



# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 61 – March 2009*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Friends AGM and followed by a talk on the Burrell collection. 7pm in the Guildhall, Berwick

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Museum Spring Clean, 11 – 4. Help Museum staff get ready for this season's 1 opening, accompanied by the pianola!

## **BERWICK MUSEUM & ART GALLERY EXHIBITIONS 2009**

### **OPENING TIMES**

**1<sup>st</sup> April – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
Including Bank Holidays**

**Wednesdays – Sundays, 10am – 5pm**

1<sup>st</sup> April - 1<sup>st</sup> May

Northumberland-A Heritage Revealed (a joint exhibition with other major Northumberland Museums): The History of the ancient county as revealed in maps, pictures and objects.

17<sup>th</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> August

Beside the Seaside: An interactive exhibition celebrating the seaside and coast for holidays and artistic inspiration.

9<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> September

Icon of the Steam Age: A detailed look at depictions of the Royal Border Bridge since 1850, staged as one of the local events marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Robert Stephenson.

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Bowling Clubhouse**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March

John Knox in Berwick and Newcastle:

Michael Cook

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April

Visit to Gunsgreen House, Eyemouth

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

Belford's Trafalgar Hero: Tony Barrow

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Josephine Butler: Ann Dawson

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May

Gefrin: Roger Miket

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Evening walk to Fowberry & Weetwood:  
Tom Braidford

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March

The Prehistoric Archaeology of The  
Cheviots and Milfield Basin: Roger Miket

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April

**AGM 7pm**, followed at 7.30pm by  
Sir Walter Scott and The Covenanters: John  
Milne

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May

Who needs a Bridge? : Alan Fendley

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Robert Stephenson, the Eminent Engineer :  
Professor Michael Bailey

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick upon Tweed.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April

The Excavation at Duddo: Roger Miket

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May

The Glen to the Eden: Paul Frodsham

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June

New Discoveries at Cheviot and Lanton  
Quarry: Clive Waddington

### **BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose**

**Time: 2.30pm**

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

Grandpaw's Bawbees and other Scottish

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April

Coins: Peter Munro  
AGM followed by  
Pagodas, Platinum and Penicillin: Isobel  
Gordon

### **COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June

Eyemouth Disaster: Peter Aitchison  
Recollection of World War 1: Mr Alan  
Fendley  
Visit to Kimmerghame

### **DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Duns Social Club, 41 Newton St, Duns.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

The Burrell Collection and its Connection  
with Berwick-upon-Tweed: Mr Chris Green

### **GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: The Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April

St Cuthbert and Northumbrian Identity :  
John Field  
Guided Tour of Coupland Castle  
( 10.30am, £7 per person)  
Serried Ranks & Bluebells- A History of  
Forestry: Bob Harrison  
AGM following at approximately 8.30pm

### **NORHAM HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Norham Village Hall**

**Time : 7.30 pm**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April

The Shadow of the Gallows, Murder in

North Northumberland : Phil Rowett

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May

History of Underwear : Priscilla Elias and

Naomi Kenny

### **NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

Henry Richardson, from Opium Wars to

Convict Ships: Jane Bowen

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Cragside: Jim & Joan Trett

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May

Memories of Seahouses: George Scott

### **NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

#### **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH**

**Venue: Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford**

**Time: 10.00am**

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Costume: Mary Pinder

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April

Local Place and Field Names: Stan  
Beckensall

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

March has come already and it has been a very busy couple of months in the Archives. The weeks seem to fly by very quickly.

For the past 6 months or so, the Record Office has been involved in a lot of education work, some of which is still ongoing. At the beginning of January, we

completed our work with Berwick Middle School on their Second World War project which culminated with all the children from Year 5 coming to the Record Office to find out about what happened in this area. The children looked at local newspapers, information about the servicemen buried at Kirknewton and found out about the Land Army Girl hostel at Norham. They all really enjoyed it and now know a lot more about the effect of the War in the local area. We have built on this project by also working with Year 5 children in Tweedmouth Middle School on our Polish/Berwick Second World War project. Again the children have come into the Office to find out what happened in the area and have been introduced to Archive sources. None of them had been here in before. As well as coming in here the children are going to work in the classroom on our resources relating to the bombings at Tweedmouth and Spittal. We have transcribed all the newspaper reports for each raid so that the children can build up a picture of what happened. We also keep finding out new little snippets – at the beginning of February one of our colleagues in the Legal Department found a wallet which had been put in a deed packet after the raid on Sunnyside in 1941. It contained money belonging to one of the gentlemen who had been killed. No one probably realised it was even there but it is an amazing find for us.

The Record Office has also been involved in another education project which has been very interesting. The Borough Council received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to repair Lady Jerningham's statue in Bankhill. The repair work has been completed but there was another element to the project – education work – so that others would know who Lady Jerningham was. In March a number of local schools will go out to Longridge Towers to enjoy a drama day based on Lady Jerningham and her life. To prepare the children, I have gone out to all the schools involved to talk to the children about Lady Jerningham and to introduce them to some of the sources that I have looked at to find out about her. It has been fascinating finding out about her life and introducing the children to her and Longridge Towers. I've probably worked with over 150 children who will now view her statue in a different light!

