



# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 74—JUNE 2012*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Armed Forces Day - History of the Northumberland Fusiliers and the Territorial Army, 10am – 4pm. Exhibition prepared by the Record Office in the Guildhall, Berwick.

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Open Evening at Berwick Museum to see the refurbished Burrell Gallery, 4- 8 pm. Open invitation for Friends

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

**As most groups do not meet in the Summer, we have only included those who do or have given us dates for their September meeting.**

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June

Walk in Ingram Valley: Brian Rogers

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July

Walk around Ford Church: Rev.Dickinson

**No lectures in August**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September

AGM

### **BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July

Hidden Berwick- Alison Cowe. A guided walk round Berwick's less well known sites followed by refreshments at Castle Vale House, courtesy of Justin and Margaret Gudgeon. Meet at Bridge End at 7pm

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Heritage Doors Open Days

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

**No lectures in July and August**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September

Partnership Working and Revitalising our Heritage in the Scottish Borders: Dr Christopher Bowles

**BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose**

**Time: 2.30pm**

**No Lectures in July and August**

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Abbotsford: Dr Sandra McNeil

**DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

**No Lectures in July and August**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September

Alan Archibald Campbell Swinton – the true  
inventor of television: Paul Marshall.

**GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30pm**

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June

“Archaeology of the Breamish Valley” as  
featured at Ingram Farm. A midsummer  
guided walk led and narrated by Sarah  
Wilson. **Meet at Ingram Visitor Society**  
**10.00am**

**No Lectures in July and August**

**NORHAM HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Norham Village Hall**

**Time : 7.30 pm**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July

The White Swan: Paul Morgan

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July

Visit to Greenknowe and Smailholm Towers

**No Lectures in August**

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September

“Gunsgreen, Robert Lambe & Legends” :  
Dereck James

**NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH**

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

**Time: 10.00am**

**No Lectures in July and August**

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September

Farming in the Cheviots: Margaret Brown &  
Anna Turnbull

**TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Crookham Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July

Walk around Berwick with Jim Herbert- a follow up to his talk on the medieval defences of Berwick. Meet at Berwick Station at 6.30pm.

**No Lectures in August**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September

“The History of the turnpike roads of Northumberland with special reference to the A697” : Derek Cutts

**ARCHIVE NEWS**

The past couple of months seem to have flown by – I’m not sure where to – but there has been plenty to keep Carole and myself busy.

If you were at the AGM, Lord Joicey updated us on the Flodden 1513 Project which was waiting to hear about its initial funding application. The Project was awarded a Development Phase Grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to work up the full project and I have been involved in it on a Cross Border basis. Rachel Hosker, the Scottish Borders Archivist and myself were asked to investigate the feasibility of undertaking a research project as part of the main project. This has involved us contacting and visiting various archives to try and establish what actual primary source material is available about the Battle of Flodden and its aftermath in this area, right up to 1603. We have visited the National Archives at Edinburgh and London, the Duke of Northumberland’s Archives at Alnwick Castle; Northumberland Archives and the British Library as well as contacting numerous archives. We have uncovered some fascinating original documentation but have become very aware that there is a big gap in the Scottish records, just prior to the battle and afterwards. It has been a fascinating project where I have certainly learnt a lot and had the privilege of seeing

original documents signed by Henry VIII and James IV of Scotland – certainly not part of my everyday job. We just have to keep our fingers crossed that the main bid is successful and that we can continue this work with the help of volunteers.

As well as the project, I have continued my work with the people of Holy Island on establishing a Community Archive. We are getting there but there is still a lot to do.

The Shepherding Project based in the Glendale area continues to go from strength to strength. We have over 25 Oral History recordings now and have been able to digitise a vast number of photographs relating to sheep and shepherding in the area. We are now getting a travelling exhibition together which we will show at various venues throughout the area in the summer months to allow a wider audience to see what we have found out.

Things have been a bit quiet on the Education front recently as there are so many other things to do. However, in March, I worked with Sure Start on an Early Start course where we used our Archive Resource boxes to help parents and children under 5 to talk about various topics, including toys and families. The families also paid a visit to the Museum where we organised a Wash day activity for the children – hanging up clothes with dolly pegs; smelling carbolic soap and making a lot of noise with the old washboards! – followed by a visit to Berwick Library. At the time I had John Rowntree, a university student on a 3 week placement with us and as his first day, was the Museum Visit, he must have wondered what he was getting involved in!

