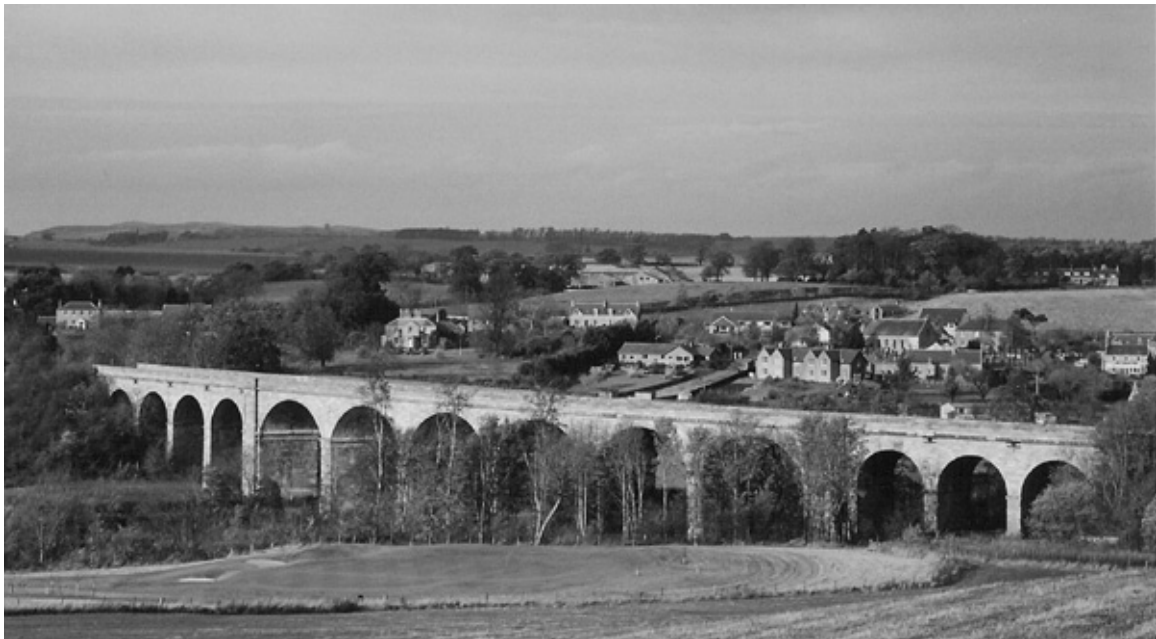


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This version is from the 14th January 2004.

AULD ROXBURGH

From former times to the Golden Jubilee 2002



Brian Wain

Author's Note

The contents of this book refer mainly to the village of Auld Roxburgh and its surrounding Barony, which is bounded by the River Tweed, the ruins of Roxburgh Castle, the River Teviot and the Duke's Strip. The book does not cover that part of the parish on the Heiton side of the River Teviot as this is well documented in Ian Abernethy's book "The High Toun on the Hill". Nor does it take in the narrow Fairnington arm of the parish, which runs to the west, as today this seems geographically and socially distinct from Auld Roxburgh and its Barony.

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Roxburgh at the Millennium



Back Row

Tom Clark, Jane Clark, Neil Thomson, Beki Thomson, Fran Thomson, James Lees, Iain Shiell, Joan Elliot, Tom Hill, David Hill, Jason Hill, Cliff Hill, Maggie Hill, Elaine Cowie, Jill Armstrong, Robert Armstrong, Anne Duffy, Katherine Fletcher, Simon Hogg, David Hogg.

Second Row

Gordon Clark, Brian Wain, Margo Wain, Graeme Wain, Donald Tully, Deborah Tully, Dorothy Tully, Dougal Forbes, Pat Forbes, Jim Wichary, Janette, Wichary, Clive Twemlow, Pauline Twemlow, Jim Hislop, Kathy Hislop, Naomi Easson, Fiona Easson, Jim Easson,,Emma Easson.

Third Row

Gordon Ferguson, Peter Bowyer, Hilary Bowyer, Grant Veitch, Karen Veitch, Peg Tod, Nettie Wyllie, Tom Wyllie, Bill Baird, Liz Baird, Grant Leitch, Debi MacLeod, Mark Briggs, Claire Briggs, Bill McCannon, Etta McCannon, Rory Bell, Jane Bell, Finlay Bell.

Fourth Row

Willie Kerr, Jean Hogg, Donald Hogg, Margaret Paxton, Muriel O'Neill, Lynnette Aldridge, George Swanston, Winnie Swanston, Jock Forsyth, Ernie Armstrong, Wat Nicol, Jeanette Nicol, Taffy Evans, Ida Evans, Bill Thomas, Eileen Thomas.

Front Row

James Cowie, Tricia Clark, Louise Clark, Craig Ferguson, Dianne Ferguson, Beth Thomson, Natalie Armstrong, Demi Armstrong, Gillian Veitch, James Bell, Anna Fletcher, Chloe Fletcher, Terry Hill.

Foreword

To be written

Roxburgh Village

The Origins of Roxburgh Village

Roxburgh Village is situated on the west bank of the river Teviot, about four miles by road south-west of Kelso. Like so many etymological interpretations of place names, the origin and meaning of the name “Roxburgh” is vague and uncertain.

The name “Roxburgh” has probably been in existence for at least a millennium but it has been spelt in several different ways over that time. Some believe it was derived from the Saxon word ‘Rox’ referring to the geographical strength of its situation while others think it is a contraction for ‘Rose burgh’, drawing attention to the beauty of its location. There are those who suppose it was originally ‘Rogue’s burgh’ alluding to the character of its ancient inhabitants. It is even possible that ‘Rokesburgh’ was dedicated to St. Rok in the Romish calendar. On the other hand ‘Rochesburgus’ may be derived from the French ‘roches’ meaning stones or rocks. This suggests the name referred to the habitation on the stony ridge on which the castle was built. This spelling is seen in old documents and may have been the name used by the French speaking friends of King David in the twelfth century.

Alistair Moffat in his book “Arthur and the lost Kingdoms” puts forward another possible derivation. Early in the seventh century the Anglians occupied the Tweed basin and an aristocrat named Hroc (meaning ‘rook’) was in charge of the locality. The area became known as ‘Hroc’s Burh’, which became ‘Rokesburg’ and finally ‘Roxburgh’.

Whatever the etymology there is no doubt that Roxburgh played a very important role in the history of the Borders for four centuries before the final destruction of Roxburgh Castle. There is, however, a lot of confusion over the identity of the name. Does the name Roxburgh, written in old texts, refer to the town on the site of the present village or does it refer to the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh on Friarshaugh? Nobody yet has come up with a clear explanation but the origins of the present village may well have been in existence a thousand years ago and referred to as Auld Roxburgh to distinguish it from the new Royal Burgh of Roxburgh adjacent to the Castle.

There are those who believe the origins of the present village only go back to the construction of the railway in the 1850. While there is no doubt that the railway increased the number of inhabitants in the village, the origins go back a lot further. The report on the parish of Roxburgh in "The Statistical Account of Scotland Vol III", written by The Rev Andrew Bell between 1791 and 1799, states that "the present village of Roxburgh.....is divided by a small rivulet into the Upper and Nether Towns, which had formerly been of considerable extent, though they now contained only about 200 inhabitants." The "Roxburgh Rivulet" still runs today. Running down from Over Roxburgh, it crosses under the Kelso road, flows north-east to the Smiddy and then taking an easterly course empties into the Teviot just to the north of the Auld Hoose. This Roxburgh Rivulet is highly significant as it defines the "Upper and Nether Towns" of Roxburgh as clearly today as it did in 1791. It is well marked on Mathew Stobie's map showing that the layout of Roxburgh in 1768 bears a striking resemblance to that of the village today. The main street, the road to the ferry, the church, the manse and Wallace's tower are still at the same fixed points. Stobie also shows houses existing, much as they do today, on either side of the main street but going right down to Roxburgh Mill.

Nether Roxburgh and Over Roxburgh are referred to again in the records of the Roxburghshire Hearth Tax which have fortunately survived. These records go back to 1690 when the Scottish Parliament imposed a fourteen-shilling tax on

every hearth in the kingdom. Again Upper (Over) and Nether Roxburgh, mentioned therein, identify the site where the present village stands.

The previous church at Roxburgh Village was mostly underground and covered with grass. In 1749 its roof was reported to be insecure and in need of repair. It was suggested the roof divots be replaced by 'sclates'. In the event it was condemned and a new church was built just to the west of it. The main body of the present church was built in 1752 and a stone bearing this date in the south wall of the church confirms this. The only remnant of the old underground church is its south wall, which still remains as the north wall of the Scott-Kerr burial vault. The lintel over the covered-in doorway on the north side of this ancient wall has the date 1612 inscribed on it. This is thought to be the date when the Scott-Kerr burial vault was added to the south wall of the previous church. This underground church would have existed long before 1612 begging the question of whether this could be the site or remains of Helias's church when he was parson of Old Rokesburg about the end of the twelfth century?

In the charter of 1128, when the monks of Selkirk were moved to the milder banks of the Tweed, King David spoke of a toft lying "in novo burgo." Presumably if a place is referred to as a new burgh then there must have been an "auld" one somewhere near. Is the present village the continuing legacy of the Auld Roxburgh? Jeffrey considers that it could be. He does not think that the old parochial church of Roxburgh would have stood so near the castle, as the River Tweed was the march between the properties of the religious houses of Glasgow and St. Andrews. He also thinks it unlikely that the principal church would have been placed at the very limit of a parish.

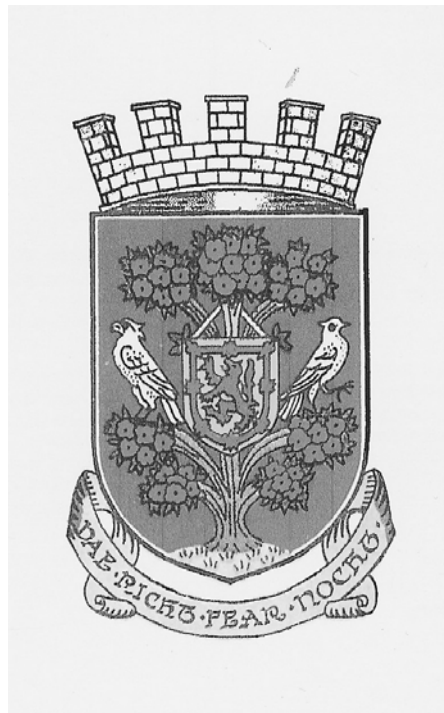
Another piece of evidence supporting the proposal that 'Auld Roxburgh' was situated on the site of the present village is the inscription on the memorial stone to the Hogg family on the south-east corner of the church. It states:-

"Here lyes a family of the name of HOGG that has resided in this parish as heretofor more than 600 years as old records do attest were portioners both in Upper and Neither Roxburgh until about 1725....."

If this is to be believed then the Hoggs were present in Upper and Neither Roxburgh 600 years before 1725. Again Upper and Neither Roxburgh identifies the site with the present village and the date takes the family back to 1125, just before King David moved his monks from Selkirk to a toft lying in novo burgo.

Considering the evidence, there is a strong case for believing that 'Auld' Roxburgh, Roxburgh Castle and the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh in Friarshaugh co-existed 900 years ago. Thus there is sufficient justification for claiming that the present village of Roxburgh should be known as 'Auld Roxburgh!'

David I declared Roxburgh a Royal Burgh in the 12th century and gave this town next to the castle its own coat of arms. However, in the 1930's, the defunct Royal Burgh of Roxburgh was included into the Burgh of Kelso and they incorporated the ancient Burgh of Roxburgh's coat of arms into that of Kelso's. There are those who think the village of Roxburgh has been robbed of its coat of arms as Auld Roxburgh obviously had closer links with the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh than Kelso, which wasn't even in existence when the coat of arms was granted!



Kelso's Coat of Arms.

The Village of Yesteryear

Until recent times the inhabitants of Roxburgh Village were largely dependent on agriculture for a living. A century ago there were twelve Cotlanders living in the village. Each Cotlander had a house, a yard and two acres of ground from the Duke of Roxburghe with the right to graze cows on the loaning. These two-acre cotlands were situated either on the right hand side of the road after Innescote on the way to the Mill or in divisions of the field on the south-west side of the railway station. The loaning was on the left-hand side of the Roxburgh-Newtown road, opposite the rear entrance to the Over Roxburgh steading. Each morning the Cotlanders' kye were herded together on their way to the loaning to get a drink of water either from the Lady's Well near the New Cemetery or from the Roxburgh Rivulet. It would have been a pleasant way of living but each Cotlander would probably have needed another source of income to make ends meet. Peter Henderson was one of the last Cotlanders and he hand-milked his Jersey cows in the Cotland byre until 1967 but he also had a haulage business. In olden days this part of the Borders always lacked a good fuel supply. The only sources of fuel for warmth and cooking were peat from the Roxburgh moor or coal, transported by horse and cart, from Northumberland. The building of roads, bridges and railways in the middle of the nineteenth century dramatically altered the availability of fuel and, of course, the introduction of mains electricity into the village a hundred years later finally solved the problem.

Villagers would originally have been reliant on wells for their water supply. Mr. Gray at Teviot View obtained water from the well in his garden, which was said to be very 'pure' after it had been filtered through the churchyard! However, water has been on tap in the village for more than a hundred years. A spring from Over Roxburgh supplied piped water in 1903 to the Manse, Schoolhouse, Innescote and Northcliffe plus the three lion-headed pants in the village. This supply was augmented with water from a bore hole at Roxburgh Mains in 1947 and it still supplies many of the Estate farms and dwellings. In 1965 the village

was connected to the mains water from the Ale Moor Reservoir and this supplies the rest of the houses in the village.

In 1861 the population of Roxburgh parish was 1178. There were 244 families in the parish, 205 of which were living in houses with one or two windows. The houses were typically of similar design and several of these oblong thatched cottages survived 150 years to see the end of the Second World War. Three stood opposite the War Memorial with a fourth one just to the north-east of them. Another, known as Bell's cottage, stood behind the War Memorial. Yew cottage stood just to the south of Northcliffe while Laburnum cottage was located between the present cemetery and the Roxburgh Mill cottages. They were all constructed of harled rubble without dressings and the lintels were made of wood. Two of them had lofts in the roof with dormer windows to provide light. Lewis Jones has vividly recalled some of these houses and their inhabitants.

Memories of Lewis Jones

Lewis Jones was born at Roxburgh Barns in 1913. When he was eleven



years old he moved with his parents into his present house at Castle View. The four houses at Castle View had been completed in 1920 and Lewis's mother said that they should have been called "Tower View" as they all looked out on to Wallace's Tower. However, the name Castle View has stuck and so has Lewis. He has lived in Roxburgh since 1924 and missed less than thirty days away from the village. These absences can be accounted for. He spent a week on holiday with his Granny in Kettering in 1928. He has had two short stays in hospital and missed a few nights while on grouse-beating duties at Byrecleugh. He spent the forty-seven years of his working life on Roxburghe Estates planting, layering and cutting hedges. When he retired in 1978 he continued to work for the Estate by collecting entrance money from the tourists before they went round Floors Castle. Having lived in the parish for eighty-nine years, Lewis is truly an authority on Roxburgh Village and its surrounding countryside - he is a true Roxburghphile.

Lewis recalls several oblong thatched cottages in the village. The Bell's Cottage was one such building. It was situated behind the present play park and was said to have been a farmhouse long ago; possibly that of Roxburgh East Mains. A photograph shows that it had a door and two windows facing south and there was a central chimney coming out of the thatched roof.

Tom Bell and his new wife moved into the cottage after their marriage and ever there after it was known as the Bell's Cottage. Tom had previously lived in the 'Moor House' just off the Nisbet road on the footpath to Roxburgh Mains farm. It was a lonely spot but the postman called each day on his way from the farm to Kirkbank Station. Tom was never one to stop in the house and liked to go out walking. He often walked to Yetholm and back in his courting days to see Miss Grant of Cherrytrees. The new Mrs. Bell did not fancy living at the Moor House and so the couple took up residence in the village. Tom was the last person to live in the Moor House and it is now just a heap of stones in the corner of the field ([NT 694289](#)).

At the side of the Bell's cottage there was a brick building with a corrugated iron roof where Tom, the tailor, had his work place and shop. Lewis

recalled a popular story of his childhood days regarding local tailors. One day the Heiton and Roxburgh tailors were questioning who was the best tailor. Eck Affleck of Heiton said, "I only have to see a man go round a corner and I could make him a perfect suit." Tom Bell of Roxburgh replied that, "I only have to see the corner the man went round and I could make him a perfect suit!" Such was the rivalry of those times.

The Bell's Cottage was a focal point for village life and a great place for local gossip. Tom not only made clothes for the villagers but he was also the school janitor and acted as registrar for the village. When the telephone arrived in the village in 1924, Tom and his wife ran the exchange from their house. If the Bells did not know what was going on, nobody did!

The Bells had three sons and a daughter. Their sons helped in the shop for a time before they moved away. Two went to work on the railway and the third became a postman at Clovenfords. Jean, their daughter, stopped at home and helped to run the telephone exchange. She gave up her telephone responsibilities when the automatic exchange was built in the early 1950s. Both of her parents died about this time and soon after she moved out and the property was never lived in again. The Estate demolished the cottage in 1956 and built garages on the site. However, the tailor's shop and a single yew tree in the garden survived for many years. That was until 2002 when the ivy covered tailor's shop, used for years by village children as a secret playhouse, was sadly found completely burnt out one morning.

Yew Cottage, opposite the Manse gates, was a similar thatched building to the Bell's. Its last inhabitant was Jock Bell, the retired roadman. He used to drive the road roller to compact the road surfaces when making new roads or repairing potholes. The Cottage was demolished in the early 1950s to make way for the present semi-detached houses. Jean Bell, by now Mrs. Greig, was the first to move into one of the new houses in 1954 and ran the village sub-post office from a hut in the garden for many years.

Lewis recalled that 'Rose Cottage' was situated on the opposite side of the road to the war memorial. It was not built like the thatched cottages but it did

span the same era as they did. In fact it was a two-storey house with a slate roof. It was reputed to have been built in a day, on New Years Day 1849, by Mr Alexander. At that time, Mr Alexander was a foreman working on the railway viaduct and he persuaded fifty of his men to give up their only public holiday of the year to build a house for him and his family. They completed their task in a day and the Alexander family and their descendants, the Duncans, lived in the house continuously thereafter. Lewis Jones's father, Tommy, stayed with the Alexanders for a time in Rose Cottage when he came up from Wales to layer hedges for the Duke of Roxburghe. Tommy Jones was one of the very first people to lay hedges in the Borders and he passed his artistry on to both of his two sons.

Like all houses built at that time, Rose Cottage would have been very basic when compared with today's standards. There would be no damp proof course, no running water, no bathroom, no inside lavatory, no electricity nor any central heating. Light at night would have been provided from the lampstone, which is now to be found in the south-east face of Northcliffe's roadside wall. This hollowed-out stone would have been filled with tallow and contained a wick made from flax. It would have been the only source of light in the house through the long dark nights; in fact, it would have been the original "night-light" candle.



The Lampstone © Author

In the 1940s the house became damp and uninhabitable and was demolished in the 1950s to make way for “The Rowans” in 1978. The floor of the old byre has been unearthed at the bottom of the garden next to Northcliffe, otherwise nothing but builders’ stones in the garden remain to record the passing of Rose Cottage.

The Shanks’s and Richardson’s conjoined cottages were situated opposite the War Memorial. They were very similar to the Bells’ cottage with thatched roofs and earthen floors. They had no running water in the house and got their water from the lion-headed village pant, just across the road. There were no W.C.s in these houses; they used a dry privy at the bottom of the garden. These buildings were taken down in the 1950s.

Jean Shanks was a widow with two sons. She kept the village shop where villagers could buy most of their daily requirements. She was especially noted for her sweets and lemonade. Geordie Richardson, next door, had the Cotland to

the east of Innescote where he kept his cows and his horse and cart. He was the village carter and transported animal feeds or road building materials for a fee. Tragically the Richardson's granddaughter met an untimely end in Roxburgh. The little girl was in the habit of showing off her courage to onlookers by walking proudly beneath granddad's docile cow. Unfortunately she tried to show the same bravado by walking under a horse. She must have just brushed up against the horse's underside causing it to lash out with its hind feet with fatal consequences.

The last joiner to live in the conjoined joiner's house and shop was Davy Walker. His father, Jimmy, had a Cotland yard at the back of the shop where there was a byre for his cows and a barn to store their hay in. Jimmy would make farm carts, gates and snowploughs and do joinery work, predominantly for Roxburghe Estates. He also repaired wooden wheels. When his repairs were completed on these wheels, they needed to be shod with an iron hoop. He would get this done at the Smiddy at the north-west end of the 'Back Lane'. Dave Armstrong was the last blacksmith at the Smiddy. His main business was to repair agricultural machinery and shoe horses. Since the reek of burning hoof has died away four gamekeepers, one forester and a computer expert from the Estate have occupied the Smiddy house.

After Davy Walker retired, Willy Kerr took over the Joiner's Shop. Willy had a thriving business doing the joinery work for the many council house renovation schemes, which were prevalent at the time. Willy and his men carried out most of their renovation work in Edinburgh but much of the woodwork was prefabricated in the Roxburgh joiner's shop. The Estate converted part of the joiner's shop into a modern office for Willy in 1986. The exterior walls were harled but Jim Johnson, the architect, insisted that the odd whinstone should show through to keep the new building in sympathy with the older part. A flush loo was also installed in the east end of the old house for the convenience of churchgoers. Willy's family enjoyed common riding and so he converted the old byre at the back into stabling for their horses. The whole complex was dismantled in 2000 to make way for Honeysuckle House.

Lewis remembers hearing locals speaking of the Dodds and Huggins cottages to the east of the joiner's shop but these had both been dismantled before his time. They were both single storey, thatched dwellings and the Huggins had a beautiful garden, full of lavender bushes.

Laburnum Cottage, another single storey thatched dwelling, stood where the heap of stones now lies (NT 702308) between Roxburgh Mill Cottages and the Cemetery. Jimmy Swanston was its final occupant. He was a Cotlander and grazed his kye in the cemetery field and the one adjacent to it. He got his water from the Lady's Well, close to the river. Jimmy attended church regularly and had a very good voice. He is remembered for his powerful singing and he held the record for the longest A..m..e..n..s at the end of a hymn - most people had already sat down before his final note had ebbed away! He was married for many years and was determined to celebrate his golden wedding, come what may. Unfortunately his wife died sometime prior to the anniversary but he was determined to carry on and celebrate. When the big day arrived he invited the village drouths along to share a barrel of beer. Four of them thought it was wrong to have a golden wedding celebration without both members of the couple being present. The story goes that these jokers went into the churchyard on their way to the party, lifted the wife's gravestone, and took it with them. Jimmy was much taken a back and ordered the stone to be left at the backdoor while the celebrations continued! When Jimmy died it was decided the house was not worth repairing and Lewis helped to demolish it in 1931.

The remains of Sunnybank Cottage are still to be seen at the bottom of the Innescote garden. This one storey thatched cottage was built by Willy Gray and named after the farm in the Lake District where his wife, Miss Birket, had spent her childhood. Willy was a stonemason to trade and had spent some time working on the fabric of Bristol Cathedral. When he came with his wife to live in Roxburgh he continued to work with stone and became dyker to the Duke of Roxburghe. He also turned his hand to thatching and was the last thatcher in Roxburgh village. John Gray, Willy's brother, lived with them in the same house and he was a postman and a carter. He kept his pony and cart in a corner shed,

opposite the cottage entrance, where the three cherry trees now grow. The cottage succumbed in 1935 but the inscription on the pillars of the front gate, at the bottom of Innescote garden, still proclaims this was the entrance to Sunnybank Cottage.

Mr. Campbell of Heiton built Innescote for Roxburghe Estates in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The house took its name from the sixth Duke's family name of Innes. It is a four-bedroom house built of stone with a slate roof. Mr. Campbell himself was the first to live in it and after him several employees of the Estate made Innescote their home. In 1984 Jim and Nancy Johnston purchased it from the Estate and then in 1993 it was sold to its present occupants, Peter and Hilary Bowyer. Lewis recalls that the hops growing in the perimeter hedge have been there for as long as he can remember.

Lewis has no recollection of what the boathouse looked like as it had been demolished before his time. However, he knew that the boathouse stood at (NT 702306) the bottom of ferry road on the west bank of the Teviot where traces of its foundations can still be seen. A photograph of the boathouse taken in 1859 shows it to have been a long one-storey thatched building with a door and three windows facing south. It served as the ferryman's residence, a ticket office for the ferry and an alehouse.

All these buildings of which Lewis has spoken are gone now, never to be resurrected. In their time, they and their inhabitants played an important role in the life of the village and we are grateful to Lewis for sharing his memories.

Roxburgh Village Today.

Roxburgh is a quiet little village situated on the brow of the hill looking south-east over the River Teviot. The view from the village takes in the ancient ruins of Wallace's Tower and the majestic Victorian viaduct, with the backdrop of the Roxburghe Golf Course and the outline of Heiton village on the skyline. It is

well off the beaten track and the only tourists seen are those looking for Roxburghe Golf Course on the other side of the river.

There are three roads connecting the village to Kelso, Maxton and Nisbet but there is no regular bus service. The village consists of one main thoroughfare with one road and two lanes leading off it. The road leading down to the boathouse is known as Ferry Road and continues, parallel to the river, as Quarry Road. At the side of Quarry Road there is a footpath, now partly overgrown, which was once used by residents walking between the two villages via the footbridge. The "Back Lane" leaves the main road opposite the war memorial and goes down to the smiddy while 'Lovers' Lane' starts at the Tirlies, runs parallel to the railway embankment and finishes at the footbridge. The name, Tirlies, refers to a turnstile-type gate, which was situated at the western entrance of Lovers' Lane, opposite the Station House. The gate prevented animals from straying down the path. In the days of the railway it was a favourite meeting place for villagers with time on their hands to exchange the news of the day. It was a pleasant spot in the summertime with fragrant, yellow, tirley roses surrounded it. Sadly the Tirley gate and its perfumed roses are no longer there but the name "Tirlies" has stuck.

Roxburgh's thirty-two houses are located on either side of the main thoroughfare except for the Smiddy, which lies a little way off to the north-west. The interesting buildings built prior to the last century include the Church and its former manse, the School and its former schoolhouse, the railway viaduct and the Stationhouse plus Innescote. All other dwellings in the village have been built within the last century with the two semidetached cottages at Northcliffe being built around 1900. The four conjoined cottages at Teviot View were built in 1905 with a similar row of four, at Castle View, being built in 1920. The four one-storey Orlit dwellings were constructed soon after the 2nd World War and the six semidetached houses were erected in the 1950s. Seven privately built houses have been added in the last twenty-five years. Thirteen houses in the village belong to Roxburghe Estates and the rest are privately owned.

The village has all the main services except for mains gas. Electricity was installed in 1952 and every dwelling in the village is connected as a prerequisite for lighting, heating, cooking, refrigeration, television, videos and other modern gadgets. The village has two sources of water. Households obtain their water from either the local Roxburghe Estates supply or mains water from the Ale Moor reservoir. The village had its own independent sewage system installed in 1955. The Environmental Department of the Borders Council collects refuse once a week.

The village sub-Post Office still functions at Roxburgh Mill Cottages where parcels may be posted, stamps purchased and pensions collected. Most villagers use the Edward VII post box in the glebe wall, opposite the War memorial. Collections from this box are made at 0900 hrs and 1530hrs on weekdays, at 0800 hrs on Saturdays and at 1300 hrs on Sundays. The postman delivers the mail to each household six days a week together with any daily papers. The postie will also take passengers in his/her post-car to Kelso on weekday mornings for a fare of 80p and if required will bring them back when the afternoon postal collection is made. The automatic telephone exchange, installed in the 1950s, is showing signs of age and hopefully will be updated now that broadband is becoming popular. The community voted to keep the bright red original, telephone kiosk for the use of visitors and in cases of emergency.

Some villagers get milk delivered three days a week by the 'cowboy milkman' who delivers at 0200hrs! Travelling vans are getting fewer. The butcher and the fish vans each come once a week and the travelling library visits every three weeks. The coalmen are regular visitors as many houses still have a coal fire. A recent feature of village life is the appearance of the supermarket delivery vans. Working Mums have little time to spare for mundane shopping so it is very convenient to order the weekly shopping via the internet and get the supermarket goods delivered to the door. There is nothing new in this, however, for the Co-op were giving the similar service over the phone fifty years ago.

It is interesting to look at the demography of the village. Over the last twenty years the number of dwelling houses in the village has risen from 28 to 32

(14%). In this Jubilee Year, there are 65 permanent inhabitants living in the village, a drop of 16 (20%) since 1983. All male householders, except the retired, have jobs and all young mothers, bar three, have employment. Of the total village population there are 36 (55 %) villagers of working age, 16 (25%) retired pensioners, 8 (12%) children catching the school bus and the remaining 5 (8%) are pre-school children. There are, however, also eight temporary inhabitants who occupy two of the houses on an intermittent basis, usually at weekends. This 'second home' is a new domestic situation not recorded in the village twenty years ago.

The increase in the number of houses in the village, coupled with a drop in the population, reflects the national trend. As a generality, there are fewer people per dwelling house than there used to be; thus more houses are needed for a lesser number of people. The two main reasons for this are to be found in the changing lifestyles of the present day. Single parent families require more units of housing, as they often constitute two family units. People are living longer and the elderly are encouraged to stay in their own homes with help from the social services rather than go and live in eventide homes. Thus their houses take longer to become available for the following generation. Roxburgh is just a microcosm of the world at large.

How times have changed. There are presently no families living in the village directly associated with agriculture. There are now a diversity of skills and trades represented in the village. There are teachers, concrete fabricators, a banker, a doctor, a paramedic, an aroma therapist, an acupuncturist, a plumber, a plasterer and a chef amongst others who daily leave the village to do their work. There are, however, two businesses operating from the village. The Hislop family operate a haulage contractors business from their home with five lorries transporting goods the length and breadth of the country. They deliver such bulky commodities as timber framed houses and wood shavings for horse bedding. Adrian Locke operates 'Engineering in Wood' specialising in hardwood furniture, wood turning, and antique restoration. He also offers a piano tuning service. He

works from the former Village Hall, which was a military hut at Charterhall before it was moved to Roxburgh in 1949.

The modern practice of the working Mum has had its effect on the social activities of the community. Working Mums have little time to socialise, as they still have to cater for their families and do the housework when they get home from work. Consequently social activities in the village are much reduced compared with those of former times and television now provides much of the family entertainment. Gone are the days of the Church Guild, the Rural Institute and the Drama Group. Gone too are the bowling, quoiting, football and summer rugby clubs. The village social gatherings now are the weekly Church Services and the nine annual gatherings arranged by the Village Hall Committee.

Roxburgh village is an ideal place for a family to grow up in. The Play Park is very popular with toddlers. It was opened on 10th May 1973 by the late Duke of Roxburghe and now contains a chute, swings and climbing frame, which are maintained by the Regional Council. Unfortunately the Roxburgh Primary School closed in 1986 but good schooling is just a bus ride away in nearby Kelso. Cycling on the relatively quiet roads is a boom to youngsters. Fishing is available on the Teviot with a permit from the Kelso Angling Club and a round of golf can be had on the famous Roxburghe Golf Course, just across the river, for the price of a day ticket or Club membership. There are plenty of good routes for horse riding along the disused railway tracks. The relative freedom of the countryside allows for several very pleasant walks starting and finishing in the village. It is not unusual when walking the Jedburgh line to identify at least twenty different species of wild flowers growing. When ambling along the riverbank, salmon and trout are often seen breaking the surface of the water and several species of duck are resident on the river. While overhead sand martins may be dodging through the air chasing flies, and buzzards are now commonly seen soaring on the thermals. In the early mornings or late evenings it is not uncommon to catch a glimpse of a fox, badger or roe deer. Roxburgh and its surrounds are rich in wildlife and residents really do appreciate living here.

Roxburgh Village Activities

The affairs of the village are mainly decided at regular meetings of the Church Office-bearers, the Community Council and the Village Hall Committee.

The Church Officebearers Meetings.

The activities of the Church are decided by the Minister, her elders and members of the Congregational Board. Weekly Church services on a Sunday are now the norm and Christenings may take place during these services. Wedding and funerals are held as and when the need arises. This year excursions were organised by the Church Office-bearers when parishioners from all the churches in the joint charge went to see the Berwick Military Tattoo and the Royal Yacht Britannia. These proved very popular and it is hoped to make further excursions in the future. A very well attended Harvest Lunch was another innovation this year, and this could become an annual event. Fund raising events for the benefit of the church are held twice a year. In the early summer a coffee morning with 'bring and buy' stalls was held in the Abbey Row Centre and in the autumn an auction of donated goods was held in Heiton Village Hall. Both events raised substantial amounts of money for church funds. The Sunday School, which progressed to become the Monday Club and then the Wednesday Club, was disbanded in the year 2000 due to lack of children but Sunday School is ready to start up again as soon as there are children willing to join it.

The Community Council of Heiton and Roxburgh.

Community Councils were created in the 1970's as part of the local government re-organisational plan. They were intended to create a link between the Regional Council and local communities. These Councils have no executive powers but serve to advise the Regional Council on local opinion. The twelve elected members of the Community Council meet four times a year, alternately in the village halls of Heiton and Roxburgh. The present chairman, Gavin Douglas, enjoys the services of Peter Bowyer as secretary and Bob Briggs as treasurer. Other members of the present Council include Mark Briggs, Sylvia Burgon, Fiona Easson, Joan Elliot, Bernie Finlay, John Forsyth, Peter Gillespie, David Hogg and Brian Wain. Alec Nicol and David Lindores, the two Regional Councillors, regularly attend these meetings. Community councillors receive no remuneration for serving on the Council but the Council does receive a grant from the Region each year to cover its running costs and to support local functions.

At Community Council meetings matters mainly concerning local issues are discussed. Those at Heiton commonly include the speed limit through the village, the traffic calming devices, the state of Peter's Path to Kelso and Fly Tipping at the quarry near the viaduct. Roxburgh's concerns are usually local flooding on the roads, water in the cemetery, and road signs. The council's biggest achievement was probably in getting the viaduct repaired in 1998. Sometimes momentous problems such as Giant Hogweed Control have to be faced! The latest issue of concern is the proposal to build eighty-two dwellings at Heiton, next to the Sunlaws Golf Course. As is to be expected with all N.I.B.Y. developments, this matter has produced lively discussions when locals have been passionate in voicing their opinions on the scheme.

