The War Memorial

By Bob Richardson

THE site for the War Memorial was presented to the town by Henry Ballantyne, Walkernburn, and occupies a prominent position in the centre of the town at the foot of Leithen Road.

It was constructed in 1921, and is unique in that part of it represents a miniature of the Leithen Valley.

The contour of the neighbouring hills is reproduced in the rocky mounts — it has Lee Pen, Caerlee Hill and Glenormiston Wood on the east side, Pirm Craig and the Pirm Wood on the west side.

A crystal clear stream winds its way through the garden representing Leithen Water which is spanned by a striking model of the Cuddy Brig.

Dwarf trees on the east side of Caerlee correspond with the trees on Glenormiston Estate, while further up Caerlee and Lee Pen, heather is planted which was brought down along with the soil from where it originally grew on Lee Pen Hill.

The stones for the rock garden were also brought down from Lee Pen Hill, and Pirm Craig Hill correspondingly.

The rockwork was carried out by Messrs James Blackhouse & Son, Rockwork Specialists, York, who also designed and carried out the work on the Zoological Gardens, Edinburgh.

The construction gave considerable employment to the local unemployed, and the finished construction was very pleasing to the eye.

In a recess on the Lee Pen side of the rockwork there is a tablet mounted on the rock. It is a bronze tablet at the top of which is a laurel wreath, and inside are the words “Pro Patria.” Outside, the wreath is the date 1914-18 and below is the “roll of honour.”

This table was moved at a later date to the “Memorial Stone,” which stands at the entrance gate and mounted along with the names of the 1939-45 war victims.

The “dedication service” for this stone was held in November, 1949, and was conducted by the Rev. J. Y. Walker, and the plaque was unveiled by Mrs Naylor.