Finally, over the past couple of months, I have given a few talks – Berwick Civic Society on Jubilee Celebrations in Berwick; Crookham History Group – the Old and New Poor Laws; and the Popular Politics Study Day in Berwick – The Poor Law project with the assistance of John Spiers.

There is never a dull moment in the Record Office and Carole and I always have projects on the go. We never know what we will be asked to get involved in next.

*Linda Bankier*

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

As part of our ongoing work on local records relating to the New Poor Law, I'm looking for a couple of volunteers to go through the local newspapers on microfilm to pick up reports of the Guardians meetings and anything else related to the

Workhouse. If you are interested in doing this, just get in touch – (01289) 301865 or lbankier@woodhorn.org.uk

## **TWEEDMOUTH FEAST**

In the last Friends newsletter, Carole included a snippet on the Tweedmouth Feast in 1870 which attracted visitors from all over the area and Tyneside. At this stage, it was only a Fair and in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it went into decline. It was revived in the late 1940s and from this date included “The Crowning of the Salmon Queen” which started the festivities. The first Queen appointed on its revival was Miss Dorothy Coulthard in 1947. The Feast and the Crowning still continue today in July and we have a number of films of the Feast events , including the crowning and the various floats which formed a great procession in the past. One of the films relates to the Crowning in 1980 and I have copied below the information we found in the newspaper to accompany it :

### **Berwick Advertiser - July 17 1980**

#### **ALL SET FOR TWEEDMOUTH'S FEAST WEEK**

For 1100 years it has been time for rejoicing

With the crowning tonight of schoolgirl Jill Summers as Tweedmouth Salmon Queen, another Feast Week will be in full swing and a programme of events designed to suit all tastes has been drawn up by a committee headed by Berwick and Border Lions Club.

Jill, aged 16, will be crowned by Tyne Tees Television presenter Mr Roderick Griffith at a ceremony at the Jubilee Lamp. It will be a particularly significant occasion for the Summers family for Jill's elder sister Wendy was the Salmon Queen two years ago.....

After the crowning at 7.30 p.m. she will receive an inscribed medallion from Councillor Leslie Sidey, the Mayor of Berwick who has done so much over the years to preserve the Feast tradition. Preliminary events have already been held, but tonight's colourful ceremony marks the official launch of the Feast which dates back over 1200 years.

For the next week there will be events on every day of the week. The West End will be the focal point and many of the festivities including a children's party and a Fair will take place in a specially erected marquee.

On Sunday the Feast Sunday service will be held in Tweedmouth Parish Church.

Organisations and clubs will be competing against each other for the Feast Trophy and the Week will reach a spectacular climax with the carnival in which up to 30 floats will be entered from all over the Borough.

The committee has worked tirelessly to arrange the programme.

**24 July 2012**

### **A FEAST WEEK TRIUMPH**

The rain did not deter the crowds from gathering at the Jubilee Lamp on Thursday night to watch the official crowning of the new Salmon Queen, Miss Jill Summers . It is the event which highlights the festivities of the Tweedmouth Feast.

Guests at the ceremony included the Civic Party, local councillors and committee members. Special guest was Mr Rod Griffiths of Tyne Tees Television who crowned Jill, the 1980 Salmon Queen.

The rain held back while the Royal British Legion and Border Bridge Pipe Band led the way for the retiring Queen , Miss Lorraine Morrison and her attendants. Lorraine with, Leslie Jeffrey, Catherine Steele, Alison Steele, Julia Leask, Michelle Bloomfield walked in procession from the Mitchell Memorial on Kiln Hill to the Queen's Gardens.

There they waited for the arrival of 16 year old Jill Summers, the Queen elect and her attendants, Susan Dodds, Lily Drummond, Gillian Evans, Caron Miller, Anne Johnson and Anne Arneil who left from the Town Hall by float escorted by the Army Cadets and the Boys Brigade led by the Coldstream Pipe Band, Local Guides, Brownies, Cubs and Scouts provided a guard of honour for the procession. On arrival at the dias, the Berwick and Border Lions Club president, Mr W Rae Huntly said how well the retiring Queen Lorraine had carried out her duties in the previous year, and although she now lives in London, she still managed to come to the

Tweedmouth for the Feast. Before handing over the crown, Lorraine wished the new Salmon Queen the best of luck for the coming year and told how much she had enjoyed her reign – “Through being the Salmon Queen I have been able to get to know many people from the area and I have gained many new friends”, she said.

