



Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 29 – DECEMBER 2000

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ARCHIVE ACTIVITIES

Friday 23rd March 2001

AGM. It will start at 7.00 pm in the Lady Waterford Hall, at Ford and be followed by a lecture. "Landscape Improvement at Ford in the 18th Century – The Practical People of Ford" by Dr. Stafford Linsley

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

25th November 2000 –
31st March 2001

Exhibition "The Ancient Borders" - The Archaeology of the Borders region in co-operation with the Borders Archaeological Society (BAS)

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

Details of time/venues of these lectures may be obtained from either the Record Office or Museum.

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 24 th January 2001	The McLarens of Belford : W. McLaren
Wednesday 28 th February 2001	F. R. Wilson of Alnwick – Architect & Surveyor : Mrs. Brown
Wednesday 28 th March 2001	The Reformation in North Northumberland : P Rowett
Wednesday 25 th April 2001	Records of WWII Air Crashes in the Cheviots : P Clark
Wednesday 23 rd May 2001	Wine in the Ancient World: J Paterson

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 20 th December 2000	The Magi at Kirknewton : Roy Humphrey
Wednesday 17 th January 2001	A Surfeit of Salmon : David Brenchley
Wednesday 21 st February 2001	Border Placenames: Dr. Chris Cameron
Wednesday 21 st March 2001	The Haggerston Family & Estate : Jocelyn Lamb
Wednesday 18 th April 2001	AGM followed by a lecture:- The Landed Gentry Of Northumberland : by Bill Purdue

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 18 th January 2001	Upsettlington : Mrs. Eleanor Moffat
Thursday 1 st February 2001	Berwick Shipping – Sail to Steam : James T. Walker
Thursday 5 th April 2001	Kelso Hunter Bridge : Robert J Young
Thursday 3 rd May 2001	Security & Defence in 16 th C Scotland : Dr. Peter Symms

NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Monday 12 th March 2001	The Peninsula Wars : Elspeth Ewan
Monday 9 th April 2001	Berwick Bridges : Jean Sanderson
Monday 14 th May 2001	Josephine Butler : Janet Heywood
Monday 11 th June 2001	Visit to Kirknewton Church
Monday 10 th September 2001	Visit to Soutra Aisle : Bryan Moffat
Monday 8 th October 2001	Winfield Airfield : Ian Brown

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Monday 5 th February 2001	Major cock-ups in the Classical World : Jeremy Patterson
Monday 5 th March 2001	A potted history of Berwick-upon-Tweed : Francis Cowe
Monday 2 nd April 2001	The Northumberland National Park : Paul Frodsham
Monday 7 th May 2001	An update on archaeology in the Cheviot area : Clive Waddington
Monday 11 th June 2001	The Fortifications of the Borders : John Dent
Monday 2 nd July 2001	Industrial archaeology in North Northumberland : Dr. Stafford Linsley
Monday 3 rd September 2001	Roman Women in the North of England : Lyndsay Allason- Jones
Monday 1 st October 2001	Berwick Archaeology : Roger Miket

NORTH SUNDERLAND LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 21 st February 2001	The Farming Scene : J. Scott Smith
Wednesday 28 th March 2001	The Alnwick to Cornhill Branch Railway : M. J. Oliver
Wednesday 25 th April 2001	The Appleby family of Embleton – The Early days of Whinstone Quarrying : Denis Malthouse

EMBLETON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 21 st February 2001	Discovering Family Roots : Mrs. A. Brooker
Wednesday 21 st March 2001	Anglo-Saxons in Northumberland : C Baker-Cresswell
Wednesday 18 th April 2001	subject and speaker yet to be confirmed
Wednesday 16 th May 2001	Women in the Roman North : Miss Lyndsay Allason-Jones

NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GROUP

Saturday 17 th February 2001	Border Murders – Part 2 : Norrie McLeish
Saturday 17 th March 2001	Custom House Records : Neil Richardson
Saturday 19 th May 2001	Bondagers : Mrs J Glass
Saturday 16 th June 2001	AGM plus Newcastle Quarter Sessions : Mrs. M Furness
Saturday 15 th September 2001	Old Photographs : Neil Richardson
Saturday 20 th October 2001	Coach trip to Newcastle City Library
Saturday 17 th November 2001	Freemen of Alnwick : C Petit

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It's that time of the year again when subscriptions are due. You should find a renewal form enclosed with your newsletter. If not, please let me know. All renewals should be forwarded to the Archives.