As well as education work, I have been involved in other outreach work. At the end of January, Maureen's Raper's Creative Writer's group came to the Office to find out about sources available for Romantic fiction. I had to think hard about what we might have but there is quite a lot including Irregular Marriages at Lamberton Toll and all the other places along the Borders. In February, I also went along to the Guild of Freemen social evening and showed our old films of Berwick, including one which hadn't been seen before – the Boys Brigade Parades in the town from the 1950s to

the 1970s/1980s – and which was very well received. The Record Office has recently received the records of the Berwick Boys Brigade which date from the very early 1950s. Through these, we were put in contact with a gentleman who has lent us a number of cine films taken in the area including the Parades. The Parade film shows the former Baptist Church in Castlegate and a beautiful shot of the old fire station in Wallace Green and many of the shops in Marygate. To make people aware of the Boys Brigade material that had been deposited and to also encourage people to lend us any other photos they might have of the organisation, we put on an exhibition in Berwick Library for 4 weeks at the end of January. The exhibition was very well received and well worth doing.

Finally, the Record Office is heavily involved in the George Stephenson 150 events which will take place in Berwick from May to October. These will include exhibitions in the Guildhall at the end of June; a Schools event and an exhibition at Etal at the end of August. There is never a dull moment in the Record Office!

*Linda Bankier*

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

As part of the Stephenson 150 weekend on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June, the Record Office is helping to put together and organise the events in the Guildhall. We will need a number of stewards who are happy to be there and help by manning the bookstall and serving the teas on the Sunday as well as generally walk around and make sure everything is OK. We may also need people who would be happy to steward at Norham Railway Museum which will be open on the Saturday. If you would like to help in any way, please ring me on (01289) 301865 or e-mail [linda.bankier@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:linda.bankier@northumberland.gov.uk) . Even if you can only spare a couple of hours, that would be great. There will be more information on the events in the next newsletter.

*Linda Bankier*

# SNIPPETS FROM THE ARCHIVES

## LADY JERNINGHAM

Whilst researching the life of Lady Jerningham, I came across the following snippets which may interest you :

**Berwick Advertiser, 1 February 1894**

### TREAT TO JUVENILES - HORNCLIFFE

On Friday last the children attending the Village School here along, with those of more tender years, were each supplied with a bun, a bag of sweets and an orange by the kindness and generosity of Lady Jerningham of Longridge Towers. The children highly prized, and were greatly delighted with their nice present. Of all the many acts of benevolence her Ladyship has effected in this community, none has increased her popularity so much and endeared her to everyone as her kind consideration to the young, and the great interest she takes in the prosperity of the school. Before the children were dismissed, Mr Black, the Master, thanked Lady Jerningham in grateful and laudatory terms both for the present and past favours conferred upon them; and on his initiative three hearty cheers were awarded her in acknowledgement of her great kindness..

**Berwick Advertiser, 3 January 1896**

### SUPPER AND BALL AT LONGRIDGE TOWERS

Through the genial hospitality of Lady Jerningham, the house servants and others along with a large number of friends were entertained to their annual supper and ball on Thursday night last week. At nine o'clock the large company sat down to an



excellent repast served up in Monsieur Theareux's [the Cook] usual grand style. Mr R. Redpath presided, and proposed the health of Lady Jerningham. After ample justice had been done to the good things provided, the company repaired to the servants' hall, the scene of the night's enjoyment, which had been prettily decorated with evergreens and mottoes suitable for the occasion, where dancing was commenced with the ever popular "Triumph" and was carried on with great zeal until an early hour in the morning. Refreshments were liberally supplied at intervals. Several songs, etc were rendered by members of the company. The jolly party broke up in the early morning by singing "Auld Land Syne" and giving cheers for Lady Jerningham. Mr Coull, head gardener, acted very efficiently as master of ceremonies; and the music was supplied by Messers Campbell of Berwick.

**Berwick Advertiser, 24 January 1896**

**SCHOOL TREAT - HORNCLIFFE**

On the afternoon of Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> inst., the school children here and a few from Longridge were entertained to tea by Lady Jerningham of Longridge Towers. Though four o'clock was the hour for assembling, long before that time they began to gather, knowing, as on former occasions, a splendid treat was in store for them. The tea was excellent and the provisions were abundant and of the choicest kind. This year no amusements were provided for the children out of respect to the memory of Miss Caroline Beatrice Valence, whose premature death was deeply regretted by the whole community. The following ladies assisted in preparing and distributing the tea: Mrs Black, Misses Hand, Sarah Stamford Turner, Sarah Ann Lisle, Susan Turner, Jemima Purvis, Eleanor Bell, Marshall Briggs and Agnes Cunningham Phillips. After tea was finished several beautiful hymns were sung. Before dispersing the Rev. Mr Valence delivered an appropriate address and thanked Lady Jerningham (who was to the great disappointment of all unable to attend) for providing such a sumptuous feast, for her liberality towards the cause of education, and for the great interest she takes in promoting the prosperity of the school, and concluding by asking as an appreciation of her kindness to give her three hearty cheers – a sentiment responded to with much cordiality. Thanks were also awarded to Mr Valence for presiding and to the ladies who had so kindly attended to the wants of the children. On leaving each child was presented with an orange. Lady Jerningham also supplied the school with a load of coals, a great boon for this season.

*Linda Bankier*

# ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

## DARWIN & THE BERWICK NATURALISTS

Amidst the celebration in 2009 of the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species* I thought it might be useful to look at a couple of the great man's links with Berwick.