The Lions president then introduced Mr Rod Griffiths of TV “Northern Life” fame who was to perform the crowning. ... He commented on the wonderful sense of community still carrying on in Tweedmouth and Berwick and he urged residents to keep it up. “The Salmon Queen is not chosen for her good looks”, he said, “but for the love and kindness they show around the community. I believe that the new Queen (as I’m sure previous Queens did) will show a great deal of cheer and comfort to all the people she visits”.

The Mayor, Councillor Leslie Sidey, presented Jill with a commemorative medallion and in doing so he said that men and women returned from long distances every year to join in the Tweedmouth Feast. He thanked the Lions Club and their steering committee for all the work they had done for the event. He congratulated the new Salmon Queen and hoped that all these people who had come to Tweedmouth would have a happy time.....Their hearts went out to the Vicar of Tweedmouth, Dr I O Henderson who had done so much for the feast and the traditional service over the years, and sent him their best wishes for a speedy return to health.

Queen Jill received the medallion and thanked especially Mr David Conway, Head of the Berwick High School and the staff for choosing her for the honour of being the Salmon Queen . She said that she was looking forward to all of her official engagements and promised to carry out all of the tasks expected of her as best she could. After the crowning ceremony, the Salmon Queen led the official party to the War Memorial where she laid a wreath in memory of the men of Tweedmouth who gave their lives in two World Wars . A short service conducted by the Rev Gordon Johnston followed.

At a salmon supper which followed in the St Cuthbert’s School, presentations were made to the new Queen and her attendants and also to the 1979 Queen and her attendants. A painting was presented to Mr Griffiths on behalf of the Lions Club. ...

Tweedmouth Feast has forged ahead this week with a very ambitious programme. A mini market in the marquee on Saturday attracted a good attendance and while the rain fell heavily there was comfort and excitement under the roof of the marquee which formed a central point for so many of the week’s activities. The event was



organised by the Round Table. Huge crowds watched the fun and excitement on Friday as teams reached the concluding stages of the competition for the Feast Trophy. In the end after a night which included welly throwing , a tug of war competition and a hectic hilarious bed race, the trophy was won by the Maltsters, The Angel came second and Berwick Cricket Club came third overall

*Linda Bankier*

## MUSEUM NEWS

The museum opened for a busy start to the season on 2<sup>nd</sup> April with four new members of staff for our front of house - Jenny Morgan, Megan Pearson, Carol Rowett & Judith Savage. Karen Page, who has re-joined us for a third season, is working also at Paxton House. We opened for additional days over the Easter weekend and the Jubilee holidays, and as a result we gained almost 1000 extra visitors.

We had a special and unexpected visit on 26<sup>th</sup> May by a group of 34 bedraggled children & teachers from Goosehill School, Morpeth. The group had set off intending to visit Lindisfarne, but there had been so much rain that morning that the site was completely flooded! The group enjoyed their visit to the barracks, and found lots to entertain themselves while on site.

The opening temporary exhibition “A Berwick Cornucopia” displays some of the interesting items we rediscovered during the Effective Collections project, and which would not necessarily be shown for one reason or another. Items include the Holy Island fire pump, some of Berwick’s weights and measures, church silver and Boys Brigade material.

The Burrell Gallery has now been painted, and re-carpeted, and is looking very smart. Berwick’s paintings were packed and transported north late in May, and the gallery is now open again – we are still tinkering with the lighting and the labels, though! Jon Old, Conservator at the Bowes Museum, visited Berwick recently to view our revamped fine art store rooms – he pronounced them fit for purpose. He was also pleased to be shown around the Granary Gallery on his trip north, as he gave lots of advice when the building was being converted to its present use. The museum is involved in an exciting project to exhibit part of the Burrell Collection at the gallery in July. This should ensure that more of the collection will be out on display, as well as allowing visitors to view the collection at weekends - and without having to pay.