At times councillors may be asked to give their views on wider issues such as a proposed structural plan, local building planning permissions, rights of way or the effect on the Borders of the proposed reopening of the old Waverley Railway line. Any views, recommendations or requests are then passed on to the appropriate department of the Borders Regional Council at St. Boswells. The

Community Council do not organise any social events in the villages - this is left to the other Village Committees.

The Roxburgh Village Hall Committee.

There are twelve elected members of the village serving on the Village Hall Committee, which organises most of the social activities in Roxburgh village. Meetings are held in the Village Hall for which the committee are the custodians, under the terms of the tenancy agreement. The committee meets before each village function to discuss the arrangements for the event and any matters arising from past ones. Fran Thomson is presently the hard working chairperson while Pauline Twemlow is its efficient secretary and Jane Clark is its financial wizard. Other members serving on the committee include Rory Bell, Peter Bowyer, Fiona Easson, Kathy Hislop, Donna Kerse, Gavin McCraw, Leanne Ross, Dorothy Tully and Martin Yule. The Village Hall Committee receives a grant of £300 per year, from the Roxburgh Association of Voluntary Services, to offset running costs and organise functions.

The committee organises nine village functions on a regular basis every year. This year, being the Golden Jubilee Year, an extra party was arranged to mark the Queen's fiftieth anniversary on the throne. This celebration took the form of a 'street party'. It was held in the glebe in June and many villagers turned out on the sunny afternoon to enjoy a barbecue and some light-hearted competitions while the children enjoyed the bouncy castle and played games.

Burns Supper/Beetle Drive.

The first regular event in the calendar year is the Burns Supper/Beetle Drive. It takes place in the village hall in the middle of January when both adults and children are very welcome. The evening commences with a supper of haggis and trifle prepared and donated by the good ladies of the committee. Liquid refreshment may be had at the bar, which includes soft drinks, and any profits from sales are put back into the Village Hall Fund. The noise level in the hall increases after supper when the Beetle Drive starts. Everybody enjoys the fun and the children always provide the company with a good laugh with their antics.

The evening ends with a raffle and the proceeds again go to the Village Hall Fund.

The Roxburgh/Heiton Sports.

There are no organised social gatherings in the busy springtime. The next event is the Roxburgh/Heiton sports in June. The venue for the sports alternates annually between the playing fields of both villages. This event had its heyday when the pupils of the two village primary schools battled it out on the sports field for ribbons and cups. Sadly both schools are now closed and the numbers of children in the two villages are far less than in former times. However the attendance is still large enough to have an enjoyable afternoon of competitive sports but it is usually members of the hosting village who are the victors.

The Kelso Laddies Visit.

On the Monday of Kelso Civic Week in July the Kelso Laddie and his followers ride out to Heiton and Roxburgh before competing in the Gymkanna. For the last 25 years the Laddie has come with his mounted followers to Roxburgh and to mark this occasion the Village Hall Committee arrange a welcoming ceremony. This ceremony takes place in front of the War Memorial on a farm wagon decorated with flowers and balloons. A well-known member of the village makes the speech of welcome and asks the Laddie to lay a wreath at the War Memorial. After this the Laddie signs the village scroll, adding his name to the list of previous visiting Laddies. The Laddie then makes his reply to the welcome and encourages all to come and support the Kelso Civic week. The ceremony ends with the Kelso Laddie, supported by his right and left-hand men, singing “Kelsae, Bonnie, Kelsae” to the crowd. After some refreshment the Laddie leaves with his cavalcade for the Gymkanna. It is a great sight to see upwards of eighty mounted horses come through the village with a large crowd of followers in cars. It is a simple but very colourful ceremony and much appreciated. Unfortunately the present format is in jeopardy. The crossing of the viaduct is deemed to present

safety problems and mounted riders might not be able to come to Roxburgh in future years. The alternative is for the Kelso Laddie to leave his mount and cavalcade at the Springwood Gymkhana and come to Roxburgh by car. This would then become a very minor affair, without the cavalcade of horses and the large crowd of car-followers. It would greatly detract from the present spectacle and sense of occasion. Hopefully a compromise solution will be found to keep the Laddie coming to Roxburgh with his cavalcade.

The Summer Barbecue.

In August the committee organises a summer barbecue in the playground next to the school. If the weather is good a big crowd is expected and seats are brought out from the Village Hall. Everybody enjoys cooking their own steaks, burgers and sausages on the two converted barrels and there is an accompanying bar with soft drinks. Families gather and pass on their holiday news while the children enjoy the freedom of running around the playground. The Summer Barbecue makes for a very congenial evening.

The Halloween Party.



Halloween is next event on the agenda of the committee. All the village children are invited to dress up in their witch's outfits and come along to the party in the village hall. There is a fancy dress competition followed by a prize for the best turnip lantern. Traditional games such as 'dunking for apples' and 'eating doughnuts off a string with no hands' are played before the Halloween feasting. After they have eaten the children light their lanterns and go guising round the village in the dark. The older children shepherd the young ones as they go from door to door singing the Witches of Halloween. Villagers on the receiving end of these goulish songs are expected to donate sweets or money to the guisers so that the witches might be placated. At the end of the evening the guisers gather to share out the spoils and they have been known to donate any money collected to charity.

Bonfire Night.



That was a big bang! © Author

The annual bonfire is built in a field near the village around a large straw bale. Villagers are asked to put out all their bonfire rubbish the weekend before Guy Faulkes Night when it is collected on a trailer and placed round the bale. The children give a helping hand in making the fire and place their guy on top. At 6.30pm on November 5th the bonfire is set alight and its blaze always compares very favourably with Heiton's fire! The committee provide soup and hotdogs for

everybody as they stand round the bonfire to keep warm. Meanwhile Peter Boyer and Euan Watt have set up the fireworks and the crowd are treated to a pyrotechnic display from behind the rope cordon. A donations bucket is passed round at the end of the firework display to help pay for the fireworks.

The Children's Christmas Party.

The committee organise a party for the village children just before Christmas. The hall is decorated with a Christmas tree and the children are given a tea party with crackers after which games are played. The highlight of the evening, of course, is the visit by Santa. A local celebrity Father Christmas sits each child on his knee and asks each what they would like for Christmas. This does not always produce a conventional reply and some of the youngest children are often overcome with emotion. All is usually well after Santa has given them a wee present to keep the excitement at boiling point.

The Carol Service.

For many years now the committee has organised a Carol Service on Christmas Eve around the tree. The Christmas tree, kindly donated by Roxburghe Estates, is erected by the church doors and decorated with fairy lights by Peter. Five children from the village read the lessons and the six carols are sung to the accompaniment of David Sanderson on his electric organ before the Minister gives her Christmas blessing. At the end of the service the committee serves hot soup and mince pies before families leave for a quiet night at home before Santa comes! This is probably the best-attended event of the calendar year in the village. Nobody feels constrained with young children running about outside and many villagers bring their friends along to this special outdoor service. The weather has usually been very kind. It can be frosty or blowing a gale but only twice in twenty-five years has the company had to go inside the church because of rain.

The Family Christmas Party.

The village Family Christmas Party is held in the village hall between Christmas and New Year. Partygoers are asked to bring along a suitable dish of food for the supper plus a raffle prize. It has become traditional to split the party into groups

to hold a quiz. Some of the quiz questions are quite bewildering to adults. The children have to be relied on to answer questions on pop music and football! After the quiz has been marked and the prizes have been allocated, it is time for supper. The cold buffet always goes down well and there are plenty of liquid refreshments available. Then it is time for party games with both children and adults joining in the fun. Competition is at fever pitch when balloons are passed down the line between participants' knees or a spoon on a string is threaded down competitors clothing. Dancing the elimination waltz and couples dancing while both are sucking on a banana never fail to get a laugh. The raffle is then drawn and the evening continues with dancing. It is all good family fun with everybody is happy.

The Village Hall Committee do a great job in organising these events for the village. It is very important to have these occasions to bring the community together and keep the village alive. It takes a lot of time and effort to keep it going and the village is indebted to the hard working members of the Village Hall Committee for all that they do to achieve this.

Roxburgh Village Environs.

Old photographs of Roxburgh show that there used to be a lot of trees, in and around the village. There was once a row of pine trees in front of the church and the glebe was well planted with mature hardwoods. In 1980 Jim Johnston pointed out that presently there were very few trees in the village and put forward a proposal that the village would benefit from some replanting. It was suggested

that each household in the village should plant a tree around the village centre and pupils at Roxburgh Primary School should each plant one beside the Nisbet road, just passed the two railway bridges. Further more Jim proposed that each tree should have the planter's name on a plaque in front of it. Thus there would be an arboreal history of those families present in the village and the children at school in 1980.

The idea found great support in the village. The trees were obtained locally and it was agreed where they should be planted. The tree sites were put into a hat and villagers drew lots for 'their tree', to save any difficulty with a person wanting a particular tree site. The trees were all planted one fine evening in March. The Lang family plus the Veitch's, Lowes, Swanstons, Kerrs, Forsyths, the Rev Thomson, Hislops, Kyles, Wains and McKenzie households planted rowan trees and crab apples around the Village Hall (now Engineering in Wood). Anne Duffy with the Robertson and Patterson families each planted a cherry tree opposite the front entrance of Innescote. The Briggs's planted a red oak by the playground steps and the Palmer, Glass, Martin and Johnston households planted whitebeams in front of Brae Hoose. The Johnstones, Knappers and Mary McGregor planted a larch and two lilacs at the side of the garages. The Alridges, McGregors, Jardines, McCraws, Hogarths, Lewis Jones and Hendersons planted silver birch in front of the church while the McIntoshes planted a whitebeam next to Innescote. The sixteen children at school in March 1980 each planted a cherry tree beside the Nisbet road (see West End plan) and the three children who started school in September 1980 planted their trees down by the river, just passed Boathouse corner. All these trees still bear the name of their planters although some expired trees have had to be replaced.

This gave Roxburgh village the planting bug and it was suggested daffodils be planted on the approach roads to the village. Bulbs were obtained in October 1980 and each household accepted a bucket full of daffodil bulbs and planted them in allocated stretches along the roadsides. These bulbs have multiplied and it is a delight to see them come through the ground at the end of winter and produce a magnificent display of yellow around Eastertide. In 2000

more daffodil bulbs were planted by newcomers to the village between the cherry trees along the Nisbet road. Thus all the entrances to the village are now blanketed with daffodils. Passing motorists sometimes pick some blooms, especially for Mother's Day, under the pretext that they are wild daffodils. Villagers who regard the flowers as their own personal contribution to the village floral display get annoyed when this happens and several such pickers have been reprimanded.

Other trees have been planted since the village became infected with the planting bug. On 31st May 1980 Bobby and Susan (nee Kyle) planted a white lilac tree by the bridges on their wedding day. In 1983 the Roxburgh Trio asked to plant a tree to mark their tenth anniversary together. Peter Chamberlain, Edna Wands and Jeffrey Rimmer were music teachers who came to Roxburgh School once a month to give lessons which gave the youngsters an opportunity to appreciate good music. Their request was accommodated on the 11th May 1983 when they planted a silver birch tree to the side of the War Memorial. Lewis Jones supervised the planting with all the school children present. In 1985 a cherry tree was planted outside the school to commemorate the life of Stewart Hogg who tragically died so young. Mr. Warburton, the Outdoors Advisor, gave the school children a project to raise an oak tree from an acorn. In 1984 they celebrated their success by planting the healthy sapling next to the viaduct close to the pier which collapsed all those years ago. It has grown well and is now about twenty feet high. In 1986, to mark the closure of the school, the last remaining children helped Beatrice Kyle plant a weeping cherry tree close by the school. Gary Callander added a further silver birch tree behind the War Memorial in 1988. Gary was a former pupil of Roxburgh Primary School and was the Captain of the Scottish Rugby XV in 1988.

The Jubilee Project 2002.

The area between the two old railway bridges to the south-west of the village had become neglected and overgrown since the arches of the two bridges

were removed in 1983. A subcommittee of the Community Council reasoned that if the area was tidied up and landscaped it would give the village an entrance worthy of the one bearing the County name. The subcommittee laboured over the summer of 2002 when weather and commitments allowed. They were extremely grateful for the help and co-operation they received from all the local farmers, Roxburghe Estates, Ronnie Welsh and Robin Hogg.

In all, eleven loads of vegetation and rubbish were removed from the site and over five tons of fieldstones were handpicked and transported in to make the raised quadrant beds. The gap between the abutments was perfectly filled with a seven metre concrete plinth, kindly donated by Border Concrete. These two tons of reinforced concrete were originally destined for the Hamilton Academics new football stadium. The plinth now forms a solid base for the Colonel's and the Roxburgh Villagers' garden seats. Bright golden gravel enlivens the area in front of the plinth and the remaining edges have been sown with grass seed. Given time to mature and a little maintenance, this should become a very pleasing approach to the village from the south-west and provide suitable parking for people taking their dogs for walks over the viaduct or along the Jedburgh line.

Villagers kindly made donations of £10 to the Jubilee Project Fund. This money was used either to purchase shrubs to beautify the raised quadrants or put towards the cost of the Roxburgh Villagers' seat. On Sunday 20th October 2002, following the Harvest Festival Lunch in the village Hall, a gathering of villagers and their friends assembled at the west end of the village. Sixteen families each planted a shrub in one of the five raised beds besides their individual name plaques and then witnessed the official opening of "The Roxburgh Village Jubilee Project" by Colonel Donald Hogg. The Colonel stood in front of the seat which he and his family had generously donated and addressed the crowd. He spoke of the transformation he had seen taking place around the abutments during the summer while taking his dog on his daily walk over the viaduct. It was now a great pleasure to park his car in this rejuvenated spot and he thanked the subcommittee for their hard work in recreating the attractive area between the bridges. He then thanked the people of the village and the

surrounding farms for making it possible with their generous donations to beautify the quadrants with shrubs and for contributing to the Roxburgh Village seat (see West End plan). The Colonel declared the project open by releasing a bundle of helium-filled balloons and ordering the firing off of two powerful rockets. He then invited the subcommittee to sit down with him on his garden seat and toast the project with a well-deserved gin and tonic.

It is proposed that the quadrants be planted with snowdrops and bluebells next year and then be sown with a wild flower/grass mixture to prevent the weeds taking over. There are even thoughts that 'the amphitheatre' should be cleared and planted with low maintenance gorse. The gorse would not only stabilise the steep banking but also produce a spectacular golden background for the seats.

Other village schemes, which are contemplated in the future, include levelling and grassing over the ground next to the phone box and the pathway going down to the playground steps. Tidying up both the wildernesses behind the garages and the jungle at the bottom of the old school playground would help the look of the village. Removing the ivy from the gravestones and the Scott-Kerr burial vault would help to give the churchyard a more cared for appearance. Reopening the path along the riverside from Boathouse corner to the viaduct would bring history back to life and clearing round the boat ring would allow it to be shown off to advantage. Hopefully some of these projects will be completed and then the village might even enter the "Britain in Bloom" competition!

The tree and shrub plantings of "The West End Project".

To NISBET

To ROXBURGH MAINS

- * George Ballentyne
- * Kelda McCraw
- * Pamela Jaffray
- * Louise Robertson
- * Jennifer Stark
- * John Spoor
- * Nicola Veitch
- * George Robertson
- * Graeme Wain
- * Daren Lowes
- * Fiona Wain

- * Katie Stark
- * Fiona Robertson
- * Gavin McCraw
- * Owen Jardie

* Valerie Hislop

The Abutment Shrubs

- * Avril & Fred Leitch
- * Kirsty & Simon Porteous
- * Margaret McCulloch
- * Joan & John Elliot

* Susan & Bobby

- * The Yule Family
- * Craig & Diane Ferguson
- * The Twemlow Family

- * The Clark Family
- * The Bell Family
- * Valerie Watson

WEST END CAR PARK

Roxburgh Seat

- * Nancy McCraw
- * Nancy Armstrong
- * The Nichol Family
- * Ian & Joanna Wain
- * Sam Kyle
- * Izzy Kyle

Colonel's Seat

- * Dorothy & Donald Tully
- * The Sanderson Family
- * The Hislop Family

- * The Bowyer Family
- * The Roberts Family
- * Pat & Dougal Forbes

Bus Shelter

To To
ROXBURGH KELSO

The 'Colonel's Seat' was donated by Col. & Mrs. D. Hogg & family.

The 'Roxburgh Seat' was purchased with donations from the following members of the village.

Liz & Bill Baird
Linda Cassie
Sue & Robert Briggs
Lilla & John Forsyth
Edythe & David Hogg
Jackie & Adrian Locke
Donna & Gavin McCraw
Beth & Oliver Stark
Jean & Sandy Palmer
Winnie & Dod Swanston
Eilleen & Billy Thomas
Jeanette & Jimmy Wichary
Nettie & Tommy Wyllie

Esme Biggar
Claire & Mark Briggs
Hester Dalgleish
Anne Duffy
Easson Family
Hill Family
Hogarth Family
W.L. Jones
Beatrice Kyle
MacKay Family
Nettie Thomson
Veitch Family

Charlotte & Peter Batchelor
Margaret Clark

Key to tree & shrub species:-

- * Rosa moyesii 'Geranium'
- * Hydrangea petiolaris
- * Mahonia x 'Charity'
- * Escallonia 'Pride of Donard'
- * Prunus avium planted by children at Roxburgh Primary School 1980
- * Syringa vulgaris 'White Lilac' planted by Susan & Bobby 31/05/80.
- 1. Hydrangea macrophylla 'Blue Wave'
- * Potentilla 'Sunblest'
- * Buddleia davidii 'Royal Red'

Roxburgh Church.



St. James's Church, Roxburgh © Author.

The Church Exterior.

The parish Church of Roxburgh and Heiton is at the east end of the village, standing on the highest point of the churchyard. It is approached via one of three gates. The main entrance is a flight of steps situated on its north side, which has wrought iron gates surmounted with an arch containing an electric lantern in the middle. This gateway was renovated in 1982. In the same year the council replaced the white railings on the north west boundary of the churchyard with a beech hedge. The path from this north gateway leads to the main church door where it divides and encircles the building. A branch off this circular path leads to the south wicket, which lies close to the mort-house. Another branch leads off to the Minister's gate in the south-west corner of the churchyard. The latter path provided the Minister with the most direct route from the Manse to the Church.

The present Church, built in 1752, is plain and simple in its construction, with its main body running east to west. It is built of stone utilising some blocks from the previous church located close-by. It has a slate roof with a chimney emerging from the vestry fireplace. It was enlarged in 1828 with the addition of galleries in the east and west wings which were reached by outside stairways. In 1878 the north aisle containing the vestibule, vestry and north gallery was built to Mr Carnegie's design and this enclosed the staircases up to the east and west galleries.

On top of the east gable sits a unicorn weather vane, which has lately lost its horn. No one knows why the unicorn was selected for this purpose. It is strange to have such a beast telling us where the wind is coming from. The unicorn was written about in pre-Christian times, long before it was adopted as a supporter in the Scottish Royal Arms around the beginning of the 15th century. Legend has it that the unicorn was a very fierce animal and no hunter was able to capture it by force. However, the unicorn has long been considered a symbol of purity, chastity and innocence.

Underneath, the weather vane is the rounded east window above which an inscription reads 'Pro Christo et Patria dulce periculum.' This is translated 'for

Christ and country danger is sweet.’ This was originally the motto of the Kers of Cessford but is now **that of the Dukes of Roxburghe**. High above the stokehole door is the Royal crest of James IV with the word ‘Marchmond’ inscribed above it. The reference to Marchmond is thought to go back to the origins of Roxburgh Castle and refer to the mound on the marches between Scotland and England. However, Alistair Moffat in his book, ‘Arthur and the Lost Kingdoms,’ postulates that Marchmond was derived from the P-Celtic word Marchidun that means ‘cavalry fort.’ This was the name he gives to King Arthur’s stronghold built on the castle mound between the Tweed and Teviot rivers.

A memorial stone, dedicated to Thomas Douglas, decorated with a skull, cross bones and hourglass is built into the north wall of the church on the left of the main doorway. Beside it are the remains of a late 12th century free-standing cross, discovered fifty years ago. Its upper surface and both sides are moulded. The obverse side shows a cross-head of eight radial expanding arms; the reverse a cross-patty. It has reappeared since its absence was reported in the last issue of this book! On the right of the main door there are three more memorial stones built into the north wall. The first is a symbolic stone in red sandstone with skull and long bone but no inscription. The second is a symbolic carving of a standing human figure with no inscription. The third is a memorial, with **skull and hourglass**, dedicated to William **Weymes**, the Roxburgh Minister who died in 1658.

The belfry mounted on the west gable was declared unsafe in the quinquennial report on the building of 1992. It was in urgent need of repair. In fact, the bell could not be rung by its external rope without endangering the life of the bell-ringer! In 1997 Laidlaw of Jedburgh carried out the restoration work and replaced the pineapple finial at the same time. Pineapple fruits were introduced into this country from South America in 1715 and were regarded as the height of luxury at the time. Carved pineapples are quite commonly found embellishing church buildings and signify opulence. The small bell inside the bellcote was examined during the restoration and seen to be inscribed ‘Roxburgh Edr (Edinburgh) 1702.’ George Hogarth, who was beadle from 1966 until he died in

1998, took great pleasure in ringing this bell before every service except for those during the period of acute danger.

(The two 12th-century bells, unearthed 50 metres apart in a ploughed field at Kersmains, are not thought to have come from a parish church. Their superior quality suggests they were probably hung in a royal chapel such as St. Johns in the precincts of Roxburgh Castle. It is estimated that these two bells had been cast in about 1200 AD and had been in use for a century. They appeared to have been damaged by fire, which would have been very possible in one of the many sieges at Roxburgh Castle. The bells could easily have been looted when rebuilding was being carried out and abandoned two kilometres away in the Kersmains field. They are both now in the safe keeping of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in Edinburgh.)

On the corners of the south wall of the church about three meters above the ground are two stone ledges where cubical sundials once sat. Alas both have fallen off their perches but the easterly one does remain on the ground beneath its former position.

Set into the southern wall are three memorial stones. The stone at the east end of this wall tells us that the Hogg family were portioners and resided in Upper and Neither Roxburgh for more than 600 years until about 1725. (If this is to be believed, the family were living here when Earl David moved his monks to the 'novo burgh' Roxburgh in 1128. This supports the hypothesis that 'Auld Roxburgh' was situated where the present village is today.) The stone at the south-west corner is sacred to the memory of the Revd. Robert Hogg late Minister of the Gospel at Roxburgh who died in the 46th year of his Ministry on 2nd February 1781 aged 77 years. Unfortunately, the inscription of the third memorial stone in the centre of the wall has completely weathered away. It was however dedicated to The Mein family who farmed at Ormiston. Surmounting the window, above this weathered memorial, is a stone with '1752' carved on it which confirms the date when this part of the church was built.

Alexander Jeffrey in his book "The History & Antiquities of Roxburghshire," written in about 1859, refers to the inscription on a memorial stone stating that

the ashes of Randolph Ker, son of Thomas Ker of Altonburn, repose in the neighbourhood of the church. No stone conveying this message can now be found in the churchyard.

The Church Interior.

Entrance to the Kirk is via the north door, which leads into the vestibule. Photographs of the last eight ministers are displayed on the left-hand wall while on the opposite wall is the framed scroll of the Kelso Laddies. All the Laddies who have visited Roxburgh since Colin Dumma came in 1977 have signed this scroll. The pewter collection plate, inscribed "Rox K" sits on a wooden pedestal beneath this scroll. On the right-hand wall hangs the church cradle roll and next to it a plaque to the memory of the Rev. C.J.M. Martin. It reads:- "To the glory of God in memory of Cyril James Mackenzie Martin Lieutenant Colonel O.B.E.,R.E. who was Minister of this church 1957-1961. He served his God with the same zeal with which he served his king, in affection and esteem. This tablet was erected by Officers and Men of 82 C.R.E. Works who served with him in Italy." On the opposite wall are two old maps of Roxburgh village.

There are five possible exits from the vestibule. Three lead to the galleries in the north, east and west of the building. The door to the right goes into the vestry and the double doors open into the main body of the church.

The vestry is used by the Minister as a changing room, meeting place and office. It used to be rather spartan with a basic table, wooden chairs, wardrobe and threadbare rug. However, it was given a facelift in the 1997 refurbishment. It now has wall-to-wall blue carpeting and a set of upholstered chairs, which provide some comfort at session meetings. These chairs had previously been in the Robertson's 'loose box' in the north gallery. Mrs. Betty Tweedie, the last surviving member of the Robertson family, recently donated these chairs to the church. The electrical controls for the church's lighting, heating and audio systems are located in the corner cupboard. The antique china chamber pot, which rests in the bottom of the wardrobe, is no longer required as a flush

lavatory was installed in 1997. The new loo is located at the top of the disused stokehole steps on the east side of the building. Tommy Lowrie was the last beadle to stoke the boiler with coal to keep the church heated. He retired when the electrical central heating system was installed.

When the body of the Church is entered through the double doors, it is seen to be T-shaped. The state of the internal decoration and repair is good. The high coombed ceilings were repaired in 1997 after a large area of plaster was stated, in the quinquennial report, to be hanging dangerously loose from its laths. This repair enabled the light fittings to be replaced by Stewarts of Kelso, as there had been frequent failure of the previous globes due to overheating. After these repairs were completed, the inside and outside of the building was repainted by Cockburn of Yetholm. The Duchess of Roxburghe, an expert on interior decoration, advised on the sand coloured walls together with the white ceiling and woodwork. Fairbairn of Berwick laid the new red carpet in the aisles, which adds greatly to the setting for that special day of the bride and groom.

The communion table and the pulpit were both designed by the Rev Dr. H.A. Mathers and crafted in oak by James Dodds of Heiton. The communion table was modelled on the tomb of Emperor Henry V in Cologne Cathedral. The top is of blue marble and its four legs represent Mathew, Mark, Luke and John with the central pillar symbolising our Saviour, Jesus. The triple ledges at the top of each leg represent the Holy Trinity. Mrs Mathers presented it to the Kirk in 1923. Doreen Martin gifted the pewter bowl on the table in 1961 in memory of her husband. The bowl is inscribed, "In memory of Cyril James Mackenzie Martin, Minister of Roxburgh 1957-61. He loved to do good." Two matching pewter flower vases also sit on the table in front of the desk-lectern. This lectern, carved in oak, bears the inscription "To the glory of God and in the memory of our father and mother, Thomas and Ada Mary Eaton. Also our brothers Fredrick Henry, Harry and Thomas Edgar, all of whom are interred in Roxburgh churchyard."

The pulpit, completed in 1932, was paid for from the proceeds of a sale of work. The Bible, which is read from the pulpit at every service, was a gift to Dr. David Paul on his induction to Morebattle parish church in 1869, seven years

before he came to Roxburgh. The Pulpit Fall was embroidered and donated by Lady Goodson. To the west of the pulpit on the wall is a carved memorial in oak, dedicated to the seven men of the parish who lost their lives in the Second World War. A wooden cross donated in memory of the Robertson family, sits on a window ledge close by. In the window to the east of the pulpit rests an unusual baptismal font. It is sculpture in stone, decorated with flowers and vines and is mounted on a wooden base. It was presented by the Women's Guild during Dr. Mather's incumbency.

There is seating for about 500 people in the church. The pine pews in the main body and the three galleries are numbered 1-45 and bear letters such as R, SK, MC etc. on the pew ends. These letters are the initials of the heritors; R representing The Duke of Roxburghe, SK -Scott-Kerr of Sunlaws, MC -The Edinburgh Merchant Company, HR -Henry Rutherford of Fairnington, A -Sir E. Antrobus of Stockstrother and D -Sir Robert Douglas of Springwood. These letters would have had great significance pre-First World War when pew rents were paid to provide a substantial income for the church. It will be noted that seven pews have circular holes bored in them. In the days before electric lighting, Aladdin lamps were used to provide light for evening services. A lamp would be attached to a bracket on a pole, which could be inserted into the hole for the duration of the service. Four wooden collection ladles are used to collect the offerings during the service. Great care has to be taken when manipulating their long handles to make sure an unsuspecting donor doesn't suffer injury!

There are four large windows in the south wall of the Kirk. The two stained glass windows representing the 'Good Shepherd' and the 'King of Kings' were presented by the Woman's Guild in 1929 and 1934. Saint James's window depicts the 'Sower' in stained glass and was presented to commemorate the ministry of the Rev. Dr. H.A. Mathers' (1897-1934). Notice the wee moosie waiting for the sower to drop him a few grains of corn. The fourth window of plain glass acts as a suitable frame for the picturesque Holly tree outside. This tree annually produces an abundant crop of berries that can be much studied during winter sermons!

On the front of the north gallery are two shields. The first shield bears the Coat of Arms of James IV with the inscription "Marchmond Jac IV 1488-1513." When James IV came to the throne in 1488 he granted to Walter Ker the place and 'message' of Roxburgh with pertinents, castle and patronage of Maisondieu, for payment of a red rose at the castle, at the Feast of John the Baptist. Hence the Royal association with Roxburgh. Marchmond refers to Roxburgh Castle as previously noted. The other shield bears the Coat of Arms of the Edinburgh Merchant Company whose motto is "Terra Marique" (By land and sea). The reason for this shield hanging here goes back to 1746 when the Governors of the Merchant Maiden Hospital founded in 1694 (now The Mary Erskine School) purchased 887 acres of the Heiton Estate. They paid £5311 18s 4d sterling for Ladyrig Farm with a view to producing valuable rental income to support their schools in Edinburgh. Andrew Robertson became tenant of Ladyrig in 1778 founding a very successful family-farming lineage, which lasted for two hundred years. The Merchant Company, by owning land in the parish, automatically became heritors of Roxburgh Kirk. In 1752, when the old Kirk was seen to be in such a poor state of repair, it was decided to build a new one. It took three years to build the new Church. The building cost £1454 Scots, of which £181 Scots was provided by the Merchant Maiden Hospital Company. Records show that as a result of this contribution, on 1st May 1755, the company "were empowered to cut in wood their Coat of Arms and place it in front of the Hospital's loft." George Dawson was paid £3 sterling for his excellent carving and it has hung there ever since. The two shields were repainted for the Church's bicentenary celebration service on the 17th July 1955. The Minister, the Rev. **Fraser** McDonald, conducted the service in the presence of twenty-five members of the Edinburgh Merchant Company Board. Miss Mackay and a choir of thirty senior girls from the Mary Erskine School for Girls provided the choral accompaniment for the occasion.

The Church's silverware consists of two pairs of silver cups, a pair of silver tankards and two pewter platters. They are all kept in a Bank vault except when taken out for use three times a year.

One pair of Scottish silver communion cups by Dougl Ged of Edinburgh, 1761, each 8.75 ins., are both inscribed, "Given to the Parish of Roxburgh 1761" together with words "The Cup of Blefsing which We Blefs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ. 1st Cor X. 16."

The second pair of Victorian silver communion cups by Hamilton, Crichton & Co., 41 George Street, Edinburgh, 1879, each 9.25 ins. are separately inscribed,

2. "Given to the Church of Roxburgh in memory of Miss Janet Scott of Wooden by her niece Miss M C Addison a member of the congregation, 1879."
3. "Given to the Church of Roxburgh in memory of Miss Janet Scott of Wooden by the Rev. David Paul MA Minister of the Parish 1879."

The two silver-plated tankards with lids are very rarely used. The pair of Scottish pewter communion plates by Robert Kinniburgh, Edinburgh, ca 1805, each 15-ins. in diameter, are inscribed, "For the Kirk of Roxburgh 1805." Andrew Bell, the Minister probably procured these four pieces at the time of Trafalgar.

In February 1998, by popular demand, individual glasses replaced the use of the communion cups. In some Scottish churches the controversial practice of taking communion from ladles or individual glasses rather than from the common cup has been practised for 150 years. This showed great foresight in the prevention of communicable diseases but was slow to catch on in Roxburgh. Roxburgh Church now has two sets of individual glasses mounted on wooden stands for the celebration of communion.

For a century, the sweet notes of a Mason & Hamlin harmonium accompanied the singing in the church. Mrs Katharine Paul presented it in memory of her mother, Margaret Kinloch, on the 25th December 1889. This harmonium was originally placed in the north gallery next to the choir. In 1930 when the choir fell silent it was moved downstairs to the right of the communion table. Annie Reid played this instrument faithfully for 35 years until she resigned on the 26th February 1991. Later in the same year, the Lammermuir Pipe Organ by Richerby of Cockburnspath replaced the old harmonium. This organ, in its flowered oak

cabinet, was placed back in the north gallery where Ian Abernethy, the present church organist, delights in playing it. Unfortunately there is no sign of a choir coming back to join him in the gallery.

On either side of the organ compartment in the north gallery are two 'loose boxes,' which were used by the Thomson and Robertson families. These compartments did not have fixed pews to sit on but had the comfort of a set of ordinary moveable chairs. A bit like Laird's in a gallery, William Thomson and his Over Roxburgh family sat on their chairs in the east 'box' while the Robertson family of Ladyrig sat on theirs in the west 'box', behind the Coat of Arms of the Merchant Company. These 'loose boxes' are very rarely used today.

Roxburgh Parish Incumbents.

Two clerics of the Church of Rome are known to have preached the word of God in Roxburgh parish prior to the Reformation. Helias, 1190-1232, was Parson of Old "Rokesburg" and Thomas (called Toddie) is mentioned in 1357 as being Rector of Old "Roxburch".

The twenty-one Ministers of Roxburgh Parish Church since the Reformation in 1560 are listed below. It will be seen that the average incumbency was twenty-one years while the longest serving incumbent was Robert Hogg who administered the faith for forty-six years.

James Beaton, 1569-79, was related to the infamous Cardinal David Beaton who had been responsible for George Wishart's terrible death in the forecourt of St. Andrews Castle in 1546. James's sister was Mary Beaton, one of the four Maries of Mary Queen of Scots. There is a costume tableau of the Queen and her four Maries presently on display in Smailholm Tower.

James Beaton, 1579-1607, formerly of Glencairn, was a member of the General Assembly. He was related to the previous James Beaton and married three times. Margaret Wemyss, his third wife, bore him four sons and three daughters.

William Wemyss, 1608-34, was married to Isabell Hewat on the 29th May 1606 and they had a son, William, and two daughters. William Wemyss was to have been inducted minister of Eccles in 1607 but the service was not performed “by reason that the parochianers withstood his admission.” He became Minister of Roxburgh on the 4th October 1608 and was one of the fifty-five ministers who signed a ‘Protestation to the King and Parliament’ for the liberties of the Kirk on the 27th June 1617.

William Rollock, 1635-39, was laureated at the University of Edinburgh on 26th July 1634. Two years later he gave a donation towards the erection of a library at Glasgow University. He was deposed in October 1639 and left the country in May 1640. He was voted £50 by Parliament in June 1661, on account of his loyalty to the crown.