In 1826 the young Charles Darwin, then a student at Edinburgh University, took his first tentative steps into the public arena of natural science debate when he addressed meetings of the newly formed Plinian Society in an underground room at the University. Founder members of the society were the Baird brothers, William, Andrew and John, who were friendly and encouraging to the young man. Darwin left for Cambridge the next year and the Bairds went their separate ways a little closer to home. John Baird (1799-1861) became vicar at Kirk Yetholm and set out with missionary zeal to convert the gypsy community there; Andrew dabbled in painting, but William Baird (1803-72), later the author of *Cyclopedia of the Natural Sciences* (1858), became a physician at Cockburnspath just north of Berwick. On the beach there he studied the lower orders of crustacea and soon met up with Dr. Johnston of Berwick, also fascinated by marine creatures. George Johnston (1797-1855) was Berwick's 'Darwin', born in the Borders, he lived in Berwick from 1818 onwards. From his successful medical practice in a house in Woolmarket, now marked with a plaque, he travelled throughout the Borough treating patients, but also studying the local botany. His *Flora of Berwick upon Tweed* (1829-31) was the beginning of a distinguished scientific career. In September 1831, just as Darwin was making frantic preparations for his epoch-making voyage in the *Beagle*, Baird and Johnston and five other men held the first meeting of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club. Darwin and the new BNC were both part of the grand project to classify and catalogue all the world's species. It began before Darwin and, like the BNC, it continues to this day, but that did not stop the Victorians believing *they* would finish the project. Once back from his voyage Darwin spent the next ten years writing up his results and in December 1840 Johnston in the course of a letter to Rev David Landsborough, of Stevenston (Ayrshire) referred to the results. The vicar had sent Johnston coral to identify which he did and commented:

“The growth of coral reefs is a still undetermined point. I think the best account is in Lyell’s *Principles of Geology*. Mr [John] Williams philosophy is sadly at fault, & his observations not worth much; the least worthy is his most interesting and valuable work. If you can get Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle* it will be useful to you. I like his theory best of all, which is, that the reefs have been raised by volcanic agency, and then occupied by the corals and madrepores. The old theory of Cook and others, which attributed reefs of many hundreds of fathoms depth to the working of coral insects, cannot be entertained even if you were to grant to this world a beginning in chaos.” (Correspondence (1892), pp,173-74)

Actually Darwin’s theory was that corals were built up continually on land that was sinking not rising. It was about twelve years later that Darwin himself wrote to Johnston having received a copy of the latter’s *Flora of the Eastern Borders* (1852) the first part of a projected set that was to cover all the natural history of the area. Darwin wrote:

“..I have looked at parts with much pleasure, you will, perhaps, think it odd, but I was particularly charmed with the Preface; its style called up to my mind the writing of the old and best authors. I look forward with interest to the zoological part which is more in my line.” (Darwin Archive 146)

Sadly the zoological volume never appeared, by 1852 Johnston was struggling to make ends meet after loosing most of his money in a bank collapse. Several friends rallied round and tried to get him a Civil List pension. Darwin did his bid towards this project writing a testimonial noting that Johnston had a high claim “on the gratitude of every British naturalists for his zealous endeavours to aid the study and spread the love of Natural Sciences”. Darwin said that Johnston had “widely extended our knowledge in several obscure and neglected departments of Zoology” and it would “rejoice every British Naturalist” to have it recognised by the Government. It wasn’t, and within three years, in 1855, Johnston was dead. Berwick’s premiere naturalist therefore was denied the opportunity of reading Darwin’s great work and it is futile to speculate on what he might have thought of it. Johnston belonged to the pre-Darwinian era of precise observers - his books are a maze of detail on the structure and appearance of fauna and flora. For him and many naturalists their purpose was the identification and listing of species. How those species came to be hardly concerned them.

In the decades following the publication of *The Origin of Species* the society that Johnston founded, the Berwickshire Naturalists seem to have completely ignored

Darwin and the whole evolutionary debate. They were busy with researching and publishing accounts of natural history but no-one cared to refer to the theory. The very first reference to Darwin at a BNC meeting was apparently the Presidential address by George Pringle Hughes (1833-1929) of Middleton Hall on 10th October 1883. Darwin had died in April the previous year, and Hughes, a landowner and arboriculturist, was reporting on attending the Southport meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) or “the Parliament of Science” as he called it. In a general account of theories around, after effectively dismissing the atomic theory from Democritus to “Des Cartes” Hughes moves on to deal with the “doctrine of Evolution or Progressive Development”. This he says “has to a certain degree revolutionised the study of organic nature, and has suggested to, and by its novelty encouraged, our younger naturalists to devote much of their time and speculation to Embryology, and specific affinities”. He then includes a long quote from *The Origin of Species* ending with the famous passage “Therefore I should infer from analogy that probably all the organic beings which have lived on this earth have descended from some one primordial form into which life was first breathed by the Creator.” Darwin apparently only added reference to the Creator at the last minute in deference to his wife’s faith. But this concession is lost on Mr Hughes who declares:-

“This bold conclusion would fly in the face of Revelation and tradition, and the consciousness of our moral being. The theory is one eminently ingenious and pleasing to the vanity of man”.