I have involved Jemma Edwards, a conservator who has been working at Bowes Museum, to help produce a full survey of the Fine Art Collection. This was carried out prior to the paintings being transported back to Berwick, and we now have a very good idea of the condition of each painting, with a record of recommended conservation for each.

The Journal Culture magazine for February featured Berwick's "Russian Dancers" by Degas in a full page article which also included information on Sir William Burrell. The pastel itself will be exhibited at the prestigious Bayeler Foundation, Switzerland in an exhibition of late works by the artist this coming winter.

*Anne Moore - Museums Officer, North Northumberland.*

## **FAMILY HISTORY AND THE LOCAL RECORD OFFICE**

I am a keen amateur genealogist and would like to raise a vote of thanks for that fabulous nationwide resource that is the Local Record Office. They come with various names, local archives, records office, heritage services etcetera but each and every one is a treasure chest of information.

We have lived in Northumberland for a number of years now and, although I am not a native of Berwick, I had hopes when I started researching my family history that I might find that my mother's family, the Hoggs, came from this part of the world. It is a local name after all. This proved not to be the case as I have traced them back to the early 1700's living as yeomen in Norfolk. So no local ancestors here but I have used our local records office to help me research the industrial history of parts of Spittal. When I have time I want to do more research about the house we live in.

My delvings into family history have revealed some interesting things about my family which I wouldn't have discovered without help from local archivists. One of my forbears, an organ builder died in Hull at the age of forty-three of 'insanity and headache' brought on by working with the lead used to make the organ pipes; another was the youngest soldier, at the tender age of fourteen, to fight at the Battle of Sedgemoor in the ill-fated Monmouth Rebellion in 1685 and was lucky to escape the justice meted out by Hanging Judge Jeffries at the Bloody Assizes.

However although various facts and figures can be discovered easily enough online these days, to bring people's lives into focus there is nothing to touch the resources provided by local record and archive offices.

My grandmother and grandfather lived in one of the poorest parts of London. She was a dressmaker, he was a journeyman baker. My grandfather was a bigamist and had a large family already when he 'married' my grandmother. From the information that my mother gave me when she was alive I do not think she knew that this was a bigamous marriage but she was aware of a stepbrother, Walter, having been killed in WW1. Her mother died when she was fifteen and her unscrupulous father abandoned his second family as he had his first, and all but my mother were put into care. I did not have a lot to go on when trying to find this missing brother, but after a lot of research I discovered all my grandfather's children by his legal wife including the half-brother that my mother remembered. Walter Charles Hogg was born 16<sup>th</sup> July 1898 at 14 Nairn Street Bromley. In 1901 he was living with his mother [not my grandmother] but his father was not with them on the census. He did not appear with either parent in 1911 and I discovered that he was living in an institution in Cheadle, Staffordshire. This turned out to be the County of Staffs Industrial School at Werrington, Stoke-on-Trent. I got in touch with Staffordshire Archives to ask whether they had any information about the school and in particular any mention of Walter. I was taken aback by the fullness of the reply received from Malinda Law one of the Archive Assistants. She had transcribed for me the complete record of Walter's life at the school. It seems he was sent there on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1909 having been sentenced to detention until 18 years of age. This record gave me so much information that I doubt I could have found anywhere else. It states that his father was William Hogg, out of work cook and cohabiting with Elizabeth Handford earning 7/- a week. Walter was charged with 'stealing a coat and offering it for sale'. The record states 'He has a bad record at home as being dishonest, a truant and generally untrustworthy. Sleeps out. Home influence is bad. School character bad.' I also learned that he was 5' 1" tall, slim, pale complexioned, light brown hair, grey eyes and with an ordinary nose. As distinguishing features he had large ears, the right one sticking out. The record goes on to state that he was discharged to the Band of the 1<sup>st</sup> Black Watch, Edinburgh but that on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1913 he was readmitted having been discharged from the army for theft. He was subsequently licensed to a Mr Edwards, a farmer in Wrexham. The farmer wanted to keep the boy paying him 2/6d per week. This was refused and Walter returned to the school. He was then sent to Market Drayton to a farmer who was to pay 4/-d a week and include board, lodging and washing. He seems to have stayed there for a while and in April he was earning £14 a year but his conduct was reported as 'unsatisfactory'.

