks. Other seemingly contrary traits were the ability to turn enemies into friends and to welcome incomers, making Rome the world's first open city.

Turning then to the Republic, formed after the kings had been booted out, he then showed how the Romans managed things.

The Ordo had seven grades of citizenry starting at the top with the wealthiest, the Equestrians. The richest paid the highest property tax, money raised mostly for the army. Land was the measure of wealth and as the Empire expanded some landholdings grew enormous.

Every five years an individual's status was assessed by a Censor

who would then be able to decide how much he could pay for public works.

The Senate dealt with matters financial, military, and civic (streets, houses and so on) and included people who gained a great deal of experience. Anyone who rose to the supreme post of Consul, possible only after the age of 42, would already have had wide administrative experience.

Complaints over the fairness of landholding though gave rise to the Plebeian Assembly whose Tribunes spoke for the people and which came to have equal powers with the Senate. The system worked because it had an inbuilt balance of powers, each part dependent on another. It fell apart when power shifted to the Plebs, factions among them developed, and civil war broke out. The result was the end of the Republic.

The Roman Empire, which at its height covered much of what is now modern Europe along with stretches of North Africa and Asia Minor, undertook the governance of fifty million people and brought substantial economic benefits.

Zoreen, Lady Hill, Chair of the Civic Society, thanked Dr, Jones

and hoped he would be able to come again.



## THE MALTINGS ART CENTRE

To update us on plans for The Maltings, its Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Matthew Rooke, and Chairman of the Maltings Trust, Graham Brown, came and spoke to the Society on July 12th.

Speaking first, **Graham Brown** insisted that alongside a strategic vision there had to be scrutiny and attention to detail to ensure that The Maltings continued on a viable footing: only so many loss making events can be held. He saw Miles Gregory as having put The Maltings on the cultural map but that under Matthew Rooke there had been consolidation and a developing range of cultural offerings.



A County Council survey showed a high degree of user satisfaction, with The Maltings the most popular of the regional venues but he stressed that this was no cause for complacency. That it has been able to attract artists of the calibre of Rory Bremner and the musicians of the Yehudi Menuhin School is a sign of its current status.

**Matthew Rooke** began by insisting that the aim of The Maltings had to be to be the best theatre in the area, otherwise there was too little ambition. There is a need to showcase local talent of which recent productions have shown there is a good deal. It draws audiences from a huge catchment area, from both sides of the Border, but the over-riding concern has to be with the quality of production.

Well-known comedians, such as Mark Steel and Jim Davidson, like coming to Berwick because of the immediacy of audience reaction rather than the muffled and delayed response which they get from huge arenas. Other well-known figures, Michael Portillo and Tony Benn for example, helped to raise The Maltings' profile even if they don't greatly advance the Box Office subsequent yield.

At a time when continuing external support can by no means be taken for granted, (Newcastle scrapped its entire Arts programme) the fact that The Maltings is generating three-quarters of its turnover from the Box Office is significant.

He stressed that along with stage and screen The Maltings pays great attention to visual work with The Granary, 'a jewel', and the restored gymnasium as great assets. That they had big draws was shown by the display of the Burrell Collection which attracted 17,000 visitors, 44% of whom came from outside Berwick.

Currently some of the Scottish Colourists' major works are on display at The Granary. There is too the chance to work with major institutions such as The Royal Opera House.

He then turned to the structure of the building with its problems and possibilities. The theatre has been in existence now for nearly thirty years and along with the inevitable wear and tear there have been a number of technological changes and requirements in that time.

The heating is only 77% efficient whereas the current standard is 95%, involving an expense of £10,000. Then there is painting,

and a cost of £24,000 for scaffolding to do the back. Other costly items are a new fire alarm system and emergency lighting.

Then around 2020 the theatre will have to close to be rewired. Staff costs too are inevitably rising. Altogether the sum of £3.6 million is needed to ensure the future of the building.

Yet, besides problems there are possibilities for reappraisal of current usage. It is now not thought very sensible to have two licensed premises, especially in view of a lessening demand for alcohol. A proposed use for the existing bar is to turn it into a forty-seated luxury cinema that might, for example, accommodate coach parties.

Various structural changes, including moving the Box Office, could open up the view of the Tweed. Alongside the Henry Travers studio is what is currently dead space and which might be transformed into a flexible social area.