Obviously, we are always keen to attract new members, so if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a Friend, why not encourage them to join ?

Linda Bankier

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

I've now been back full time at the Record Office for nearly three months and so I feel as if I have never been away! I am still kept very busy with everything and there are not enough hours in the working day to do everything.

Since coming back, I've had two groups visiting the Office – the Newcastle University certificate class in Family History who came to find out about Borough records and the North Northumberland branch of the Northumberland and Durham Family History Society who spent a morning practising Palaeography.

Recently, I have been doing some work with Wendy Ball from the Scottish Borders Memory Bank. Some of the oral history tape recordings made by Fred Kennington include incidents on the Scottish side of the Border and so Wendy is going to include them in the Memory Bank.

A number of items have been deposited and/or catalogued recently which may interest the Friends. These include Berwick Grammar School magazines, 1913 – 1939 (see article) and various former Presbyterian church records. The Presbyterian records were deposited by the United Reformed Church History Society and include a number of baptism registers, some of them for churches for which we previously did not have any records. These include :

Warenford baptisms, 1747 – 1951
Ancroft Moor baptisms, 1845 – 1960
Windmill Hill baptisms, 1935 – 1970
Lowick English Presbyterian baptisms, 1848 – 1911
Norham baptisms, 1752 – 1854; 1858 – 1879
Etal baptisms, 1769 – 1828; 1916 - 1950

There are also various Kirk Session minute books and Communicants' roll which are very useful for those tracing their Family History.

My volunteers have still been beavering away in the Office. At present, they are busy transcribing Tweedmouth parish baptisms; Norham Presbyterian baptisms; Warenford Presbyterian baptisms; Wooler parish records; Freeman's admissions pre 1800; Berwick Ship Sailings. If anyone else would like to do some transcribing or indexing work in the Record Office or is happy to enter information into Record Office databases, please just come and see me.

Finally, Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2001.

Linda Bankier

BERWICK GRAMMAR SCHOOL MAGAZINES

Recently, one of our members, Mr Duncan deposited in the Record Office a bound volume of Berwick Grammar School Magazines covering the period 1913 – 1915; 1918 – 1939. The magazines contain a wealth of information about activities in the school at the time and also about former pupils, some of whom may have been known to our

members. Does anyone have copies of the magazine after 1939 or the two missing issues of 1916 and 1917 ? It would be useful if we could complete the series.

The following are extracts from some of the magazines which may be of interest :

1913

Norman A. Hunter, last year's Dux, was born at Milfield, near Alnwick. He was educated in his father's school there and entered Berwick Grammar School as a County Council Scholar in 1907, and very early gave evidence that he was a "lad o' pairts". He gained the Hamilton Prize when in the Lower School, and twice in succession in the Upper School. His successes in the Oxford Local Examinations, which are held yearly, have been very notable. He took Honours in the Preliminary, Honours twice in the Junior, and he repeated the same performance twice in the Senior Examination, gaining the sixteenth place out of some 9,000 candidates last year. He wound up his career in the Grammar School by gaining the Guthrie leaving Scholarship, and also by taking 14th place in the open Bursary Competition at Edinburgh University, where he is now studying for the Indian Civil Service.

1918

THE FIELD OF HONOUR – *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*

GEORGE PRATT BOYD - Entered the school in 1897. A good all round scholar and athlete, he excelled in Art. After leaving school in 1899 he adopted the profession of Architect, subsequently becoming one of the leading Architects of the town. Shortly after the outbreak of war, he enlisted in the Coldstream Guards, and later on was given a commission in the Irish Guards. He had been through a good deal of fighting with this gallant regiment, and was killed in action in September 1917. His death is a great loss to our town and district.