In May his employer reported that he was impertinent and he was apparently 'still growing, 6 1/2 in socks'. By July the situation had worsened and the boy was reported as 'disobeying orders and rude and impudent if spoken to'. On September 5<sup>th</sup> the school received a letter from Walter saying that he had joined the Cameron Highlanders in London and he was subsequently transferred to their training camp at Invergordon, Ross-shire. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915 he sailed for France and by 9<sup>th</sup> February he was reported sick in hospital. On March 16<sup>th</sup> the school entry reads 'Letter received from lad's parents saying lad was shot in the body in the trenches and died before reaching hospital on Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup> RIP'.

There is then a final entry

'Minutes dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

Item 20... Of the boys who have left school, 70 are known to have been at the Front. Of these 6 are killed, 18 wounded, 5 reported missing [1 since rejoined] and 2 prisoners. Since war was declared 49 boys have been reported to the school as having volunteered their services and some are already at the front. One of these, Walter Hogg, 16 1/2 years of age but 6'2" in height, was killed in the fighting at Neuve Chapelle. 16 boys are serving in the Royal Navy.'

Walter had signed up when he was sixteen and died four months before his seventeenth birthday. He had lied about his age on joining up and his memorial reads 'In Memory of Private W.C. Hogg who died aged 18 on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1915. Remembered with honour, Voormezeele Enclosure No 3.'

How would I have discovered so much about this missing uncle without this record carefully stored away in Stafford?

A second piece of fascinating history was uncovered for me by the Somerset Archives Office. My maiden name, Gannicott, is now rare and has never been common. Making allowances for the various and wonderful spellings which appear in old documents, my father's family has been fairly easy to trace. I discovered that one of them, Ann Gannicott was transported in 1833 to Tasmania. I wrote to the Somerset Archive Office asking for information and very quickly received a comprehensive account of Ann's misdemeanour and her trial. I was also sent photostat copies of all the relevant documents for my files. I learnt that Ann appeared at the Bridgewater Midsummer Sessions on 2nd July 1832 charged, with two others, with felony. She was convicted of receiving stolen goods and duly sentenced. The record reads 'Let them [sic] be transported beyond the seas for a

period of fourteen years. Rough justice indeed. Ann was twenty four at the time and is described in the records as being ' 5'2", stout, pale complexion, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes.' She had a long face and a large chin, her distinguishing marks are described as a cut on the first finger of her left hand, she was childless and single and was employed as a servant in Taunton. Ann, together with John Perry and Henry Rose, was originally charged with stealing two aprons, two child's dresses and some stockings. . The witness statements given at the trial give a vivid insight into life in Taunton at the time. The motive given for selling the items was to raise money for food. John Rose was sentenced to be transported for fourteen years for larceny whilst Henry Rose was transported for life. He had a previous conviction for felony. Ann was only found guilty of receiving stolen goods but was still given fourteen years. On 11<sup>th</sup> January 1833 she was removed from the prison and sent to Woolwich where she was put aboard the convict ship Jane. By following up this information in the Tasmanian record office I was able to find out about Ann's life in Tasmania. She married a fellow convict in 1835 and received a final pardon on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1841. It seemed to me that she had received a very severe sentence, even by the standards of the day, but in reading around the subject I have discovered that judges often sentenced young women to transportation as there was a shortage of women in the colonies and they wanted to secure a continuing stable population in countries such as Australia.

I have other examples of the useful and detailed information available at local record offices but I have chosen these two as their stories are linked by misfortune and the effects on their lives of our legal system. Both were charged with stealing and trying to sell an article of clothing. How common a crime was this I wonder? Who would have thought that I would be able to discover not only my ancestors' physical characteristics but also an insight into the circumstances of their lives? How much more such information is there squirreled in archive offices all over the country? How lucky we are to have access to them and the knowledgeable staff who run them. So a very big thank-you from me to all of you for all your hard work and expertise, and for making the information so available.

Now.. I just need to do a bit more research and see if I can track down great great uncle Samuel Standen, reputedly drowned in the sinking of SS Northwood on his way to Australia, or his nephew, an organ builder in Bristol, or the mysterious disappearance of great grandfather Samuel Meech . . . . .

The trouble with family research is that one problem solved inevitably leads one onto another interesting path. A good thing that I know where to look for some answers.