William Wemyss, 1641-58, was the son of the former Minister who had attained his degree at Edinburgh University in July 1632. He had been attached as a chaplain to the Earl of Roxburgh’s regiment in England before becoming Minister at Roxburgh. He was married to Elizabeth Moir but there was no issue. He died in March 1658 in the 17th year of his ministry at the age of 52 years. A memorial stone to him is set in the north wall of the present church, on the right of the main door. Carved upon this stone is a skull, cross bones and an hourglass, signifying the sands of time had run out.

John Hallyburton, 1660-71, acquired his degree at Edinburgh University in July 1641 but was deprived of his licence in May 1653 after some scandal when the Edinburgh Presbytery found that “his levitie and light carriage with a young woman has bein the onlie arrys and ground of scandall”. He was restored to

office in June 1654 and became chaplain to the Earl of Roxburgh before his appointment to Roxburgh parish in 1660. One wonders what the local gossip was when Roxburgh parishioners learnt of their Minister's previous 'levitie and light carriage!' He was married to Margaret Haliburton in 1663 and they had a daughter, Marion.

John Dalgleish, 1673-83, studied at St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews obtaining his degree in 1662. He became chaplain to the Earl of Roxburgh 1672 and Minister of Roxburgh parish in 1673. However, the stipend in Roxburgh was not big enough to support him and his large family so he had to take on additional work. In 1683, much to the regret of his parishioners, he moved on to seek a greater income elsewhere. But the grass was no greener on the other side and seven years later he was back again.

John Ker, 1683-89, was accused before the Privy Council in 1689 with only partly reading a Proclamation and for praying for James VII. The case was found not-proven and he was acquitted but left the parish soon after.

John Dalgleish, 1690-1700, returned to Roxburgh in 1690 and although in 1698 he was complaining of old age and ill health, he was still able to leave in 1700 for a more remunerative parish in Dundee. His leaving again was much regretted by his parishioners. John may well have been the Minister who is recorded in the Roxburghshire Hearth Tax Records as not having paid his fourteen shillings Hearth Tax to the Scottish Parliament!

Robert Brown, 1702-17, was called in 1701 and became Minister at Roxburgh in July 1702. He was deposed in August 1717 in the wake of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion for "dissaffection" to the government. Some rebel soldiers in Kelso had stolen his horse and he had drunk the Pretender's health with Brigadier Mackintosh, the rebel commander, in the hope of getting his horse back. It was

not a clever gesture in those times but he was said to have neither shining abilities nor the caution and prudence necessary to guide him safely in a political age. "Yet we felt for him," says Andrew Bell. Deprived of his parish and thus his livelihood he was at a very low ebb when the noble Countess of Roxburghe came to his aid showing compassion and humanity. He was provided with a cottage at Cessford, where he tended his milk-cow, dug his garden and lived off gifts of charity. After some years, he was restored to the ministry and became Minister of Dawyk parish until he died in 1729.

John Pollock, 1718-34, was a native of Roxburgh and he must have been a truly formidable man in village life. He was involved with Robert Brown's political enemies, marching to Stirling with the Hanoverian forces in 1715. Andrew Bell, however, tells us that he was "designed by Providence to instruct a rude race of men, he was endowed with many qualifications required for that important task". He had a robust constitution, a bold impetuous temper, was widely educated and unwearied in his attention to the care of his pastoral duties. His rigid execution of discipline and very considerable powers of address procured for him the lasting memorial of having turned many from darkness to light! Scarcely anybody in the parish was taught to read before his day. Under his tuition youths not only obtained the elements of useful knowledge at school, but were also obliged to commit the principles of religion and morality, as recommended by the constitution of this kingdom, carefully to memory, and repeat them publicly in church. This gave them early and salutary ideas of civil and sacred virtues that the lapse of time has not entirely wiped away. Mr Pollock's few surviving disciples now talk of these things with delight as they rediscover the mingled sensations of joy and trembling when they speak of the great oaken stick Mr Pollock always walked with. How effective the great stick was in over-awing the insolent, rewarding the deserving and giving encouragement to the timid. It does not sound as if he would last long in today's teaching profession! He died on the 12th August 1734.

Robert Hogg, 1735-81, was a native of the parish. He was married to Mary Home and they had three daughters. He must have been the last Minister to preach in the old underground Kirk. He would have overseen the building of the present church and been its first Minister. His successor wrote that 'he wore out his days in serving his cure with much esteem, respect and usefulness, until he died on the 3rd of February 1781, aged 77 years, in the 46th year of his ministry'. A memorial to his memory is to be found in the south wall of the church at its westerly corner.

The Rev. Mr Andrew Bell, 1781-1819, studied at St. Andrews' University and became Minister of Roxburgh in November 1781. He wrote a very informative review of the parish, which is recorded in the Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-99. He states the new church is in a good state of repair and that the Manse has been rebuilt during his incumbency. He deemed the Manse a good one if it were not for its very damp situation, which rendered it uncomfortable and unhealthy to live in. The heritors had gone to considerable expense in renewing the ground floor and throwing drains round the house but these works had not improved the situation. He considered that those who furnish accommodation to professional persons should see that it was built properly and durably comfortable. The Minister goes on to have a dig at the Duke regarding his stipend. He states that his glebe has been much improved at his sole expense and that his garden is now likewise very good.

Andrew Bell ends his report by "musing over the razed foundations of Roxburgh, once the fourth burgh of distinction in Scotland; the traces of those halls, which rang twice seven days in honour of Royal births and nuptials; and the rubbish of domes, where Princes and Nobles were wont to sit in state, the heart feels for the transient nature of sublunary joy or greatness, and the Christian's soul aspires after mansions above, where moth and rust corrupt not."

Andrew died on the 29th April 1819 aged 65 years in the 39th year of his ministry. The memorial at the south-west corner of the church is sacred to his memory and that of his wife plus their son and two grandchildren who died in infancy.

The Rev. James Hope, 1819-43, was a native of Dumfriesshire and became Minister of Roxburgh in September 1819. He wrote in the Statistical Account of Scotland 1834 that about 130 families attend the established Church in Roxburgh and the average number of communicants was 240. The poor of the parish were assessed twice a year and money levied from the heritors and tenants was distributed amongst those deemed to be in need. Twenty five to thirty people, on average, received parochial aid which usually amounted to 2s 1d in summer and 2s 1.5d in winter. This system which, had been in existence from 1737, was successful under proper management and appeared to be by far the most just and equitable method of provision. This was a century before the introduction of the Welfare State. No wonder people are recorded as coming north across Coldstream bridge into Scotland to receive benefit at this time when they were not feeling too well.

The Rev. James observed that agriculture was much more productive now with the turnip system involving crop rotations and the applications of lime. He was expecting great improvements in crop yields with the use of bone manure. Sheep he observed were increasing in popularity. He commented that internal communications were the greatest barrier to improvement in the area and hoped that the proposed railway to Berwick would go ahead so that agricultural produce from the area could reach the London market with a much-reduced carriage cost.

In December 1835 James married Marion, the daughter of The Rev. James Young, Minister of Eckford parish. James Hope died in March 1843 in the 24th year of his ministry at the age of 56 years. A memorial erected to his memory is to be found in the churchyard at the south-west corner of the church.



The Rev. William Lee DD, 1843-75, is seen standing in the photograph speaking to his father. William was Minister at Roxburgh for thirty-two years and published several treatises on Theology. He was incumbent when the railway was being constructed and negotiated the sale of part of the glebe on which the embankment was to be built. He planted Lilac trees by Lovers' Lane to hide the view of the "vulgar" railway embankment from his Manse. Percy Thrower confirmed that the Lilacs, which still flower there today, are probably direct descendants of those that William planted.

William was one of the first on the scene after that terrible accident when the viaduct collapsed on the evening of 20th June 1849. He tended the dying and the injured, doing all he could to help. Nine men lost their lives that night and several others were left badly mutilated.

William's father, John, had been Principal of Edinburgh University and William too, after thirty-two years of rural ministry, hankered after academia. In 1875 he went to Glasgow to become Professor of Church History at the University. He died in Glasgow on 10th October 1886. There is a memorial stone in Roxburgh churchyard to his wife who died in 1860 aged 33 years and their first born, John, who died aged 13 months. In 1960 the Rev. Walter Lee DD, William's

son, who had been a Minister in Perth, visited Roxburgh Church when he was 94 years of age.



The Rev. Dr. David Paul, 1876-96, was an excellent preacher and administered to capacity congregations. During his ministry the Church was so well attended that there had to be a double service on communion days. He started the Spittal Trip for Sabbath Scholars taking youngsters by train from Roxburgh to have a day of fun on Spittal beach. He saw the North Aisle added to the Church and had the Manse enlarged to accommodate his large family. Mrs. Paul presented the church with a harmonium, which was placed in the north gallery to accompany the choir.



The Rev. Dr. H.A. Mathers, 1897-1934, was responsible for the communion table and pulpit and he also oversaw the installation of two of the stained glass windows. He was a learned preacher and took his pastoral duties very seriously. He visited all his parishioners in their homes once a month. He walked everywhere, as he had no horse conveyance or motorised vehicle. Janet recalls that he always called up at the Rig at lunchtime on a Monday. When it was known that he had arrived at the first house, news spread rapidly and the men-folk in the other cottages quickly left their lunches and returned early to their work! He used to take his tan coloured mongrel dog with him on these walks but it was a savage beast. It used to run off and worry the sheep at Over Roxburgh, creating mayhem. In 1921 it went down the village and picked a fight with the King Charles at No.1 Teviot View. It was an unequal contest. The poor Cavalier sustained a broken back and had to be euthanased.

Dr. Mathers and his wife had no family of their own. He is remembered as having a poor rapport with the village children but he was regarded as being highly intelligent as few could understand a word of his sermons!



The Rev. Peter Gunn, 1934-50, knew the district well as his father had been Minister at Oxnam. Peter was a bachelor for the first 6 years of his appointment at Roxburgh. He must have been one of the last lads in village to be hurled up and down the main street in a wheelbarrow, the day before his wedding - a very good sport indeed. Although he and his wife were married in the Church it was not uncommon in those days for Peter Gunn to conduct wedding ceremonies in the Manse rather than the Church.

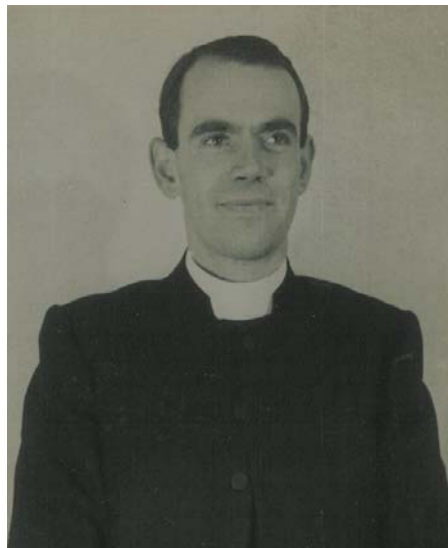
In the early 1940s troops were stationed at Roxburgh Mains and Sunlaws on military manoeuvres. The soldiers rested on Sunday mornings but had to attend a compulsory church parade at Roxburgh Church. Peter Gunn preached to a full house on these occasions.

Peter organised annual Sunday School picnics which were held alternately in Sunlaws and Roxburgh. They were great affairs and everybody looked forward to them. He started a monthly evening service in Heiton Hall for the benefit of the parishioners on the east side of the Teviot. He recalled that he got a fright one night when returning from one of these services. He was cycling home in the dark when he passed between two snoozing Clydesdale horses near the viaduct. All three got a nasty shock.

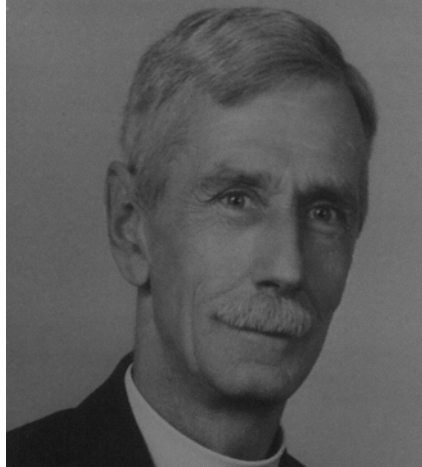
Peter remembered very clearly the November flood of 1938 when it was possible to touch the raging torrent from the footbridge. The river rose so high during the morning service that parishioners from Heiton and Kelso had to return home via

Ancrum and Brownrig. He also recalled the great flood of August 1948 when the railway tracks were damaged between Edinburgh and Berwick. This resulted in the Roxburgh line being promoted to mainline status with the 'Flying Scotsman' and 'Queen of Scots' making a daily appearance through Roxburgh for the next three months.

He left after 16 years to take up an appointment in Ancrum where the mains electricity had already been installed in the Church and Manse.



The Rev. Ian McDonald, 1950-56, was Minister at Roxburgh for 6 years. He drew the attention of the Merchant Company's to the dilapidated state of their Coat of Arms in the church. The Merchant Company Board responded by having it restored to its former glory. The plaque was rededicated at the bicentenary celebration service in 1955, which Ian conducted. Ian's was a short stay at Roxburgh and he is remembered especially for his musical talents.



The Rev. C. James M. Martin, 1957-61, had had a distinguished career in the regular army from 1921 to 1949, achieving the rank of Lt. Colonel. He had served in the Royal Engineers and was awarded the OBE for distinguished military service in Italy. After leaving the army he became Minister of Roxburgh parish and found some very old Kirk Session Minutes in the Manse safe. These Minute Books contained some very interesting entries.

In 1704 a John Elliot was interrogated by the Kirk Session as to whether or not he had said that those who had made Roland Douglas an elder might well also have made him a hangman? He had answered in the affirmative and showed little sorrow for his rude statement!

In 1708 Andrew Robinson confessed that he had fought with John Davidson during divine worship. The elders having due consideration for the boys ages and the memories of their own younger days, ordered that the two go down on their knees before the session and confess their sin and promise never to do the like of it again!

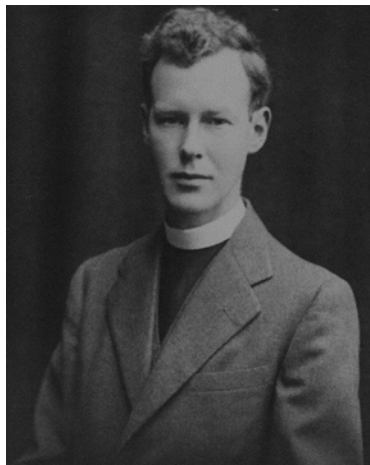
In 1719 Alexander Peacock was questioned as to whether or not on the last Sabbath he had taken drink at Robert Hewit's house? He admitted he had. "Then what was it?" they inquired. "Brandy", he replied. "How much did you drink?" they asked. "A pint", he told them. "Was it all drunk out?" they queried. "Yes", he said. "Then why did you not give it back when you knew it was Brandy?" they demanded. "I could not give it back", he retorted, "because it was all drunken out". They found him guilty of drunkenness, by drinking Brandy on the

Lord's Day, and ordered him to stand at the pillar in the Kirk and pay three pounds Scots to the poor.

Discipline was strong in those days. Elders who found no backsliding in their districts were told to, "look more diligently, that sin and iniquity should be punished".

The army had made James Martin acutely aware of health and safety. Consequently one of his first acts on coming to Roxburgh was to have wire mesh erected on either side of the footbridge walk in case a child should fall through. His wife Doreen (nee Fraser) was a daughter of the Sprouston Manse and knew all about growing sweet peas. In 1911 her mother and father had placed entries in the Daily Mail "Bunch of Sweet Peas" competition at the Crystal Palace in London. The top prize was a massive £1000 and this attracted an entry of 38,000 bunches of Sweet Peas. The Frasers won first and third prizes receiving £1050 in prize money, which covered the costs of building the new cancel in Sprouston church in 1912.

James Martin was the last minister in sole charge of the Roxburgh parish.



The Rev. William Thompson, 1961-97, was Minister of Roxburgh parish while also administering to the parishes of Crailing, Eckford and Oxnam. It was difficult for Bill to travel between the four churches to conduct services every Sunday. The numbers of services were therefore reduced and services were held in each church on alternative Sundays. This did not stop the old Scottish paraphrases, which were collected and brought out in 1781, being sung in the church. Indeed one elder is so fond of them that he has been threatening jovially that if they were not regularly sung he would leave the Kirk. He is still there!

In the latter part of his ministry, Bill had to accommodate the inconveniences of the restoration work in the church. On 28th April 1997 volunteers from the congregation cleared the sanctuary to give Laidlaws of Jedburgh freedom to work. Two services were held in the old school but they were then moved to Crailing Church which was considered devotionally more suitable. The £40K refurbishment was completed in time for Harvest Festival on 12th October 1997 when once again the church bell welcomed the congregation to the service.

Bill retired on his 75th birthday, Christmas Day 1997.

There then followed an interregnum of three and a half years until the appointment of the next incumbent. The Rev Joe Brown and the Rev Dudley Fox were responsible for most of the services during this time.



The Revd. Valerie Watson MA BD STM

was inducted at Roxburgh Kirk on Wednesday 16th May 2001. She was given responsibility for the linked charge of Makerstoun & Smailholm, Roxburgh, Stichill, Hume & Nenthorn after having had twelve years experience of the Ministry in Glasgow. In accepting the challenges of the rural parishes, Valerie has started her ministry with enthusiasm by re-establishing weekly worship. She introduced variety into the service and is in the process of developing a “Worship Team” who if required could take services in the future if the Minister was unavailable. The new monthly Church Magazine keeps everyone informed. When there are interested children in the village again, it is hoped to re-start Sunday school classes, as two teachers have already been appointed. Valerie stresses the importance of the role of the church in the life of the community. The Harvest Festival Lunch was a great innovation this year and the organised trips to ‘The Royal Yacht Britannia’ and ‘The Berwick Military Tattoo’ made for great fellowship.

The church is not only reliant on its Minister for survival, it needs the enthusiasm, help and co-operation of its parishioners to make it vibrant and viable. Roxburgh church has been fortunate in having such valued people who are willing to give of their time and expertise to the church. Jimmy Stark became an elder in 1946 and his son, Oliver, has continued through to the present day. They have held the office of Session Clerk between them for over half a century, keeping the session

minutes and looking after the church valuables. Jean Palmer is another stalwart of Roxburgh Church. She has been treasurer for twelve years and although she now resides to Kelso, she still continues in that office. Peter Batchelor was elected an elder in 1995 and immediately took on the onerous task of organising the restoration and refurbishment of the church in the mid-nineties. He oversaw the work and dealt with the quantum of correspondence involved in such a project. The £40K needed to pay for it came from the fund received from the sale of the manse in 1979 and a £2K grant from the Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Fund.

Such people are to be applauded, for without their valuable time, hard work and dedication, our church would be so much the poorer.

Church Officerbearers in 2002.

The Minister.

Valerie Watson.

The Kirk Session.

Oliver Stark	Appointed	1977	Session Clerk.
Jean Palmer	Appointed	1994	Treasurer.
Peter Batchelor	Appointed	1995	Fabric Convenor & Clerk to Congregational Board
John Elliot	Admitted	1994	Presbytery Elder.
Margo Wain	Appointed	2001	District Elder.
Dougal Forbes	Appointed	2001	District Elder.

The Congregational Board.

The Kirk Session plus the following elected members:-

Alison Wood Janette Wichary Lillian Whellans Tom Clark

Organist.

Ian Abernethy

Church Officer/Beadle.

Winnie Swanston.

The Churchyard.

There are approximately 325 gravestones in the churchyard. Sadly some thirty inscriptions cannot be read as the stones are lying face down and several others have weathered so badly that it is not possible to decipher the lettering. There must be some fascinating stories buried in the churchyard if it were only possible to hear them but we have to be content with the interesting inscriptions that have been left behind.

The first stone on the right of the church gates marks the resting-place of the 59-year-old wife of the Station Master, whose name was Annie Moonlight Hendry. Moonlight is an unusual name but she had been given her mother's surname. Her father, Charles Henry is buried in the next grave. He was Roxburgh's Station Master for 34 years and affectionately known as 'Old Dammit' as he often used to say "Dammit, boy, where have you been?"

There are five gravestones belonging to the Rutherford family towards the north west corner of the graveyard. Members of this family lived at Fairnington and were heritors of the parish. J. & J.H. Rutherford were printers at No. 17, The Square, Kelso.

In the north west corner are buried eight of the nine men who lost their lives when the part of the viaduct they were building collapsed on the 20th June 1849. The original memorial stone can no longer be found but a small stone with a 'Y' on it now marks the spot. This is appropriate because to this day we don't know *why* the viaduct pier crumbled and fell.



The First World War Memorial, commemorating the fifteen men of the parish who lost their lives, is situated at the north west corner of the churchyard. It deserves a special mention because it not only gives the rank and the regiment of those who died between 1914-1919 but also the date of death. The list includes Alex Mason who died from his injuries after the official conclusion of hostilities.

Midway down the west side of the churchyard a memorial tells us that Andrew Gemmells, alias Edie Ochiltree, was interred here in 1793 at the age of 106 years. The carving on the back of the stone shows Andrew wearing his Bedesman's gown with his faithful dog at his feet. He has his kent (staff) in one

hand and a "meal-pock" in the other and above are carved the words "BEHOLD THE END O'T". William Thomson who was the farmer at Over Roxburgh erected this stone in 1849 to the memory of Andrew Gemmels. William also designed his own castellated headstone, which is situated just above the Scott-Kerr Aisle. There will be more about these two men later in the section dedicated to them.

Possibly the oldest gravestone in the churchyard lies next to the walk going south from the church. A small stone about two foot square declares that Ann Hop, daughter of Robert Hop, died in 1402 aged 10 months. Dr. Mathers, however, disputed this date and reckoned the 7 had been chiselled into a 4, thus it should read 1702. Another old stone of note is a small headstone commemorating James Fairninten who died in 1706 and was an indueller in the toun. A. Jeffrey in his book "The History & Antiquities of Roxburghshire", written in about 1859, refers to an old memorial stone in the churchyard. The inscription on it stated that the ashes of Randolph Ker, son of Thomas Ker of Altonburn, repose in the neighbourhood of the church. However, no such stone can be found in the churchyard carrying this message.

A flat stone opposite Ann Hops allegedly declares "Here lies John Cairns with his three wives and fourteen bairns". A surviving relative, Eil Waldie, was so affronted with the inscription concerning this "amalgamated family", that she chiselled it out. Dr. Lee, the Minister, felt it should remain as it was and had it carved in again. There must have been some strong exchanges between the relative and the minister for she chiselled it out again and the minister had it reinserted. However, Eil had the last word, for Dr. Lee accepted a chair at Glasgow University and when he left she obliterated the inscription again and said that she "hoped Dr. Lee would be drowned when he went over the sea to Glasgow!" Dr. Lee died peacefully ten years later but the inscription remains to this day as Eil left it.

This flat stone also features another story. Many years ago there was a man known locally as 'Daft Scott' who suffered from a nervous disorder which showed itself as a religious mania especially when the moon was full. He had spent some time in Melrose and escaped back home where his parents shielded

him. On one starlit night when the moon was full he got out of bed and went to the churchyard in his white gown and nightcap. There he lay on the flat gravestone and pondered a few moments. Then he slowly rose to his feet and uttered in a ghoulisish cry, " Arise, all ye dead, and come to church. See yonder star of Bethlehem shining in the east." All would have passed unrecorded had it not been for Bert Tom, a Heiton man, who stuffed birds for a living. He was making his way home a little anxiously. It was dark and he had no torch or street lighting to guide him in those days. As he passed the village pump, he happened to look across the churchyard and saw the apparition stand up and speak. He was so overcome with fear that he took to his heels and ran. He passed the Boathouse in full flight and failed to realise the Star of Bethlehem was the distant signal light at the Heiton siding! Past the ash tree, over the footbridge and up the Slitrig he ran, trembling uncontrollably. He was so petrified that he missed his footing and fell into the swollen burn. He managed to get out, soaked to the skin, and then he met Jock Devlin making his way back to Roxburgh. "For heavens sake, turn back, Jock, don't go any further", Bert ordered in a very agitated voice, "They're risin' in Roxburgh churchyard!"

The two Roberton Family enclosures, both surrounded by railings, are situated at the southwest corner of the church and the Innescote corner of the churchyard. Members of this family were tenants of Ladyrig Farm continuously from 1778 until Lorna Fraser (nee Roberton) relinquished the tenancy in 1980. Many members of this remarkable family are remembered in the inscriptions on the memorial stones within these two enclosures. Some lived to ripe old ages but sadly others died in childhood, as was all too common a century ago. The death of Captain Kay Roberton is recorded in the Innescote enclosure. He should have continued the family tradition of farming at Ladyrig but was tragically killed in action at Anzio in Italy on the 4th February 1944.

In the north east corner of the churchyard behind the Roberton enclosure there is a stone sacred to the memory of John Gibson. He was the ninth man to meet his maker on 20th June 1849 when part of the railway viaduct he was helping to build collapsed.

The present church is dedicated to St. James, as was the former church. The position of the previous church is thought to have been just to the east of the present one, with its southern wall now forming the northern wall of the Scott-Kerr Aisle. The ivy covered burial vault of the Scot Kerrs of Chatto and Sunlaws is built on an old foundation and contains three memorials. On the north wall, under the motto "REGULIER ET VIGOUREUX", is a plaque erected to the memory of Robert Kerr died 5th December 1831 of Chatto and Sunlaws together with his wife Elizabeth, their five daughters and their four sons who died in infancy. The two other memorials are to the memory of William Scott-Kerr who lived from 1807-1890 and his wife Frances who died on 29th August 1884. A relatively recent armorial panel with the motto PACEM AMO (I love peace) surmounts the southern entrance. A lintel in the north wall over what appears to be a blocked up doorway bears the remains of an inscription which read "A K, M H Anno 1612". There are some that believe this doorway to be the southern entrance to the former underground church, which was covered with grass and reached by six or seven steps. Whether this peculiar construction was intended as a kind of "security to the worshippers in times of persecution and danger", or whether "the spirit of devotion likes best to dwell in gloomy retreats", we shall probably never know! The stone slabs, which formed the roof of the vault, have disappeared and there is no evidence remaining of the steps which led down to the original church. The vault was restored in 1833 and 1917 but badly needs attention again. The slabs, which protected the top of the southern wall of the ancient building, have slipped off. The underlying masonry is now exposed to the elements and the whole structure is suffering from the ravages of invasive ivy and elderberry.

The retaining wall at the southern extremity of the churchyard contains the outlines of a doorway in its stonework. Lewis Jones thinks this was the entrance to the mort-house. During the first half of the nineteenth century, 'Resurrectionists' dug up dead bodies in churchyards and sold them to the anatomy schools in Edinburgh for dissection. Grieving relatives were mortified at the thought of this happening to their loved one. They, therefore, organised a

member of the family to patrol the churchyard at night. This was done every night for six weeks after the internment to stop the 'Dead Lifters' stealing the body. It must have been a scary business to be by yourself on a dark night in a churchyard with just an owl and the wind for company. The better churchyards had wee bothies built so that the patrolman might have some shelter. These wee bothies were known as mort-houses and the very best of them had a fireplace so that the patrolman could keep warm during the long cold nights. The patrolman's courage was often fortified with whisky, paid for by the family. He was also supplied with a 'dead bell' to summon help if need be and some even had a single barrelled flintlock gun for protection. With no electric light or torches these long night vigils must have been truly nerve racking experiences; so pity the poor church pig at Midlem who perished by the gun when he only fancied a little midnight feast in the churchyard!

Burke and Hare are probably the best remembered 'Dead Lifters' but there is no substantiated evidence that they ever came to Roxburgh. However, they tired of visiting distant churchyards at the dead of night and took to murdering unsuspecting lodgers in Edinburgh to fulfil their order book for the Edinburgh Medical School. They were caught and brought to trial on 17th December 1828. Hare cheated the gallows and sped to England never to be heard of again. Burke bore the full weight of the law and was hanged in the High Street in front of a crowd of 25000 people. As the Judge, Lord Meadowbank, had instructed his body was given for dissection to further the advancement of medical science in exactly the same fashion as all his victims. His skeleton can still be seen to this day at the Medical School.

In the 1930s, Messrs Richardson and Henderson were the local gravediggers and they were paid to keep the churchyard tidy. They cut the grass, quiled it up and made hay of it for their cows! Believe it or not, the churchyard has never been better kept than it is today under the auspices of the Regional Council.

Roxburgh churchyard is now full and since 1946 burials have taken place in the cemetery which is located next to the Roxburgh Mill cottages.

The Manse.



Roxburgh House & Glebe © Author

Today, Roxburgh House, formerly Roxburgh Manse, stands amidst four acres of picturesque glebe land overlooking Wallace's Tower and the viaduct. It is a substantially built two storey, stone dwelling, with a slated roof. Its walls are roughcast and coloured in Scottish ochre. The well-maintained garden is centred on a magnificent old Walnut tree, which still bears edible nuts in fruitful seasons.

In former times The Church of Scotland built commodious residences for its Ministers. There were several reasons for this. The Manse reflected the important status of the Minister in the community. The Minister also had an obligation to the Church of Scotland and was expected to offer hospitality and accommodation to visiting Moderators and Missionaries on furlough. Manses were required to have at least seven rooms for this purpose. On a more practical point, large families were the norm in Victorian times and Roxburgh's Ministers were no exception. Lots of children required lots of space and the Minister's wife required help to run her busy household. Maids were employed and many were given sleeping accommodation on the premises. It was often too far for these young girls to travel home each night and besides they had to start work early in the morning and finish late at night. It is no wonder then that Church of Scotland Manses were built as commodious dwellings. The size of Roxburgh's former manse reflects all of these considerations even to the size of its stable block. Here, visitors' horses would have been fed and rested along side those of the Minister. There are no horses in the stables now but four donkeys delight in the freedom of the glebe and entertain residents with their cacophonies at feeding times.

The exact origins of present building are not easy to follow. Whether or not the initial building was built pre or post 1800, it was certainly enlarged during Dr. Paul's ministry. The Rev. James Hope wrote in his statistical report of 1834 that the Manse was built in 1820 but gave no further details. The Manse is, however, shown on Stobbie's map of Roxburgh in 1768 as being in the same location as it is today. The Rev. Andrew Bell recorded in the Statistical Account of 1791-99 that the Manse had been rebuilt during his incumbency and would have been deemed a good one if it were not for the damp situation which rendered it uncomfortable and unfit to live in. The heritors had gone to considerable expense to repair the damage and put new drains round the house but all to no avail. The Minister went on to criticise the heritors for their lack of consideration in providing comfortable accommodation for persons in public office and for not overseeing the workmen in the course of their work. The Minister went on to complain that a

destructive stream, which caused the land to be wet and have a cold bottom, intersected the glebe. He had enclosed and improved the extensive glebe at his sole expense but it would require constant attention to keep the fences stockproof and the land in a tolerable state of fruitfulness. Andrew Bell went on to say that his garden was now very good and contained a hawthorn tree remarkable for its size and beauty. It measured seven feet round its trunk and shaded an area upwards of thirty feet in diameter. He considered that there were few objects of greater beauty to be seen than this tree when in bloom.

The Manse was enlarged in the latter part of the 19th century to accommodate Dr. David Paul's very large family with its entourage of maids. The number of maids, however, gradually declined over the years until there were no maids living-in after 1941. Winnie Rearie from Nenthorn was the last maid to live-in when the Rev Gunn was Minister of the parish. Winnie Swanston (nee Rearie) recalls that the manse was a cold house with no electricity at the time. Winnie's duties included tidying up, cleaning and keeping the fires going. Mrs Gunn did all the cooking and used the eggs from her own flock of hens. Winnie recalls that all discarded eggshells were collected up, dried in the oven, and then fed back to the hens as grit. Winnie's working day started at 7 am and finished at 9 pm. She worked for seven days a week but was allowed time off on Sundays from 2pm until 9pm to cycle home to Nenthorn to see her family. Her pay was 5/= per week, plus board and lodging. She was never allowed outside the manse gates during her employment and the very thought of the young maid going to village dances could not even be contemplated.

The families of the Reverends Bell, Hope, Lee, Paul, Mathers, Gunn, MacDonald, and Martin. made the Manse their home from 1781 until 1980 when Doreen Martin moved into her new bungalow, "Glebe Cottage". The Church of Scotland then sold the Manse to Sue and Robert Briggs who re-named it "Roxburgh House".

Andrew Gemmells and William Thomson

Buried in Roxburgh Churchyard are two very interesting characters, Andrew Gemmells and William Thomson. Although William was only eight years old when Andrew died, they knew each other and both had Roxburgh connections. Andrew Gemmells lived in a byre at Roxburgh Newtown when he wasn't out on one of his begging rounds and William Thomson was to become the farmer at Over Roxburgh Farm in later life. They had each followed very different lifestyles but both were united in their common hatred of war.

Andrew Gemmells was immortalised by Sir Walter Scott as Edie Ochiltree in his book 'The Antiquary'. Andrew's calf-country had been in Ayrshire but as a young man he had been a dragoon in active service during the wars of Anne and the first Georges. The last fifty years of his life were spent as a wandering beggar (gaberlunzie) of the "Bedesman" or "Blue-gown" class. Thus he belonged to the aristocracy of his order and was esteemed a person of great importance. These

Bedesmen were an order of paupers to whom the Kings of Scotland gave certain alms under the auspices of the Catholic Church. In return for which they were expected to pray for the Royal Welfare and that of the State. Their number equalled the number of years that the King had lived, and on each birthday the King appointed another. On his appointment each Bedesman received a new cloak of light blue coarse cloth with a pewter badge which conferred the privilege of asking for alms throughout all of Scotland. He was also given a leather purse containing as many shillings Scots as the King was years old. The Bedesmen then received a sermon from the Royal Chaplains but as one said they were the most impatient and inattentive audience in the world, as they were paid for their own devotions and not for listening to those of others. Perhaps the real reason was the luscious breakfast of bread and ale, which awaited them at the conclusion of the ceremonial on the royal birthday!

Andrew Gemmells, the gentleman beggar, was well known in the vales of Gala, Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow. He made his calls at certain houses generally twice a year and was received rather as an old acquaintance of the family than as a beggar. Sir Walter Scott had, in his youth, frequently seen and conversed with him. He described him as, "a remarkably fine old figure, very tall, and maintaining a soldierlike or military manner and address. His features were intelligent with a powerful expression of sarcasm. His motions were always so graceful that he might almost have been suspected of having studied them; for he might have served as a model for an artist, so remarkably striking were his ordinary attitudes. He had little of the cant of his calling; his wants were food and shelter; or trifle money, which he always claimed, and seemed to receive, as his due.