NORMAN ARCHIBALD HUNTER – The second son of Mr Hunter, Schoolmaster, Milfield, Norman Hunter entered the School in 1907 with a County Council Scholarship. From the very outset he showed himself to be a boy of outstanding ability....He was working for his degree when war broke out, and he immediately joined the R.A.M.C.. After being at the Front for about a year he accepted a Commission, and was attached to the 7th Northumberland Fusiliers at the time of his death. Norman Hunter was one of the most brilliant students the School has produced, but he was by no means a bookworm. He excelled in games, and was Captain of the Football Club and of the Cricket Club in the season 1911 – 1912. He was of a very sociable and lovable disposition – extremely popular with his fellow pupils. There was nothing of the prig about him: he was gifted with too much solidity of character for any weakness of that kind. Fearless and conscientious in the exercise of his duty, he has left behind him a name, we trust, that shall not perish in the dust.

ANDREW BERGHAUS MC CREATH – The 5th son of Mrs McCreath, Wellington Terrace, Berwick, and the late Mr H.O. McCreath, grain merchant, Andrew McCreath was a pupil of the Berwick Grammar School from 1898 – 1905. Throughout his school course he showed himself to be a pupil of marked ability, and in the corporate life of the School he took a very prominent part. On leaving school he joined the staff of Barclay's Bank, and was a clerk in the Newcastle branch when War broke out. Shortly after joining up he accepted a commission in the K.O.S.B. and had been through much severe fighting in the East with this famous regiment, His death, from wounds, In December 1917, cuts off another young life full of promise and usefulness. Heroes of this stamp live in deeds not years.

Spring 1939

HOUSE NOTES

Hamilton

House Masters – Mr W. Hutchinson, M.A.; Mr I.W. Stephens, B Sc.

House Captain – R. Scobie

House Secretary - J.A. Cameron

House Football and Cricket Captain - R.Scobie

House Football and Cricket Vice-Captain – T.P. Johnston

Junior Football and Cricket Captain - J.Weatherley

We are pleased to record a very successful year both in School and on the sports field. The House won the School sports by a large margin of points, and was placed second to Guthrie in the House Championship.

The Norman Challenge Bowl was won by T.W.T. McCall, and R.Scobie was second on points with W.J. Short of Guthrie House. In addition the Junior Championship was won by D.J.Nivison.....

We wish to congratulate R.Scobie and T.P. Johnston who gained their Matriculation and J.Air, N.Brown, R.J. Clark, R.D.Swanston and J. Young who passed the School Certificate Examination in July. ...

We take this opportunity to record our great appreciation of the valuable work done by our House Captain, R.Scobie, who left to take up a post with the L.N.E. Railway Company...

To our House Master, Mr W. Hutchinson, and to Mrs Hutchinson, who were married in August, we extend our heartiest wishes for their future welfare and happiness.

SPEECH DAY 1938

The Annual Speech Day took place on Thursday afternoon, 8th December when the address was given by Sir Francis Blake, Bart.

The Headmaster read his Annual report. "In presenting my report for the past year", he said, "I feel that in some measure it marks the end of another chapter in the history of Berwick Grammar School, in the sense that this is probably the last Speech Day to be held in this Hall". He went on to say that although many would regret it, nevertheless the provision of new and fuller accommodation was long overdue.

Mr Shepherd then referred to the scholastic successes. Ten out of thirteen boys, he said were successful in gaining the School Leaving Certificate of Durham University, and of these, four obtained Matriculation distinction. G.S.Easton reached distinction standard in English and Geography. R.Logan passed the Higher School Certificate Examination in English, French and Geography. We also record the success of R.J.Taylor in winning the Stiles' Memorial Bursary awarded by the Edinburgh Border Counties Association. Two boys passed the Aircraft Apprentices' Examination and one boy gained a Civil Service appointment by examination...

The School Scout Troop, Dramatic Society and Old Boys' Association have had an active year as component parts of the School, said Mr Shepherd, adding that the Scouts had obtained 24 badges and had won the Tweedmouth Shield. He mentioned that the latest out-of-School activity was the newly formed Debating Society, and he spoke of the possibility of holding a Scout Camp in Norway next summer. Mr Shepherd went on to say that as a new feature of the sports awards, Life Saving certificates and Medallions had been competed for....