Perhaps a conservatory or orangery and maybe used as a wedding venue. Then, in 1990 less thought was given to disabled access and much more could now be done. Other suggested future activities were hosting themed

events such as with food or folk music, holding conferences, and arranging with Woodhall for the showing of archive film.

He stressed that there is no possibility of the wholesale redevelopment of The Maltings and whatever problems are faced it will have to keep going for to stop would spell disaster, and ended with a plea for feedback, even if critical, and the positive news that Box Office takings are up 10%.

Zoreen, Lady Hill, Civic Society Chair, thanked both speakers for giving us an interesting insight into The Maltings' current aims and vision.



## THE BARRACKS HERITAGE HUB AND THE PORT - BERWICK'S TWO BIG TOURISM PROJECTS

On the evening of October 11th a joint meeting was held by the Civic and History Societies to hear a presentations by Sir Philip Mawer and Alan Irving. Speaking first, **Sir Philip Mawer** took as his title 'Transforming the Barracks'

In his role as Chairman of the Steering Group of the Berwick Heritage Hub, Sir Philip explained that the aim of the current work is to produce a year-round tourist destination. This would feature a modern museum that tells the story of Berwick and the Eastern Borders, something that the Town Museum, despite its best efforts, is unable to do.

An enhanced role is seen too for the Gymnasium Gallery with contact with others such as Salford's with its Lowry's.

Then the archives with their richness and historical depth could be more adequately stored and made more available.

There would too be cafe, shop, and education facilities. Particularly stressed is the need for events, such as historical re-enactments to bring the place alive. An estimated 60,000 visitors a year might be enticed in to a more vibrant place as compared with the current total of 12,000. The Beer and Food Festival, which attracted 6,000 people in two days, shows what can be done.

Every effort should be made to provide visitors with sufficient interest that they linger in Berwick instead of rushing off elsewhere. Increased footfall is bound to give an economic boost. An encouraging sign here is the more entrepreneurial spirit now being shown by English heritage now that it has to be a self-supporting charity.

A number of bodies have been collaborating, not always easily, but now with an understanding that it has to be a combined effort, and

the Berwick Barracks Fundraising Trust has been set up as a fronting body. The current economic situation is not ideal for fundraising and £15 million is a challenging target.

Then there are practical problems of refurbishing a Grade I listed structure. Essential is a good business case taking into account fresh market research and the possibilities of Berwick as well.

The stress is very much on seeing the place come alive. While to some of us almost any bit of history can be of interest there are others who can only see it as 'boring old stuff' and it's to these, and children, that a more lively appeal is needed. 'How to be a Redcoat' was the kind of thing with a broad attraction. Sir Philip stressed that current plans are not definitive.

**Alan Irving**, Chief Executive of the Harbour Commissioners since 2011, has been around the port of Berwick for 42 years with a variety of roles. These have included customs officer, VAT inspector, boarding cargo ships, immigration, taking on smugglers, working for the stevedores W.N. Lindsay, and then managing the firm.

He began with the history of the dock. It was needed because the north side of the river is unsuitable for steam ships. It cost £40,000 and its opening was accompanied with due ceremony, 'gallons of wine' being downed at the King's Arms.

It imported chemicals for use as fertilisers but now it is the finished product that is imported. Timber used to be a substantial import along with cement, though it was Dunbar works that put paid to the latter.

Until about ten years ago there used also to be a thriving stone export business. cereals have come in and out.

There are never likely again to be the 278 vessels using the port that there were in 1975 but that does not necessarily mean there is less trade. Today's ships are far bigger with cargoes that can reach almost

3,000 tons. There is though a need to get in more trade and to be less exclusively concerned with agriculture. The harbour entrance was widened in the 1990s to accommodate vessels of this size.

The most crucial current issue is the replacement of the jetty. This intricate, but now rather weathered structure is to be replaced with a box-like system at a cost of £3,000,000. This is an absolutely vital priority as collapse and disintegration would mean the immediate closure of the port. The second, updated application for funding from the Coastal Community Fund, was successful, the £2,000,000 awarded being the fund's second highest. Engineering work will probably start in 2018.

Future participation in the town's tourism with cruise liners entering the bay is envisaged with the Commissioners providing the facilities to bring people ashore and, hopefully, spend a good deal of money in the town.

Some interest in this has already been aroused with a request for promotional material. The aim is to make Berwick a 'must-see' place and to follow the example of other small coastal towns in making more of the waterfront. The town

has a lot to offer and its future could be 'bright and successful'

Offering a vote of thanks, David Conway thanked both speakers for the 'double vision' that both shared for a brighter economic future with what seems like realistic expectations.