He sang a good song, told a good story and could crack a severe jest with all the acumen of Shakespeare's jesters though without using, like them, the cloak of insanity. It was some fear of Andrew's satire, as much as a feeling of kindness or charity, which secured him the general good reception which he enjoyed everywhere".

Andrew Gemmells was a wealthy man. He did his rounds on a good blood-mare. He could sit down to a game of brag with the Laird of Gala where the stake was a considerable parcel of silver. They played on a windowsill. The Laird sat on his chair inside while the beggar sat on a stool outside in the yard. This was said to be done in order to preserve the due gradations of rank or perhaps to counter the odour! On one occasion a country gentleman expressed great regret that he had no silver in his pocket or he would have given Andrew sixpence – “I can give you change for a note, Laird,” replied the beggar. In his latter years he was heard to say, as many supertax payers do today, that times were now harder for he got £40 a year less than when he started. Even if he had twenty sons he said he would not bring one of them up in his own line.

One of his best known anecdotes took place at St. Boswells Fair. A sergeant in dazzling uniform while trying to enlist a few recruits was eloquent in praise of war, its dignity, its noble lessons and its rich rewards. Andrew, the ex-dragon, at once put an end to the sergeant's recruiting by holding up his empty 'meal-pock' and exclaiming with a tone and aspect of profound derision, “BEHOLD THE END O'T.” The contrast was irresistible and the confused sergeant beat a hasty retreat amidst universal laughter.

Andrew carried with him two combs for his beautiful silverlocks, and a set of white false teeth, which he had been gifted for his 100th birthday. In his last days he was asked what money he had on him. "Bow, wow, wow, woman! " he retorted. "Womenfolk are aye fashing theirsels aboot what they hae nae business wi'." He died in 1793, aged 106 years, in a bed made for him on a cart in a byre at Roxburgh Newtown. He was buried in Roxburgh churchyard where the local gravedigger, old Jamie Jack, dug his grave. It was a very lucky nephew in Ayrshire, and not Jamie Jack, who benefited from Andrew's considerable fortune. Old Jamie had to be content with the shoes Andrew had bought in Selkirk on his last begging round.

Andrew's memory were not allowed to fade. Roxburgh Newtown's leases contained a clause for many years, which stated that the door to Andrew Gemmell's byre was to remain unaltered. Andrew Purves confirmed that in 1920

the original door still hung there. Sadly, in 1980 the old byre had to be demolished to make way for a new multipurpose farm shed.

Andrew would have been amused to learn that there was a Scott Class D 30, 4-4-0, railway engine named Edie Ochiltree in his honour based in Hawick. Like several other Scott Class engines, it was named after characters in Sir Walter Scott's novels. The engine roamed the Waverley line and branch lines of the Border's countryside for forty years until the 1950s - just as its namesake had wandered all those years ago.

Andrew is more permanently remembered in stone. In 1849 William Thomson, farmer at Over Roxburgh, erected a tombstone above his grave in the churchyard. The sandstone carving still bears a likeness to Andrew dressed in his blue gown, carry his meal pock, with his dog at his side, all surmounted by those immortal words: -

“BEHOLD THE END O’T.”

It was a remarkable gesture by William Thomson to go to all that trouble and expense in getting a memorial carved to a beggar who had been dead for fifty-six years. The reasons for this act of remembrance go back to William's childhood when he lived with his family at Callaburn, near Stouslie, Hawick. Andrew was a frequent and welcomed guest at the Thomson household and often called there on one of his begging rounds. William's father once bought a cream coloured mare from him, which became a family favourite and was always known as Gemmell's mare. On these visits Andrew would join the family for a meal when they would catch up with all the news of the day and exchange stories. William was transfixed by Andrew's exciting tales of his life in the dragoons and adventures in foreign parts. The young lad listened intently when the Bedesman and his father discussed war and all its terrors for the two men both shared an absolute hatred of warfare and anything to do with it. These mealtime conversations made a lasting impression on the young William and he spoke out against the evils of war ever after. It was to express the ideas he held about war that William raised the memorial to Andrew Gemmells in the churchyard, all those years after his death.

William Thomson's brother, John, who was Minister of St. Mary's Church, Hawick, wrote the book 'Life and Times of William Thomson' in 1879. The book contains great detail of agricultural practices of the time and is rich in its many aspects of rural life. There is one thoughtful passage, taken from notes in William's diary regarding the pace of life, that is as profound today as the day it was written.

William had been a joiner to trade in his youth and he took it up again in retirement. He had to travel to Berwick to get wood and the two journeys he made from Roxburgh to Berwick in 1808 and 1859 make for an interesting comparison. John wrote that "In 1859 William Thomson took in hand to do the joiner work of the new cottages at Whitehill, by way of amusement, in his old age. He took the train to Berwick, bought the wood he required, and returned in a few hours without any fatigue or annoyance.

How different from what it was when he walked there in 1808. Was he happier, or in any way better, going by train than on foot? He walked then at the rate of four miles an hour – cheery and healthy was the exercise – and on the banks of the dark rolling Tweed were ten thousand objects to study and admire. In 1859, he rattled on at the rate of thirty miles an hour, getting slight glimpses of the road he had walked fifty years before and a chance sight of the Tweed much the same as it was. Where was the advantage? Had he more time now to cultivate the taste for the good, beautiful, and true? Had he now more time to enjoy social intercourse and the higher duties of devotion and religion? Where, then, is the gain? Not so much as some people seem to think. But in vain do we sigh after a past age. To the homespun age, and the long walks of our forefathers, there is no return. Dangerous railways and startling telegrams follow us everywhere. Well, well; rattle on; I am afraid you will not make the world much better, even if so good, as it was a hundred years ago. We cannot return however; and if the present running to and fro' be the daughter of the past and the mother of the future, we shall watch with some little interest the new age about to begin".

Nothing changes. The only difference today, 150 years later, is that the pace of living is even faster.

Wallace's Tower.



The ruins of Wallace's Tower from the south. © Author

The remains of Wallace's Tower lie on the brow of the hill, midway between the old Manse and the river Teviot. Its ruins indicate that its

construction was typical in size and form to many similar pele towers built in the Borders in the 15th and 16th centuries. These strongly built towers evidently formed part of a chain of communication along the Border valleys. Wallace's Tower was the link between Roxburgh Castle and those pele towers in the valleys of the Teviot, Kale and Jed rivers. They were in fact an early warning system. If an English raiding party were spotted then a bonfire would be lit on top of the tower. Other towers would see the flame and light theirs, thus passing on the warning. This procedure would be repeated along the valleys and very soon the whole of Teviotdale would know that danger was lurking.

In its heyday Wallace's Tower would have been an imposing building. The Rev Andrew Bell writes in the Statistical Account of 1791-99 that elderly parishioners remembered it as a magnificent building when various apartments in the extensive tower were inhabited. They recalled that the windows and doors were secured with iron bars and gates. The doorways, especially the great porch, had been highly decorated with fine Gothic sculptures. The elderly ladies spoke in raptures of the beautiful gardens and orchards, which surrounded the building. In fact, an agreement of 6th June 1662 has survived concerning the disposal of fruits from the Earl of Cassillis's orchards in Roxburgh. The document went to great lengths in detailing who was to receive the strawberries, gooseberries, cherries, plums, pears, keeping apples and common apples from the gardener, Andrew Robson.

Some superstitious elders murmured that a subterranean passage extended from the tower to Roxburgh Castle but they could produce no firm evidence to support this. Then, nervously, they reminded Andrew of the story of the young lady who in about 1715 had been sitting spinning at the stair-head in the tower. She had been putting the finishing touches to her wedding dress when she tripped and fell down the stairs to her death. Now, even today, ghosts of the deceased haunt places where wilful or accidental deaths have occurred. So it is not surprising that very occasionally strains of wedding music can still be heard on a whispering, southerly breeze!

The Tower has had various names over the years. Blind Harry said that it was called "Wallace's Tower" because the great man (1270-1305) had built it while others said it was named after him in recognition of his being such an illustrious champion of his country. It was also known as "Sunlaws Tower" when it belonged to Christian Ker, Lady Chatto of Sunlaws. She received from the ruins of the tower a strong iron gate, two spears, a steel helmet and a coat of (chain) mail. The latter was given to a stout young man of the village to try on but it was so heavy he could not move! It is interesting to note that Walter Ker, a relative, received the charter of confirmation of the lands of the East Mains of Roxburgh in 1543 "cum turre et fortalicio earundem". Old maps place the East Mains Farm of Roxburgh just to the west of the tower, close to where the railway embankment has been built. The ruins of the tower also became known as "Merlin's Cave" from an old tradition that a warrior of that name dwelt within it. Merlin, of course, is closely associated with King Arthur. If Alastair Moffat is correct in that Arthur did have his cavalry based at Marchidun (Roxburgh Castle) then it is not surprising that Merlin's name pops up here! Finally, the Earl of Hertford recorded that he had razed the "Toure of Rockesborough" when he destroyed it in September 1545. Today it is usually referred to as "Wallace's Tower".

The Rev. Andrew Bell recorded that in 1791 there remained of the tower only two ground floor apartments. They were strongly arched with walls up to 6 feet thick, built of small stones cemented as solid rock. In the walls were narrow slits with rounded arrises. These windows were used for light, ventilation and the shooting of arrows in different directions. The roof was overgrown with grass and interspersed with stunted ash saplings and there were no sculptured stones to be found amongst the ruins to recall its former magnificence. This was probably the state it was in when the "Kelso Mail" described the "Roxburgh Night out in Wallace's Tower" on Monday 26th November 1848.

"On Thursday evening last a party of the skilled workmen of Messrs. Ross & Mitchell, to the number of about forty, employed at the works at Roxburgh (Viaduct), held a social meeting within the ruins of the ancient Border Keep,

known as Wallace's Tower, adjacent to the village on the occasion of initiating four individuals of their number into the secrets of Aproncraft. After the ceremony the company were regaled with bread and cheese and the best of Islay Whiskey. The health of the foreman of the work was drunk with the honours, and a variety of toasts and songs followed. The tower was fully illuminated for the occasion and the evening was spent with great hilarity, many intelligent references being made by the workmen to the importance of the gigantic operations on which they were engaged."

Remarkably, the two chambers are still very much as the Minister described them two hundred years ago. The arching in both chambers is still good and there are still three square cut outs in the walls, which may have been used for storage. The small room contains a slit window in each of its north and south facing walls. The larger room has a solid masonry northern wall with a slit window and a larger square window in its eastern wall. There is another slit window in the southern wall and the dilapidated western entrance door has a square window opening on either side of it. The roof is still overgrown with grass and the ash saplings have to be regularly pruned to help preserve the structure. Aerial photographs reveal faint traces of the barmkin that once protected the tower in the 16th century.

The last authenticated occupants of the tower were Mr. Logan's sheep when it was used as a lambing shed in the 1930s. John Forsyth recalls that in the 1940s the youth of the village used it as a site for the Guy Faulkes bonfire. "You could see the bonfire for miles around and nobody ever fell off the top of the tower", he recalled. In 1948 East Coast trains were being diverted through Roxburgh because of flood damage to the line north of Berwick. On the 5th November the Colchester-Aberdeen express was halted on the viaduct embankment to let the 7 o'clock goods train from Edinburgh to Newcastle pass through on the single track. At the sight of the bonfire and firework display and the sound of bangers and jumping-jacks, the passengers on the waiting train opened the windows and cheered much to the delight of the village folk. In the 1950s the ruin made an exciting HQ for the 'Red Feather Gang' and since then it

has always been available to provide the local children with a superb setting for re-enactments of Braveheart! Lately wood pigeons have made it their home.

Agriculture in the Roxburgh Barony.

Farming in former times

Roxburghe Estates own the tract of land between the rivers Tweed and Teviot, which encompasses Roxburgh Village. The land is generally flat or sloping and the soil is mostly rich loam, which is well suited to pasture or cropping. These fertile lands have been cultivated and supported the indigenous populations for centuries. The land is now divided into seven farms namely Roxburgh Barns, Roxburgh Mill, Kersmains, Trows, Roxburgh Newtown, Roxburgh Mains, and Over Roxburgh; all of which are tenanted from the Duke of Roxburghe. These farms have been in existence as identifiable units for a long time. It is even possible that these seven farms were formed from the Barony of Roxburgh, which has been under the same family ownership for the last 550 years. Alexander Jeffrey in "The History and Antiquities of Roxburghshire" records that "in 1451, the barony (of Roxburgh) was granted by James II to Andrew Ker of Altonbourne, for payment of a silver penny at Whitsunday, in the name of *blanche ferme*, if demanded, and with whose descendants it still remains. The court of the barony was held at Friars, situated between Tweed and Teviot. In the remains of this religious house, the family of Roxburghe occasionally resided, especially during the rebuilding of Floors in 1718."

In those far off days, before the agricultural revolution, the open-field system was in use and land was farmed in long strips. The elders of the parish

decided what crops should be planted and they followed the same age-old, time-honoured rules of cultivation. The land was farmed in multiple tenancies which greatly hindered the decision making process. As the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, cheap food was needed to feed the increasing urban workforce. The old open-field system of cropping could not cope with the demand and was an obstacle to progress. Bigger farm units were required. These bigger units needed to be run by a single tenant who could make quick decisions regarding drainage, cropping and the efficient use of the new machinery. The answer was to drain the boggy areas and enclose the land by making fields with boundaries of thorn hedges and ditches or dry stone-dykes. A rotational system of cropping on a much bigger scale was then possible. Farmers began to treat agriculture as a science and responded to the challenges by experimenting with new types of grain, grasses and vegetables. They learnt how to increase crop yields by fertilising with farmyard manure, lime, bone meal, marl or seaweed. The introduction of turnips allowed sheep and cattle to be fattened over the winter and thus mixed farming evolved in the area. Local food requirements were soon satisfied and surpluses became available for the people in the new factory towns.

The agricultural revolution did not come without its problems. Whole villages were enclosed and peasants were ruthlessly cleared off their land; this long before the days of the Highland Clearances. These peasants, of course, didn't leave their land voluntarily. Starting in 1710, it took a century of Parliamentary Enclosure Acts before the landlords got control of all of their lands. While enclosure certainly achieved greater agricultural productivity, it brought disaster for many in its wake. The dispossessed peasants were left without means of survival and had to find work in the industrialising towns or emigrate to seek their fortunes overseas. In 1700, 80% of the population earned its income from the land but a century later, this figure had fallen to 40%. Now at the millennium less than 1% of the population works on the land.

The agricultural revolution owed much to the inventiveness and far sightedness of men such as Tull, Townsend and Coke. Jethro Tull invented the

horse-drawn hoe and a mechanical drill for planting seed in rows. Turnip Townsend stressed the importance of growing turnips on fallow land which revolutionised the winter-feeding of sheep and cattle. Thomas Coke highlighted the value of field grasses and fertilisers, which led to improved grazing.

Border men were among the leaders of the agricultural revolution. James Church of Eckford planted 60 grains of oats from Poland on his Mosstower Farm in 1776. They ripened earlier and produced a far heavier yield than other common oats of that time. They were so successful that James multiplied them and sold the seed on. Their reputation spread so rapidly that by the end of the century they were the oat of choice in Scotland and increasingly popular in England and America. James Small, a Berwickshire blacksmith, perfected a cast-iron plough, which revolutionised the practice of ploughing. Two horses drew this plough instead of eight oxen and its newly designed curved mouldboard turned the furrow over. The patterns of fields, hedges and roads that seem so familiar to us today owe much to the invention of Small's plough.

The agricultural revolution was nation-wide and the changes, which took place in the Barony of Roxburgh, were similar to those of other farming areas. The lands of Roxburgh parish had all been enclosed by 1790. The new fields were surrounded either by well-established hedges with ditches or by dry stane-dykes. Plantations had sprung up on non-arable knolls and rocky hillocks, providing shelter for livestock and crops, as well as beautifying the landscape. It was reckoned that half the parish was in pasture with the other half in tillage. The enclosed pastureland now contained fixed groups of sheep and cattle, which could be mated with one particular sire. Thus indiscriminate breeding could be avoided and animals could be 'improved' and bred to a type, which has ultimately resulted in the pedigree herd books of today. The rotational system of cropping was well established and generally two white crops followed one green crop. Wheat or oats were sown after potatoes and either corn crop would be undersown with selected grass seeds. The leys of ryegrass and white clover resulting provided pasture and grass hay for the next year and possibly for another year after that. Cropping would then revert back to potatoes.

Potatoes were a speciality of the parish. They grew well on the light land enriched with farmyard manure. Lime, however, was not used as it caused the tubers to scab. Potatoes were planted about three feet apart in drills, which were kept weed-free by frequent hoeing. When the potatoes started to flower they were earthed up in the form of a molehill round each plant. This greatly benefited

the yield. Local farmers recognised ‘curled leaves’ as an undesirable ailment of the potato plant. They kept its incidence to a minimum by not planting tubers from affected plants. The quality and yield of potatoes grown in Roxburgh were held in very high esteem.

There were plenty of animals present in the parish in 1790. Cropping on a large scale required power to plough the land, work the soil, spread the fertiliser and sow the seed. There were 160 workhorses to provide power for the 50 ploughs in the parish at that time. A small number of oxen still remained and they were used to pull carts and wagons. Surprisingly there were only 10 riding horses (plus their offspring) in the parish. The new rotational cropping and the cultivation of turnips provided winter feed for sheep and cattle who in return produced much needed farmyard manure in the cattle courts for the next year’s arable crops. There were 600 black cattle and 4000 sheep recorded as being resident in the parish in 1790. They were described as “all good of their kind, though not distinguished in the neighbourhood either for size or value.”

During the next fifty years the established rotational cropping in the parish evolved into “the turnip system” of husbandry. Following a crop of oats turnips were sown and then a crop of either wheat or barley was undersown with grass seed to produce a ley for the next year’s grazing. This four-year cycle was repeated with the appropriate fertilisers being used.

Turnips became all-important to the farming practised at this time but ‘Bad-root’ could seriously reduce their yield. ‘Club root’, as it is known today, was a formidable problem of turnips grown on the same land year after year. The problem was, however, greatly ameliorated if the turnips were grown after other crops and the land was fertilised with lime. Roughly a quarter of the arable acreage of local farms was put into turnip cultivation and mixed farming became dependent on Rabbin Burns’s favourite vegetable!

The grain and meat now produced by improved husbandry exceeded the requirements of the local population around Roxburgh and so the surpluses were ‘exported’ south via Berwick. The communications, however, were poor and when the cost of transport had been deducted there was little left to encourage

the primary producers. It is no wonder that in 1834 there was so much excited, local talk about a new railway being built between Kelso and Berwick.

The middle of the nineteenth century saw farming prospering both locally and nationally. The present farmhouses and steadings of the seven Barony farms were built at this time and the houses still look good today. It was not until the 1880s that farming took a nosedive when improvements in shipping and refrigeration allowed cheap food to be imported from the colonies. Farming then went through half a century in the doldrums until the Government had to respond to the north Atlantic U-boat menace during the Second World War. In response the Government introduced financial incentives to encouraged farmers to produce more and more food to feed the war-torn nation. The incentives worked and when the war ended the financial supports continued with the Government policy of 'cheap food for all.' These financial incentives commonly known as subsidies, have continued right through to the millennium in different guises but are now unsustainable and farming is back in the doldrums.

Farming in 2001

The 3014 acres of the original 'Barony of Roxburghe' are still divided between seven farms. Three of these farms, however, rent a further 188 acres of grazing land out with the parish to release more of their fertile Roxburgh land for arable crops.

In February 2002 a farming survey of the Roxburgh Barony was carried out to gather information from the previous year concerning:- 1) Farm Personnel and Accommodation in 2001. 2) Roxburgh Farm Cropping in 2001 3) Roxburgh Farm Livestock in 2001 and 4) Other Relevant Information in 2001.

1) Farm Personel & Accommodation in 2001.

Farm	Tenant	Workers			Cottages		
		Part	Season	Full	Workers	Holiday	Let
Barns	O Stark	0	1	1	0	3	5
Kersmains	D Hogg	1	1	1	1	0	4
Mains	J Elliot	1	0	2	1	0	4
Mill	R Bell	0	0	1	1	0	4
Newtown	C Twemlow	0	0	0	0	2	4
Over Rox	T Clark	0	0	2	1	0	8
Trows	H Fleming	0	0	0	0	0	6
Totals		2	2	7	4	5	35

The seven farms now employ a total labour force of 7 full time workers, 2 part timers and 2 seasonal labourers. It is interesting to note that In 1891 Kersmains alone gave full time employment to 5 men and 6 women plus the extra hands needed at harvest time. The contraction of the farm labour force has been brought about by economic pressures and farming on the seven Barony farms has only remained possible by replacing the workforce with ever-bigger machinery to do the work. Gone are the days of the gentleman farmer, as each farmer now has to put in a very full day's work and his wife is often involved in the running of the farm as well.

There were forty-seven cottages on the seven farms but six of these have lately been converted into three larger dwellings. The contraction of the farm workforce has meant that only four farm cottages are now required for farm workers. The remaining forty cottages are inhabited by non-farm personnel. Thirty-five of these are permanently let to families who work elsewhere or who are retired and the other five are let as holiday cottages.

All farmhouses and cottages have mains electricity and running water. Water for Roxburgh Newtown is supplied by the mains system, which receives its waters from the Alemoor reservoir. Roxburgh Mill, Roxburgh Barns and Kersmains are supplied with water from the Roxburgh Estates bore hole at

Roxburgh Mains. The other three farms have water supplies from both of these sources. All houses have landline telephones but many people now communicate by mobile phone or E-mail. Some farm cottages at both the Trows and Roxburgh Newtown are connected to the mains gas supply, which runs along side the Kelso-Maxton road.

2) Roxburgh Farm Cropping (acres) in 2001.

Farm	Grass	Wheat	Barley	Oats	OSR	Roots	Setaside	unused	Acres
Barns	20	67	185	0	36	30 _{pot}	32	10	380
Kersm	39	46	204	0	0	25 _{pot}	0	26	340
Mains	220	180	50	90	0	0	40	60	640
Mill	125	0	110	0	0	16 _{kale}	16	3	270
Newt	42	140	60	52	54	0	35	29	412
Over	119	155	150	40	65	56 _{pot}	50	0	635
Trows	91	0	215	0	0	6 _{Turnips}	25	0	337
Total	656	588	974	182	155	133	198	128	3014

Cropping of the arable land is still carried out on a rotational basis but there is no one fixed system. The following crops were grown in the Roxburgh Barony during the 2001 season: -

Grass.

There were 455 acres of permanent grassland and 201 acres of temporary grass grown for the sheep and cattle to graze. However, some of this grass was conserved for winter feed in the form of silage, haylage or hay. Its preservation depended on the weather. If dry hay could be made but if continually wet then the crop ended up as haylage or silage with a lesser dry matter content.

Winter (sown) Wheat.

There were 588 acres of Winter Wheat sown. The harvested grain was utilised in several ways. 40% was used for alcohol production, 20% for biscuit manufacture, 15% for bread & cake and the rest was fed to poultry.

Winter (sown) Barley.

There were 65 acres of Winter Barley grown and the grain was used for animal feed or converted into pearl barley for incorporation in human soups.

Spring (sown) Barley.

There were 909 acres of Spring Barley grown. If the grain had a low nitrogen content it was used in the brewing industry, otherwise it was fed to animals.

Winter Oats.

There were 90 acres of Winter Oats grown and the grain was used for cattle feed.

Spring Oats.

There were 92 acres of Spring Oats grown and the grain was used for breakfast cereals.

Winter Oil Seed Rape.

There were 130 acres of Winter Oil Seed Rape grown for the production of vegetable oil.

Spring Oil Seed Rape.

There were 25 acres Oil Seed Rape sown in the spring for the production of vegetable oil.

Ware Potatoes.

There were 69 acres of potatoes planted and the best of the harvested crop was used for human consumption otherwise it was fed to cattle.

Seed Potatoes.

There were 42 acres of potatoes planted for the specialised multiplication of tubers for seed.

Kale.

There were 16 acres of kale grown for winter sheep feed and game bird cover.

Turnips.

Only 6 acres of turnips were grown for winter sheep feed. The once mighty turnip has fallen from favour over the years. Its cultivation is labour-intensive and there are now cheaper alternative feeds available.

Set-aside.

There were 198 acres of land left fallow in the 'Set-aside' system. Set-aside is a system under which farmers are paid by the Government to leave their arable land uncropped for a period of time. It was introduced in the mid-1980s to address the problem of production surpluses.

Uncultivated land.

The final acreage of land rented is made up of 128 acres which could not be cultivated and included hedges, copses, stackyards etc.

The diversity of crops grown on the seven Barony farms in 2001 did not include any Linseed, borage, peas, beans or maize which were grown on other farms in the Borders that year.

3). Roxburgh Farm Livestock in 2001

Farm	Adult horses		Adult Cattle		Adult Sheep		Pigs
	Work	Pleasure	Pedig	Comm	Pedig	Comm	
R Barns	0	3	0	66	0	4	0
Kersmains	0	0	0	(30)	0	(100)	0

R Mains	0	0	96	0	100	400	0
R Mill	0	0	40	80	30	400 _{hogs}	0
R Newtown	0	0	1	0	0	90	0
Over Rox	0	7	0	110	0	120 _{hogs}	0
Trows	0	0	0	29	0	90	0
Total	0	10	137	285	130	584	0

There are now no dairy cows in Roxburgh. Thus all cattle grazing on the Barony farms are involved in beef production. There are two pedigree herds of cattle present with their followers. One herd contains 96-pedigree adult Aberdeen Angus and the other 40-pedigree adult Simentals. Both herds produce young bulls, which are sold to suckler herds for use as terminal sires.



“Rawburn Transformer” the stock bull at Roxburgh Mains. © D. Rainy Brown.

There are 219 commercial suckler cows in the Barony who are mated with terminal sires to produce suckler calves. These suckled calves plus the 66 bought-in store cattle were all fattened on-farm to be sold as prime Scotch beef.

One farmer let his grassland in the summer and allowed 30 suckler cows and their offspring plus 100 sheep to graze it.

There are 130 pedigree ewes grazing on two farms. The Suffolk flock of 100 females produces rams for use as terminal sires in commercial flocks. The 30 Blueheaded Leicester ewes produce tups to mate with upland Blackface females to beget Mule ewe lamb replacements for commercial lowland flocks. There are 580 commercial ewes present and these are mated with terminal sires and produce offspring for the prime lamb market. The 120 Cheviot hogs are brought in to fatten over the autumn and the 400 Blackface hogs from the hill were over-wintered on permanent grass.

It would be an interesting exercise to compare the livestock numbers kept on farms today with those of former times. There are figures available in old texts of the numbers of animals kept in years gone by. However, their comparative value is dubious. There is often no way of knowing how the figures of former times were arrived at and without comparing like-with-like the numbers become meaningless. The number of animals on any one farm varies depending on the time of year, as happens before and after lambing. Animal numbers would, therefore, have to be compared on the same day of the years in question and include numbers of both adults and offspring if the comparison was to have any useful meaning.

There are 10 horses stabled on farms for pleasure and there are a further three riding horses in the village. There are no workhorses left on any of the farms neither are there any pigs. The four resident donkeys in the local sanctuary are an added attraction to the village as they often call to a fifth on the Watchlaw Hill (Roxburgh's version of the dawn chorus!). One pedigree Highland cow and her young son add a touch of touristic nostalgia to the western approaches, while four overgrown pet lambs, now approaching grannyhood, are kept as easy-care lawn mowers on the eastern flank. Other pets on farm steadings include 25 dogs, 14 cats, 8 hens, 3 peacocks, 1 pet rabbit and probably a few rats!

4) Other relevant information in 2001.

Roxburgh farm rents, like any others, depend on the quality of the land and the resident facilities. They are reviewed regularly every three years and whereas they averaged about £1.44 per acre in 1880, they fell to £1.00 per acre in the depression of the 1930s. At the millennium they stood at roughly £42 per acre having risen with inflation since the Second World War. The rents are paid twice a year at a 'Rent Lunch' which is held in the Roxburghe Hotel. The Duke, himself, often hosts these rent lunches and his estate is one of the last in the country to uphold the tradition of a free lunch with liquid refreshment on rent collection day. It used to be an entirely a male affair but with the advent of joint tenants, ladies now enjoy the upmarket fare before their rent cheques are handed over.

The acreage of woodlands and copses on the farms are thought to have increased slightly over the last 30 years but these do not form part of the tenants' remit.

Since the Second World War there has been a cheap food policy in this country with farmers receiving financial support from the public purse for such commodities as grain, milk, beef and lamb. This support system has been modified over the years and has progressed to become 'The Common Agricultural Policy' (CAP). CAP has now become so complex that farmers require spending at least half of each working day completing applications forms in the office. If they fail to do the paperwork they have no chance of receiving the little 'brown envelopes' which result in Government cheques that are essential for their financial survival. It also helps if farmers have a University degree in order to understand such CAP terminology as Agrimoney, Modulation, Decoupling, Less favoured areas, Blue box/green box/amber box and National beef envelopes! Farming is going through a very difficult period at present, as farmers have to compete on the world market and accept low prices for their produce.

The enclosures, which started over 300 years ago, have resulted in bigger farm units with less labour being employed on the land. This trend has continued through to the present day and is well illustrated by a 6000-acre arable unit just to the west of this parish. This unit has been created, in the name of efficiency

and economies of scale, by the amalgamation of twelve farms over the last few years. There are now just four full time farm workers employed to work on it.

It is truly remarkable that the 'Roxburgh Barony' has survived within the same boundaries, under the same family ownership, through 550 years to the present day. It is amazing too that the seven farms have survived so long with virtually their original acres. When these farms were first defined as having approximately 300 - 600 acres they would have been regarded as very large farms, hence the very substantial farmhouses. Sadly, the effects of the enclosure acts are reaching their self-destructive end point as today's tenants are finding it increasingly difficult to earn a living from their limited acres. After so many years of unrivalled stability, one wonders what fundamental changes will have to take place in the Barony of Roxburgh for its seven farms to survive the next millennium.

Roxburgh Railway

Building the Railway.

George Stephenson was a pioneer of the railways. His Grandfather is said to have been shepherd at Bloodylaws and Plenderleith farms, both not far distant from Roxburgh. His father had no interest in sheep and went to work in a coal mine near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There his father operated a Newcomen atmospheric-steam engine, which was used to pump water out of the mine. Young George followed in his father's footsteps and by the age of nineteen he too was operating a Newcomen engine at Killingworth colliery. George was a genius with steam engines and in 1813 he went to a neighbouring colliery to see John Blenkinsop's "steam boiler on wheels". It had been built to haul coal out of

the mines but the weighty contraption was often breaking down. George was very taken with the concept of this steam engine on wheels and thought he could improve on it. He persuaded the owner of Killingworth colliery to let him have a try. 'The Blucher' was his resultant engine, which drew 8 wagons, loaded with 30 tons of coal, at 4 m.p.h. Enthused with this success he built several more locomotives for the Killingworth colliery, continuously improving each one's design. In 1825 his latest engine "Locomotion" pulled the first passenger train on the Darlington to Stockton line, carrying 450 passengers at 15 m.p.h. Four years later he and his son, Robert, had further modified their engine design and built the "Rocket" which won them the £500 prize offered by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway when it achieved a speed of 36 m.p.h. In 1830, the Liverpool to Manchester line opened with the world's first scheduled railway freight and passenger services. Such was the success of this venture that the Railway Era took off and within the next twenty-five years the U.K. was covered with an extensive railway network.

Roxburgh was not to be left out of this new craze for railways. In June 1846 the North British Railway Company (NBR) authorised the building of eight miles of railway line between Rutherford and Kelso, via Roxburgh, to complete the Branch Railway between Hawick and Kelso. The building contract was awarded to the Ross & Mitchell partnership of Hawick and George Glennie of NBR was to be the resident-engineer. It would not be an easy contract as they would have to overcome the unevenness of the undulating countryside and bridge the River Teviot. The shortest route, in a straight line, could not be taken due to intervening hills. They decided that the most suitable route would be one along a gracious curve from Roxburgh Newtown round by Over Roxburgh following the 80-meter contour to Roxburgh Village. The line would then have to cross the river Teviot and be routed along the east bank of the river to Wallace Neuk.

There were many ups and downs to be overcome on this route and the 1000-man gang of mainly Irish labourers must have lost a lot of sweat in making the track bed. They moved many thousands of tons of earth using only picks and

shovels to load it onto horse drawn carts. These carts would then transport the earth from the cuttings and deposit it on the embankments to produce a level track bed for the trains to travel on. Local carters were hired for the job and Ned Kane from Heiton was pleased to take on this carting work for NBR. After a while he was subcontracted to bring quality sandstone blocks, one at a time, from Swinton Quarry to Roxburgh. This carting was a time consuming task, as the horse could only make one thirty two-mile journey to Swinton and back in a day. However, it was a good regular income for Ned.

One day as Ned was waiting in the queue to pay the toll to pass over Kelso Bridge he spoke with a passing acquaintance. "You may well ask," says he, "how a well set up chap like me has nay wife – but I did have a girl once. I used to walk from Heiton to Lauder and back (30miles) every Sunday to see her. There were no bikes or other means of transport for me in them days. I just set off early in the morning, got the ferries over the Teviot and Tweed and walked as the crow flies. I did this every Sunday for three years but the last time I was there I jaloused things were not as they should be. Something told me someone else was visiting when I wasn't there and I resolved to finish it. " Maggie," I said, "I'll no be back." "Get away Edward" she said, "you'll be back all right". "No I wont be back", I replied. "Now its sixty years since I told her that. Surely she'll believe me now!"

The man in charge of the earthworks was William Ross, senior partner in the firm of Ross and Mitchell, the railway contractors. While making the deep cutting through Over Roxburgh he would on occasions sit down and have a game of draughts with the local farmer, William Thomson. They played in strict conformity with the rules laid down by Hoyle – touch and it was played, forget to take and it was blown.

The men who laboured on these railway constructions were not highly paid and lived a rough existence. There is a story told of a very unpopular foreman who disappeared one day and despite an extensive search was never seen again. The mysterious disappearance was resolved many years later by an Irishman on his deathbed. He told how he and his mates had discharged a load of soil from a

large tipcart just when the foreman was at the foot of the tip. The load fell in such a way that the foreman was buried alive. Said the Irishman, "he's lying there still with his boots on."

The trackbed had to be carefully drained so that no excess rainwater remained to destabilise the track. Many drains were put in place and connected up to the existing field drains. There were, however, two massive, underground drains constructed through Roxburgh Newtown's land. These boulder-filled drains still drain the water from the graceful curve directly into the River Tweed a third of a mile away.