He expands on this by saying that Evolution requires such lengths of time and succession of circumstances that it can hardly “shake our faith, in the revealed word of God”. Hughes says he “cannot conceive by what process of evolution man could be elevated from the irrational creation, except by the direct intervention of the Creator.”

Hughes then concedes that despite this terrible theory Darwin “must be allowed the credit of having added mightily to scientific information.” Nevertheless too many of “our ablest philosophers” have “allowed themselves to be drawn into a belief in his doctrines, but I think I already observe a reaction. Theories, like those of Darwin, however plausible they may at first appear, are likely to end in disappointment, as their truth can never be proved.” Hughes was of course writing before it was realised that scientific theories are never “proved” as such. Now we realise that a scientific theory stands as an accurate idea until someone ‘disproves’ it. This failure to grasp the idea that only theories that are capable of falsification by experiment or

observation can be considered truly scientific is a fundamental misunderstanding that lies at the heart of today's Creationist vs Evolution debate.

If Hughes thought that he had put a stop to Darwin in 1883 he was mistaken. Exactly a year later on 8th October 1884 the next President of the BNC, Commander Francis Martin Norman (1833-1918) returned to the theme and made 'Darwinism and Natural Religion' the subject of his Presidential address. Norman was an ex-Naval Commander who was much involved with improving Berwick Museum and was keen to preserve Berwick's heritage, writing the first guidebook to the walls. Under the pen-name 'Martello Tower' he had published two successful books of Naval reminiscences which are notable for their easy style and fair level of whimsy. His approach therefore to Darwinism was no exception. Norman noted that the subject had created "wide and deep interest, not to say also, sensation, throughout the whole civilized world". But despite this and that fact that many of the members will be aware of it, the BNC had officially ignored the theory for nearly thirty years. He thought it was "natural, right, and proper" that some record appear in their proceedings. He then summarises the theory referring to the notion of 'the Survival of the fittest', coined by the social philosopher Herbert Spencer. Norman says the whole subject is too vast to deal with completely so he will only look at the effect of Darwinism on 'Natural Religion'. Looking back at previous Presidential addresses he says he was struck by the number of times that God is mentioned. Previous naturalists all seemed to be intent on "seeing the hand of God in all the works of nature, and of marking the traces of His wisdom, power and goodness". This, he thought, was only right. Whereas the 'business', in other words the procedures of natural science and theology, were quite distinct, nobody could study natural history without thinking about its deeper meaning. But he stressed, lest his hearers were getting impatient, that he, as their president was not about to expound a theory that "attempts to eliminate nature's God from Nature's Works". For all that, it was, he said, a misunderstanding to think of all Darwinists as Atheists or Materialists. The next section is a mildly whimsical account of such people as Irish atheistic physicist John Tyndall, social-Darwinist Ernst Haeckel, (coiner of the terms 'ecology' and 'master race'), and Thomas Huxley. The naturalist, Norman reckons, reads these people "with a smile of amused amazement" and "wearies his puzzled brain" with their theories which must be dismissed as "being equally at variance with science, revelation, and common sense, and destitute of any foundation in fact". So far so good. "Nothing that need cause alarm". Indeed Norman was himself convinced that "Darwinism has not yet taken rank as a science", but even if it had, and were proved true, would that mean that God was eliminated from nature? Norman then proceeds to give a fair summary of the differing views concluding that

“just now the popular line” was that evolution might well be true but that it was God who started it going. But Norman himself thought this was a weak compromise, after all “if God...does intend to reveal Himself in Nature, it must be directly as the Designer and Inventor of her innumerable wonders. In what other conceivable way could they have been designed?” For Norman this perceived design is the convincing argument: “as a naturalist I...am struck with the beauty, completeness, the exquisite finish of everything and its exact fitness for the part that it has to perform in the great scheme of Nature”. The irony here is that “exact fitness” is precisely the Darwinian case but Norman draws the opposite conclusion from his own words and calls on those who have yet to make up their minds that they should suspend judgement and “do not believe that the Evolutionist has yet proved his theory”. Finally Norman briefly tackles this issue of Man and their descent from apes, he himself would find this “disagreeable” but if it were true it would stand as an objective fact whether he liked it or not. But he points out that there were as yet no intermediate fossil humans found, the ‘missing links’ were not there. Of course that was true at the time and it caused a real difficulty until the remains of fossil hominids did start to appear. The Commander concludes with a typical piece of whimsy saying that everybody should wait until the “Darwinian Cyclone shall have blown over” and calm having been restored everybody would be in a better position to judge but that he himself confidently expected that “those who now...range about in the semi-ape-like nudity of differentiated Man will be found ‘sitting at the feet of Moses, and in their right mind’”.

The next and final time the BNC devoted space to Darwinism in its journal was in 1927 when an account of the BAAS meeting in Leeds of that year was mainly devoted to summarising Sir Arthur Keith’s paper on the latest view of the descent of Man. Sir Keith is quoted as saying that Darwinism “settled for all time that man’s rightful position is among the Primates” and a sermon by the Bishop of Birmingham is also quoted asserting that man had evolved “from an ape-like stock”. So perhaps, that was then end of the issue, Science and Religion in perfect agreement? Or perhaps not, the members of the BNC who read this in 1927 would have been aware that just two years earlier a schoolteacher in USA had been successfully prosecuted for teaching evolution. And today the debate continues, with Creationism again back in contention, the Christian Fundamentalists now aided by equally dogmatic statements from some Islamic preachers. The late Victorian Berwickers though seemed all for compromise, like a genteel lady’s remark at the time of the publication of the *Origin*: “Descended from the apes? Well, let us hope that it is not true - but if it is, let us hope it won’t become generally known”.