After presenting the prizes and certificates, along with his own Essay Prize to T.B.A. Moonlight, Sir Francis Blake gave his address... Sir Francis gave the audience a glimpse of the Grammar School of 75 years ago. He mentioned that at that time there were only two masters, one for the juniors and one for the seniors, and that all games took place in the playground. Many a time, he added, we cracked our heads on the stone walls on either side.

NEWS FROM THE OLD BOYS

Mr David J. Johnston, a schoolmaster in London, whose home is at Norham, is prospective Labour Candidate for the Ealing Parliamentary Borough.

Mr George Cringle, Canada, visited Spittal, his home, in January 1938. He is an accountant and travels extensively in the Dominion. Mr Cringle recalls meetings with Messers William Hunter and Tom Cringle, his brother in Montreal.

Mr Jasper Lillie was presented with a gold wristlet watch from his colleagues in the Municipal Offices when he left Berwick to become Deputy Clerk of Alnwick Rural District Council. His older brother, Andrew, is with the L,N,E.R. office staff at Norham.

Mr N. Ironside of Hope Nurseries, Berwick was married in February to Miss Alice Donald at Aberdeen.

Mr J.C.Scott and Mr A.D.Patterson had principal parts in Berwick Operatic Society's production of "The New Moon " .

Mr T. Hogarth is this year's President of Tweed Salmon Club.

Mr William Taylor, a Berwick electrician, was married in St Mary's Church to Miss Jean Finlay, Scremerston, on April 30th.

Mr Robert Lees was appointed assistant mill superintendent in the Balatoc Mining Company, in the Phillipine Islands, in May. His wife and daughter spent a holiday in Berwick during the summer.

Entering Berwick Post Office as a probationer- sorting clerk in 1933, Mr George F.Borthwick passed the minor and manipulative civil service examination. In July Mr Borthwick was appointed Assistant Inspector of Taxes at Newcastle.

We often hear Alan Melville's voice these days. Better known as W. Melville Caverhill – the name we knew him by at school – he is with the BBC and was transferred during the year from Aberdeen to Glasgow.

Mr J. Lockie, a farmer of Grievestead, Norham, was married to Miss Mary Deas, at Wooler.

Mr I.T. Smith was elected President of Berwick Rotary Club in July. For some time previous he was Secretary of the Club.

Married at St Bartholomew's , Tweedmouth, on December 24th, Mr Francis R. (Tommy) Bryson, now a teacher at Tweedmouth, to Miss Evelyn Blackett, Tweedmouth.

Mr Robert Scobie, well known as a player of Berwick Rangers F.C., secured a clerical appointment with the L.N.E.R. Company and is now at Cornhill.

MUSEUM NEWS

A Journey through Berwick's Literary Heritage

By Chris Green

5: Poems of Peace and War (Otterburn to Flodden)

"God prosper long our noble king
Our liffes and saftyes all!
A woefull hunting once there did
In Chevy Chase befall.
To drive the deere with hound and horne
Erle Percy took the way:
The child may rue that is unborne
The hunting of that day!"

The opening of *Chevy Chase* one of the oldest of English ballads, praised by Philip Sydney, Ben Jonson and Joseph Addison. The lines quoted are from the slicker 17th Century broadsheet version but there is also much longer version in a 15th Century manuscript. The precise events described are uncertain but certainly relate to the bitter rivalry between the Percy and Douglas families. In 1388 this led to the battle of Otterburn, when the Percy brothers were captured by the Scots, and which inspired the ballad *The Battle of Otterbourne*, which exists in English and Scottish versions. The rematch as it were, was the battle of **Homildon Hill** in 1402. After a decade of peace the Scots were ravaging Northumberland again and Henry 'Hotspur' Percy cut off their retreat just outside Wooler. This time it was Douglas, the Scots commander that was captured. *Chevy Chase* has it that the king himself vowed revenge on the Scots:-

"This vow the king did well performe
After on Humble-downe;
In one day fifty knights were slayne,
With lords of great renowne."