The crossing of the River Teviot posed a problem for the construction team. Not only did they have to cross the water but they also had to turn the trackbed almost at right angles to get it in line for Kelso. They proposed to overcome both of these objectives by building an eleven-arched, stone viaduct on a curve. There would be four thirty-foot arches on the Heiton side of the river with seven fifty-foot, skewed arches spanning the river to the Roxburgh side (a later change in plan resulted in a total of fourteen arches). A large embankment would then be required to fill in the 350-yard void between the end of the viaduct and the proposed site of Roxburgh Station. At a very conservative estimate, it would require 100,000 tons of earth to be carted from the Over Roxburgh cutting to make this embankment.

(Maps show the River Teviot running virtually from south to north at the point where the viaduct crosses the Teviot. The shortest crossing would be at right angles to the river and the supporting piers would therefore have to be placed on the east and west banks of the river. However, the locals for generations have always referred to the Heiton side as the 'south' bank and the Roxburgh side as the 'north' bank, as did the newspaper reports of the accident in 1849. This is obviously erroneous but, for the sake of the locals and the interpretation of newspaper reports on the accident, this falsity will be perpetuated for this section of text regarding the viaduct.)

Plans were drawn up, the contract was agreed and work began on the south side. Stone for the building had to be quarried. Some came from as far away as

Redhall Quarry, three miles west of Edinburgh, some came from the Swinton Quarry in Berwickshire but most of it was quarried locally. There is evidence of three small quarries near the southern end of the structure and another on the north side of the river opposite Sunlaws caves. What is not apparent today is that the main quarry was on the north bank of the Teviot beneath the structure itself. The stonemasons worked on site shaping blocks of the required dimensions with picks and hammers. These heavy stones would then be hoisted up by one of the two steam cranes and embedded into their final position with mortar. The two steam cranes were moved to and fro on a service rail, which rested on wooden beams passing through the tops of the piers. Gaps in the masonry where these support beams passed through can still be seen at the top of some of the piers in the northern thirty-foot range. The two thirty-foot ranges were to be strengthened with iron ties to prevent lateral pressure pushing the parapets out. These ties are still present today positioned above each pier, below the parapets. The voids around the bases of the piers and the abutments were to be filled in with stone and earth, which was to be beaten in. This would give the structure further support, acting rather like a plaster cast to prevent any movement.

The viaduct seems to have been constructed in three sections. The massive central span of fifty-foot skewed arches is flanked at either end with a span of lesser thirty-foot arches. These three sections may be considered to have been built independently of each other with their adjacent end-piers being built at an angle to one another. This angulation and the skewed arches allowed the structure to be built on a curve. When the viaduct was nearing completion the open sides of the end-piers at the two junctions of the three spans were filled in with dressed stone, leaving them with the appearance of huge single piers which will be termed "master piers". Few people realise nowadays that these "master piers" are hollow and contain steps inside. These steps had been built on the inner surface of the end-piers to allow workmen to climb up to the top of the ever-expanding structure to carry out their work. It was the only way the men could get to the top of the building, as the embankments at either end of the viaduct had not been completed when these piers were being built. When the viaduct

underwent repairs in 1998 the steps were seen to be still in place within the two hollow master piers.



The Master Pier at the junction of the thirty-foot and fifty-foot arched spans on the Roxburgh bank © Author.

By June 1849 all was proceeding as planned. The two abutments were completed, all the piers had been built to the springing of their arches and the four southernmost spans had been successfully bridged. On Wednesday 20th June the men were working on the northern section constructing the arches on either side of the pier next to the abutment. At 5pm catastrophe struck at the east side of this pier. George Cleghorn "saw a stone spring out of this pier about half way up and the whole fell with a tremendous crash". The pier with its two uncompleted arches collapsed with men, scaffolding and mobile cranes falling eighty feet into the quarry beneath. Five men were killed, four died shortly afterwards and seventeen were left with terrible injuries. The medical officer for the works, John Bookless, and other doctors from Kelso were quickly on the scene and did everything in their power to relieve the agonies of the suffering. In his report on the injuries sustained by the survivors, John Bookless recorded the following conditions:- severely injured in his person, head and spinal injuries, concussion of the brain, many broken bones, some dislocated joints, severe

lacerations and bruising and contusion of the knee-pan joint. Four of the dead were buried next day and on the following day (Friday) four more were laid to rest, all side by side, in the north west corner of Roxburgh churchyard. "Their remains were followed to the grave by about one hundred of the workmen and others in their working clothes and the procession had a sad and melancholy effect upon the mind of the spectator." A subscription was commenced immediately for the benefit of the widows and children of the deceased with contributions being received by the Rev. Lee of Roxburgh Manse, Mr. Laidlaw of Roxburgh Schoolhouse and the offices of the two local newspapers.

The Trial.

The cause of the collapse was not immediately obvious. It was hoped, however, that the reason or reasons for the disaster might be uncovered at the forthcoming trial in October. James Mitchell (railway contractor) and George Glennie (resident engineer for NBR) were indicted to be tried before the Lord Justice-General, Lord Justice-Clerk, and Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, in the Circuit-court of Justiciary to be held in Jedburgh. James Mitchell and George Glennie were charged with "Culpable Homicide, also Culpable Violation or Neglect of Duty" to which they pleaded NOT GUILTY. William Oliver Rutherford, Esquire, of Egerston, advocate sheriff of the shire of Roxburgh, took statements from forty-nine witnesses during the summer and all are still preserved in the Scottish Record Office of Register House in Edinburgh.

The trial took place before Judge Woods on the 2nd & 3rd of October 1849 in Jedburgh's Circuit-court of Justiciary. The fifteen-man jury, made up mainly of Border farmers, was empanelled and the case against the panels (Mitchell and Glennie) commenced. The evidence for the prosecution appears to have centred on four issues viz. the Viaduct Design, the Service Bridge, the Stone Blocks and the Mortar used.



The doomed pier next to the northern abutment © Author.

Viaduct design.

The contract, signed in 1847, between the NBR Company and Ross & Mitchell, was “to build a viaduct on a curve across the River Teviot at Roxburgh and keep it up for twelve months after.” The design was for a viaduct with eleven arches; four on the south bank with thirty-foot spans and seven, fifty foot, skewed arches crossing the river. Two of the supporting piers were to be built in the water, parallel to the flow of the river. These two piers in the water plus the two on either side of them were to have expanded bases to carry a footbridge. Work commenced on the south side but a year later, in 1848, there was a change in plan. It was proposed that the northerly most fifty-foot arch be replaced by four arches of thirty foot spans, similar to those on the south side. This would give the structure a more aesthetically, balanced appearance and most importantly,

reduce the amount of earth required to fill in the embankment between the northern abutment and the proposed station site. This revised plan was agreed for an extra cost of £500 but no engineering drawings of the proposed changes were ever made. The existing plan was just amended in red ink to show the range of four new arches replacing the former fifty-foot arch. Thus the presence of the quarry between the north abutment and the second pier was not taken into account. The specifications for founding of the fateful pier at the bottom of the quarry were never described. The contractors appear to have built the four newly proposed arches with no detailed plan; just using the four south side arches as references. Instead of being founded 10 feet below the surface of the ground, like most of the others in the thirty-foot spans, this pier was founded on rock thirty feet below the surface. Thus the doomed pier was a far higher structure than the other piers in the thirty-foot spans but built in the same manner.

The question for the jury was whether or not the pier's heightened structure was capable of bearing the weight that was being asked of it?

The Service Bridge.

Scaffolding is needed in the construction of any sizeable building to allow masons independent access to the building area. Timber was used for this purpose in the building of the viaduct. It was considered that the scaffolding should be kept clear of the building and be centrally supported from the ground to take its weight, so as not to compromise the newly erected masonry.

In the construction of the viaduct steam cranes were used to hoist the massive stones up into position. These moveable engines required tracks to run along so that their positions might be altered. A service bridge, extending the whole length of the range, was constructed of large, 14 inch square beams and strongly secured with iron bolts. These wooden beams passed through the whole breadth of the pier, projecting at each side. They supported the service rails on which the heavy travelling cranes were moved to and fro. It was considered unusual to insert beams into a pier as they could act as levers and upset it. However it was

deemed acceptable if sufficient support was given to take away the leverage, bearing in mind the latent insufficiency of the timber used.

The jury were now asking themselves if movement of the timbers under the weight of the working crane could have caused pressure on the structure by leverage causing it to collapse?

The Stone Blocks.

The sandstone blocks used in the construction of the viaduct were classified as ashler, courser, and rubble, according to size. The rubble was further subdivided into engineer's and architect's rubble; the former being larger with a chipped face than the latter with a dressed face. The blocks were shaped on site and dressed with a pick and hammer. The heaviest blocks weighed up to 1.5 tons. The larger piers were built of ashler blocks, the smaller piers with coursers and the underground sections of the piers were made from engineer's rubble.

The prosecution witnesses were damning in their evidence of what they had seen when examining the site of the collapsed structure. They had all been invited to examine the remains of the fated pier and its surrounding debris soon after the accident. If they so wished, they had been given leave to remove as much of the remaining structure as they deemed necessary to inspect the workmanship. Many commented that the stones used were of too small a size, not properly squared and poorly set; some stones allegedly being laid on edge like 'cocked hats'. Poor workmanship was blamed. The defence, of course, produced witnesses who gave glowing reports of what they found. Few, however, had had any experience of constructing a building of so great a magnitude.

What was the jury to believe when they came to reach their verdict? Were the stones of the right size, properly prepared and correctly laid or was shoddy workmanship to blame?

The Mortar.

Mortar was used to bed the stones and bind them together. It had been made up the previous autumn from good lime and clean, sharp sand and was deemed to be good. However, witnesses for the prosecution stated that when they examined the remains of the pier the mortar was still damp and had no hold of the stones. Some further stated that they considered that the sand used was contaminated with clay and this had resulted in the poor setting quality of the mortar. It was explained that it took a long time for the mortar to take hold of the stone. It was a gradual process and even after twelve months the mortar would not be thoroughly dry.

The Judge made great issue as to whether or not "it was safe to build an arch when the mortar has not hold of the stone, as when it has sufficient hold?" The witness, under threat of imprisonment by the Judge if he did not give a straight answer, replied that he thought it was safe. He had qualified his reply saying, "he considered that the mortar when it has not hold of the stones would support the building quite as well as if it had, especially when the stones were well dressed and bedded in lime."

But doubts were created in the jurymen's minds as to whether or not the mortar used could do the job required of it and if it could, were the contractors pushing the masons too hard to get the building finished?

By the end of the second day of the trial, the evidence had been completed. The Advocate-Depute addressed the jury at great length summing up the evidence and asking for a verdict of GUILTY from them. Mr. Inglis then started to sum up for the defence but a jurymen was taken ill with diarrhoea, vomiting and cramp in the extremities. A doctor was summoned and pronounced that it would be prejudicial to the man's health if he should be further confined to the jury box and not receive the proper remedies. The diet was therefore deserted against the panels '*pro loco et tempore*' and the court adjourned.

No records of a reconvened trial have been found so we are never to know if the jury considered the accused, GUILTY or NOT GUILTY. We can now only guess at what the Judge would have emphasised in his summing up as to what had caused the collapse and who therefore was ultimately responsible. Did he think it

was due to a basic design fault, leverage from beams in the service bridge, stones being of insufficient size, poorly shaped, improperly laid or the mortar having insufficient hold of the stones? The cause of the catastrophe remains unresolved and so the blame cannot be apportioned. One thing, however, is certain. By the time the trial ended, not only had four feet of masonry from the fallen pier been removed, to get below that which was 'shaken', but the pier had been rebuilt and arched with bigger stones using the same mortar.



The completed viaduct viewed from Sunlaws © Author.

Development of the railway.

The viaduct was completed within a year of the accident, without further mishap. On Monday the 17th June 1850, the first passenger train left Newtown Station at half-past 10 o'clock a.m., passing through Roxburgh, for Kelso's temporary terminus at Wallace Neuk. Listed amongst the V.I.P.s on that journey which crossed the Roxburgh Viaduct was a very confident George Glennie, Esq., resident engineer. On the 7th January 1851 the line was extended to Kelso Station at Maxwellheugh. Meanwhile the Newcastle and Berwick Railway Company were building a line from Tweedmouth to Kelso. This line had opened

as far as Sprouston on 27th July 1849. The two companies filled in the remaining 2.5-mile gap between Sprouston and Maxwellheugh when their tracks met at Mellendean Farm on 1st July 1851. Passengers and goods could now travel from Hawick to Berwick. Thus the Waverley route was linked with the East Coast main lines, making journeys to all parts of the Kingdom possible. The days of Border isolation were at an end and the age of tourism had dawned.

Pleasure Excursions became the rage. People might, if they could afford it, now go beyond the limits of a journey by Shanks's Pony or a horse. The Railway Companies, ever mindful of profit, laid on special excursions. The ordinary people of Kelso could go to Edinburgh and see for themselves the great city that they had previously only heard about. Conversely, as on Thursday 22nd May 1851, fifty people took the day off in Edinburgh and boarded the train to see the Vale of the Tweed, "one of the most beautiful and richly cultivated districts anywhere to be seen." They called at Berwick and Kelso before passing over Roxburgh's Viaduct to continue their journey via Melrose and Galashiels on their return to Edinburgh.

On Wednesday the 27th of August 1867 Queen Victoria joined the tourists' craze using the railway network to travel to the Borders. She boarded her Royal Train at Windsor, travelling overnight to Carlisle. Here the Royal party stopped for breakfast in the County Hotel and then headed east, passing through Newcastleton, Hawick, and Roxburgh, before terminating at Kelso to spend three days with the Roxburghe family at Floors. The Queen's welcome to Kelso was ecstatic. She was greeted at Maxwellheugh station by the Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe to the sound of a Royal salute from the 6-pounders, stationed at Roxburgh Castle. The Royal party then proceeded down to Kelso Square led by four bands. The streets and square had been decorated with flags, banners, laurels, heather and flowers and were packed with cheering well-wishers. The official platform party had assembled in the Square and Mr. George Craig, senior magistrate of Kelso, greeted her Majesty with an address of welcome after which, the six-year-old, Miss Tait presented the Queen with a bouquet of flowers. "Her Majesty, who was attired in mourning, looked remarkably well and

acknowledged, with looks of manifest pleasure and gratification, the loyal acclamations with which she was greeted". The Royal carriages then drove off to Floors. That night a sumptuous dinner was held in the Castle to celebrate this very special Royal occasion. The after-dinner entertainment took the form of a re-enactment of 'Lighting the Beacons on the Border Hills'. A shower of rockets from Floors Castle was the signal for forty-five bonfires to be lit on hilltops from Berwick to the West Coast. It must have been a fabulous sight to see the night sky ablaze with fires for as far as the eye could see, just as it had been in January 1804 when the poor watch-man on Hume Castle had set off the same spectacle with his famous false alarm. Meanwhile down in Kelso town the locals were having a great time. People had stayed on after the Royal procession and many more had arrived on foot, by horse or in trains to see the decorations and enjoy a night on the town. The town was brilliantly illuminated with padella lights and many devices in gas jets had been constructed to add to the spectacle. There were numerous transparencies to be seen in the Market-square but probably the most spectacular sight of all was the ancient Abbey lit by limelight. The Royal Party left after three days to continue on to Balmoral but we shall now never know what Her Majesty whispered to Roxburgh's stationmaster as her train left his station to cross the viaduct!

Rail travel was here for all. A few years later the Roxburgh Minister, Dr. Paul, took his Sunday school pupils on a trip to Spittal beach. The excited party assembled at Roxburgh station and clambered aboard the train bound for Berwick. Here they left the station to walk down to Spittal beach where they had a fun day at the seaside. The trip was so popular that it became an annual event, known as 'The Spittal Trip'.

Rail travel now made difficult journeys easier. In 1875 a man arrived at Roxburgh station from Canada asking directions for Redsteads Farm. He had emigrated many years previously and wished to see once again the house where he had been born. Mr. Dagg, the stationmaster, directed him along the Nisbet road with instructions to turn left at the end of Badgers' Wood and follow the track towards the Jedburgh line. There on the right of the track, at the brow of the hill, he would

find Redsteads and so he did. Redsteads farm disappeared langsyne but evidence of it can still be seen today. It is easily recognisable as an area of ground, on the edge of "Redsteads" field, piled high with fieldstones ([NT 698297](#)). Its position can be verified on the Ordnance Survey map of 1859. Interestingly, the field has always been referred to as the "Redsteads" field but until Maisie Dagg, the stationmaster's daughter, recalled this story nobody knew the origin of the field name.

The railway network connected Roxburgh with the rest of the UK and this allowed my father to come on his annual trip to buy newly spained lambs at St. Boswells to take home and fatten. He purchased enough store lambs to fill a railway waggon and arranged for rail transport from St. Boswells to Alrewas in Staffordshire. The lambs were loaded and soon started their 250-mile journey via Roxburgh's viaduct to Berwick and then down the main east coast line to Alrewas. The lambs had a further two-mile walk from the station to the farm. This was always a slow drive as the lambs could not be persuaded to leave the grass on the roadside verges uneaten.

The cross-country route from St. Boswells to Tweedmouth was to prove its real worth in 1948 when it provided a diversionary path for trains after the floods wreaked havoc with the main line between Berwick and Dunbar. All the East Coast expresses such as The Flying Scotsman, The Queen of Scots, The Night Scotsman and The Aberdonian were directed from Tweedmouth to Edinburgh via Roxburgh and Galashiels for three months while the east coast bridges were repaired. What a spectacular sight it was for excited villagers to see these magnificent trains puff slowly over the viaduct. Wouldn't Messrs Ross, Mitchell and Glennie have been proud of their work.

This diversion added forty miles extra to the journey plus time to stop at Galashiels to take on water. One day the driver of the engine "Union of South Africa", No. 60009, was in a hurry as he had a Burns Supper to attend that night. He decided to take a risk and forego the Gala water stop, knowing that if he could reach the Lucker troughs, south of Tweedmouth, he could pick up a tankful of water with his scoop from between the rails there. He succeeded and still had

some water to spare. Thereafter the long distance trains ceased to stop at Galashiels.

For this short period, the line through Roxburgh had been a lifeline for British Railways, allowing their mainline service between London and Edinburgh to continue. No wonder Dr. Beeching's closure of this cross-country route in 1964 was greatly lamented when the Penmanshiel Tunnel, near Abbey St. Bathans, collapsed in 1979.

The whole route from St. Boswells to Tweedmouth was originally double-tracked but the St. Boswells - Kelso portion was singled with passing loops in 1932. These lines had various owners, including L.N.E.R. until they were all nationalised under British Railways in 1948.

The seven-mile branch line from Roxburgh to Jedburgh had been opened on the 17th July 1856 as a single line track. After leaving Roxburgh the train's first stop on its twenty-minute journey to Jedburgh was at Kirkbank, with its single platform and small goods yard. It had a stone station house and the distinction of having a female stationmaster, Mrs McKinnon, in the 1930s. Two and a half miles further up the track was a level crossing before the line entered Nisbet station which served both Crailing and Ancrum. A little further on trains stopped at Jedfoot Station where extensive goods sidings thrived for a time. The route then crossed the Kelso to Jedburgh road and proceeded to the terminus at Jedburgh where there was a single platform and a sizeable goods yard with a shed for the engine.

The station masters at Roxburgh Station from 1850-1872 were Handyside, Nettleton and Trotter. These were followed by Charles Hendry, Tommy Dagg and Jimmy Walker from 1872-1950 and after them Jeffrey, Swanston and Shepherd; the latter finishing when the station came under the control of Kelso. They had all lived with their families in the accommodation provided on the ground floor of the station building. They were all busy men and there were some real characters amongst these "Controllers". Many tales of their experiences in Roxburgh will remain untold but those stories, which have been passed down by word of mouth, make for fascinating listening.

There could be nothing more exciting than a derailment or a run-away train and both incidents took place at Roxburgh. The gradient of the line was such that if the guard's brakes were not applied adequately while the engine was being changed, the wagons could move off. On one such occasion a set of wagons crossed the viaduct, made for Kelso and stopped only when the gradient reversed at Springwood. Similarly, a fifteen-wagon runaway cattle train on the Jedburgh line didn't stop till it reached the blackberry cutting, a mile away.

One day a wagon came off the rails just outside the station and toppled over the bridge falling onto the road beneath. It was a major task to get such a wagon back up onto the tracks but the embarrassed stationmaster wasn't going to be beat! He organised a steel rope to be tied to the fallen wagon and attached the other end to an engine. The engine was then moved slowly forward hauling the renegade wagon up the side of the bridge. To this day, there is a score mark on the south-west abutment, running the height of the bridge, which marks the passage of the wagon as it was successfully hauled up.

In 1906 there was a tremendous snowstorm and a train carrying horses on the St. Boswells line got stuck in a snow drift a mile from the station. Mr. Rush, the Kelso horse dealer, had to jump his horses off the train and walk them to Kelso. It was just as well that he did for the snow kept drifting and it was a week before the line was cleared. Similarly in 1948 a train ploughed into a snowdrift on the Jedburgh line and had to remain there over night before it could be dug out.

In August 1916 it was reckoned that Roxburgh Viaduct was the target for a German bomber. Jerry had been sent over in his Zeplin on a night raid. The pilot was able to confirm his position approaching Kelso as he spotted a roof light in Kelso Hospital where they were performing an operation. Luckily Zeplins travel very slowly and by the time the pilot was lining up for his run the light went out and he got a bit lost. Apparently he crossed the Teviot between Heiton Mill and Roxburgh Mill, missing the viaduct, and he dropped his bombs near Bowmont Forrest. Of course, everyone went to see the damage next morning and a local wag reasoned he had come over to re-christen Bowmont Forest as "Bomb-on-Forest"! Some sheep grazing nearby had had a very fortunate escape, as several

were found next day to have shrapnel embedded in their fleeces. Some of these ewes were sold the following Monday at Boswell's Mart where the auctioneer described them as being bombproof!

In 1919 the N.U.R. strike affected Roxburgh and the Stationmaster, Mr. Dagg, found himself with no signalmen. One passenger train, however, did operate out of Roxburgh with a driver, fireman and guard. Mr. Rutherford, the driver, was old and didn't believe in strikes; Pat Nolan, the fireman, had been chased by the Priest and Johnny Cullen, the guard, had a lot of bairns to feed and could not afford to strike. The service ran between Jedburgh, St. Boswells and Kelso passing through Roxburgh and Mr. Dagg had to man the signal box, which had a design fault. If an engine went through the station too fast there was not enough time to set the signals and change the points. Mr Dagg was an amateur in the signal box and he could not rise to the occasion. The engine came off at the catch points with the result that Mr. Rutherford and his engine landed ignominiously on their sides in the garden. Bob Fairbairn, the striking signalman, witnessed the disaster and was overcome with joy. He skipped down the village street shouting, "they're trying to howk tatties with a steam engine in the stationmaster's garden!"

There could be great rivalry between Stationmasters and such existed between Tommy Dagg of Roxburgh and Sam Wilson of Kelso. Tommy who regularly liked a dram considered his temperate colleague in Kelso a pompous figure dressed in his smart L.N.E.R. blue serge uniform with his gold-braided peaked cap. Many remember with amusement Tommy Dagg taking great delight in his regular platform announcements at Roxburgh crying out, "This is Roxburgh. All change for Kirkbank, Nisbet, Jedfoot and Jedburgh. Keep your seats for the Holy Land (Kelso!) and watch out for the man with the egg on his hat".

Signalmen could also 'cause problems' at times. In 1926 the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds were out hunting and raised a fox on the Rig Moor by sending terriers down a hole after him. The half-mauled fox bolted and led the hounds across the Cotlands. Then, consulting his mental timetable, quick thinking Rufus went up over the railway line where the 2 o'clock from St. Boswells was making its way

towards Roxburgh. The hounds were in full cry and two did not observe their green cross codes. They collided with the train and were both killed outright. George Summers, the huntsman, was hopping mad with rage and immediately went to confront the signalman for not stopping the train. The poor chap could not have stopped the train even if he had tried. Mrs. Hislop, the schoolmaster's wife, who witnessed the encounter between the two men, attempted to calm George down. "Quiet" she said, "you're making more noise than if it had been a man killed". Meanwhile Rufus had made for the safety of an earth in the quarry on the Heiton Mill road. Summers, however, was not prepared to let him sleep peacefully there with two of his favourite hounds dead. He dug him out and took his revenge.

In the heyday of the railways, at about the time of the First World War, there were six passenger return services daily through Roxburgh Station where twenty-three men were employed. The three Roxburgh surface squads, each of five men, maintained the tracks from Roxburgh to Nisbet Dub, Riddletonhill and Wallacenick. The stationmaster, two clerks, three porters and two signalmen manned the station. The stationmaster also doubled as the postmaster and had five delivery postmen under him. There was also another man who looked after the Heiton siding, across the viaduct, which dealt mainly with lime, basic slag, coal and animal transport for the farmers on the east side of the river. Jimmy Mudie was the last man to work at the Heiton siding but he also doubled as a porter at Roxburgh station. He lived at the Heiton siding with his wife and two children in a two room-house constructed with tarred sleepers and a tin roof. His children went to Roxburgh School while his wife knitted Fair Isle jumpers for Patrick Thomson's in Edinburgh. He left in 1937 and so was not at the siding to witness the derailment of one of the last locomotives to pass there when the points failed.

Sadly nothing lasts forever and the great days of steam engines declined as they were replaced with diesel multiple units on passenger routes. The railways, however, succumbed to the explosion of motorised transport in the nineteen fifties. Cars and lorries could transport passengers and freight more

conveniently from door to door. The branch lines could not pay their way and Dr. Beeching, armed with his axe, chopped off the uneconomic tributaries of the main lines. The Borders were not spared. The Jedburgh passenger service had already ceased in 1948 due to flood damage but the track bed was considered safe enough for the freight service to continue until 10th August 1964. The last return passenger train to Kelso ran through Roxburgh on 13th June 1964 when several villagers made the nostalgic journey. The goods service through Roxburgh finally terminated on the 30th March 1968.

When the tracks were lifted, the land reverted back to the local landowners. These strips of land have been left uncultivated and have reverted back to nature. The tracks from Roxburgh to Wallace Neuk and Roxburgh to Nisbet are now very pleasant walkways but the Rutherford line is impassable since the track bed stones were lifted.

The majestic viaduct stands firm as a rock as a lasting tribute to Ross, Mitchell, Glennie and all those who worked to construct it. It still holds the same lines as the day they finished it and the mortar is now set – therefore, the mortar was good! It is 692 ft long, carrying a 27 ft wide carriageway with its parapets 75 ft above the water. It is one of the very few viaducts with a Grade A-listing and now belongs to Rail Property Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of The British Railways Board. In the winter of 1998 it was given a £300,000 facelift when deteriorated masonry was made good and the surface was weatherproofed to stop further decline. Several suggestions have been put forward for its future use. These include forming part of a cycle way or being made into a tourist attraction with a passenger train being parked on top. So far nothing has materialised but it provides a fabulous backdrop to the Roxburghe Golf Course at Sunlaws. Many are struck in wonderment when they witness for the first time the size and grandeur of this fourteen-arched viaduct built on a curve.

The wrought-iron lenticular truss footbridge at the base of the viaduct, constructed by Messrs. C.D. Young & Co of Edinburgh, has stood the test of time too. It remains much as they left it in 1850. The three spans of the 178-foot x 5-foot river crossing still rest simply on the expanded bases of four piers of the

viaduct. For 152 years it has provided communication between the two villages of the parish enabling villagers to go to Church, attend school or visit socially. Many are the feet and hooves that have trodden its timber deck for no charge at all and been thankful too that they hadn't to wait for the ferry or get wet in the fording. Today this crossing is a 'right of way' and maintained by the Borders Regional Council.

The two railway bridges crossing the Roxburgh to Nisbet road formed a delightful entrance to the village from the west. Unfortunately they were demolished in 1979, despite protestations of caring villagers. The authorities deemed them unsafe and their arches did restrict the passage of high-sided vehicles. With the arches gone, cattle wagons now travel directly from Kelso to Roxburgh Mains, thus saving the long detour round by Nisbet. Villagers witnessed a powerful bulldozer take hours to dislodge these 'unsafe' structures. Now only the austere vertical abutments remain and these give no protection from the rain to the village school children waiting for the Kelso bus. It was Irene Knapper who suggested building a bus shelter to replace the protective covering of these bridges which for generations had been known as 'Paddy's Shelter'.

Today we are very fortunate to be left with the legacy of the viaduct to admire, the tracks to ramble along and the vivid memories of Roxburgh's greatest railway enthusiast, John Forsyth, to recall the past age.

John Forsyth remembers.



John Forsyth was born in Roxburgh and has lived in the village all his life. When he left Kelso School at the age of fifteen he followed in his father's footsteps and worked on the railway for twenty-eight years. In that time he gained an intimate knowledge of the railway and how it operated. His memory is crystal clear and he has some fascinating tales to tell.

John's father was a railway 'surfaceman'. He helped maintain the track-bed, kept the embankments cut and repaired the fences on either side of the line. John, however, decided to be a signaller as the wages were better than those of a surfaceman. There were no railway apprenticeships to be served in those days. He quickly learnt the job and ultimately became a 'relief' signaller, which paid even better.

Relief signallers were necessary to fill in for illness, holidays or emergencies, such as happened one year at Newcastleton. The signaller there had won first

prize with his Blackface tup at the Bellingham Show. Unfortunately he had overdone the celebrating and was not able to do his next shift in the signalbox. The Edinburgh Traffic Controller was informed and he contacted John to see if he would help out. John had finished his day's work and was just about to set off to a dance in Selkirk. He was not at all keen on being sent to Newcastleton but the Controller, Ian Swanston, who had once been a clerk in Roxburgh Station, talked him into it. So John forwent the dance, got on his motorbike, and did the Newcastleton shift. Relief signalmen had to be prepared to man signal boxes anywhere at short notice. This sometimes involved long journeys if the boxes were on the periphery of the network, as Gorebridge, Leadburn, Kershopefoot and Duns were. All signal boxes were different and each had its own peculiarities. John had to be familiar with all their idiosyncrasies to be able to operate them at short notice. He was able to familiarise himself with their workings when he was 'spare' by visiting each in turn and revising their procedures.

In 1950 John was a signalman at Roxburgh Station. Roxburgh was the junction, which connected with St Boswells, Kelso and Jedburgh Stations. The railways at this time still provided a lot of employment for locals. John joined the Stationmaster who doubled as the Postmaster, six postmen, one porter, one clerk, another signalman and six surfacemen. The stationmaster had charge of the postmen, clerk and porters but had no jurisdiction over the signalmen or the surfacemen, except for their time keeping. The signalmen were responsible to Inspector Peter Bird in St Boswells while the surfacemen took their orders from Inspector Hope of the Engineers' Department at St. Boswells.

The Stationmaster, Jimmy Walker, saw that the station ran smoothly and was kept clean and tidy. He and his clerk issued tickets to passengers with a return trip to Kelso costing six pennies. He also sold newspapers, stamps, postal orders plus permits for fishing and supplemented his income with sales of lemonade and biscuits. As Postmaster, he was responsible for the village post office. He accepted local letters and parcels, sorted them and put them into mailbags. These were sealed with lead seals and put in the guard's van of the next train

which, was going in the direction of their destinations. The incoming mail delivered by the trains was sorted and re-distributed by the six postmen on their bikes. These posties were fit after pedalling the long distances to deliver to Bowmont Forest, Cessford, Nisbet, Fairnington, Rutherford and Daniel's Den. However, this was all about to change when the Post Office got motorised delivery vans. In 1955 Kelso took over the post office duties and the Roxburgh office closed down making the posties with their bikes redundant. Roxburgh village was then served by a sub-post office, which was run for many years by Mrs. Greig. The village still has a sub-post office at Roxburgh Mill Cottages where Donna Kerse is the sub-post mistress.

John's typical working day at Roxburgh was to get up at 0530 hours and have a cup of tea plus a slice of bread with jam. He would collect his 'piece' and get to the station for 0605 hours to open the signal box. There was first class security here for the key was kept on a nail under the third step from the top of the stairs! He lit the lamp and his first job was to contact Maxton signal box to let them know he was now present and ready for duty. He then signed the book to register his presence before lighting the fire, which the back-shift signaller had made ready the previous evening. The kindling, coal and paraffin was set alight and a sheet of metal, held in front, created a draft which soon had the fire roaring like an engine. Thus his signaller duties commenced. At 0900 hours he would have his 'piece' for breakfast. This usually consisted of a cup of tea and a doorstep sandwich with a cold fried egg or bacon or cheese in the middle. There were no cooking facilities in the box. At 1300 hours the back-shift signaller appeared and the two had an hour and a quarter together. This overlap allowed time for one of them to tend the signal backlights. John would leave his mate at 1415 hours to have lunch at home. In the afternoon he usually gardened before having tea and making up his 'piece' for the next day. John was not an early bedder and blamed it on that 'darn wireless' for keeping him up! He worked six days a week and got two weeks rostered holiday a year. There was no such thing as public holidays. Christmas Day was a normal working day. New Years Day, however,

was a holiday in Scotland and if he worked that day he was paid time and a half and got a day off in lieu.

John's signalman duties were to make sure that all trains were on the right tracks and travelled safely through his network on time. It was all done in the signal box by pulling levers, which controlled the positions of the points and signals. Roxburgh's signal box contained 42 levers, two of which were spare. It needed strength to pull the levers although they were counter balanced. Some far away signals needed a tremendous pull especially in winter. The levers were connected to the signals by metal ropes, which could be as much as three quarters of a mile in length, as were the ones at Heiton Mill Bridge and Roxburgh Newtown. This was a tremendous weight of rope to pull even though pulley wheels spaced at ten-yard intervals aided them. However, in winter the ropes contracted and the pulley wheels froze making it a dead-weight pull. In summer the ropes expanded and it was difficult to know if the far away signals had responded correctly, as they were unsighted from the box. To overcome this, these signals were fitted with repeaters that indicated in the signal box if they were in the correct alignment. Each signal was also fitted with a backlight so that it could be seen in the dark. These lamps had a bull's eyeglass in front with a plain slit aperture in the rear. Light was provided by a paraffin lamp, which burnt 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The lamps were routinely serviced once a week by the 'lampman' who replenished the paraffin and tended the wick. Big stations such as St. Boswells, Galashiels and Hawick employed their own lampman to do the job but in Roxburgh the signalman attended to the home lamps while a porter did the far away ones.

Safety on the railways was, of course, paramount. Over the decades since the introduction of trains, safety systems have evolved which were common to the whole of the UK network. In 1950 a driver, fireman and guard manned each train. The guard was in overall charge and he communicated with the driver by flag and whistle to set the train in motion. He could also slow down the train with his break in the guard's van. The driver obeyed the mandatory, red, square ended signals and took notice of the yellow, V-indented, warning signals. The signals

could be set at stop, caution, or all clear. The fireman stocked the boiler and was in charge of carrying the tablets and exchanging them with the signalmen at each sectional interchange.