# OTHER ITEMS

## SPORT IN 19C BERWICK

By the middle of the 19c Sport was well established as an important part of life. While the Rowing Club clearly displays its date of foundation, the Cricket Club is the oldest. In 1845 it was playing Alnwick, making scores of 22 and 28 in its two innings - not enough as it happened. These low scores were habitual in matches throughout the Nineteenth Century, suggesting either demon bowling or weak batting though maybe the poor state of the pitches in the days before mechanical mowing and regular rolling had something to do with it.

Playing for Berwick though was a serious business. In 1854 members were reminded that *'play for the season will commence on Friday, 28th April at 6.00 precisely'*.

A variation for women called 'Victoria' was played with a bat laced with cat-gut and a ball like a tennis ball. A player was out if a bell fixed to the middle stump rang.

Lawn Tennis was also popular on the Pier Field with 50-60 pairs being reported as playing there.

*'If played by girls it should be played without corsets'.*

However, disquiet grew at the *'lawn tennis rules and regulations being made so excessively stiff'*. This was thought to account for a drift from tennis to croquet, *'that most flirtatious and lazily lounging of games'*.

Another lightly physical game was lawn bagatelle which required a long, narrow strip of ground and, presumably, a pretty active groundsman.

Cyclists on the other hand often tested themselves to the limit. In 1889 Mr. W Swan covered 230 miles on his 'Demon Safety' model while Mr. W.T. Shiel did 200 miles in 24 hours.

The following year others were competing for the Northumberland 100 mile record. Not all were in favour of this lung-bursting stuff. *'At what cost are these useless feats accomplished'* wondered one newspaper correspondent,

considering them '*dangerous to the point of insanity*'

By 1900 football had become the prime sport. Between the wars Berwick Rangers played, usually quite successfully, in the East of Scotland League.

The physical nature of the play sometimes attracted comment. So did, on one occasion, the conduct of the referee. In a 1935 match between Berwick Hibernians and Berwick Coop, the referee sent off McAskill, one of the Hibs players. McAskill didn't take this lightly and called off the other Hibs players. After the resumed match concluded, McAskill had words with the referee who wasn't going to argue with him. Instead, he struck and floored him. A free for all followed!

***Michael Cullen***



## WHAT WAS IT?

In the Spring 2017 issue of the Newsletter I raised the question as to what the derelict building at the end of the quayside was used for in its heyday and presented some information and an image both kindly provided by Jim Herbert.

Well, as a result of the article, I received a letter from Jim Walker, well-known for his publications about Berwick upon Tweed and Jim wrote that "I understood it to be a mortuary for the bodies of drowned sailors, fishermen etc. I can't give any details but I'm fairly sure I've read this in one of the books on Berwick"

However, by chance, whilst I was compiling a table of all the listed buildings in Berwick from the English Heritage web-site for the Neighbourhood Planning Built Environment Group, I noticed an entry that seemed to refer to the building and further research

produced a map confirming that it is. It appears that it was a customs watch house built in the late 18c or early 19c. Here is an extract of some of the information provided by English heritage.

*"This building is considered to be of later C18 or early C19 in date, and is depicted on the 1850 tithe map. A Land Registry map dated 1901 describes it as a Customs Watch House, part of a wider Customs complex which also includes a Customs Boathouse attached to the east side. The building's location immediately at the mouth of the Tweed Estuary is an ideal situation for such a building.*

*The Navigation Acts (1650-1697) sought to protect national commerce, and after 1651 required imports to be carried by English-owned ships or ships owned by the nation of origin of the cargo. One of the Acts also required that all European goods bound for America or other colonies must be shipped through England first and duties imposed; imports of certain type including sugar, indigo, rice and molasses also had to be landed and tax paid before the vessels could continue their way to other countries. From the late*

*C18 custom regulation was enforced by ships operated by the Customs Service. This provides the context for the construction of the Berwick Customs Watch House. The Navigation Acts were repealed in the mid C19.*

Confirmation of Jim Walker's suggestion as to its use as a mortuary is provided by the statement that *"the building is known as The Mortuary, which suggests that the building may have more recently served as a mortuary for washed up bodies similar to the example on the beach at Saltburn."*

So, the mystery is solved, if indeed it was a mystery. It may well be worth preserving because the English Heritage designation also states that *"it is one of a very small number of customs watch houses remaining around the shores of England"*

***John Webster***



## BERWICK BOAT TRIPS

July 2017 saw the welcome return of daily boat trips from Berwick Quayside, thanks to the enterprise of Pam and David Thompson and Berwick Town Team.