Chris Green

## WORKHOUSE PROJECT

After a long wait and lots of patience, the Berwick Workhouse Project has finally got started properly. Most of the volunteers have received feedback on their trial run and are starting to catalogue the correspondence of the Poor Law Commissioners with the Berwick Board of Guardians. We hope to include some snippets in every newsletter of what we have found in the minutes. At the moment we are looking at the period 1834 to the early 1850s. Below is some of the information that we have found so far.

## THE MORE THINGS CHANGE.....!

*As part of 'Living the Poor Life' project we have been looking at correspondence between the Berwick-upon-Tweed Board of Guardians and the Poor Law Commissioners in 1844. The following letter contains the excuse offered by John Paxton, the Medical Officer for Norhamshire, for not having his account books ready for the Auditor in October 1844.*

Norham  
25 Oct 1844

Sir

An unexpected succession of severe cases has required almost my constant attention & prevented me from preparing my Books for the Auditor. As I consider it my duty to attend to the persons of suffering, before attending to their names ages etc I have been obliged to forego the latter, as the days are now getting short I will endeavour to steal a few hours from the night and have them ready to send down by the carrier in the morning.

Yours etc

J. Paxton

*Jane Bowen & Jan Ward*

## **THE UNRESOLVED CASE OF MARGARET DUNLOP**

On December 6, 1834, John Anderson, the Assistant Overseer of the Parish of Tweedmouth, wrote a letter to the Poor Law Commissioners at Somerset House in London. The letter begins thus 'I am directed to ask your advice on a case of bastardy the first we have had anything to do with since 14th August last.' August 14, 1834 was the day the amended Poor Law of 1834 came into force. The case the assistant overseer referred to was that of Margaret Dunlop and her illegitimate child and how to deal with it under the new law. The mother did not want to have anything to do with her child who apparently had been cared for by the alleged father, Forster Swinney of the village of Spittal, a single man living with his father. The alleged father had several times tried to return the child to its mother, but with little success. Margaret Dunlop had appeared before the magistrates at a petty session as she wanted to be relieved of the duty of having to take care of the child. Before she appeared she was told by the assistant overseer that under the new law she could not swear a child upon another person, to do so she would have to appear at the Quarter Session at Durham and produce credible evidence in her favour (in 1834 Tweedmouth was still part of County Durham). This she did but was again told by the court that if she was herself unable to care for the child, her father, mother, grandfather or grandmother would have to assist. The problem could be solved by admitting both the mother and the child to the poor house, which the parish was willing to do, but the mother refused.

So things were at a stalemate and therefore the parish turned to the Poor Law Commissioners in London for help and guidance. We do not have the actual reply sent by the Poor Law Commissioners, only notes scribbled on the letter from Tweedmouth dated December 11, 1834. The commissioners mention different things that the parish can do under paragraph 72 of the Poor Law, which deals with either the parish being responsible for the care of a illegitimate child if the mother is unable to do so herself, or the swearing over of responsibility to the father if credible evidence can be produced to prove his identity. Another possible solution open to



the parish would be to refuse relief to the child and thereby forcing it to go to the poor house, or only offer relief, as really needed. It does not seem quite clear whether this refers to the child only or to the mother as well. However, the last sentence in the reply sums up the ideology behind the new law, it says 'and withhold all improper inducement to resort to the parish'

I have not been able to find out what actually happened in the case of Margaret Dunlop, her attempt to swear over responsibility to the alleged father seems to have failed. Nothing appears in the newspaper about it, no minutes of meetings are to be found. We do not even know who Margaret Dunlop was, was the case perhaps hushed up? Other reports from the magistrates' court appear in the Berwick Advertiser around this time.

If anybody reading this should have information about the case I would very much like to hear about it.

*Lars Rose*

### **VOLUNTEER WANTED**

The Berwick Board of Guardians Minute books for 1834 to 1839 inclusive never came to the Record Office as part of the original deposit of records. As it will contain very useful information which will help us with the project, I thought it would be useful to try and recreate it through the reports in the Berwick Advertiser of the time. I am looking for a couple of volunteers who would be willing to locate the entries in the local newspaper and type them up for us. If anyone is interested in doing this, please get in touch (01289 301865 or [linda.bankier@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:linda.bankier@northumberland.gov.uk) ). It would be really useful background for the project and might explain some of the correspondence exchanged between the Guardians and the Poor Law Commissioners.