These tablets were the railway safety keys on a single line track. John had two sets of them in his signal box - one set for the Roxburgh-Maxton section and another for the Roxburgh-Kelso. The tablets were sizeable, brass discs with individual cut-outs, which would only operate in their own tablet machines located in the signal boxes at the two ends of their designated section of track. Taking them out of the tablet-machine enabled the starting signal to be set at go which allowed the train to pass through that tablet's designated section of line. The fireman carried the designated tablet for that particular stretch of line with him in the engine and this made sure there were never two trains on that section at any one time. At the end of the section, the tablet was exchanged for the tablet of the next section.

The signalman and fireman had a set procedure for exchanging tablets whilst on the move. Firstly the signalman released the tablet which allowed the starting signal to be set at go. The tablet was then placed in a tablet-bag, which had a hoop on it. When the train entered the home section the signalman took his bag to the predetermined 'tablet-stand'. Here he stood with his arms in the prescribed fashion so that the passing fireman could exchange tablet-bags with him. The train with its new tablet could now pass through the next section and the signalman would go back to his box with the returned tablet. He reset the signals, put the tablet in the machine which set the instrument back to normal and all was clear again. The process was now complete but would be repeated at each sectional interchange down the one-track line.

John also covered the Roxburgh-Jedburgh section, which operated a different safety system to the tablet one described. It was called the 'staff and ticket' system and incorporated a single line block instrument. It was an antiquated system even then and the only one of its kind in use in the south of Scotland. When the line was closed this instrument was sent to the museum in York to be put on display.

Communication between signal boxes was by railway-only telephones or by the Morse code-like bell system. The railway-only telephone systems were very limited. John could only converse with his counterparts as far as St. Boswells, Kelso and Jedburgh on the local system and headquarters in Edinburgh on the special line. He could not phone home. The Morse code-like bell instrument was the crux of the railway's communication system. Messages were passed between signal boxes by a sequence of taps on the instrument. This resulted in a bell ringing in the same sequence at the other end. Competent signalmen were conversant with the codes and understood their meaning immediately. A 3:1 bell-ringing indicated to John that a stopping passenger train was coming from Maxton and if all was clear he would acknowledge it with a 3:1 reply, holding on the last ring. This allowed the Maxton signalman to turn the commutator of his tablet instrument to release the tablet, which allowed the starting signal to be set and the train could then proceed through the section to Roxburgh. The result was that only one train could be on that section of line at any one time, thus preventing any mishaps. Meanwhile John had belled ahead to Kelso and the whole process was repeated for that section. There were many different sequences of bell rings depending on the type of trains passing through. The signalmen had to be thoroughly conversant with all the bell sequences but it did mean that deaf signalmen were unemployable! This was a fail-safe system and in all his 28 years it worked perfectly for John with no mishaps to recall. John considers that today's train drivers are far too comfortable in their centrally heated cabs. It is no wonder that occasionally a driver nods off and accidents happen. This would not have happened in the days of steam trains because there were two men in the cab and the fireman would always be awake stoking the furnace.

Roxburgh was not a very busy station in 1950. Twelve passengers a day were the norm but bad weather sometimes induced more farmers to travel by train, as they had no four-track vehicles in those days. The goods trains carried mainly agricultural products. Potatoes and grain were transported in very large, backbreaking railway sacks while trainloads of locally grown sugar beet were sent in bulk to the processing factory at Cupar. Fertiliser and basic slag were

brought in for local farms, as were agricultural machines for Hendersons. Loads of sheep but not many cattle travelled by rail. Years ago, local sheep leaving Roxburgh were usually watered and rested overnight in one of the small fields besides the station or at the Heiton Siding. However coal, for both domestic and industrial purposes, was by far the biggest commodity transported by rail in those days.

Six trains a day came from St. Boswells through Roxburgh and each made a return journey. They did this six days a week, as there were no Sunday trains except for an occasional special excursion. The first train of the day was the passenger/mail train, which only slowed down through the station to throw the newspapers and mail onto the platform. This train terminated at Kelso where it 'turned round' and returned to St. Boswells to get ready for its Tweedmouth run. Kelso had no turntable so engines came back to Roxburgh tender first. The second train of the day was a 'stopping goods'. It uncoupled any wagons it had for Roxburgh and Jedburgh and continued to Kelso where it left the Kelso wagons and did any shunting there was to be done. It then returned to Roxburgh with any wagons destined to travel that way and diverted up the branch line taking with it any goods for Jedburgh. A lot of freight including coal, sulphuric acid, and lime went up to the busy Jedburgh rayon factory. On its return journey to Roxburgh the wagons contained rayon products and Glaubers Salts. This 'stopping-goods' then returned to St. Boswells before repeating the same journey in the afternoon. The first passenger/mail train had meantime been cleaned and made ready for its Tweedmouth run. It called at all stations on the way and returned via the same route. The two morning passenger journeys were repeated in the afternoon, manned by the back shift crew as the day shift had completed its eight-hour stint. Every afternoon a coal train came from Tweedmouth. It stopped and dropped off coal wagons for Roxburgh and Jedburgh before going to St. Boswells where it left the rest of its load to be distributed by the local engine. It then returned to Tweedmouth with empty wagons. The railway day ended at Roxburgh at 2100 hours, as there were no trains running through the night.

The Jedburgh branch line was not a good earner and its days were always numbered. Few people had been travelling on the line and the passenger service ceased after the 1948 storms as the floods had left the track bed in a dubious state for passenger trains. The branch line was kept open for the morning and afternoon goods services for a further sixteen years as the Jedburgh Rayon factory depended on it.

There had been some noteworthy drivers on the Jedburgh line. "Hell Fire Jock" has long been remembered. In about 1900 he was tempted with a £1 bet to complete the run from Jedburgh to Edinburgh in less than one hour. Jock earned his £1 wager for some excellent stoking. Willy Blowes was another character. One New Years Day he brought his train from Jedburgh to Roxburgh with only a guard and stoker on board. Such was his joy at entering the New Year that he decided to see if he could lessen the time it usually took to get to Kelso. They built up steam, roared off and completed the journey in a record three minutes! Unfortunately the brakes were unable to stop the engine at Kelso and the train was well on its way to Sprouston before it ground to a halt! Such was the quality of whisky in those days!

There were six engines in the sheds at St. Boswells; two passenger, three goods and a pilot engine for shunting. They were maintained every night by a night shift driver and two cleaners. This trio would set to and empty the spent clinker from the furnaces putting enough coal back on the embers to keep the fire going through the night. Tenders were replenished with coal and the tanks refilled with water. The cleaners would also give the engine a polish to keep it looking respectable. In the morning the day shift crew would turn up half an hour before their train was due to leave. Prior to setting off, they oiled the bearings, checked the wheels by tapping them with a hammer and made sure there was enough steam. In the case of an engine breaking down the pilot engine was usually called in as substitute.

Engine drivers could go off the rails from time to time. One autumn day, John was 'spare' so had been at Kelso Station 'revising' its signal box. When he had finished his revision he waited for the midday passenger train to get a lift back to

Roxburgh. However, the driver of the goods train saw him and offered him a lift in the engine. John declined saying that he would wait for the passenger train, as it was far more comfortable. The driver was very persuasive though and in the end John accepted the lift but he had an idea there was something on! The journey passed quickly as John joked with the driver and fireman but as they crossed the Roxburgh viaduct the driver turned to John and told him that he would have to take the train back to the Roxburgh siding himself. "Why?" asked John. "There are mushrooms in the field down here. We saw them as we passed this morning and we're off to get some," replied the driver. With that the driver and fireman left the engine to go and collect their mushrooms. John knew how to drive the engine so there was little he could do but take it into the station. He took one last look at his deserting colleagues and spied that the guard was also leaving his van to go and join them. John really was on his own now and prayed that the Inspector was not at the station. If the Inspector saw him driving the train it would be instant dismissal. John took his engine, a class J36 goods, with its twelve wagons carefully through the station and stopped well clear of the points. He tooted to get the signaller to change the points and lock them before he reversed his train into the siding. He brought the engine to a halt with the steam brake but not trusting this brake to hold, he applied the tender brake as hard as he possibly could before he left. Mightily relieved he remembered to hand over the tablet to the signaller and went home. When the crew came back with their mushrooms it took two of them with a hammer to release that tender brake before the engine could move. They were in a hurry now to get back to St Boswells as the engine had to be cleaned up and made ready to take the 7.17 pm goods to Carlisle. Needless to say John wasn't offered any of the mushrooms!

John could not recollect any accidents on the line with stray sheep or cattle but he did recall a human tragedy near the Heiton Mill Bridge in the 1930s. The wife of a Heiton man had learnt that her husband was having an affair with another woman. She had taken it very much to heart and decided to end it all by throwing herself in front of the afternoon passenger train. This she did. The driver saw it all happening but could do nothing about it. She was killed instantly. The driver

stopped the train in Roxburgh station and told the Stationmaster who reported it to the Inspector. The order was given to clear the line and two surface men were delegated to take the hand bogie and a railway sac to complete this awful task. By the time they got back to the station the police had arrived and were carrying out their investigation. Meanwhile the train had terminated at St. Boswells and the driver had to be relieved as he was suffering from shock. Years later the same driver met an untimely end himself when he was up on the tender shovelling coal. He had forgotten the approach of a low bridge crossing the line and paid the ultimate penalty. He, too, died instantly.

When the railway closed down, John's finale as a railwayman signalman was to ride on the engine of the penultimate passenger train to Berwick. It was a nostalgic journey and as he rode back into the sunset on his return to Roxburgh, it dawned upon him that this was indeed the end of an era but what memories he had of his days on the railways. When he left he was presented with four, free, lifelong railway passes for services rendered. These four passes allow him to make four journeys a year anywhere on the UK network at no cost to himself. He says he hasn't been able to make much use of them, as the trains no longer run from Roxburgh!

The former Station House.

Roxburgh Station was built at the same time as the railway in 1850. It was described in The Kelso Mail of 24th June 1850 as "a neat building erected at the head of the sequestered little village of that name". The squarely built stone building had two storeys with a slate roof. The ground floor was a dwelling for the stationmaster and his family. This had a front door, which opened onto a small garden surrounded by a hedge. In the hedge was a wicket, which opened onto the road and gave the stationmaster's family a private entrance and an easy access to the village. The upper storey of the building was entered either by a door into the post office shop or by another door connecting the booking hall to the platform via a wooden bridge. A corridor lined with pigeonholes was used as

a sorting office for the mail. There was no internal staircase connecting the ground floor with the upper storey. The two waiting rooms were on the up- and down-platforms. The up-platform was on the north side and used for trains going to Kelso. The down-platform was an island platform, reached by an overhead metal bridge, and served the trains going to St. Boswells and Jedburgh. The waiting rooms had large glass sides and would have made excellent greenhouse for growing tomatoes. Remarkably they were never vandalised. Each waiting room had a fire, toilet and urinal. The toilets could be entered by placing a penny in the slot. However a penny was a penny in those days and railway workers were loath to spend. It was a signman who came up with an idea to save money. He got a six-inch nail and placed it on the track in front of an engine to get its end squashed. The flattened nail could then be inserted into the lock to bypass the mechanism, thus saving him spending a penny. The flattened nail was placed in a secret crevice for the use of 'only those in the know'.

Roxburgh station functioned in a similar fashion for over a hundred and fifty years until it finally closed down in 1968 when the trains stopped running. The ownership of the land and building then reverted back to Roxburghe Estates. In 1972 the Estate sold the station yard and building to Tony and Lynette Aldridge who planned to convert it into a dwelling house and garden. It was a formidable task. The building was derelict and the "garden" was barren. Undaunted they went ahead.

The wooden bridge to the ticket office was removed and a two-storey extension was built in its place. The whole of the upper storey was converted into living quarters with the new sitting room opening out onto the future garden 'at track level'. The ground floor was converted into sleeping accommodation. An internal staircase was built to connect the ground storey with the upper. The Aldridges finally moved into their new home in 1977, naming it 'Station House'. Their next task was to make a garden out of the station yard. It was to be an enormous undertaking.



The original part of Station House 2002 © Author

Thousands of tons of soil had been imported to make up the existing ground to track level when the station yard was originally built. This soil was mainly subsoil, of inherent poor fertility, brought in from the Over Roxburgh cutting by horse and cart. It was not the ideal ground to convert into a garden and the track stones together with years of accumulated ash, oil and grim just added to the gardening problems. The ground had become so compacted with the passage of heavy trains that a spade could not be persuaded to penetrate more than the top two inches. Imported topsoil was the answer and many loads were led in to cover the track beds. It was then possible to sow lawns, lay out flower beds and plant trees round the perimeter to give the new home the setting that had been envisaged. The grass, plants and trees thrived in the new environment with the help of a blessing from the Bishop and in just a few years the Aldridges' delightful new home was surrounded by an extensive, well laid out, picturesque garden. Mark and Claire Briggs reaped the benefits of the Aldridges' planning when they made the Station House their home in the year 2000.

Roxburgh School

The 'old' school.

John Knox (1510-72) saw that every parish church in Scotland had its school, but not until 1872 did every child have the absolute right to be educated for 10 years. The first record of a school in Roxburgh is found in the Kirk minutes of 16th July 1704 when the schoolmaster's Candlemas wages were quoted as £3.16 Scots. A few years later we learn that John Pollock, the Minister, was teaching in the school. He apparently taught with an iron discipline and every youth could read and had the elements of useful knowledge by the time he had finished with them. Unfortunately it is not possible to deduce where these early pupils were taught. The Rev. Andrew Bell tells us in his report in the Statistical Account of Scotland of 1791-99 that about 30 scholars attended the parochial school in summer and 40 in winter. The schoolmaster's salary was L.100 Scotch and a darg of turf cast on Roxburgh moor, according to use and want. The schoolmaster also benefited from several little perquisites from his posts as session clerk and heritor's clerk. Again there is no reference to the school building but it is presumed to be in the old school house. Children of Roxburgh Parish certainly gained their education in the schoolroom of the present village schoolhouse when Mr Maxwell became schoolmaster in 1858. Thomas Hope (1849-1935) who lived at the 'Auld Hoose' near to where the Roxburgh rivulet enters the Teviot, was one of the last pupils to receive lessons in the schoolhouse. He took part in the move from the

schoolhouse to the present school in 1859 and recalled Mr Maxwell marching the pupils down the Village Street from the old to the new.

The 'old' Schoolhouse was sold in 19XX and is now the home of David and Anne Sanderson and their family. David has done a lot of delving into the history of the 'old' Schoolhouse and has come up with some very interesting findings.

The 'new' school.

The 'new' school was a simple rectangular sandstone building with a slate roof. The main entrance was through a porch on the south side above which was a small bellcote but no one can remember it ever having a bell. The school's siting next to the south wall of the churchyard was the subject of many debates. Its position was considered to constitute a health risk to the children and the controversy would not go away. Mr. McKenzie in his report of June 1875 stated that 'the alley between the school and churchyard was sufficient entirely to prevent any danger from foul drainage, noxious effluvium or such like. The pupils' ailments described to him were more likely the result of the foul air of the sadly overcrowded schoolroom'. Disease epidemics of scarlet fever, typhoid, whooping cough, mumps and measles played havoc with school attendance in those days. Poor Mary Coonie died after two days with diphtheria in February 1896.

The school roll varied greatly over the years. In January 1884 when 5-14 year olds went to school the roll was 111, but by the turn of the century it was 62. In 1939 it was down to 12 pupils until 22 evacuees from Edinburgh boosted the numbers. In January 1957 it hit an all time low of 8 pupils.

School holidays are now far more generous than they used to be. In 1875 school started at the beginning of October and carried on straight through until the New Year when a week was taken to celebrate Hogmanay. There was no such thing as a Christmas holiday. After this break it was full ahead until the summer

holidays at the beginning of August. Days off were given at the spring and autumn Fast Days in April and at the end of October. Time off was also given for the Kelso Hirings in March until they ceased in 1939 and for St. Jame's Fair in August. If there was a farm sale in the district or a local otter hunt the school closed for the day. The highlight of the year for the Sabbath Scholars from 1880 onwards was the Spittal Trip. The Minister and pupils boarded the train at Roxburgh station and sped through the countryside to Berwick where they all spent the day on the beach at Spittal where a good time was had by all.

There was a worrying amount of absenteeism amongst school children at the turn of the century. It was of such a concern that in 1904 a "Compulsory Officer" was appointed to visit the school and check up on reluctant scholars. Children in these times however were not really skiving, as is the modern problem. These children were working on the farms helping out at the busy times. The main reasons for non-attendance were the spring potato planting and lambing, the May Term migrations and the autumn potato lifting.

Academic prowess has varied at this village school. Every year in February His Majesty's inspector visited the school looking for any deficiencies which might be overcome and he assessed the scholars' progress. The suggested improvements in 1875 were for more classroom space, in 1896 a chart for teaching the Metric system, in 1907 for a school garden to be started and in 1908 for the provision of a globe, barometer, compass, thermometer and metre stick. The inspector examined scholars in set subjects and it was on their competence and attendance that he based the school grant for the next year. This grant and the pupils' fees were the school income until 1890 when both were abolished and the government paid the bill in full.

Pupils of Roxburgh have not always been so bright. In 1874 the Inspector's report stated that "there is still the same marked want of life and intelligence and the same deficiency in Arithmetic and Dictations. My Lords will look for a better report next year". Academic standards did improve over time and Roxburgh usually got a good report for sewing and discipline.

The Headmaster reported 'Mischief' several times at the turn of the century. In 1888 the school gate was removed and a coping stone from the school wall went missing! "Monkey business" was also afoot in 1896 when the school was broken into and windows were smashed during several weekends.

Corporal punishment was commonly employed to keep order. Several octogenarians still vividly recalled the belt being applied for breaches of discipline. It was used on both girls and boys for the tawse knew nothing of sex discrimination! Former pupils have recalled how when Mr. Hislop was very cross he delivered up to ten strokes of the tawse onto the hand, from the 'tip-toe position'. His character was recorded for posterity by a young poet in the school shed and read: -

Mr. Hislop is a godly man
He goes to Kirk on Sunday
He prays to God to give him strength
To strap the loons on Monday.

Tragedy has not been absent from our village school. In November 1905 William Telfer from the Barns "dropped down on his way to school and expired due to "Heart Disease". He had been playing piggy-back with a friend as they made their way to school. William had collapsed at the smiddy and his young friend, realising something was very amiss ran to the house shouting for help exclaiming, "My horse is deed". A cross on one of the stones in the smiddy dyke marks William's end. In March 1940 William Douglas, Sam Heatlie and an evacuee, John Thomson, were drowned when the ice gave way while they were skating on a frozen pond at the Trows. James Lockie was lucky and escaped to bear the terrible news.

The school garden was started in 1908 and played a big part in school life between the two Great Wars. Turnips, beet, leeks and onions grew well but sparrows played havoc with the cereal grains as they ripened. In 1917 the carrots were untouched by maggot fly and in June 1920 a mole was causing mayhem

with his tunnelling in the garden. It is interesting to note in November 1909 that John Porter of the East of Scotland College of Agriculture visited and offered horticultural advice. The college repeated this annual visit regularly thereafter for many years.

Mr. Maxwell was Headmaster from 1858 to 1903. He taught up to 111 scholars with the help of two assistants and a visiting sewing mistress. There must have been great disruption to teaching in his time due not only to the great population movements at the May Term but also to bad weather and epidemics. In fact, Mr. Maxwell suffered from the mumps in March 1883. He saw many noteworthy changes in his time as Headmaster. The school accommodation was enlarged. Latin (1877) and French (1894) were introduced into the curriculum. The first school photograph taken in 1882 by Mr. Higgins of Berwick. Although he was Head Master, Mr. Maxwell did not always get everything his own way. The Minister, Dr. Lee, closely monitored his activities and in March 1874 reprimanded him for opening the school six and a half minutes late! Maxwell's explanation was that 'on his way to school he had been asked into one of the houses to receive some school fees due by that householder'.

Mr. Whiteford (1903-21) soon put a stop to "Barring Outs" which had taken place for many years on the shortest day. It was the custom that if pupils could get into the school before the headmaster and barricade him out then they were given the day off. Apparently the pupils were often the victors! During his term as headmaster Mr. Whiteford saw maps for geography lessons introduced. He saw the Technical Room built and classes started in cane work (1907), gardening (1908), cooking and woodwork (1912) and dairying (1913). The latter would be important in those days because many of the pupils would have to milk the family house cow when they went home. In 1908 the pupils were given a lesson on the evils of cigarette smoking and three years later health care became a feature of school life with regular medical examinations.

Mr. Hislop took over the school from 1921 until the beginning of the Second World War. During his stewardship absenteeism grew less. He was aided in his teaching by a permanent assistant and visiting teachers who taught needlework

and cookery, music, gardening, woodwork and physical exercise. In 1921 drawing was recognised as a subject and in 1925 the school choir won first place in their section of the Border Music Festival. The schoolroom had been heated with an open fire and this was replaced in 1925 by a coke-fired boiler with radiators. This must have been a great improvement. Previously the youngest children had sat next to the fire but as they got older they were gradually seated further away. The older pupils must have been frozen at times when they were sitting at the back of the room. Medical care expanded to include dental inspections in 1927 but, horror of horrors, nits were still present and four pupils were sent home with scabies in 1932. The older children now left Roxburgh School at the age of twelve and went to Kelso High School for their secondary education.

Mrs. Miller (1940-61) taught the evacuee children and saw the school through the difficult war years. Free school milk was introduced in 1946, followed a year later by free school dinners. Winnie Swanston helped to prepare these meals in later years. In 1953 electric lighting was installed and this was followed in 1954 by an electric cooker and a hot water system. Throughout this period the orthopaedic nurse attended the school and visits by the speech therapist (1953) and the audiometric tester (1956) became regular occurrences. The doctor started diphtheria vaccination and polio vaccinations in 1943 and 1957 respectively. The Fire Prevention Officer visited the school in 1951 and five years later the P.C.C. (Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Officer was in attendance. In 1953 there was great excitement when Mrs. Miller took the children to Kelso Cinema to see the film of the Queen's coronation.

Mrs. Brown took over the reins for two years until April 1963. There was little of consequence reported in her diary of the time except for plumbing problems. In 1962 it is logged that the girls' toilet froze, the boys' toilet burst and the school boiler leaked! What a catastrophe but I bet the children made the most of it. In 1962 there was great excitement when the Queen and Prince Phillip visited Kelso. The children were thrilled when Mrs. Brown took them by bus into town so that they could see the Royal spectacle for themselves.

Mrs. Sutherland (1963-67) saw night-store heaters installed into the school and the playground tarmaced. In 1963 one of her girls won the "rose hip badge" for collecting 124 pounds of hips. There were visits by psychologists and physiotherapists in 1964 and more unusual visitors in 1966. Nesting starlings had commandeered the attic above the schoolroom and the birds unprovoked chatter provided the children with lots of amusement. Mrs. Sutherland organised annual nativity plays and Christmas parties and took the children on trips to Edinburgh. Mrs. Kyle took up office in 1967 and started with a healthy school roll of twenty pupils. One of the first acts of the new broom was to get the schoolroom floor covered with new "quiet-tread" vinyl. Then in 1969 the school received new blackboards plus new tables and chairs to replace the old desks. At this time the school annexe where woodwork and cookery had been taught was demolished, as it was old and surplus to requirement. In 1971 the school bike shed and the old toilets were taken down and the latter were replaced with flush Portaloos. In the same year the churchyard wall which had been the subject of such lively village debate in 1875 was repaired. A new era of hygiene had begun and the school nurse reported head cleanliness was 100%.

A feature of the modern educational era was the use of new technological developments in the schoolroom and Roxburgh was not left behind. In 1968 the school got a new radio and children were able to listen into the national radio programmes for schools. This was soon followed by a tape recorder and a television set, but these novelties were not without their problems. The tape recorder exploded in 1971 and the television disappeared in the school robbery of 1983. A photocopier was added in 1983 and a computer, that epitome of modern advancement, was installed in 1984. Mrs Kyle considered all of these gadgets to be a tremendous help as aids for teaching the children.

Mrs. Kyle saw to it that not all the children's education took place in the classroom and encouraged healthy competition in the field of sports. In 1971 the pupils started swimming lessons in Jedburgh baths and after a very short time it was reported that five could swim with tyres and two without! Two months later five pupils were diving. The school later used the Kelso baths and the annual

swimming gala against small primary schools became the high point of the swimming year. In the summertime athletics were encouraged and sports days became a feature of the school calendar. The children competed for ribbons and cups with local rivalries surfacing again. These rivalries were best demonstrated at the Roxburgh/Heiton Sports Day when team (village) spirit was at its very height with the Roxburgh children chanting their war anthem:

Roxburgh forever
Heiton in the river
Pull them out
And make them shout
Roxburgh forever!

To be absolutely fair, Heiton had their own version to the song!

In 1973 some children asked Mrs Kyle if they could play football and she responded in her usual positive fashion. A team was soon organised and they played their first match against Heiton winning 17-0. Football became the talk of the schoolroom and the girls weren't to be left out. The young footballers wanted to play in their own colours and have their own pitch. Nothing is impossible where Mrs. Kyle was concerned and her enthusiasm was infectious. The team got sponsorship at a halfpenny per goal and had their black and tangerine strips within a month. The Duke of Roxburghe kindly let them have the use of the field next to Roxburgh Mill Cottages for a pitch and goal posts were soon erected. To complete the children's requests, Kelso Round Table donated a games ball and Kelso United gave them nets. Saturday morning football became great entertainment for spectators, both at home and away. Dads and Mums were hugely supportive, watching their offspring pitting their skills against those of neighbouring villagers in the Small Schools League and later in the Borders Under-14 League. Thanks to "Mrs. Clough's" managerial skills, enthusiasm and

determination Roxburgh was well and truly on the football map. They were a great team and were victors in many 5-a-side tournaments and twice runners up in the Borders Under-14 League.

Mrs. Kyle encouraged her pupils in competitive sport but always with a sense of fair play. She was a shining example and her enthusiasm and determination influenced many pupils in their formative years. She takes great pride in recalling that four of her bairns have represented their country in different sporting activities. Garry Callander captained the Scottish Rugby XV, Mandy Bell played Lacrosse for Scotland, Ian Forrest fenced for his country while Ian Nairn was in the Scottish Clay Pigeon Shooting team. Not a bad record for a small village school.

Cultural education blossomed under Mrs. Kyle and the annual Nativity Play at the end of the autumn term was an occasion all villagers look forward to. For many years the children performed to capacity audiences and their efforts were rewarded in the Christmas holidays with a visit to the Musselburgh Pantomime. Other visits added to the children's general education and interest and these included visits to Border Abbeys, the Edinburgh Museum of Childhood, Smailholm Tower, Jedburgh Jail and Edinburgh Zoo. On one particular visit to the Zoo a member of the company went missing and sensing danger Beatrice let forth a "Kyle Roar", matching any she had given in the classroom. The effect on the zoological gardens was stunning. The sleepy lions awoke, the chattering baboons were shocked into silence and the giraffes tilted their heads in bewildered amazement to note the source of the outburst. The thunderous utterance, however, produced the desired effect and the missing child sheepishly returned without the ice cream that she had gone to get.

Mrs Kyle considered that doing project work was a wonderful way of learning. Once a month she took her pupils on a nature walk down by the river and up on to the old railway line. The children collected wild flowers on these outings and when they got back to school they identified them and pressed them into a book.

At the end of the year they had an accurate record of all the wild flowers that grew in the area they visited.

The study of "The Romans" was another project and what better way to learn about them than go to see where they lived. No the school did not fly to Rome, they went by bus to Housesteads. They studied all the literature at the information centre and then went for a walk along Hadrian's Wall. At a certain point the children were asked to stop, shut their eyes and listen for the Scots coming in the dark; just as the Roman sentries would have listened all those years ago! By the end of the visit teacher thought she had covered the subject well. On the way home the party stopped for a break at a poultry farm where the grandparents of three of the children lived. There were lots of different hens, ducks and geese to see and the children were fascinated. After the refreshments they set off for home and all agreed it had been a great day out. Next day the children were asked to draw pictures and write about their trip to Housesteads. Mrs. Kyle was soon to learn that the Romans definitely played second fiddle to the hens!

Many interesting visitors have called at Roxburgh School and chatted to the pupils on diverse subjects, adding greatly to their general knowledge. One such visitor was Colin Martin of "Santa Maria de la Rosa" fame. He had returned to Roxburgh to visit his mother and called in at the school to tell them all about the sunken ships he had explored.

Mrs Kyle invited two Moderators of the Church Of Scotland to come and speak with the children. When Dr. Douglas came the parents were invited but afterwards Mrs Kyle thought the children had not had the attention they should have had. When Dr. Gray came no one else was invited and the children had a great day. They inspected the Moderator's "costume", tried on this ring and chatted freely with the learned man. Dr. Gray made a big fuss of the new canary who had been christened Paddy. Sometime after the visit Paddy died and Pauline wrote to the Moderator telling him of the sad news. The Moderator replied very kindly and sent his condolences. At the end of his term in office, Dr Gray wrote articles on his experiences during his year as Moderator. In one he

wrote glowingly of his visit to the little school in Roxburgh and Mrs Kyle got a lot of leg pulling at Presbytery over this!

One day three Directors of Education came at very short notice to find out how a one-teacher school functioned. They were all rather sunburnt coming from Brunei, Sarawak and Swaziland. This didn't put the children off nor did the fact the man from Swaziland was a member of its Royal Family. The educationalists were given a free rein to speak with the children and how well they interacted. All were having such fun that when the driver came back to collect the three he was told to go away and come back at 4pm. The school should have closed at 3.30pm but the children were only too happy to stay on as they were greatly enjoying the experience. Summing up the visit afterwards, Mrs Kyle said what show-offs the children had been but how proud she was of the way they had reacted in a completely unrehearsed situation.

Small village schools have played an enormously important role in rural life and the village dominie has usually been a tower of strength and inspiration to the community as Mrs. Kyle has been in Roxburgh. The School was the focal point of the community during this period as the village shops had closed and the church played a lesser role than in former times. The threat of closure of Roxburgh School was first voiced in 1980 but village opposition produced a stay of execution. Times had changed and rural families no longer moved house regularly as they did in bygone times when they brought with them a new complement of youngsters for the school. Most villagers now own their homes with the result that once the family has been educated there are no children to follow on to keep the school full. In April 1986, it was realised that there would only be five children at the school in the following autumn term and so the village community decided the school should finally be closed. It was not that the five children would be educationally deprived but that they would miss out on friendship and healthy competition from children of their own age. It is a sad blow to Roxburgh villagers for, without exception, all would have liked to see the school continue. Like many other small schools, though, it had closed itself through lack of pupils. It was regrettable that the future children of Roxburgh Village would not

be able to benefit from the local village dominie. Former pupils, however, are very grateful that they had the good fortune to take advantage of all those special benefits, which the small village school had to offer.

School closure.

The closing of the school on Friday the 4th of July 1986 was a truly nostalgic day. It was one of the saddest days in Mrs. Kyle's life. It all began at 7.30 am with Alastair Campbell's broadcast on Radio Tweed. The programme opened with Sarah Hogg playing her recorder and this was followed by interviews of former pupils by Alastair Campbell. Alastair produced a very balanced picture of life at Roxburgh School over the passed eighty years. Most of those interviewed had very happy memories of their early schooling and obviously had great pleasure in recalling their experiences. The broadcast concluded with Fiona Wain reciting the poem "Our Village School" to the dying strains of the recorder.

In the afternoon Border Television came to film Mrs. Kyle planting a Weeping Cherry tree to mark the closure of the School. Lewis supervised its planting just to the west of the school and all the schoolchildren were present. After the tree was secured Mrs Kyle presented all her assembled pupils with a signed copy of "The Good News Bible".

At 6.30 pm an "At Home" was held at the school to which former pupils, parents, school children and friends flocked. The ages of the well -wishers varied from ninety year old Maise Dagg to Mrs Kyle's two year old Granddaughter. Many people had brought photographs and other memorabilia to bring back school day memories for many. A delicious Last Supper was prepared by the mothers and served by the school children. Brian Wain compered 'After dinner' when The Rev William Thomson recalled all things great about Roxburgh School and Jock McCraw spoke in glowing terms of Mrs Kyle's many contributions during her reign as head teacher at the school. Mrs Kyle was presented with a bouquet of flowers, a watch, a deep fat fryer and a music centre, while her husband Jos received a "Prince Andrew & Sarah" bottle of Bell's whisky. This was a truly poignant occasion for the closure marked not only the end of nineteen years of

Mrs Kyle as head teacher but the end of schooling in the village, which had started 282 years previously in 1704.

Au revoir Dominie.

When the school closed, Beatrice spent a further four years teaching at Heiton and Broomlands primary schools. She then took early retirement, as she had lots of other interests she wished to pursue. She had always wanted to travel and was so pleased to be able to attend the Oberammagau Festival in 1990. Later in the same year she and her husband, Jos, were busy moving house to Jedburgh. In the following year she went on her world trip staying with friends and relatives in Australia, New Zealand, British Colombia, Winnipeg, Detroit and Orlando. The only places she had to find accommodation on the trip were when passing through Fiji and Hawaii. Then in 1997 she was invited to attend a friend's Hindu wedding in Calcutta and was pleased to accept. Having gone so far, she decided to carry on and visit her relatives in Australia again. Beatrice and Jos have made two further trips to Canada and spent several holidays on the continent enjoying especially their stays in Austria and Yugoslavia.

When she wasn't travelling Beatrice pursued her interests at home. She now had four grandchildren to care for and make sure they were 'properly' educated! The church had always been an integral part of her life for she had been a

church elder since 1974. She took a keen interest in the affairs of The Church of Scotland and served on its Kirk Session. She also served on its Educational Committee for five years and carried out her work as a Sunday school advisor and became an elder trainer for the Presbytery.

In 1992 she became Leader of the Kelso Wednesday Club where once again she was able to put her Christian principles into practice. The Wednesday Club caters for people in need. The membership varies between 12 – 20 and there are no age limits. Members may be suffering incapacitating or debilitating conditions or are just plain lonely. They all have one thing in common and that is the need to get out of their homes and be stimulated by talks, visits, outings or other means. There is nobody better qualified to do this than Beatrice. In 2002 she was nominated as one of 'Scotland's Unsung Heroines' for her work with the Wednesday Club. She was honoured at a grand reception in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle, hosted by Mrs. Liddell, Secretary of State for Scotland.