I was lucky enough to be invited on a trip by David when I approached him about preparing an article for the Civic Society Newsletter.

During the summer months David and other crew members have been running boat trips to a published timetable which features four different trips including upstream as far as the Chain Bridge, depending on tide, or downstream to well beyond the Pier where seals and dolphins are often spotted alongside the boat.

David tells me that he comes from a Berwick seafaring background and has been earning a living for many years running fishing trips for sea anglers. His local knowledge and enthusiasm for the area means those on the boat trips are educated and entertained with a steady flow of information and facts on the Town, Elizabethan Walls, Historic events as well as facts on all the flora and fauna seen as well as the sea birds and mammals.



*David at the Helm of the Border Rose*

David ran boat trips from Berwick up the Tweed for several years from 2000 onwards but insurance and other costs, made this unprofitable and the trips were discontinued.

Fast forward onto 2017 when the Berwick Town Team, who have been working on the project with David since 2013, were able to provide the necessary finance to purchase a purpose-built boat.

The boat had previously operated as a ferry, named “Wild Rose”, on the South Coast of England, running between Keyhaven in Hampshire to the coastal fort of Hurst Castle, built by Henry VIII in 1544 to protect the approach to the Solent.

David has renamed the boat as the “Border Rose” to carry on a long-established naming tradition. The Border Rose is capable of carrying

up to 60 passengers in safety with the boat licensed and certified by The Maritime and Coastguard Agency and fitted with modern safety and navigational equipment.

Further Boat enhancements are underway with plans to extend and renew the canopy that protects passengers from rain.

Plans for the future, include one-way trips to Paxton House to allow walkers to walk to the house then take the boat back to Berwick, or vice versa.

Another plan, which David thinks would be very popular, is for extended voyages to Holy Island and Eyemouth. David is also planning to run private trips tailored to suit customer's own requirements.

Pam and David Thompson should be congratulated on their entrepreneurial enterprise and wished every success for the future of their business. It is the development of such tourist attractions that will attract more visitors to Berwick and, equally important, linger in the area and spend on local services.

At a more mundane level, if Berwick Town Council could be persuaded to support the

development of other tourist-related amenities at The Quayside such as providing public toilets, this would resolve an issue raised by many visitors.

*John Webster/ David Thompson*



*Lord Wilson of Tillyorn with Catherine*

## LAUNCH OF THE FORTH TO FARNE WAY

The official launch of the Forth to Farne Way was held at the Parish of Whitekirk and carried out by Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, Patron of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum and former Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, at a joint service of celebration of the 100th anniversary of the rededication of St. Mary's Church yesterday on 15th October.

The Pilgrim Way between North Berwick and Lindisfarne makes use of the existing paths and connects historic towns and villages with areas of outstanding natural heritage and magnificent coastal scenery and passes through Berwick to Holy Island.

After the launch, the steering group, led by Jimmy McGuinness organized a walk from Whitekirk to North Berwick, along the sandy beach and were warmly greeted at the Museum and the historic St. Andrew's Kirk.

The Forth to Farne Steering group come from communities along the length of the route. During the past two years the group has been walking and developing the route, which is 72 miles long, enjoyed in 11 stages varying between 2 and 13 miles long. They will engage a wide range of stakeholders in order to develop the infrastructure to cater for locals and visitors to walk the Way.

They aim to work closely with Northumberland County Council, East Lothian and Scottish Borders Council, businesses, local community groups, churches and landowners to the benefit of its economy and local services. Their website can be found at [www.forthtofarne.org](http://www.forthtofarne.org).

The Way will help celebrate the historic ties between Scotland and England, within the former Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, which pre-dated the current border with links of historic pilgrim routes going back to Saints Aidan, Cuthbert, Ebbs and Baldred.

*Catherine Seymour*

**The Berwick Civic Society** is a Registered Charity (No. 508953)

Website: [www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

**Office Bearers 2017-2018**

Chairman..... *Zoreen Lady Hill*

Vice-Chairman..... *John Webster*

Hon. Treasurer..... *Michael Gallico*

Secretary..... *Eirlys Lloyd*

Newsletter/ Website..... *John Webster*

Please feel free to email any Officer of the Society using:

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Membership forms can be downloaded from the website:

**[www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk)**