*Linda Bankier*

## **THE WEATHER IN BERWICK, MARCH 1884**

As part of his diary, Dr Henry Richardson kept a note of the weather conditions in Berwick. Below are his observations for March 1884

## Dr Henry Richardson, M.D., R.N. Diary

Date	Temp° F	Weather
1		Ground covered with some inches of snow, misty, quite calm
2		Snow nearly gone, calm sunny day
3		Very cold, SE wind strong, a few flakes of snow
4		Dull wet disagreeable day
5		Beautiful day
6	44	Fine mild sunny day, wind very light
7	42	Fine sunny morning almost calm, afternoon thick mist and drizzle
8	40	Thick and misty day with drizzling rain all day and heavy rain at night
9	36	Dull and showery in morning, afterwards fine calm and sunny, blowing fresh at night
10	36	Blowing very bad during night with rain, snow began to fall at 8 a.m. and continued till 10 after which sun came out, wind moderated and fine clear day
11	32	Fine clear calm day, Cheviots white from top to bottom, less bright p.m. and light easterly wind
12	38	Rather dull day with occasional sunshine, cold SSE wind
13	42	Dull day, wind SW fresh, temperature mild – very.
14	50	Blowing fresh from SW all night and more or less during the day, remarkably mild, almost warm
15	50	p.m. lovely day, wind SW and moderate
16	45	Wind SSW very light, clear sunny morning, mist came on at 9.29 a.m. and continued more or less during the day but sun shone through it – lovely day quite warm
17	45	Wind SSE very light, fine sunny day quite warm – a most enjoyable day
18	47½	Strong breeze from SW all night and morning, almost a gale in forenoon, weather very variable sunshine and showers and wind
19	44	Blowing very strong during the night, wind very light in the morning from SW, freshening afterwards to a gale at night, fine sunny day
20	43	Wind extremely violent from the westward all night and early part of the day
21	39	Fine sunny morning, wind NW fresh, rather cold day, a brief shower of hail at 1 p.m.
22	36	Fine sunny morning, wind westerly moderate – afternoon dull cold and showery
23	40	Wind westerly, sunshine and clouds, fine pleasant day

24	39½	Wind E cold, fine sunny day but rather misty
25	39½	Wind SE, sun shining through mist, fine day, wind rather cold
26	38	Dull morning and dull cold day, wind north easterly, moderate
27	39½	Wind NE, rather dull morning and day with an occasional glimpse of sunshine
28	38	Wind NE light, cold da, rather dull and showery
29	39½	Fine sunny morning, wind southerly, rather dull cold day
30	38	Wind S, dull misty day
31	42	Wind East very cold, thick mist, rain and sleet in afternoon and wind changed to West, fine clear and rainy at night

*Jan Bowen*

## **MUSINGS FROM MY WINDOW**

Just after Christmas I was confined to barracks with a very cold-who wasn't? I sat at my bedroom window and contemplated the world before me.

Perhaps you don't know, but Peter and I live at number thirteen Bankhill and our house stands above the River Tweed, looking down on the junction of Love Lane and the New Road.

So, I fell to thinking of what I could see and what history had passed before me.

On a clear day we can see right down to Holy Island and most days the coast and Bamburgh are visible. Sweeping round through 180 degrees we can see bits of the coast, Cow Road, the chimney at Spittal, Eastcliffe, Highcliffe, the High School and on and on until we reach the towers of Longridge, Stephenson's railway bridge and finally the site of Berwick's castle.

I sometimes feel that, with a more fertile imagination, I could conjure up people and events from the earliest days of settlement in this grand panorama. Maybe years ago, I visited the Camera Obscura in Edinburgh and I feel this would be an ideal site for such an implement in Berwick, so that future generations could reflect on the rich history before them.

Coming closer to my home, we have been assured that the last vestiges of the Cat Wall lie at the end of our garden. Perhaps so, but it is now blanketed by many years of garden compost. A Time Team of the future might dig there and find artefacts from the 1300's. I know there was a dig in Cowe's yard not long ago, and there were skeletons - but I never followed it up - perhaps I should.

Also below and around us was the Monastery of Ravensdale. Again my knowledge of this establishment is very hazy. We still have to pay way leave of £1 per annum to use the end of our path to the river, as it leads over Tintagel House land which might be part of the site of the hospice called Maison Dieu. What tales it could tell.

Later centuries find the granaries which were prevalent in this area. We found a millstone in our garden and one visitor to our house remembered a small cannon standing here in the fifties, but there is no evidence of that now.

We also used to pay way-leave of 6d because our house was built "on the Walls". The sum stopped being collected a long time ago, but always there are reminders of huge amount of history in this relatively small space.

Some day, when I am not doing more pressing present day things, I should see about ordering my mind and do some research so that the ghosts of the past can be assembled and tell their stories.

Some day.....*Barbara Herdman*

## **A QUIET WEDDING IN WOOLER- 1877**

*Dr James Hardy of Old Cambus was secretary of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club for 27 years until his death in 1898. For most of that time, he visited and corresponded with a Mrs Jane Barwell – Carter, who lived in the Woolmarket in Berwick. She was the daughter of Dr George Johnston, founder of the Naturalists.*

*It had been his habit to spend a couple of weeks after the harvest each year with friends in Wooler. Here in the following extract, as a bachelor of 60, he confides his*

*intention to marry – his intended bride of 52 having just been ‘released from attendance’ on her bedridden mother.*

**15<sup>th</sup> November 1876 Old Cambus**

....I may whisper to you, as I told you before, first of all living beings, that some time or other soon, I may be expected to get married. It is so foolish with old people, or people who are reckoned old; but if you knew how much I am bothered to keep things in order, with only a pair of hands, you would say I had done it merely to obtain help. I will at least get quit of household care, and have my papers kept in their places regarding the Club’s business. I cannot get the old house so nice as I would like it, but will maybe get another farm with a better dwelling. The house is the length of half a street, but has no proper accommodation and is very cold, but there are few houses in the county that are not so exposed. I will probably be back at Wooler in December....