Beatrice taught 96 pupils in the 19 years she was at Roxburgh School. Remarkably sixty have gone on to tertiary education with many gaining University degrees. In fact her very last pupil at Roxburgh, Jessica Twemlow, has just qualified [BSc Hons](#) from [Edinburgh University](#). Many of Beatrice's bairns keep in touch with her. They phone or write to her and pass on the latest news and send photographs of their families. She has attended a dozen of their weddings and several christenings of the next generation. She is interested in all their achievements and so delighted to hear how they are getting on.

Beatrice is missed in Roxburgh but she is always welcome back and often returns to keep in touch. Villagers were delighted when they heard recently that she had been acclaimed as one of Roxburghshire's 'Unsung Heroines' in this Golden Jubilee year – a truly well deserved honour.

The 'new' School Building.

The closure of the school rendered the building surplus to the requirements of the Educational Department of the Borders Region. It was suggested that it might be a more appropriate building for a village hall than the corrugated army hut, which was being used at the time. If all were agreeable, the old school could be taken over by the village and used as a Community Centre. The Regional Council handed the building back to Roxburghe Estates, the owners of the land on which it stood. Roxburghe Estates then offered the building to the village for use as a community centre if certain conditions were met. They required that the Village Hall Committee agree to keep the building wind and watertight, pay the water rates and repaint it, internally and externally, every five years. The Village Hall Committee consulted with villagers who considered the change of use a good idea and agreed with the terms. Before the deal could be finalised, the Village Hall Committee had to await formalisation from Roxburghe Estates who granted a 25-year tenancy on 15th June 1987 for £1 per annum, if asked only. The conditions of the tenancy Agreement including taking out Public Liability Insurance were agreed to and signed for, on behalf of Roxburgh Village Hall Committee, by chairperson, Pauline Twemlow, Treasurer Lynne Veitch and Secretary Eleanor Jardine.

The Village Hall Committee were quick to get central heating and a new cooker installed into the new Village Hall. Further kitchen facilities have since been added and the interior has been redecorated. The outdoor portaloos have been replaced with inside Ladies and Gents toilets and the building now serves very well as a Community Centre.

During the last fifteen years there have been some memorable village functions in the old school plus some very enjoyable private parties. The church Monday Club (former Sunday School formed in 1983) used it until the club became the

Wednesday Club which was disbanded in the year 2000. The Roxburgh (formerly Heiton) Playgroup made use of its facilities for a short time until it too disbanded through lack of numbers and shortage of finances. It has been used for political meetings and as a polling station. It makes a very convenient venue for Community Council and Village Hall Committee meetings and is always there for any extraordinary gatherings.

The former village hall was handed back to Roxburghe Estates and it is let on a commercial basis as a joiner's workshop.

The 'old' School building.



Roxburgh's Rivers

The River Tweed and the River Teviot are very prominent features of Roxburgh parish. The River Tweed forms the parish's north-western boundary while the Teviot flows in a northerly direction, bisecting the parish. The two rivers have followed their present courses for centuries, coming together at Kelso's 'Junction Pool' and then flowing on as one to journey's end at Tweedmouth. For the most part they are benign but from time to time they become angry, raging torrents as a result of torrential rainstorms or fast melting snow. The storms from the west generally produce greater flooding than those originating from the east. Regardless of direction, the resultant floodwaters can cause great loss of life amongst grazing farm animals and damage crops on the low-lying arable land. Flooding also causes major inconvenience for travellers trying to cross low lying areas. Flood waters often block the road from Roxburgh to Kelso at Maxwellheugh Mill and the Roxburgh to Kirkbank road at Ormiston mill. Luckily for Roxburgh residents the roads through to Nisbet and Maxton usually remain open.

Nowadays flooding tends to be quick and furious. Floodwaters reach the rivers more quickly than in former times as fields are better drained and towns swiftly channel water from vast areas of roofing and concrete into efficient drains down to the river. The marshlands have all been drained so nature's sponges are no longer there to soak up the excess water and alleviate the pressure on the river's finite carrying capacity. When the river's carrying capacity is exceeded it no longer takes the excess waters flooding results and so it all rushes down the river and quickly returns to the sea from whence it came.

The south-eastern part of the Borders is a relatively dry region, being in the rain shadow of the Southern Uplands. The daily rainfall over the last century has been meticulously recorded at Lochton, just six miles north-east of Roxburgh. Lochton's results show that the average annual rainfall is 25.38 inches. The wettest year recorded was 1916 when 37.48 inches of rain fell and the driest year was 1972 when only 16.21 inches were noted. February is usually the driest month and August is often the wettest.

Great floods have occurred in times past as in May 1782 when 'the waters of the district were greatly swollen'. The next extraordinary rising of the waters was in October 1797. On this occasion the 43 year old bridge over the river Tweed at Kelso was swept away. This storm had begun at 6 o'clock on the Friday evening and continued with great violence during the whole night. By morning the Kelso Anna was totally submerged with only the top half of the trees showing above the waters. The immense body of water descended with great velocity on Kelso Bridge and it was seen that the third and fourth arches had sunk a little below their usual level. Obviously the waters were undermining the foundations of the bridge and it was in imminent danger of collapse. The natural curiosity of Kelso folk induced a great number of them, plus members of the Caledonian Hunt, to gather at the east end of the bridge to witness the spectacle. Two daredevils on horseback added to the suspense by riding across the quaking bridge. They and their horses made it safely back to the Kelso side while fourteen persons, fearing the worst, remained at the Maxwellheugh end and became stranded. Suddenly the wait was over. Soon after midday the masonry gave up the unequal struggle and two arches with two piers disappeared, in the twinkling of an eye, beneath the roaring torrent of the river sending up a cascade of foam high into the air. The crowd took some time to disperse after witnessing the awesome solemnity of the scene.

The next great flood in February 1831 was due to melting snow but it resulted in little damage. A devastating flood followed this in September 1839, which caused tremendous damage to the crops on the haughlands. The great flood of 1948 was due to melting snows and caused havoc to the railway tracks north of Berwick. The great east coast express trains on the London to Edinburgh line were diverted for a time through Roxburgh while repairs were being carried out to the track beds.

Heavy rains from the east produced the last floods in the district in October 2002. The flooding at Maxwellheugh and Ormiston Mills prevented any cars going from Roxburgh to Kelso or Kirkbank. At its height at 6pm on the Tuesday evening the swollen Teviot was just lapping at the metalwork of the footbridge attached to the

Roxburgh viaduct. Remarkably by 8am the next morning the Kelso postie encountered no difficulties on his way to Roxburgh and delivered the mail at the usual time. The quick dispersal of the floodwaters on this occasion was greatly helped by the ebbing of the tide at Berwick during the night.

The last great snowfall in the district was in February 2001 and Roxburgh was blocked in for two days. This snowstorm coincided with the outbreak of the horrendous Foot and Mouth epidemic, which in the Borders alone claimed the lives of 8248 cattle, 90740 sheep, 876 pigs, 60 goats and 3 llamas. Fortunately the outbreak did not directly affect any of the local Roxburgh farms. The snow lasted for weeks and many sheep were lost in the drifts but the snow melted slowly resulting in little flooding.

It is difficult to imagine a sizeable river like the Teviot drying up but there are reports that this has happened on three occasions in the space of a century. On the 25th January 1748 it was reported the River Teviot stopped flowing. The bed became dry for 2 miles before it joined the Tweed. The fish which had been left high and dry were collected by locals and sold at Langton and other places. After 9 hours the water gradually came back and built up slowly till the river ran as usual but in no greater quantity. A gentleman sent this information from Scotland in a letter, which was printed in the Newcastle Journal of 19th Mar 1748. Over the next few weeks this same phenomenon was reported on the rivers Kirtle, Esk Sark and Liddel. The River Tweed at Peebles was also observed to be stopped for twelve hours at around this time. In the report it was stated that "there was no swell of the water as if stopped by frost, but a general sink or lessening of the water". When it began to flow again it did so gently and rose to the usual height in a short time.

The second recording of the Teviot running dry was in 1779 when the grandmother of Mr Ebenezer Hardie, merchant in Kelso, picked up a gold ring from the centre of the channel about one hundred yards from where it joins the Tweed.

On the third occasion, dated 27th November 1838, so complete was the stoppage of the current that trouts were taken by hand in several shallow pools

opposite Maxwellheugh Mill and the bed of the river was crossed dryshod. The cause of the rivers drying up has never been explained and the phenomenon has not been witnessed again within living memory.

Great freeze-ups do occur in the district from time to time but it is rarely that the rivers freeze over. However, both in 1764 and 1814 the ice was so thick on the Tweed that the inhabitants of Kelso partied on the solidified river at the Cobby. On the latter occasion the revellers drank a toast to "Both sides of the Tweed, and God preserve us in the middle of it"! The last time the Tweed froze over with a significant thickness of ice was in February 1963 when youngsters enjoyed skating on the Tweed at the Cobby.

Earthquakes are a rarity in this part of the world but they do occur. Such seismic activity was recorded on the 27th April 1656 when the shock was felt only in the river Tweed and on the land adjacent to it. The earthquake followed the course of the Tweed from source to ocean but was felt nowhere else in the kingdom. In 1816 there was an earthquake recorded at Coldstream at 11 p.m. on the 13th of August which may have been responsible for the collapse of the first Wellington's Pillar built on Pineal Heugh. The 6th Marquis of Lothian had proudly erected this monument in honour of Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington who was his mother's cousin.

The last earthquake recalled in the district was on the morning of 26th December 1979. Its epicentre was near Longtown, Cumbria and it had a magnitude of 4.7. It was felt in Roxburgh but produced no great shakes. It did, however, cause damage in the Canonbie area.

The Tweed River.

The River Tweed flows along the northern-western boundary of the parish through beautifully wooded parkland and rich agricultural farmland. It adds

greatly to the vistas of the two stately homes of Makerstoun and Floors, both situated just to the north of it. Along its course through the parish, it passes several interesting landmarks, which have been there for centuries. In fact these geographical features would have been seen by the monks of Lindisfarne as they accompanied the remains of St. Cuthbert floating down the river in a stone boat in the 9th century.

St. Cuthbert, the saint of Tweedside, had been buried in Lindesfarne. However, in 875 AD the Danes forced the monks to leave the monastery and they took the body of St Cuthbert with them. They wandered with the corpse through the north of England and the south of Scotland before resting for sometime at Old Melrose. After a while the remains of the saint showed the same signs of restlessness and agitation, which had occasioned former removals. This saintly unease caused the monks some anxiety but fortunately a way to pacify the impatient spirit of the saint was shown to them in a vision. The attendants were ordered to construct a boat in stone and place the saintly relics therein and commit it to the river. The monks constructed a boat of stone 10 ft long, 3.5 ft broad, 1.5 ft deep and 4.5 inches thick. They placed the saintly remains in the boat and launched it upon the waters of the Tweed to float down the river. The boat glided slowly through the future parishes of Lessudden and Maxton before reaching the present boundary of Roxburgh parish just passed Rutherford. At this point the attending monks could look up and see Ringley Hall on the right, high up on the cliff top.

Ringley Hall.

Ringley Hall was an ancient British fort. The remains are still to be seen on top of the cliff on the south bank of the river Tweed, opposite Makerston Mill, in the north-west corner of the present Roxburgh parish (NT 667312). The name Ringley is thought to be derived from "a fortified place on the point" and it may well have been a fort on the River Tweed, which formed the northern boundary of Bodicea's territory and, centuries later, the northern extent of the Romanized Britons.

Today the fort looks like a three-tiered circular wedding cake with its northern edge on the precipitous cliff overlooking the Tweed. The three concentric levels with diameters of 270 ft, 234 ft and 180 ft. were constructed with earth. A 6-ft. rampart made of dry stones surrounded the base section. The outer wall of the middle section was made as steeply as possible from soil and turf. The crown section was 18-ft. higher with a 6-ft. earthen rampart surrounding it. This summit level had a 36-ft wide entrance to the east and traces of a 40-ft. square, stone building in the south-west corner. The fort must have been approximately 34-ft. high.

During one of the many Border skirmishes the English army occupied Ringley Hall for several days while the Scots hid out in Scots Hole on the other side of the Tweed. The Scots, however, were in the habit of taunting the English by mounting attacks from the high ground of Pleahill, just to the east. The English decided to put a stop to these antics and attack the Scots in their hideout. They chose a shallow crossing to get to the other side of the river but once they were in the water the Scots crept out of their hiding place and attacked. An obstinate battle ensued and eventually the English had to capitulate. Many were slain and the dead were buried in consecrated ground nearby. The river crossing became known as Rutherford, after the Scots let it be known that the English had been made to "rue-their-ford".

The stone boat with its attendants continued on its journey down the Tweed for a further **half of a mile** passing over a shallow stretch of the river, which was fordable at low water. Near these shallows on the south bank the attendants could see the conspicuous mound known as the "Pleahill".

"The Pleahill".

"The Pleahill" or Mutehill as it was sometimes known, functioned as an outdoor court. The lords of regality and barony held courts within the territory over which they possessed jurisdiction. These courts assembled in the open air on the summit of an eminence, which was called a Mutehill or Pleahill. Each district had its own Mute-hill or "seat of justice" and it was generally to be found on the

westward of the mansion. In mediaeval times it was the duty of the sheriff to proclaim the laws, which were enacted by the estates of the realm at the cross of the King's burghs. The sheriff also had to furnish copies of these laws to the courts of regality and barony and see that the people were made aware of the enactments. It was from these Mutehills or Pleahills that laws were published to the people.



Pleahill, is now known as "The Law" and is surmounted by three mature beech trees. It is about fifty feet high and has a flat top, about 34 ft in diameter, which was accessed from the east side. Interestingly Roxburgh Newtown Farm has a field on the rising ground to the south of this mound, which is said to be where the locals gathered to receive the proclamations from "The Law". The field to this day is known as "The Watchlaw" field. Contrary to relatively contemporary folklore, "The Law" was not dumped there by a former Duke of Roxburghe to spite the proprietor of Makerstoun House over some disagreement. Nor was it placed there by the owner of Makerstoun House to hide his view of the Roxburgh Newtown cottages. It is in fact a naturally occurring mound of earth of which there are several other examples in the area.

The little craft glided on after the shallows but the attendants became very concerned a little further down the river when they heard the great roar of the waters at the "Tors".

"The Tors".

The name "Tors" means a number of perpendicular rocks which aptly describes the bed of the river at this point. Some rocks stick out above the water and the rock of the riverbed is divided into four channels. The channels are so narrow that a person might easily step across them. They contained whole water when the river is not in flood and two of the channels are reckoned to be 34 feet deep. Among the rocks are deep pools in which whirlpools are created. The river water makes a tremendous noise as it tumbles through the Tors. However, the noise here is even greater when ice breaks up and the roar resembles the sea breaking upon a rocky shore. In cold winters the frost creates various fantastic shapes in ice, which are truly remarkable. The situation was to change somewhat in 1797 when Sir Henry Hay McDougal became so concerned about people making the dangerous passage across the rocks. He decided to blow up the middle rock to make the channel wider and deter people from making the dangerous crossing. In fact it has made little difference as people can still step across at low water.

These rocks are now known as the Trows and have given their name to the nearby farm.

The Tors presented a formidable obstacle to the little stone boat. If the river had been at low water the craft would have had extreme difficulty squeezing through any of the four channels. If the water level had been high it would have been in danger of hitting any one of the protruding rocks with disastrous results. Alexander Jeffrey in his book, "The History and Antiquities of Roxburghshire" considers that ' all the monkish skill in the world could not have floated it over the Tors. If the stone coffin sailed down the Tweed... it could only be by a miracle". But miracles did happen then and they were transporting the remains of the Saint.

The brave stone craft appears to have made it through the Tors for it then entered calmer waters and meandered peacefully through the fertile lands of Tweedside. The next geographical feature the monks could see was the high river banking on the right. They weren't to know it at the time but they were leaving the present Roxburgh parish boundary at Daniel's Den with its castellated gazebo, which was to be completed nine centuries later.

Thus ends our Tweed journey along the north-western parish boundary but let us complete the story of the little boat's journey. It then passed Marchmount where the mighty Roxburgh Castle was to be built. Thereafter the stone coffin boat rounded the haughland before passing the chalk cliffs that would one day be part of Kelso. The little boat's speed picked up when the waters of the river Teviot joined those of the Tweed and the little craft sped on for miles until it beached on a peninsular where the river Till joins the Tweed. The monks rested here at Tillmouth for they were relieved that the signs of restlessness and agitation of the Saint were no longer present. A small chapel was built at Tillmouth and dedicated to St Cuthbert. The stone boat was left on the bank and it was last reported as being used by a Northumberland peasant at the end of the 18th century to feed his hogs out of and for pickling his pork!

The Teviot River.

There is no romantic story of any Saint sailing down the river Teviot but the river's passage through the parish is quite as interesting as that of the Tweed. There is a ford and an old ferry crossing which served as crossing points while the footbridge attached to the viaduct now serves that same purpose. There are also three mills and the Sunlaws caves to see along its course.

As the river enters the parish after leaving Kalemouth it flows passed the western boundary of the beautiful parkland of the Roxburghe golf course as far as the viaduct. On its other bank there are beautifully wooded areas and prime agricultural land farmed from Roxburgh Mains and Roxburgh Mill. After the viaduct the river passes to the east of Roxburgh village before skirting Roxburgh

Mill and passing on to the rapids of Heiton Mill. The entire eastern bank of this stretch from the viaduct to Heiton Mill is lined with trees under which there is a wonderful carpet of snowdrops every springtime. From Heiton Mill the river is flanked by woods on its eastern banks all the way to Springwood. On its western side it flows passed the arable lands of Kersmains and the Barns until it leaves the parish at the 'Pailin End' before sweeping past the ruins of Roxburgh Castle on its way to meet the Tweed. Along this three-mile stretch the river can only be crossed dryshod via the footbridge attached to the viaduct.

The Teviot bisects the parish leaving Heiton village on one side and Roxburgh on the other. The river must have, therefore, presented formidable problems for those wishing to travel between the two villages before the footbridge was erected. Even nowadays to travel by car between the two villages is a five mile journey by Kirkbank or eight miles via Kelso.

In former times there was a lot of coming and going between the two villages. Heiton's children attended the school in Roxburgh. Heiton's parishioners worshiped at the parish church in Roxburgh and there was much to-ing and fro-ing between the two communities when families and friends went visiting. Prior to the footbridge being built in 1850, the only river crossing points in the parish were the ford at Roxburgh Mill and the ferry at the junction of Ferry Road and Quarry Road.

The entrance to the ford is situated on the Heiton side near the Kelso Angling Association's car park. In former times those wishing to cross the river with horse drawn vehicles had no option but to use the ford and the crossing could only be made when the water was low enough. There would be a lot of farm traffic using the ford at certain times of the year when local farmers wanted corn thrashed at Roxburgh Mill or ground into flour at Heiton Mill.

The ferry service was available further up the river at the point where Ferry Road turns south into Quarry Road. Ferry Road remains tarmaced from the village to the ferrystone. This ferrystone is still to be found at ground level at the corner of the road. It has a ring attached to it, which was used to tie up the ferry, when it was not in use. A map of 1859 shows the boathouse to have been situated on

the bank just opposite the ferrystone (NT 702306). Traces of its four walls can still be seen on the flat ground there. The boathouse was divided into three parts; the ferryman's accommodation, the ticket office and the Alehouse where refreshments might be taken before making the ferry crossing.

There are several Boathouse stories, which have survived. Rumours abound that a wealthy man was murdered and robbed at the Alehouse and his body was found floating on the other side of the river. Another story has it that the ferryman murdered his wife but for what reason remains a mystery as again the details are very vague. However, it is recalled that when this criminal case came to court the boatman employed a famous Edinburgh lawyer to defend him. The lawyer successfully argued his case and got him off. When it was all over the boatman went up to the lawyer and said "I must shake you by the hand and thank you for getting me off". "No", said the lawyer, "I might get people off but I won't shake hands with murderers".

The Alehouse served as Roxburgh's only pub. It is known that there was an illicit whisky still at Heiton Mill and the ferryman under cover of darkness brought its produce across the river. Some of the whiskey was drunk in the alehouse while the remainder was taken to a Shebeen near Jim Johnston's hen house for distribution to villagers. The management of the alehouse had a modern approach to business and provided entertainment for their customers on Saturday nights. The local 'Roxburgh Sisters' did their turn as they were very good dancers but when they started to demonstrate the 'Dance of the Seven Veils' to local farmers it spelt the death knell of the Alehouse. Dr. Lee, the Minister, when he heard of these terrible goings on, had the 'sink of iniquity' closed down.

Today a mature ash tree grows on the riverbank just to the south of the ferry point. This tree is reputed to have started life as a drover's stick. The drover must have stuck it in the ground while he went for a pint in the Alehouse. He obviously had one too many, forgot about his stick which took root and grew into the fine specimen we see today. Just to the left of the ash tree a telephone cable crosses the river connecting Heiton to the Roxburgh telephone exchange. To the right of

the tree there are several big boulders out in the river, which have provided many generations of Roxburgh children with hours of fun in summertime splashing about in the river.

The ferry became redundant when the viaduct footbridge was completed in 1850. The opening of the footbridge was a great boon linking the two communities. It meant that locals could cross the river for no charge, at any time of the day or night, without getting their feet wet. Horses went across it too, many going to the smiddy at Heiton to get shod. An Austin 7 car once crossed it successfully to win its driver a wager. Many will have stopped mid stream while crossing the bridge to look for fish in the river below and up until 1983 some will have peered into the waters seeking the crowbar which was dropped when the viaduct was being built. This crow bar was accidentally dropped from the top of the viaduct and fell 75 feet into the river below. It fell with such force that it became embedded in the bedrock leaving only a foot of its length showing. The end of the crow bar could be seen at low water until it gradually rusted through and was lost after 133 years of being in the water.

Looking up at the viaduct from the footbridge one can only admire its beautiful structure and its graceful curvature and wonder how the builders got the stone blocks to such a height to build it. Jim Gray looked at it from a different angle when he walked along its outside ledge as a schoolboy. Young Jim completed his daredevil transit during a school break but unfortunately for him he had not realised how long it would take him. When he arrived late for the class the headmaster questioned him as what he had been up to. Jim told all and the headmaster was so mad with him that if he thought it had been cold on top of the viaduct he was certainly very warm when the headmaster had finished with him! The viaduct, of course, provided a river crossing for the trains but the public were never allowed to use it as a pedestrian thoroughfare.

The three parish corn mills at Heiton, Roxburgh and Sunlaws each relied on water from the river to turn their **waterwheels**. In each case part of the river was diverted by a man-made cauld into the **mill-lade** in which the waterwheel was sited. The power of the flowing water turned the wheel which in turn drove the

machinery which either thrashed or ground the corn. The water was then returned back to the river via the **mill-race**. Millers were never the most popular of people in the countryside. Traditionally they took payment for their labours in kind. Every thirteenth peck of grain milled, the 'mill-dozen', was payable to the miller. Farmers often thought they got short changed by the miller when they got back much less ground corn than they expected from the amount of grain they took in to the mill.

Heiton corn mill was operated by the Hogarth family who also owned Kelso Mills. It was used mainly by the farmers from Heiton who carted their grain down the track from Heiton Mains, over the railway bridge, to the mill at the bottom of the loaning. Farmers from the Roxburgh side of the river also had access to the mill via the ford at Roxburgh Mill when the waters were low. This mill ground grain into flour but its speciality was crushing oats into groats.

Roxburgh trashing mill is situated a little upstream on the other side of the river. Like the other two parish mills it depended on the cauld in the river to divert water into the mill-lade to work the machinery. Caulds could be subjected to damage during high waters and might even get washed away. It was incumbent on the tenants of Roxburghe Estates, via a clause in their lease, to maintain this cauld at the mill in a good state of repair. After heavy flooding they would need to gather stones and rebuild the cauld to make the mill serviceable again. When in use the local farmers would lead in cartloads of corn sheaves to get thrashed and leave with the separated straw and grain. The latter could then be milled at Heiton mill when required.

The ivy-covered ruins of Sunlaws Mill are still to be seen on the western edge of the Roxburghe golf course between the old quarry and the river. This corn mill formed part of a small farm, Sunlaws Mill farm, which was last farmed by **Robbie Elliot** as part of the larger Sunlaws Home Farm. The farmhouse stood on the flat ground above the mill and was last occupied by **Dan Swift** until it was decided to demolish it in **19???**. The mill has never worked in living memory but its function is easily discernible. The tall stone building has completely lost its roof and all the floors have collapsed but the last vestiges of some cross beams remain in place

with only the heartwood holding them together. The great wheel disintegrated years ago but the old millstones still lie silent on the ground where they fell. It is still possible to make out the course of the cauld and the mill-lade. The cauld was a substantial stone structure built diagonally across the river. It not only diverted the water into the mill-lade but also had the effect of raising the level of the water for some distance upstream. This created some deep pools, which made for excellent fishing. However, the cauld was blown up some years ago and the level of the water has fallen back leaving only exposed tree roots to tell of its previous level. The bare tree roots may be seen today along by Willy Davidson's seat.

The three Sunlaws caves are to be seen just upstream of Sunlaws Mill in the sandstone rock face. One is known as the "Horse Cave" which is said to have concealed the horses of Bonnie Prince Charlie when he passed through this parish on his way to Derby in 1745. Another cave is reputed to be the entrance to a subterranean passage to Sunlaws mansion house but its entrance is now blocked. A wicket guards the entrance to the third cave, which is known as the "Dove Cave". Lady Chatto used it as a 'pigeon-house'. The sides of the cave are full of square holes, cut out of the solid rock. These were thought to have been 'nest boxes' for pigeons. The pigeons' eggs would have been used in Sunlaws Mansion House for cooking before the domestic hen was introduced.

The waters of the Teviot look very placid and inviting in summertime but like any other river they must be treated with respect. The river level can rise very quickly after a rainstorm in the hinterland and the undercurrents can be very powerful. A few years ago four fishermen from Hawick were fishing upstream of the viaduct when they suddenly noticed that the waters were rising. Three made it safely to the bank but the fourth became marooned on the anna where he had taken refuge. The police were alerted and the Emergency Rescue Services came down as fast as they could from Edinburgh with their inflatable boat. They managed to get the man safely of the island in their inflatable but nearly came to grief when the propeller choked up with weed on the return journey. In June 1943 two young brothers, Alastair and Ian Hunter were bathing in the river downstream of the viaduct when they got into difficulties with the strong undercurrent. They

struggled vainly and despite their mother's brave attempt to save them, they were both sucked under and drowned. The power within Teviot's waters must never be underestimated.

The Fishing

Many people come to the Borders and enjoy fishing on the River Tweed and its tributaries. Fishing has become a very important part of the local economy. In 2002 the Tweed River fishery supported 520 full time-equivalent jobs and brought in over £13m into the local economy. This accounted for over 75% of the annual income generated by "activity" tourism in the region and so fishing is vital to the economy of the area.

Fishing is not what it used to be. Gone are the days when three or four cart-loads of salmon could be caught in a morning in the deep pools of the Tweed just below the Trows. Alexander Jeffrey reported this to be the case in about the year 1800. At about the same time it is written, "the Teviot abounds with various kinds of fish, especially salmon whose prices are generally regulated by the Berwick market. A small purple coloured trout prevails much here, very delicious to eat and is said to be peculiar to Teviot". The biggest criticism today is the lack of fish in these rivers. So what has happened to them in the intervening period?

During the last two hundred years the Industrial Revolution has taken place, great changes in agriculture practice are seen and fishing at sea is no longer hit or miss. As a result of these 'advancements' various theories have been forwarded for the decline of the fish numbers in the river including loss of breeding habitat, destruction at sea, obstructions to migrating fish, pollution, disease and predation, including man. There is probably no single reason for the reduced number of fish in the river but almost certainly the accumulative effect of all these adverse factors.

Fishing in Scottish rivers has been prized for centuries. As far back as 1431 there were laws protecting the spawning season of salmon. However the River Tweed was exempt as at that time the river, for much of its course, formed the boundary

between Scotland and England. It was not going to help the survival of the Tweed salmon if the Scots observed the rules and the English disregarded them. The Tweed was therefore declared open to all Scotsman at all times of the year as long as Berwick and Roxburgh remained in the hands of the English. All this began to change at the union of the crowns and by 1855 an Act containing stringent provisions was in force on both sides of the river. This was the law of the river and covered all its tributaries. No fishing was allowed on the river between 15th October and 15th February except by means of rod. No fishing was permitted between Saturday evening and early Monday morning and the killing salmon fry at any time incurred severe penalties. At this time grilse caught in the Tweed weighed from 3-7 pounds while salmon weighing 40 pounds were regularly taken. The two-mile stretch of Tweed at Henderside earned its proprietor the handsome sum of £200 per year. The river Teviot was not noted for its salmon even then but it did contain an excellent variety of trout. These trout were noted for their love of life as they fought hard for their liberty. When taken in season they were red-fleshed, beautifully marked, of faultless symmetry and weighed on average between 0.5-1 pound.

The problem came to a head in the latter part of the last century when fortunately science came to the rescue. Focklore, the prevailing wisdom of the river up until then was to be replaced by scientific fact. It would no longer be the prerogative of 'Rob o' the Trows' to be the only person to know why salmon accumulated below the Trows and not above it.

The pools in the river still retain their old names such as Boat Pool, Ashtree Cast, Bloody Breeks and Turn Pool and fishing can still be had east of the viaduct on production of a permit.

In the deep pools of the Trows great numbers of salmon frequent them to such an extent that 60 yrs ago it was not uncommon for three or four cart-loads of fish being caught there in a morning. Kerse the fisher knew the reason why the salmon were found in such numbers below the YORS AND not above that place.

Alexander Jeffrey The History & Antiquities of Roxburghshire vol iii and its adjacent districts written in 1859.

The spawning season of the salmon was guarded in xxx by severe enactments dating back as far as 1431. However the Tweed was exempt. It was open to all Scotsmen at all times of the year as long as Berwick and Roxburgh remained in the hands of the English. The Tweed formed the boundary between Scotland and England in many places. Obviously it wasn't going to help the Tweed salmon survival unless the rules were also observed by the English. This all changed at the union of the crowns. By 1855 an act containing stringent provisions was in force which was the law of the river and all its tributaries.

No fishing between 15 Oct-15 Feb except by means of rod.

No angling between 1 Oct – 15 Feb at all

No fishing between 15 Oct – 1 June between 1800hrs Sat & 0200hrs Mon

No fishing between 1 Jun – 15 Oct between 1800hrs Sat & 0600hrs Mon

Severe penalties for killing Salmon Fry.

2 miles of Henderside water bought in £200/yr in 1855

Average weight of a Tweed salmon was 9-10 pounds

Grilse varied from 3-7 pounds while salmon weighing 40 lbs were frequently taken by fly on Tweed.

Trouts taken during May-June were firm whitefleshed and rich and frequently weighed 2-7 lbs.

The Teviot was noted for its excellent trout but not so much for its salmon, The trouts when caught in season were red fleshed, of faultless symmetry and beautifully marked. Weigh on average 1/2- 1 lb. They fought hard for their life and liberty.

Roxburgh Walks

The Scottish Borderland is an ideal area to go walking with its varied scenery, historical sites and richness of wildlife. Roxburgh is no exception as it nestles close by the River Teviot. The Teviot valley is flanked by rolling hills of

rich farmland. The ruins of the old threshing mill on the east bank of the Teviot remind us that corn has been grown in the Roxburgh district for a long time. Legend has it that Bonnie Prince Charlie hid his horses in the Sunlaws caves just to the west of the old mill when he and his Jacobite army were marching towards Jedburgh. The fourteen arch railway viaduct built on a curve over the Teviot dominates the local landscape and the ruins of Wallace's Tower remind us of the conflicts that took place in bygone times. Many of Britain's wild mammals are resident in the area and at least sixty species of birds are known to nest here, with another score popping in for a feed on their migrations. Species of wild flowers are numerous and if you are hungry there are always seasonal wild raspberries, black currants, cherries and brambles to feast on if you know where to find them.

Five circular walks have been identified around Roxburgh, all starting from the West End car park. They vary in length from a one-mile dander round the village to a six-mile hike to Kelso's Teviot Bridge and back. These walks make use of quiet country roads, redundant railway tracks and well-trodden riverside paths. All are classified as easy and during clement spells of weather trainers or good walking shoes are perfectly adequate for all of the walks. The walks do pass through privately owned land and the countryside code must be adhered to. Fasten all gates securely. Start no fires. Drop no litter. Take only photographs and leave only footprints. A map showing the five routes is displayed in the bus shelter near the car park.

This bus shelter was built after the arches of the two railway bridges were demolished in 1979. In bad weather, these arches had acted as 'Paddy's Shelters' to children waiting for the school bus. With this protection gone, it was deemed a bus shelter was required. The Regional Council was approached but Roxburgh was to be the thirty-second on the waiting list for bus shelters. It was decided Roxburgh should build its own and pay for it with the proceeds from a sponsored bike ride. On the 15th May 1983 forty two villagers got on their bikes and set off on a twelve mile route circling Pineal Heugh by way of Nisbet, Monteviot and Fairnington. Not to be out done seven youngsters got on their

trikes and pedalled to the Ormiston road and back. All completed the course and a grand total of £397 was collected which was sufficient to cover Arch Veitch's costs in building the shelter. The shelter was officially declared open on 6th October 1986 by Nancy McCraw, Roxburgh's Marathon Running Mum. The shelter has served its purpose well but has had to be re-roofed this year.

The bus shelter is a 'local information' centre and contains a history of the railway in Roxburgh, a plan of the village's shrub plantings and a map of the five routes for walking. Pick any one of the five routes and have an enjoyable walk.

The Village Walk

via the River Teviot.

Distance 1 mile Time 20 minutes Classification easy

Leave the bus shelter, turn right and walk down Lovers' Lane.

Notice Roxburgh House (formerly the Manse) and the ruin of Wallace's Tower on the left. Halfway down Lovers' Lane on the left a stream emerges from underneath the embankment. This is the destructive stream written about by the Rev. Bell in the Old Statistical Account for the Parish of Roxburgh in 1791. In 1850 the stream was redirected away from the Manse when the railway embankment was built. In springtime this path is lined with Daffodils and the embankment is a carpet of Primroses and Violets. In early summer the descendants of Dr. Lee's Lilac trees may be seen blooming among the embankment trees.

Stop at the wicket at the bottom of the path.

Admire the viaduct's massive structure and appreciate its curvature. Ponder how those stone blocks were put up without the aid of sophisticated machinery and take a guess at how many cart loads of earth would have needed to make the embankment between the viaduct and the station. Look back at the pier next to

the north abutment and imagine that collapsing eighty feet into the quarry beneath it.

Pass through the wicket and turn left along Quarry Road.