*Brenda Crowcroft.*

## **SUFFRAGISTS AND SUFFRAGETTES PART 2**

Despite finding these accounts of visiting women to the area I had so far not managed to find out very much about politically active women in the movement who lived and remained in the area of North Northumberland. Militant acts further south around Tyneside and over the Border were reported in the newspapers, for example, a thwarted plan to burn down the Grandstand at Kelso racecourse in 1913 as revenge for a long prison sentence passed on Emmeline Pankhurst and the actual burning down of Whitekirk Church, near Dunbar in 1914.

However, whilst searching through old editions of the Berwick Advertiser at Berwick Record Office I made an interesting discovery. A Women's March from Edinburgh to London (approximately 400 miles) took place in the autumn of 1912. A small core group of women covered the entire route on foot, led initially by women on horseback and were joined for shorter stretches by supporters along the route. They followed the Great North Road, passing through Berwick, Belford and Alnwick.

The Berwick Advertiser of 11 October 1912 reported:

*The objective of the march is to carry a petition for which signatures will be solicited praying the Government to adopt a measure for Women's Suffrage this session. Recruits are joining at many places en route and it is anticipated that the ranks will considerably increase as the march proceeds. Meetings will be held at all places en route and literature sold and distributed; it is hoped that all friends in sympathy with the emancipation of women will assist the campaign by their active support when the march reaches Berwick on October 16<sup>th</sup>.*

*Names of recruits, for 1 or more days, donations and offers of help are urgently asked for and should be addressed to Mrs Le Fonblanque c/o Miss Ross, Eastbourne, Midhurst, Sussex.*

Recruits were expected to defray their own expenses, estimated at 35/- per week (*less if plenty of hospitality is offered*) making participants a self-selecting group able

to pay their own way and therefore less accessible to working-class women. It was intended to make the march a peaceful one, *no militancy being indulged in. Each member will be dressed in a brown tweed costume and a hat of the same material, with a green cockade at the side. (Berwick Journal)*

The marchers were joined at Dunbar by Isabel Cowe from St Abbs on her bicycle which she used to make detours for *scouting work* up by-roads in order to procure more signatures. Described by the *Berwick Journal* as an *enthusiastic Berwickshire recruit*, she was asked how the women were standing the strain:

*She replied with a homely illustration." It's like this...when I begin spring-cleaning after the winter's rest, I feel very stiff, and the first day especially is a hard grind, but afterwards I get used to it and don't feel it. These ladies will find the great walk like that and a day or two will put them in thorough training."*

*Miss Cowe has done splendid work en route, for the bicycle has enabled her to reach many out of the way farm-places and hamlets for signatures, and then rejoin the party. Her long experience of wrecks and storm at St. Abbs, where she has been a tower of strength to storm-stayed mariners, has made her hardy and helpful, and even in the roughest weather of the long evening she never missed a chance of getting a signature. Wearing a sou'wester, and holding a hurricane lantern and pen and ink, she made a picturesque figure.*

Isabel Cowe had only a few months earlier taken part in the rescue of passengers and crew from the ship *Glanmire* off Coldingham and given them shelter in her home. For her bravery she was awarded a Gold Brooch by the RNLI.

*Another Border lady, who not only travelled most of the way from Dunbar, but worked hard at local arrangements, was Mrs Hope of Sunwick.*

A van carrying the marchers' equipment was pulled by a horse named *Butterfly*, a mare belonging to Mrs Le Fonblanque. Bred and broken in by her, the horse completed the journey as far as Finchley in London but was then sent home to avoid the crowded London streets. (*Women's History Review 2007*)

Newspaper reports detailed names of new marchers and supporters providing accommodation and hospitality. Miss Grey of Lovaine Terrace, Mrs Willets (wife of a Head Teacher) and Mrs Fred W... were named for Berwick. Miss Grey, a teacher, was Secretary of the local WSPU.