This verse inspired one "E.W." to contribute a poem on *The Battle of Humbledown Hill* to *The Gentlemen's Magazine* in August 1791. It is from a Scots perspective and mainly concerns the families of Swinton and Gordon patching up their quarrel to fight, and die, together against the English. The

poem, also recorded by the song-collector John Bell, concludes by listing the slain and noting the prisoners:-

"With eighty Knights and many more
Than can ee' now be told,
All captives led, for ransome sett
By Harry Hotspur bold.

Fra' Forth to Tweed, a swankie blade
Was then a sight to see,
The co'uter left in half plough'd lidge
Lay rusting in the lee.

God Prosper Scotland, let us say,
And grant our wars be done,
And may we ne'er see sic a day
As that of Humbledown"

But the prisoners brought disaster when Henry IV ordered them to be taken to London and irritated by the potential loss of ransom money, Hotspur declared open revolt, marched to join the Welsh, and died in a field of peas outside Shrewsbury.

In the meantime an eyewitness at Homildon was settling in as Constable of Warkworth Castle. This was John Hardyng (1378-1465). Born somewhere in Northumberland, much later he became Constable of Kyme in Lincolnshire, spending the last 30 years of his life in ease and comfort writing his poetical chronicle of the reigns of Henry IV to VI. Most critics dismiss this as without literary merit, but Hardyng's literary creativity was not limited to bad verse. Under Henry V, Hardyng set out to Scotland to scour archives in search of documents to prove Scotland's subservience to England. Apparently he was very successful in this and received substantial payments from the King in exchange for this firm evidence. Not many of these documents now survive, but it looks pretty certain that, having failed to find real documents, our learned author simply wrote them himself. He even included himself in the haul producing one supposedly from James I, whom he said he had met at Coldingham, granting Hardyng 6 servants, horses and a thousand marks. When Henry V went forth to France, Hardyng went along as well taking part in the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Seven years later as Henry lay dying at Vincennes near Paris, Hardyng was with him reporting the results of his latest research, being rewarded with a Manor. The new king Henry VI was also keen to prove his mastery over the Scots and Hardyng duly obliged with more documents for which he received grants and a pension. Perhaps that's why Hardyng calls Henry VI a man "of small intelligence". Hardyng died peacefully at the age of 86 and the forged documents scam was not discovered until 1837.

Talking of Hotspur and Henry IV to VI of course must bring us to Shakespeare's version of these events. The play *Henry IV* was adapted at Alnwick in 1999 to tell

the story of Hotspur's revolt, while *Henry VI, part 2* does have a scene featuring a couple of Berwick residents, Mr and Mrs. Saunder Simpcox. Like Hardyng, they too are confidence tricksters who convince the king, he "of small intelligence", that Mr. Simpcox had been blind from birth but has been miraculously cured at the shrine of St. Alban. Fortunately the ever watchful Gloucester is on hand and tricks Simpcox into naming the colours on his cloak and gown.

"Then, Saunder, sit there, the lying'st knave
In Christendom. If thou hadst been born blind,
Thou mightst as well have known all our names, as thus
To name the several colours that we do wear.
Sight may distinguish colours; but suddenly
To nominate them all, it is impossible..."

He orders them to be whipped and Simpcox, who also claims to be lame, jumps up and runs off. Gloucester says "Let them be whipt through every market town, Till they come to Berwick, from whence they came." Apparently this was a true incident which Shakespeare found in Foxe's book of martyrs. This is the best that Berwick gets from Shakespeare, but we cannot leave him without mention of the play *Edward III* (1596) now conclusively identified as being by Shakespeare. It has to be said it is a very poor effort, mainly because of its structure, effectively two different plays combined. The first half is a light breezy romp as Edward III attempts to pursue an adulterous relationship with the Countess of Salisbury. The second half is completely different being a leaden account of the king's expedition to France and his victory at the battle of Crecy. This is like *Henry V* without the good bits. The play opens with Sir William Mountague bringing the news that king David of Scotland has broken his truce and invaded England. :-

"The treacherous king no sooner was inform'd
Of your withdrawing your army back,
But straight, forgetting of his former oath,
He made invasion on the bordering towns:
Berwick is won; Newcastle spoil'd and lost;
And now the tyrant hath begirt with siege
The castle of Roxborough, where enclos'd
The countess of Salisbury is like to perish."