Comfrey, Butterbur Knapweed, Hedge Woundwort, Sweet Cicely, Meadow Cranesbill and Willowherb flower here during the summer. You may catch a glimpse of a Heron fishing in the river and Mallards are regularly seen here too.

After 100 yards there is a park bench on the left. Take a seat and enjoy the river. Here you may well see a trout rising in the water. Admire the large Ash tree on the riverbank to the left. It is reputed to have started life as a Drover's stick. Notice the tarmaced footpath the seat is placed on. This portion of pathway has recently been uncovered. It was part of the riverside pathway which locals used when walking between Roxburgh and Heiton via the footbridge. The pathway has been in existence since the ferry stopped in 1850.

Continue along the bank until reaching a second park seat on another part of the same newly exposed pathway that has just been left.

Behind the seat are three trees, which were planted by the three primary school children who started at Roxburgh School in September 1980. Crossing the river at this point are telephone cables linking Heiton to the Roxburgh telephone exchange.

Follow this path to the corner.

Here there is a stone in the ground with a ring in it. This is the ferry stone. The boatman used to tie his ferry up here when it was not in use. This ferry stone has been redundant since the ferry stopped, one hundred and fifty years ago. The site of the old Boathouse is just over the burn in the field where the ground plateaus.

Leave Quarry Road, turn left and go up Ferry Road towards the village. *Hidden in the field on the right is the village sewage plant, which was installed in 1955. Notice the kink in the wall half way up the hill on the left. This is not an aberration by the drystone-dyker who built it but it was purposefully incorporated by him to create a passing place for horses and carts. At the top of the road on the right is*

the workshop of 'Engineering in Wood.' This corrugated iron hut previously served as the Village Hall and before that it had been an army hut at Charterhall.

Go up the steps and enter the school playground.

On the left are the four conjoined Castle View cottages and in front is the Village Hall, formerly the Village School. On the right is the site of the former school playground. Around the edge of this area three conifers, a Colorado White Fir, a Norway Spruce and a Scots Pine, were planted for educational purposes. The apple tree is all that remains of the former school garden and the rope swing in its branches is much used by village children today.

Pass diagonally across the playground on to the road at the corner.

Innescote House stands on the left and amongst the ivy on the garden wall may be seen a doorway which was the entrance to Sunnnybank Cottage. On the other side of the road is the Cotland's steading where horses are now kept.

Go up the hill and turn left around the corner of Innescote's walled garden. *On the right are the four conjoined cottages of Teviot View, which are in close proximity to the semidetached houses.*

Continue through the village.

Notice on the left St. James's Church with its eight trees on the banking, planted by villagers in 1980. The newly built "Honeysuckle House" on the right replaced the old Joiner's shop and steading. The drive-in to Honeysuckle House leads to the 'Back Road.' This was formerly the route from the Joiner's Shop to the Smiddy. This is a right of way and is much used today by walkers and equestrians. The two modern houses on the right, Southland and the Rowans replaced Shank's Cottage and Rose Cottage.

Continue along the road.

The War Memorial is on the left in front of Garry Callender's Birch tree with the much-used Children's Play Park behind this. Across the road a red telephone kiosk stands next to the eight-foot glebe wall. Close by is the village post-box that was built into the wall in the reign of Edward VII.

Following the glebe wall to the village notice board.

Standing well back on the right are the Northcliffe Cottages built over a century ago. The original lampstone of Rose Cottage is built into the roadside wall of the second Northcliffe Cottage. The next semidetached dwellings are built on the site of Yew Cottage.

Continue along Teviot Road.

The three entrances into the Roxburgh House, formerly the Manse, are passed on the left before reaching Glebe Cottage. On the right are three more semidetached houses all built half a century ago. Looking across the glebe there is an excellent view of Wallace's Tower with the viaduct in the distance. The last house on the right before the junction is the former school/schoolhouse and across the road to the right, standing on higher ground, is the old Station House. The Village walk via the river Teviot is now completed.

The Jedburgh-line walk

and back by the banks of the Teviot.

Distance 3 miles **Time 1 hour** **Classification easy**

Leave the car park by its south-east corner through the wicket opening. The path leads up onto the disused railway track of the Roxburgh to Jedburgh line. This section of the walk along the track is about 1 mile long.

This track is a favourite ride out for equestrians. Please be prepared to give way.

Pause at the first set of gates.

Notice the viaduct to the left and Badgers' Wood, a field away to the right. In the summertime Rosebay Willowherb, Yarrow, White Clover, Harebells, Knotweed and wild Scabious will be seen flowering along this stretch.

Carry on to the second set of gates.

The ruins of Sunlaws Mill are to be seen across the river on the left and through the gate on the right there is a heap of stones about 50 yards up the track. These stones are all that remains of Redsteads farmhouse and steading.

Continue and walk through the Blackberry Cutting passing blue pheasant feeders.

This is where the unmanned runaway cattle train, with its fifteen wagons, came to a halt after going on walkabout from Roxburgh Station.

After a break in the trees a barrier crosses the track at the next wood.

This is the parish boundary where a wee burn passes under the embankment. The path through the wicket in the barrier is part of the 'Four Abbeys Way' and leads to Nisbet and ultimately Jedburgh.

Turn left, go down the steps and over the style. Follow the path round the edge of the field to the corner next to the river.

Notice the hawthorn trees smothered in lichens.

Bear left and follow the riverbank.

The pebbly spit of land in the river, known as the 'Sandbed,' is a favourite spot for resting Oystercatchers and Ducks.

At the corner of the field is a kissing gate, go through and continue on the riverside path.

Notice the 10th hole of the Roxburghe Golf Course across the river.

Cross the damp area via the two wooden walkways provided and, in a short distance on the right, is a seat commemorating Dr. Willy Davidson who was a keen fisherman.

Take a break, sit down and watch the trout risin' just as the doctor liked to do. Admire the stand of Beech trees on the opposite bank of the river.

Continue along the path and pass under the electric cables where no fishing is allowed.

Look out for Herons here as they too like to fish along this stretch of the river. Other birds which are known to breed in the area include:-.

Barn owl, Blackbird, Blackcap, Blue tit, Bullfinch, Buzzard, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Coal tit, Collared dove, Common sandpiper, Coot, Crow, Curlew, Dipper, Dunnock, Garden warbler, Goldcrest, Goosander, Grasshopper warbler, Gt Sp woodpecker, Goldfinch, Great tit, Greenfinch, Grey partridge, Grey wagtail, House martin, House sparrow, Jackdaw, Jay, Kestrel, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Linnet, Long-tailed tit, Mallard, Meadow pipit, Mistle thrush, Moorhen, Mute swan, Oystercatcher, Pheasant, Pied wagtail, Redshank, Reed bunting, Robin, Rook, Sand martin, Sedge warbler, Skylark, Snipe, Song thrush, Sparrowhawk, Spotted flycatcher, Starling, Stock dove, Swallow, Swift, Tawny owl, Treecreeper, Tree sparrow, Tufted duck, Whitethroat, Willow warbler, Woodcock, Woodpigeon, Wren, Yellowhammer and Yellow wagtail.

Continue along the riverbank under the Ashes, Oaks and Larches until the sound of rushing water is heard as the river passes over the cauld.

This cauld, built of boulders placed diagonally across the river, diverted the river water into the mill-lade to drive the water wheel of the old corn-mill.

At the far end of the cauld, in the sandstone rock face above the river, are the entrances to Sunlaws Caves.

Continue along the path.

The viaduct appears to the fore and across the river the ivy-covered ruins of Sunlaws Mill will be seen. This mill ceased grinding corn a hundred years ago but the millstones are still lying there, idle on the floor. You can still make out the mill-lade on the far side of the river, which drove the big waterwheel.

Keep walking towards the viaduct.

In the summer months Himalayan Balsam, Meadowsweet, Great Willowherb and Meadow Cranesbill all flower along the riverbank.

Pass the fishing hut in the quarry on the left.

*Stone from this quarry may well have been used in the construction of the viaduct. On the other side of the river is **the 14th fairway** of the Golf Course.*

Approach the viaduct.

Notice the difference between the thirty-foot and fifty-foot arches and the large Master Pier that separates them.

Pass under the arch.

Look up and observe the skewed formation of sandstone blocks in the arch, accounting for the curve of the viaduct.

Go through the kissing gate and turn left. After passing the large hollow Master Pier go under the arch to the other side of the viaduct. Follow the path up the embankment on to the disused railway track.

At the top of the track look back to the south-east and get another good view of the Roxburghe Golf Course. Turning to the south-west Wellington's Pillar on Peniel Heugh stands proud on the skyline above the Roxburgh Mains farm steading. Looking down through the trees on the other side of the track, Roxburgh Village can be seen.

Continue along the track away from the viaduct.

Wild strawberries can be found here in abundance in early summer. The descendants of Dr. Lee's Lilac trees may also be seen amongst the trees on the right hand side.

Continue along the track until the Station House comes into view. Then take the left-hand path and descend into the West End car park to end the walk.

Heiton Village walk

via the Sunlaws Road and back by Heiton Mill

Distance 3 miles Time 1 hour Classification easy

Leave the bus shelter, turn right and walk down the Lovers' Lane. Notice *Roxburgh House (formerly the Manse) and the ruin of Wallace's Tower on the left. Halfway down Lovers' Lane on the left a stream emerges from underneath the embankment. This is the destructive stream written about by the Rev. Bell in*

the Old Statistical Account (1791-99). In 1850 the stream was redirected away from the Manse when the railway embankment was built. In springtime this path is lined with Daffodils and the embankment is a carpet of Primroses and Violets. In early summer the descendants of Dr. Lee's Lilac trees may be seen blooming among the embankment trees.

Pass through the wicket at the bottom of the path and cross the river via the footbridge.

This wrought-iron footbridge is just as Messrs. C.D. Young & Co. of Edinburgh left it in 1850. Many are the feet and hooves that have trodden its timber deck since then. Look down into the river and see if there is a salmon lurking in the waters.

Continue up to the road and then turn right under the arches to cross to the other side of the viaduct.

Through the gateway opposite is the [15th hole](#) on the Roxburghe Golf Course and just to left of this gateway there used to be a block of two 2-roomed, square-dressed rubble cottages ([NT 703303](#)). Originally railway workers lived in these 'Bridgend Cottages', then farm workers from Sunlaws Mill occupied them for a time before they were finally used as cowsheds.

Continue up the road.

White Champion, Rosebay Willowherb, Greater Willow herb, Knapweed, Tansy and Yarrow are all seen flowering on this roadside during the summer.

Pause at the gate at the end of the conifer plantation on the left.

This was the entrance to the Heiton Railway Siding, which was used by the local farmers to transport agricultural produce.

Carry on up the road.

The field on the right might one-day contain houses. It is proposed that eighty-two houses be built here in what is to be called 'The Sunlaws Village Development.'

Continue up the hill passing the entrance of the Roxburghe Hotel and Golf Course on your right.

The houses of Heiton Village will become visible at the top of the hill on the left.

At the top of the hill stop.

Look back and get a *good view of Wellington's Piller on Peniel Heugh.*

Turn left at the junction, having reached the main Kelso to Jedburgh road, and walk along Heiton's main street.

Pass the old joiner's shop on the left where James Dodds crafted the communion table and pulpit now residing in Roxburgh Church. Gaze over the dyke on the other side of the road. Whitehillfoot Farm is seen to the right and Bowmont Forest is seen on the skyline. Bowmont Forest is where the Zeplin dropped its bomb in the 1st World War. Just passed the bus shelter on the other side of the road is the Village Hall with the former School standing next to the telephone kiosk. The old buildings of Priorsland Farm are close by and the village playing field is just behind them.

Continue to the end of the village.

Across the road is a good view of Ladyrig farm with its tall chimney. The Robertson family farmed here for 200 years.

After the bus stop turn left down the track between Heiton Mains farmhouse and its steading.

You are now walking on the right of way from Heiton Village to Heiton Mill. Years ago farmers used this track to transport grain by horse and cart to get it milled at Heiton Mill.

Proceed just over the brow of the hill and stop in the gate place on the right.

Here you can gaze on one of the most magnificent panoramic views in the Borders. Roxburgh village is seen nestling down beside the River Teviot and looking back the chimneys of Heiton Village are still visible. Then, looking to the south-west and moving in a clockwise direction pick out on the skyline 1) the point of Ruberslaw 2) Wellington's Piller on Peniel Heugh 3) the Baron's Folly on Down Law 4) the Selkirk mast 5) the three Eildon Hills 6) the Black and the White Hills of Earlston 7) Legerwood Hill behind Haymount Farm 8) Jock & Jenny on Sweethope Hill 9) Hume Castle and 10) Queenscairn Hill where Queen Marie de Gueldres received the news that her husband, King James II, had been killed by his exploding cannon.

Continue down the track to the bottom corner of the field.

Here is a splendid view of Roxburgh Village and its viaduct with Floors Castle to the right. At the side of this track Knapweed and Meadow Cranesbill attract Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies. Other butterflies found in the area include the Clouded Yellow, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Small Tortoiseshell and Meadow Brown.

At the corner of the field turn right and walk along the edge of the next field until a bridge over the disused railway track is seen on the left.

This was the railway line that operated between Roxburgh and Kelso from 1850 until 1968. Queen Victoria passed by this way on her way to Floors in 1867.

Cross the bridge and leave by the kissing gate. Turn right and follow the path to the big tree in the corner of the field.

Here is a good view of Heiton Mill farmhouse and its steading with Kersmains farmhouse and its distinctive Wellingtonia tree in the background.

Follow the hedge down to the gate at the start of a bridle path. Cross the style and proceed down the bridle track in front of the farmhouse.

Hear the sound of the river rushing over the cauld. The mill still stands at the riverside at the back of the steading. It was here, many years ago, that local farmers brought their oats to get them milled into groats and oatmeal.

Follow the road round to the left, as it runs parallel to the river.

Roxburgh Mill will be visible through the trees on the right. Farmers on nearby Roxburghe Estate farms used this mill long ago to thrash corn. In the field away to the left the horizontal line of trees and bushes marks the line of the old railway.

Carry on down the road till you reach the KAA car park on the right.

This is the site of the old ford where farm carts crossed the river to travel between Roxburgh and Heiton. This riverbank here is a carpet of Snowdrops and Wild Garlic in the springtime.

Keep walking down the road until Roxburgh Cemetery comes into view through the trees across the river.

Looking to the right of the cemetery are the five Roxburgh Mill cottages and to their right stands the Auld Hoose. This was formerly the home of the Hope family before it became a stable. The Roxburgh Rivulet empties its waters into the Teviot just to the side of this building.

Continue walking towards the viaduct.

A telephone cable may be seen crossing the river at a height of 10 meters above the water. This cable also marks the route taken by the ferry that plied across the river before the footbridge was built.

On the left, just before the viaduct, are the remains of the old quarry where Rufus met his end at the hands of the huntsman. It is hoped that this quarry may be filled in some day soon to prevent the unsightly rubbish dumping that takes place there.

Turn right at the viaduct and go back across the footbridge. Make your way back up Lovers' Lane and the sight of the Station House at the top of lane heralds the completion of this walk.

Roxburgh Newtown walk

via Stockstruther and back by Bucket Corner.

Distance 5 miles Time 1.5 hours Classification easy

This walk is all on road and is a good alternative walk when conditions under foot are very muddy.

At the bus shelter cross the road and make for Kelso.

Pass the Schoolhouse on the right and Stationhouse on the left.

At the junction bear left in the direction of St Boswells.

The copse immediately on the left, between the road and the old railway line, used to be a paddock for holding sheep before they were loaded onto the train. The Roxburgh rivulet will be seen on the right running through the field. This stream is where the Cotlanders' cows got a drink of water before they went to their grazing on the Loaning.

Go under the bridge.

It is a low bridge so pass under with the confidence that no cattle wagon will be coming in the opposite direction. The field immediately on your left with the Beech tree in the middle was once known as the Cotlands. It was divided into two-acre strips and each Cotlander in the village had his own strip to cultivate.

Walk on up the hill to the entrance to Over Roxburgh farm steading on the right.

The long strip of ground running parallel to the road on the left is planted with young trees. This was once the 'Loaning' where the Cotlanders grazed their cows. After a while the strip leaves the roadside and curves away to end at the Waterdykes Wood, which can be seen on the left.

Continue up the road.

In summer wild raspberries may be picked and eaten from the verges. On the left, amongst the trees, is the Moor House. This was once a small farm but has been the gamekeeper's house for many years.

Carry on up to the junction and turn left.

The road skirts the Moor Wood. During the 2nd World War there were no trees here and the Polish militia used this ground for tank practice. Nowadays, all is at peace and buzzards are often to be seen flying above the conifers where the tanks once roared. A quiet pause may reveal a red squirrel playing in these trees. In summer the roadside verges are thick with Knapweed, Meadowsweet, Rosebay Willowherb and Yarrow.

Pause at the corner before bearing right and gaze in a south-westerly direction.

Wellington's Piller on Peniel Heugh and the Baron's Folly on Down Law are visible in the distance. The fields immediately in front are known collectively as Roxburgh Moor. This is where years ago the Minister dug his allocation of peat to

fuel his fires in the Manse. Long, long ago horse racing was held on this ground. At the far side of the Moor is the Duke's Strip. This plantation of trees runs for one and a half miles and marks the south-west boundary of the Roxburgh Barony.

Follow the road down the hill.

Admire the distinctive outline of Smailholm Tower on the skyline as you pass sweet smelling Honeysuckle and prickly Gorse on the way. A stand of Scots Pines on the edge of Spot Wood will soon be seen on the left.

Go over a small bridge.

The burn below this bridge marks the boundary of the Roxburgh Barony and is known as the Stockstruther Burn. The wood on the right is known as Angle Wood. It contains Scots pines with mature Poplar trees and is carpeted with Snowdrops in early springtime.

Pause at the road junction before turning right.

The farm to the fore is Rutherford Burnside and Belted Galloway cattle may sometimes be seen in its fields.

Walk on.

Stockstruther House is on the left. This is 'the house in the meadow'. The Antrobus family once owned Stockstruther and they were thus heritors of the parish and had a designated pew in the church.

Walk on under the Railway Bridge and up to the lodge on the right with the Cairnmount Burn running through its garden.

The lodge marks the entrance to Cairnmount Mansion House, which can be seen through the trees. This sizeable house was built in exactly the same style as Roxburgh Barns farmhouse.

Carry on down the road keeping the wood on the left. The road will bear right round an ancient Fir tree before going down to meet the main road from Kelso to Maxton.

Walking down the hill the Mansion House of Makerstoun appears to the fore. Away to the left are the remains of Ringley Hall hidden in the woods.

At the main road turn right and walk on the verge towards Kelso.

On the right is the old road bridge over the Cairnmount Burn. The burn passes under the road and enters the River Tweed on the left. Keep a good look out in the field on the right for the Highland cow, Una, and her family.

At the next road junction bear right and follow the sign to Roxburgh.

Roxburgh Newtown cottages are situated on the left. The Stockstrother Burn is seen again flowing through the dean on the right. This was once a favourite site for poaching salmon before alterations were made to the main road. The ivy-covered shed halfway up the hill on the left was once the farm smiddy where the workhorses went to get shod.

Pause at the next brow of the hill.

The farm steading on the right is that of Roxburgh Newtown. It was here in a byre where Andrew Gemmells, the gaberlunzie, lived and died. Sadly the byre was demolished in 1980 to make way for a multipurpose shed which is now a grain drier. Look back and in front of Makerstoun House is a hillock known as 'The Law' or sometimes referred to as 'Pleahill.'

Follow the road around Roxburgh Newtown steading passing the Steward's house on the right. Then bear left up the hill.

Under the tree on the right, almost buried in the ground, is the water storage tank for Roxburgh Newtown.

Stop at the bridge.

Beneath this bridge once ran the North British Railway's line from Rutherford to Roxburgh following the 80-metre contour. The field on the left above the railway is known as the 'Watchlaw' field. Long ago people sat here and waited for news from the judicial meetings being held on 'The Law' (Pleahill).

On the 18th May 1996 Pauline Twemlow conducted a survey for the purposes of conservation grade crop registration. She noted all the wild flowers in bloom on that day which grew along the former railway track and around the hedgerows of all the fields on Roxburgh Newtown. The following is a list of her observations.

Wild Flora of Roxburgh Newtown.

Azalea	Bittercress	Bluebell	Broom
Bugle	Bush Vetch	Buttercup	Charlock
Chickweed	Comfrey	Cow Parsley	Cowslip
Cranesbill	Creeping Speedwell	Daisy	Dames Violet
Dandelion	Forgetmenot	Fumitory	Ground ivy
Groundsel	Hawkweed	Herb Bennet	Herb Robert
Honeysuckle	Jack-by-the-hedge	Mayweed	Meadow Orchid
Meadow Saxifrage	Mountain Ash	Ox-Eye Daisy	Pansy
Plantain	Primrose	Ragwort	Red Campion
Silverweed	Sorrel	Tormentil	Trefoil
Violet	Wall Speedwell	Wallpepper	Water Avens
White Campion	White Clover	White Deadnettle	Woodruff
Wild Strawberry			

Follow the road up to the Z-bend where the four, dead or dying, trees stand.

This is known as 'Bucket Corner.' A cottage once stood here on the right hand side of the road (NT 678304). It had a bucket on its roof instead of a chimney pot, hence its name. There is a good view to the west of this point of the three Eildon Hills and Smailholm Tower.

The field on the left of the corner is known today as Lightpipe field. One cannot help but connect this field-name with a dwelling called Lightpipehall which is shown, at this location, on Matthew Stobie's map of 1770. On the same map, a little to the north-east, is a dwelling called Acrehouse. Again this is represented today by a field known as 'Acrehouse.' No definite traces of the Lightpipehall or the Acrehouse dwellings exist today but one does wonder if the strangely isolated piece of dyking in the hedge, just along from the four trees on Bucket Corner, might once have been part of the Lightpipehall garden boundary.

Continue along the road to the junction on the right. Having now completed the circle, follow the sign back to Roxburgh (1.5 miles).

Ahead in the distance is a good view of the Cheviots on a clear day and to the left is a limited view of Berwickshire's skyline with Hume Castle sitting

prominently. All the fields on the left belong to Over Roxburgh farm and the square looking wood is known as 'The Over Roxburgh Covert.'

Pass under the railway bridge again and at the road junction turn right. It is just a short distance back to the West End car park to finish this walk.

Kelso's Teviot Bridge walk

via the Kelso-line and back by Roxburgh Castle.

Distance 6 miles Time 2 hours Classification easy

Leave the West End car park by the wicket, which says no motor cycles. Go up the path onto the disused railway track and make towards the viaduct.

Identify the wild flowers. As many as twenty different species may be seen blooming on this embankment at any one time during the summer.

A barrier obstructs the track across the viaduct. There is a path on the right 35 yards before the barrier. Follow this path downhill and pass under the third arch of the viaduct.

Look up at the underside of the arch and notice the holes just under the springing of the arch in the piers on either side. This is where the supports were placed to carry the steam cranes when the viaduct was being built. On the other side of this arch is a fine specimen of a young Oak tree. The pupils of Roxburgh Primary School grew this tree from an acorn and planted it in 1984 under the supervision of Mr. Warburton, their natural history teacher. It is known as the Warburton Oak and is now twenty feet tall.

Continue down the path to the river and cross the footbridge.

Admire the construction of the massive Master Pier at the junction of the thirty-foot and fifty-foot ranges of arches. Look up and observe the skewed stone blocks of the fifty-foot arches that enabled the viaduct to execute a curve. Look down into the water and see if there are any trout or salmon lurking in the river.

Follow the path up the hill to the road.

Pass the viaduct's second Master Pier three quarters of the way up the path. On the left of the path Giant Hogweed once grew profusely amongst the trees producing massive umbelliferous seed heads in the autumn.

At the junction with the road turn right and proceed under the arch.

The 15th green of the Roxburghe Golf Course is to be seen just through the gate opposite. On the left of this gateway there used to be a block of two 2-roomed, square-dressed rubble cottages (NT 703303). Originally railway workers lived in these 'Bridgend Cottages', then farm workers from Sunlaws Mill occupied them for a time before they were finally used as cowsheds. Today nothing remains of the two dwellings but Snowdrops from their gardens still bloom in the spring.

Carry on up the road and go through the gate on the left at the end of the conifer plantation.

This was the entrance to the Heiton Railway Siding. The only visible remains of the Siding are a brick structure on the right. This was the platform where goods were unloaded for Heiton and local agricultural produce was taken on to be transported to distant locations. The conifer plantation on the left was once a triangular paddock where sheep rested over night before being transported by train.

Continue up to the junction just up at the top of the rise.

The viaduct lies to the left and to the right the track leads to Kelso. It was here at this junction that an engine came off the rails when the points failed, narrowly missing the surface gang who were having lunch at the time.

Take the track to the right and make for Kelso, passing through a wicket.

There are lots of brambles to be picked here in late summer. Rabbits may be seen anywhere along this track and other wild animals who make their home in the district include:-

Badger, Fox, Hare, Hedgehog, Mole, Mouse (field), Mouse (house), Otter
Rat, Roe Deer, Shrew, Squirrel (grey), Squirrel (red), Stoat, Weasel.

Continue along this track running parallel to the River Teviot on the left.

After passing a field gate on the right the track runs through a cutting that becomes waterlogged in wet weather. On this stretch of pathway the stone track base, which supported the railway lines, has been uplifted and the railway drains have become blocked. This boggy area is caused by a natural spring, which surfaces here. Hopefully this stretch of track may be drained in the future to make it more user-friendly.

Pass this muddy stretch and the path becomes good again. Continue to the overhead bridge.

This bridge forms part of the right of way from Heiton Village to Heiton Mill. Local farmers used this bridge when carting their grain to Heiton Mill to get it ground into meal. Further along the track after the field gate on the left hand side there is a good view of Heiton Mill with the distinctive white farmhouse of Kersmains in the background. Broom, Scabious, Knapweed and Willowherb bloom along the side of the track in summertime.

Pass through the gateless wicket to find a track 35 yards to the right, which leads up on to the Kelso-Jedburgh road. Pass by this opening.

Carry straight on along the old railway track.

The white house on the right is called Maison Dieu. It is built close to the site of a former house of that name which was dedicated to St Peter and used as a hospice for travellers in the heyday of the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh. Nothing remains of the former hospice. There is a garden seat at this point facing over the River Teviot.

Take a break and enjoy the panoramic view.

The three Eildons hills appear on the left. Scanning right from these, there is the square form of Roxburgh Barns farmhouse with Daniel's Den behind in the trees. Sweethope Hill, identifiable with two trees on top, may be seen on the skyline with Hume Castle a little to the right. Good views are also had of Kelso and the majestic Castle of Floors behind the ruins of Roxburgh Castle. This is the panoramic view, which Queen Victoria would have seen when she was approaching journey's end on her overnight train journey from Windsor to Kelso on 27th August 1867.

Progress to the second seat a little further along the track.

This is the end of the road for the moment, as a route from here to Kelso's Teviot Bridge has not yet been sanctioned. The obvious route through the Springwood Caravan Park compromises the park's security procedures. It is hoped that a route around the park will be worked out in the near future and will then be sign-posted. Meanwhile fly over to the Teviot Bridge!

Cross the Teviot Bridge.

This bridge, with its Doric columns, was designed by Alexander Stevens and built in 1794-5 by William Elliot of Kelso for approximately £2000. Teviot Bridge replaced an old ford across the river Teviot at this point. This ford had been a strategic crossing point on the route south out of the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh to England. In earlier times it had been managed by Franciscan Friars who charged a toll for those using the crossing. The Franciscans had been granted land at the bend of the river by Alexander II in 1232. Here they built their Franciscan Friary of St. Peter, which continued until the last warden died in 1564. Today nothing

remains of the Friary but Friars Cottage at the end of the bridge serves to remind us that this was the site of the former Franciscan Friary.

Walk up the road you and pass the fisherman's cottage on the left.

On the right the field known as 'Friars' Haugh' also reminds us of the history of this place. Point-to point racing is now held on the haugh every spring. On the brow of the hill in the same field once stood the Royal Burgh of Roxburgh, which was once one of the four major Burghs of Scotland. Not a trace of it remains above ground but it is hoped that one-day excavations may take place to ascertain if there are any remains to indicate the former presence of the churches, houses, streets and Royal Mint of the ancient Burgh.

The stone stile on the left leads down to the river while a fingerpost on the right points out the route of the 'Borders Abbeys Way.'

Cross the stile and follow the path along the riverbank.

This is the route of 'the Borders Abbeys Way,' which ultimately leads to Jedburgh.

Stop at the bend in the river and sit down on the seat provided.

Watch out for a trout breaking the surface of the water before studying the flat field across the river, which is known as the 'King's Haugh.' Roman soldiers congregated on this site in the early centuries A.D. There is a wealth of evidence to support this as lots of Roman artefacts have been found in the soil of this haugh.

Carry on along the path.

On the mound to the right are the scanty remains of what was once the mighty Castle of Roxburgh. Imagine the Black Douglas attacking it on Shrove Tuesday night in 1313. He and his sixty men dressed in black cloaks scaled the walls while the English were feasting and making merry inside. This small band of men took the garrison completely by surprise and after some fierce fighting Sir Gilleman de Fiennes and his remaining soldiers surrendered. Those English soldiers left alive next morning were soon 'sent homeward to think again!'

At the west end of the Castle rock is a smaller mound known as 'Gallows Knowe.' The dip between these two mounds was thought to be part of a moat

around the castle. There are some big stones lying diagonally across the river at this point. It has been proposed that the river could be made to flood out into the moat by blocking its flow with tree trunks placed across these boulders. However, looking at the present day terrain levels it is difficult to imagine that the moat could be flooded in this way.

Across the river amongst the trees is the Springwood mausoleum. Built in a style reminiscent of the neo-classical design, it was consecrated in 1838. Members of the Douglas family are buried in its vaults.

On the pathway opposite the mausoleum, diviner's rods become positively active. This activity is thought to indicate the presence underfoot of a road. Many think it was the ancient road from Annan to Berwick that crossed the River Teviot at this point, either by a ford or a bridge. The Annan to Berwick road is thought to have been an old trade route with wool being collected along its way and taken, via the Via Regis, to Berwick from where it was exported to Flanders.

Cross the style.

Across the river, in the trees, is the [Springwood Caravan Park](#).

Pass over a wooden bridge and continue along the path.

The river here becomes shallow at low water with boulders protruding. This is a favourite haunt of Herons and Mallards in the summertime. The hut on the right-hand side of the pathway contains interesting information on river life.

After the cauld in the river follow the path out of the trees along the bottom of the field. At the corner of the field, climb over the style and continue along the riverbank.

The riverside is very peaceful along this stretch. Pochard ducks may be seen swimming here and Black-headed gulls roost at night on the rocks when the waters are low. Other birds to be observed in the locality but are not known to nest here include:-

Common crossbill, Common gull, Cormorant, Fieldfare

Great black-backed gull, Greylag goose, Heron, Herring gull

Lesser black-backed gull, Lesser redpoll, Merlin, Pink-footed goose

Redwing, Siskin, Teal, Water rail, Waxwing, Wigeon.

Carry on along the riverbank and cross a small wooden bridge.

Notice the Poplar trees growing on the opposite bank.

Pass a riverside seat and stop at the next hut.

Rest awhile and read all about Giant Hogweed and Mayfly.

Cross the next style, turn right through the wicket and go along the path on the field side of the fence.

The cauld in the river opposite Heiton Mill can be heard as well as seen. The distinctive farmhouse at Kersmains can be seen to the right in the trees.

Cross the next style and then follow the fence side path, high above the river, to the corner of the field. Pass by the style in the corner and follow the track for 40 yards to the next style. Cross this style and descend on to the road by S.J. Bell's Rowan Tree. Turn left and walk down the road towards Roxburgh Mill farm.

The Teviot lies close by on the left-hand side. Many species of duck congregate here in the winter months and a Mute Swan often nests on the other side of the river in the early summer.

Pass through Roxburgh Mill steading.

*There was once a thrashing mill here driven by waterpower but nothing now remains of the structure and even **the mill-lade** has been filled in.*

Continue up the road to Roxburgh village.

A burn passes under the road. This is the Roxburgh Rivulet, which divided Upper and Nether Roxburgh in bygone times. On the left is a stable, formerly the 'Auld Hoose,' where Tom Hope's family lived. Tom was a pupil at the original school at the far end of the village and he took part in the move to the new school in 1859.

Pass the five Roxburgh Mill cottages on the left.

The pile of stones ([NT 702308](#)) between these cottages and the cemetery is all that remains of Laburnum cottage. Jimmy Swanston of the long Amen fame was the last person to live here.

Pass the cemetery and go up the hill.

On the left are the recently built Teviotbank and Cotlands houses. Approaching the brow of the hill on the right is the old telephone exchange which is still one of Roxburgh's links to the outside world. On the left is Innescote with a wall surrounding its garden. Next on the right are the four conjoined cottages of Teviot View which are in close proximity to the semidetached houses.

Continue through the village.

On the left is St. James's Church with eight trees on the banking, planted by villagers in 1980. The newly built 'Honeysuckle House' on the right replaced the old Joiner's Shop and steading. The drive into Honeysuckle House leads to the 'Back Road.' This was formerly the route from the Joiner's Shop to the Smiddy. This is a right of way and is much used today by walkers and equestrians. The two modern houses on the right, Southlands and the Rowans, replaced Shank's Cottage and Rose Cottage.

Continue along the road.

The War Memorial is on the left in front of Garry Callender's Birch tree with the much-used Children's Play Park behind this. Across the road a red telephone kiosk stands next to the eight-foot glebe wall. Close by is the village post-box that was built into the wall in the reign of Edward VII.

Following the glebe wall to the village notice board.

Standing well back on the right are the Northcliffe Cottages built over a century ago. The original lampstone of Rose Cottage is built into the roadside wall of the second Northcliffe Cottage. The next semidetached dwellings are built on the site of Yew Cottage.

Continue along Teviot Road.

The three entrances into the Roxburgh House (formerly the Manse) are passed on the left before reaching Glebe Cottage. On the right are three more semidetached houses all built half a century ago. Looking across the glebe there is an excellent view of Wallace's Tower with the viaduct in the distance. The last house on the right before the junction is the former school/schoolhouse and

across the road to the right, standing on higher ground, is the old Station House overlooking the West End car park.

This completes the round river walk via Teviot Bridge.

Acknowledgements.

John Forsyth, Lewis Jones, Willy Smith, Beatrice Kyle, Maisie Dagg, Robert & Sue Briggs, Jim & Nancy Johnston, Peter Batchelor, Oliver Stark, Winnie Swanston, Robin Hogg, Tony & Lynette Aldridge
Libraries of Kelso, Selkirk, & 2 @ Edinburgh

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