***Marriage notice in the Berwick Advertiser***

*At the parish church Wooler on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1877 by the Rev. J.S Green MA vicar. James Hardy, Old Cambus West Mains to Ann daughter of the late James Halliday, Wooler.*

**27<sup>th</sup> February 1877 Old Cambus**

I thank you much for your kind remembrance. My wife carried it off and has it stored up among other letters of good will and kindness from known and unknown correspondents of my own. We are getting on very comfortably as you prophesied would happen, when the humanising influence of female oversight would prevail.

I must tell you all about the ceremony, as some old customs and superstitions manifested themselves, not as regards ourselves, but the onlookers. When I went to Wooler, I found everything pre-arranged. The marriage was from the house of Miss Short of Wooler Mill, a benevolent genius and social centre in the place. Her father first brought me from Berwick, a little boy under his wing and introduced me to my uncle’s family, and it is from his house as represented by his daughter, that I took away the representative of the good folk who lived in the other house, to which I ever after came to as a home, for it was a hospitable place.

I arrived the previous evening and warned Mr Green and got his and Mrs Green's directions. Among other directions I was to warn the police to be there, as people were often rude and ready to extract money, by placing a rope across the street after the ceremony. Before leaving my house I avoided an infliction of old shoes by escaping at an unexpected door. I stayed at Miss Short's for the evening and went over in the morning to help my intended wife to flit the few remains of articles she wanted to take with her, and we all breakfasted at the house of our patroness for the occasion. Miss Short's niece was the bridesmaid and Miss Halliday's nephew, who was cousin to the bridesmaid, was my representative. He and I had a neat posy of snowdrops and green leaves, which were the only floral decorations.

A carriage took us to the church, the police were there and all was orderly. The church was pretty well filled with spectators, although it happened at half past 9. I never saw a church marriage before, but Mr Green was a grand director. When we retired, an attempt was made at the church door to place a board for us to step over, by some masons working at the church repairs, but it was checked directly. There came also a written petition for drink money from the same parties but we were not so foolish as to listen to it. The children of course had to get their handful of small coins scattered about for them.

In going up the street, a basin of rice was thrown across the vehicle. It seemed to have pleased the Wooler people to have it there. It was termed 'a neat nice wedding' and was a grand termination to what they were pleased to call a 'twenty year's engagement', although that is a gross exaggeration. The carriage returned to Miss Short's and a plate of cake was cast over the bride's head and once more copper tribute was forthcoming to the bairns, who appeared to have deserted school for the day. After refreshments and a meeting of the bride's relatives, and a change of clothes, we drove to Belford, receiving on parting the usual old shoe tokens, which are more hearty than commendable.

We went from Belford by the express to Dunbar, dined there alone and got a conveyance and were here at 6 o'clock. The only demonstrations were flags and evergreen arch and we arrived unexpectedly and passed in quietly without any uproar, in the quiet way that both of us like.

'Creeling' was whispered, but the people knew better, and they have had their own entertainment suitable to the occasion.

The Club work goes on as usual and my leisure is not the least broken upon, and the house is more comfortable, and is and will look much better. My wife is delighted with the plan, small as the house is, and never wearies gazing at the ever -

changing sea, stealing away at times to watch its motions from the upper windows in a sort of rapt wonder.

Hoping our correspondence will proceed as usual, with kind regards.....

*Although he does not make the connection, he and Ann Halliday were related. His mother was a Halliday, and Ann's father, must be the 'uncle' referred to. Despite the seeming lack of romance, the arrangement suited them both and they appear to have been a most devoted couple for the next 21 years.*

*Joan Wright*

## THE BLUE BELL IN 1909 AND A VISIT TO LINDISFARNE

**(Extract from an article by a 'Peripatetic Parson' which appeared in the Church Times Sept 17 1909)**

In the afternoon the picturesquely situated castle, perched on a steep conical rock of basalt at the extreme south east of the island, was visited. It was built quite early in the sixteenth century for protection against the Scotch or the French, and has no feudal significance. It is sometimes stated that it was built by Prior Castell, which probably means that it was erected by the Crown with his assent and sanction. It was garrisoned by Parliament in 1646, and in 1715 was held for two days by one Lancelot Errington on behalf of the Pretender. Until recently the castle was used as a station for a detachment of the Coast Brigade of the Royal Artillery, and guns were mounted on the platform. But since the advent of the far-carrying great guns, this pile of most substantial masonry has become obsolete as a place of defence, and the Government let it on a long lease to Mr. Edward Hudson (of *Country Life* fame) with the power of resuming it at any date if required for national use. Mr. Hudson has bestowed much care and excellent taste in adapting this small fortress for residential purposes. and has made it a perfect treasure-house, from top to bottom, of genuine old world furniture of every kind. The path up some sixty feet to the castle entrance is a paved causeway, there a small portcullis gives access to a

stairway hewn in the solid rock. The views from the platform on the summit, and occasionally, as we mount, through the embrasures in the massive masonry, are singularly extensive and impressive. They extend over the dreary looking island towards Emmanuel Head on the north-east, and towards the Snook on the south-east; the coast-line northwards is visible beyond Berwick to St. Abb's Head, whilst the imposing outline of Bamburgh Castle stands out to the south; inland to the west are the near Kyloe hills, with the Cheviot range beyond them; and again, seaward towards the south-east is the low-lying archipelago of the Farne islands, sacred to the memory of St. Cuthbert. A profusion of wild flowers deck the skirts of this castle rock. The horned yellow poppy was in full flower, and so, too, was a large clump of the noisome henbane.