The scene then shifts to the siege of Roxborough Castle and King David makes a splendid speech saying that the Scots won't rest till King Edward cries out "Enough, spare England now for pity". Needless to say within 5 minutes he's been chased off the stage by the victorious English and Edward proceeds to woo the Countess. She resists and he goes off to conquer France instead. It was this same Countess of Salisbury who, in 1348, supposedly dropped a garter at a dance at Wark-on-Tweed, which was picked up by King Edward, who, thus inspired, went on to found the Order of the Garter. We will return to this in our next episode. Somebody who would have appreciated such fumbings and "made good cheer in every flourishing town in England betwixt Berwick and

Calais" was William Dunbar (1460-c.1520), court poet to the ill fated James IV. Some of his spirited verse made it into some of the earliest books printed in Scotland but mostly his poems were copied down in manuscript by readers for their own use, and therefore many problems of attribution abound. He went to England as part of the Embassy that brought Margaret Tudor to Scotland to be the wife of James IV. She was greeted in Berwick in 1503 with great ceremony, the booming of cannon and rejoicing, upon which we based our recent 'Tudor Days' at the Museum. Dunbar's composed a song of welcome, the earliest datable court-song in Scots:-

"Now fayre, fayrest, of every fayre,
Princes most plesant and preclare,
The lustyest one alyve that byne,
Welcum of Scotlond to be quene!"

And a longer poem *The Thrissill and the Rois*, described as "perhaps the happiest political allegory in English literature". Dunbar wrote other poems for the court, but the great hopes everyone had for the marriage and 'perpetual peace' were sunk in the mud and blood of **Flodden Field** in 1513. Probably the greatest Scottish defeat of all time but from it a rich literature has grown. One of the earliest is *A Ballade of the Scottyssh Kynge* (1513) written by John Skelton (1460-1529), poet laureate to Henry VIII. It's a celebration of the English victory and for Scots must have added insult to injury:-

"Ye have determyned to make a fraye
Our kynge than beynge out of the waye
But by the power and myght of god
Ye were beten with your owne rod"

As with many catastrophes, the first response of the survivors is denial, and rumours soon circulated that king James had escaped the field, or had not died in battle but had been murdered, or even that the Scots had won the battle. Skelton was induced to take up the pen again with *Against the Scottes* (1520):-

"Lo these fond sottes and trattlying Scottes,
How they are blinde in theyr own minde,
And will not know theyr overthrow.
At Branxton moore they are so stowre,
So frantike mad, and say they had,
And wan the field with spear and shielde:
That is as true as black is blue."

Nor was this Skelton's last foray into Anglo-Scottish relations. Within two years he was complaining that "From Baumberow to Bathombar" [Bootham Bar, York] an army had been raised, funded by southern tax-payers, such as himself, but now a treaty had been signed "And never a Scot slayne!".

In the mid 18th.Century Bishop Thomas Percy visiting a friend saw a maid lighting the fire with pages from an old manuscript, this turned out to be a volume

of old English ballads. Among them was *The Scottish Fielde*, a Flodden ballad written about 1515 around the same time as *The Ballate of the Battalle of Floden Field* found in two manuscripts in the Harleian library. Both these represent what the celebrated American ballad editor Francis Child termed the 'new minstrelly' of 16th Century:-

"..when the short metrical tale merged with the folksong tradition to produce for the first time...authentic ballads sung to rounded tunes."

The minstrel for the *The Ballate* almost certainly was employed by the Earls of Derby, while *The Scottish Fielde* was probably sung by a minstrel of the Legh family of Baguley Hall, Manchester. Apart from being intended as entertainments they share a more devious purpose, to glorify the role in the battle of the Stanley family, while at the same time covering up the awkward fact that half the Stanley contingent fled at the first volley of Scottish gunfire. *The Scottish Fielde* does this with ease and the listeners at the end would have been unaware of the truth, the more so, as any action the Stanley's were not involved in, like the sieges of Ford, Etal, Wark and Norham, was ignored. Also the role of the commander Thomas Howard and his family was played down, the Stanleys and the Howards having a long standing feud.