The Daily Mail Special correspondent wrote from Reston:

*It has really been a dreadful walk for the marchers, but, wet through and tired as they must be, they were merry as crickets when I left them. Dunbar was left at seven o'clock this morning without breakfast. Mrs Harry Hope, the wife of the Unionist member for Buteshire, met the marchers on the road and took them to her home for breakfast. They had not long left here when the rain came down in torrents. The banner was stowed away in the van, but for the marchers there was no shelter and their russet brown costumes were soon almost chocolate-coloured with rain. While conditions were at their worst the marchers were cheered by the arrival of a deputation on bicycles from Haddington to wish them a good journey.*

The distance of 30 miles from Dunbar to Berwick was covered within 13 hours of 1 day, concluding in an open-air meeting near the Town Hall in Berwick. The women arrived about 8pm despite very bad weather, carrying candle-lamps and witnessed by a large crowd. (*Newcastle Evening Chronicle*)

*Yesterday, however, was a test of endurance of no mean order. It was the most strenuous and severe day which the Suffragists have had or are likely to have in their 400 mile march. While the average daily mileage for the walk is reckoned at less than 15, they did on Wednesday a heavy 30 mile stage from Dunbar to Berwick. Rain during the greater part of the day made the conditions very trying, especially as parts of the road are very exposed. One of the seven ladies ...walked no less than 28 miles. At 9pm Miss Brown was cheerfully working around the crowd collecting signatures to the great petition.*

“Everyone has been most kind to us on the road. Mrs Harry Hope, the wife of the MP, gave us breakfast at Dunbar. We had lunch at Grantshouse and Madame Bertoli of the Ayton Group of WSPU gave us tea.” (*Berwick Journal, 17 October 1912*)

The start of the speeches at Berwick was a little delayed because of the difficulty of speaking amid the tolling of the Curfew bell. Mrs Le Fonblanque's address was greeted with boos from a number of boys at which she remarked, “I don't think that is quite cricket, do you?” Applause from the audience followed her comment that they had not felt cold despite the weather because “The fire of enthusiasm burns within us and we are carrying the torch of light”.

*The crowd was for the most part extremely attentive although a number of boys behaved rather badly. There was, however, no intelligent opposition and Miss Benett held the attention of the large crowd for nearly an hour.*



Rowdy youths continued to interrupt the speakers and Miss Brown, one of the core group, remarked to a newspaper reporter that Berwick was the only place at which they had experienced any rowdiness.

The women left Berwick the next day in *bright sunshine* cheered by the number of signatures they had obtained.

*Indeed, the difficulty lay in overtaking the work, so many were anxious to adhibit their names. With their banner unfurled they marched down High Street, Butterfly and van following, with Miss Cowe alongside wheeling her cycle.*

A magnificent photograph of the women *as they crossed Berwick Bridge into Tweedmouth* appeared in the *Berwick Journal* (24 October 1912). This is the only photograph I have managed to locate of the marchers in this area. The difference in coverage and reporting styles of the two Berwick newspapers is interesting. The *Berwick Journal* strikes a more sympathetic tone and is noteworthy in that it ran a regular column headed *Women's Work and Interests*. This contained not only the usual articles on domestic issues but also on women's suffrage, employment, education both at home and abroad, etc. During the time of the March it printed a letter from Mary Gillies of Edington Mains, Chirside, condemning force-feeding of suffrage prisoners.

The next stage of the journey was from Berwick to Belford. Fortunately, the weather proved more sympathetic on this day:

*Instead of rain, tiredness and dreadful isolation they had an easy 14 mile tramp through delightful country in glorious weather with scores of folk out on roadsides to watch them pass. One even heard them singing as they trudged along a quiet spell of the road, where there were none but the queer-clad Northumbrian harvest women to hear them. The song was "John Peel", a fine marching air. They have decidedly recovered their spirits and this notwithstanding a rather unfriendly meeting at Berwick.*

An old *dame of Tweedmouth* who waved from her window a *garment unmistakably masculine* clearly did not support their cause but a more enthusiastic response was enjoyed at their lunch stop. This was at the Plough Inn (now the Lindisfarne Inn) at Beal, described as a *solitary house, miles from anywhere*. A heated debate amongst diners took place after the women arrived:

*The diners were an unwilling audience to some blunt truths and untruths about themselves. (Would that we today had been flies on the wall!) but on their leaving the countrymen came out in a body and wished the marchers goodbye. "Well, stick to it" said the spokesman, "dinna break down, women! Stick to it now, whatever you do!"*