Ere leaving the island, on the shore to the south-west, facing the little island where the foundations of the chapel of St. Cuthbert-in-the-Sea have been exposed, we stopped to search with some success, for the tiny circular fossils known as St. Cuthbert's Beads. The wearing of these is still supposed by some to be a preservative against shipwreck or drowning at sea. Before the evening closed, the usual route between Holy Island and the mainland was taken, for it was low water, and the three miles of sand stretching from Chare Ends on the island to Beal on the mainland was entirely clear of sea. The route is plainly marked out by a long procession of lofty stakes or poles, and for part of the course by some of the ancient heaps of yet unsunken stones that guided the pilgrims in the days before stakes were used. In two places on the mainland side where there is the most risk of a sudden influx of returning waters, refuge boxes are fixed to stout poles, gained by rough ladders, for the safety of rash adventurers who may attempt the passage at risky times. We were content to cross this sandy waste in a two-wheeled conveyance, but when leaving Lindisfarne, we had spoken to two ladies who had just arrived on foot; for the greater part of the track the sand had been practically dry, but now and again, for some yards, there was a sufficiency of lingering water, or water-charged sand, to wet the feet about ankle high. Daily the passage is made barefoot, though usually by the men of the district in seamen's boots. On gaining the shore at Beal, a kind of well of water, with an adjacent seat, was pointed out as the place where the barefooted ones usually resumed their shoes and stockings. The train and a certain amount of walking brought us again to the "Blue Bell" of Belford.

*Jane Bowen*



## **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

**Berwick Advertiser August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1864**

### MARRIAGES CEREMONIES

The briefest marriage ceremonies in the world-that is, among civilised nations-are those practised in the United States of America. The following is authentic: - Magistrate: "What is your name, sir?"- Answer: "Matty."-Magistrate:\_ "What is your name, miss?"- Answer: "Polly." -Magistrate: "Matty do you take Polly?"-Answer: "Polly, do you take Matty?"-Answer: "No mistake."-Magistrate: "Polly, do you take Matty?"-Answer: "I reckon I do." Magistrate: Well, then, I pronounce you man and wife all the days of your life."

**Berwick Advertiser August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1864**

### THE SANITARY CONDITION OF HOLY ISLAND

Sir-,from your report of the meeting of Guardians last week, I observed a letter was read from Rev. Dr Dykes, calling attention to two very bad cases of small pox that had occurred in Holy Island, and expressing his fears that unless something was done to cleanse the Island, that malady might spread, by which the Rev. Doctor leads the Guardians and the public to believe that it is owing to the disregard to cleanliness on the part of the inhabitants that these two cases of small pox have occurred. Sir, begged to state, that as a regular visitor to Holy Island, and one who has deep interest in its welfare, that during no period of its history in my recollection has the sanitary condition of the Island been better, as exemplified in the cleanliness of its street and lanes, than during the present season. As regards the two cases of small pox referred to, both were imported into the Island, the first man from Newcastle, and the second that of a poor woman who had gone to Berwick and purchased clothing at a Broker's shop, which she incautiously put on to wear without washing, and thus arose the two cases; both patients, I am happy to add, are now convalescent. I might almost challenge Dr Dakyns to instance a village, whose inhabitants are chiefly fishermen and their families, showing a lower death-rate, or as many old people as is to be found in Holy island, thus proving that the Island, even prior to the new sanitary laws, was a very healthy place. It was only last week

that your obituary announced the demise of one of its inhabitants at the patriarchal age of 87.

**Berwick Advertiser August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1864**

SCREMERSTON GYMNASTIC GAMES

These annual games came off on Monday last, on the usual field Heathery Tops. The day was observed as a holiday in the district, and the owners of the collieries considerably shut their works in order that all their employees might participate in the pastime. The weather being all that could be desired for the occasion, there was a large turn out of farmers and their wives and families, as also bathers from Spittal. We observed, among the present, Mrs Johnston, Miss Barras, and Mr Johnston, from Scremerston House. The arena was surrounded by blooming and smiling faces of the village and district lads and lasses, and the scene was livened by the presence of the Scremerston Brass Band, which throughout the day discoursed lively music and was much appreciated.

**Berwick Advertiser September 3, 1864**

THE QUEEN'S JOURNEY FROM WINDSOR TO BALMORAL

The whole railway journey of 580½ miles was finished within one minute from the appointed time-namely, in nineteen hours and forty-six minutes.

**Berwick Advertiser October 22, 1864**

FORMATION OF A TWEEDOMETER AND DISCOVERY OF AN OLD INSCRIPTION

Taking advantage of the very low state of the Tweed recently, Mr Brown, Road Surveyor, has carried into effect an idea which he had for a considerable time conceived, by forming on the river side of the retaining wall, immediately at the bottom of his garden, and near to the remains of the northern parapet of Kelso old bridge, a "Tweedometer," or gauge for measuring the height of the river. Such gauge, it must strike every one, will be of great use in keeping a record of all unusual depression or elevations of the water; and especially within the last two

years, during which there have been two very large floods, and during the late summer a drought both extraordinary and lengthened, its value would have been highly appreciated.

*Carole Pringle*