The Howard side of the case was put in *La Rotta de Scucesi* (The Rout of the Scots) an anonymous ballad published in Rome very soon after the battle. There seems to have been no contemporary translation so it may have been little known in Britain. Also the author gives a confused account of the battle. Favouring of the Stanleys is also to be found in the most discussed of all the early ballads, that published in Berwick in 1774 as *Flodden: An Exact and Circumstantial History...in verse, written about the time of...Queen Elizabeth...from a curious manuscript*, the editor being Robert Lambe, the eccentric vicar of Norham who invented the 'ancient' story of the Laidley worm. This ballad has attracted more editors and critics than any other. One of these, Henry Weber writing in 1808, comments that:-

"It would be in vain to contend for any great share of poetical merit in the execution;...and, though the general conduct of the poem be too prolix, and the style too much that of the chronicle ballad writers...there are not wanting passages which evince considerable vigour of versification and spirit of narration".

But he is outraged at Lambe's approach as editor who "failed most grossly" and "deceived the purchasers of his book". Lambe, being:-

"grossly ignorant of ancient, or even mere ballad literature...changed all ancient words into modern ones. The transcript subsequently underwent the further innovations and polish of Mr.Lambe, who boldly corrected into it, and therefore entertained no sense of the duty incumbent on him to preserve curious manuscripts immaculate"

Also, not content with keeping to the original, Lambe adds things of his own

invention including late in the poem a "most unaccountable rhapsody, on a subject totally unconnected with the battle". Even the poor vicar's notes, which Weber concedes have "obtained him the applause of men well qualified to judge" contain "long rambling dissertations" of little relevance. Eighty years later Charles Federer was equally harsh on the Rev's notes which:-

"are prolix and irrelevant where the meaning of the text is perfectly clear, and scanty or entirely absent where a text really requires elucidation. His deficient philological knowledge, moreover, betrayed him into many absurd statements".

But Federer does let the vicar off the hook a bit over the "gross" inventions as it seems he simply handed over to his printer, Robert Taylor, an edition of the poem edited and printed by Thomas Gent of York in about 1755. Gent, says Federer:-

"dealt very summarily with any obscure passages or words...by simply omitting them and substituting for them his own locubrations which in no single instance come up to the rugged and simple beauty of the original text".

Federer prints what he believes is the original text, but according to Thomas Hodgkin, this was not much of an improvement on Weber's. The problem all stemmed from different 'originals'. Gent, Lambe, Federer and a Skipton edition (1867) follow a transcript possibly done in Yorkshire in early 18th.Century and owned by Mr.Askew of Pallinsburn, Northumberland. Weber rejects this and goes for a manuscript written around 1636 in the Harleian collection, printed in 1664 which he found in Sir Walter Scott's library. Another 1774 edition of the ballad by Joseph Benson used different, lost, sources. In terms of the poem itself, the squabble illustrates the difference between 'improvers', aiming to produce a smooth readable version and 'antiquarians' intent on getting to the original no matter how difficult to understand. Overall there is some difference, but not that much:-

Weber

"A fearful field in verse to frame
I mean if that to mark ye list
O Flodden Mount! Thy fearful name
Doth sore affroy my trembling fist.

Gent/Lambe/Federer

A fearful field in verse, I'll frame,
If you'll be pleas'd to understand,
O Floddon-Mount! Thy wonderous name
Doth sore affright my trembling hand"

The work was probably written in Yorkshire around 1570-80. Another English celebratory Flodden ballad is by London silk weaver Thomas Deloney (1560-1600) who wrote a number of jokey poems about recent murders and other historical and patriotic subjects, including three on the defeat of the Spanish Armada:-

"At Flodden Field the Scots came in,
Which made our English men faine; [glad]
At Bramstone Greene this battaile was seene,

There was King Jamie slaine.
Then presently the Scots did flie,
Their cannons they left behind;
Their ensignes gay were won all away,
Our souldiers did beat them blinde."

The 1587 edition of *A Mirroure for Magistrates*, a collection of instructive tales on the fall of kings, includes *The Battle of Branxton*:-

"O Rex Regum in thy realme celestiall
Glorified with joies of Gabriel's company,
King James is dead, have mercy on us all,
For thou haste him prostrate so suddenly,
(which was our noble Prince his enemy)
That us to withstand he had no might
So thy helpe, old Lord, preservde king's Henry's right."