Belford inhabitants were reported to have *turned out in numbers, such as they are, to see the marchers*. Strong support from local women could surely be expected from a town which in 1792 had submitted a petition against the Slave Trade, notable for the large number of women who had signed it. No record of where the women stayed was mentioned in the newspaper reports. The next stop was Alnwick where they were met some distance north of that town by a welcome party of Suffragists. A meeting was held in the town that night. The following day Mrs Le Fonblanque sent a telegram to a newspaper when they passed through the village of Felton. They arrived in Morpeth, which, 1 year later, was to be the scene of an impressive procession at the funeral of Emily Wilding Davison. On arrival in Newcastle a grand demonstration took place and a special church service was held in connection with the Church League. (*Newcastle Evening Chronicle, 17 October*) Local organiser, Laura Ainsworth, headed the welcome party at the Blue House, North Road. They marched down Northumberland Street, Pilgrim Street, Hood Street and Grey Street taking tea at the Turk's Head.

The marchers continued to London arriving on Saturday 16 November. *The Vote* reported how *the brave Brown Women swung into Trafalgar Square to the tune of "See the Conquering Hero Comes" and "March of the Women"*. 5000 sympathisers escorted them from Camden Tube Station to Trafalgar Square. Miss Cowe was named as one of the six who covered the whole distance. The petition was presented to one of Mr Asquith's secretaries. As expected it had little effect on him but the march and the petition had promoted the cause in new areas and reached parts of the country like North Northumberland where the movement had barely penetrated up until then.

The following year the Northern Men's Federation for Women's Suffrage was founded and a branch formed in Berwick. Newcastle became the first City Council to pass in 1913 a resolution to grant suffrage to women, an action which was the brainchild of Laura Ainsworth.

On the outbreak of WW1 all suffrage prisoners were released and the WSPU agreed to end militancy and help the war effort. The 1918 Qualification of Women Act

enfranchised women who were over the age of 30; providing they were householders, married to a householder or if they held a university degree. In 1930 all women over 21 were granted the vote.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned another personal connection to this subject. I was born at the Mona Taylor Maternity Home outside Morpeth. It was not until researching this topic that I learnt who Mona Taylor was. Born Maria Gulph in 1852 in Wales she attended her first suffrage meeting with her parents in 1872 when visiting London and joined the National Society for Women's Suffrage shortly afterwards. By 1881 Mona had married Thomas Taylor, a coal owner, later Alderman. They lived at Chipchase Castle near Hexham. She formed the Newcastle Branch of the WSPU in 1908 but resigned in 1912 around the time of the Women's March after the Pankhursts split with the Pethick-Lawrences. She joined with Laura Ainsworth in forming the National Political League for Women's Suffrage.

After the old workhouses closed in the 1930's Northumberland county council decided to replace them with newly-built village-style accommodation for the elderly. Built just before WW2 they were commandeered for military purposes but after the war became Homes for the Elderly and a Maternity Hospital. They were named after the Taylors as a tribute to their philanthropic work. Mona Taylor died in 1936.

*Val Glass*

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

**Berwick Advertiser, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1870**

### THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

Last week the foot and mouth disease broke out among the cows grazing in the Pier Field. The disease very soon spread, and nearly all the animals in that field have been or are affected by it. The Local inspector, under the Contagious Disease (Animals) Act, reported on Saturday that out of fifty cows in the field nineteen had

been attacked. We believe that since that report several more of the cows have been seized with the disease, and one belonging to Mr Patterson, Angel Inn, High Street, which was attacked on Friday, died on Sunday afternoon. Some of the animals are being treated in the field, others have been removed to byre, a few being taken away before they were infected by the disease. To prevent contagion, an order has been issued by the local authority prohibiting the owners of the cows after this date from removing their animals from the field to the byre, or from the byre to the field.

**Berwick Advertiser, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1870**

LIGHTS TO BE CARRIED BY FISHING BOATS

An official notice has been issued by the Board of Trade regarding lights to be carried by boats when engaged in drift-net fishing. The Board of Trade direct attention to a case recently decided at Newcastle, that boats employed in drift-net fishing are required by the Sea Fisheries Act 1868 to carry two lights-one over the other, three feet apart. As fishermen generally are not sufficiently attentive to this rule, and as they are liable any night when riding at their nets to be run down by either steamers or sailing vessels, it is important for them to know that, unless they have the proper lights up, they can have no claim for damages sustained.

*Carole Pringle*