The Scots were rather less keen to write up their defeat, the only early verses relating to the disaster being the defiant *The Souters of Selkirk*, still used as part of the Common riding ceremony. *The Flowers of the Forest* now associated with Flodden commemorations was originally just a tune first recorded in the Skene manuscript of 1620. The verses:-

"I've heard them lilting at the ewes milking.
The flowers of the forest are a' wede away.
I ride single on my saddle,
For the flowers of the forest are a' wede away."

were associated with the tune some time afterwards, but whether they were originally connected to Flodden or some other event is unknown. Certainly when Alison Cockburn (c.1712-94) rewrote the traditonal verses into a poem in about 1742 she had in mind a series of recent bankrupcies in Ettrick rather than Flodden, hence her opening lines "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling". A ballad entitled the *Laird of Muirhead*, among the papers of the great Scottish song collector David Herd (1732-1810), includes the lines:-

"Dool and wae for the order, sent our lads to the border!
The English, for ance, by guile won the day;
The flowers of the forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land are cauld in the clay"

John Bell prints a version of this as *An Old Song on the Battle of Flodden*, following it with a much longer 26 stanza *The Flowers of the Forest; or Flodden Field*, beginning "From Spey to the Border/ Was peace and good order". This, he says "is made up from various copies...and is of very unequal merit." But he says of one section: "it is impossible to peruse it without feeling a high degree of the pleasing sombre tenderness, which it is the object of this sort of poetry to

produce." Not feelings one would get from his next short item *Verses on James the IVth*:-

"Nor was the day of Flodden done,
Till they were slaughter'd, one by one,
And this may serve to shew -
When Kings are Patriots none will fly:
When such a King was doom'd to die,
Oh, who would Death forego?"

But it is to Jean Elliot (1727-1805) that we owe the most celebrated version of *The Flowers*. Born at Minto in Teviotdale she lived a simple and uneventful spinster life in Edinburgh. Professor John Veitch records that returning home in a carriage with her brother the conversation turned to Flodden, and he suggested it was a good subject for a poem and:-

"She leant backwards in the carriage, and there, with the old refrain, 'The Flowers of the Forest' are a'wede away, sounding in her ear, as a stray echo from the past, and mingling in fancy with the scenery of her life and love, and under the kindling of her true human heart, she framed *The Flowers of the Forest*; that immortal lyric...in which pathos of heart and patriotism of spirit, and a music that echoes the plaintive sigh of the Border waters, passed, as it were spontaneously, into one consummate burst of song."

The poem published in 1776 was her only known work. After that the floodgates of emotion were opened and James Hogg (1770-1835), John Leyden (1775-1811), William Edmonstone Aytoun (1813-65), James Brown (1832-1904), William Henry Ogilvie (1869-?), 'J.B.Selkirk', James Thomson, 'Horace Deluscar', William Nichol, and Sir John McEwen of Marchmont are just some of the stream of 19th and 20th Century poets who have reflected in melancholy verse upon 'The Brave of Both Nations'.

But before we get too dewy eyed, the battle has also provided other rather more robust inspirations, such as Walter Scott's *Marmion* (1808) which in turn inspired a whole number of plays, and to which we must in a later episode. There is also *Flodden Field: A Tragedy* (1903) by the then poet laureate Alfred Austin (1835-1913). His appointment to the laureateship was greeted with amused derision and mockery. His pomposity, religious sentimentality and condemnatory reviews of now established classics make him seem even more absurd today than he did to his contemporaries. Tennyson, Browning, Morris, Arnold, Clough and Swinburne were all to him, indifferent poets either too "feminine" or "essentially childish". Austin, a biographer wrote, "urged no poem was great unless it was an epic or dramatic romance on a theme combining love, patriotism and religion". *Flodden Field* is a perfect example of this belief. Set at Ford Castle, it tells the 'true' story of the supposed dalliance before the battle of a disguised James IV with Lady Heron, who also is in love with the Earl of Surrey. Her delight at Surrey's imminent arrival gives a good idea of Austin's style:-

"My more than King - My towering warrior, my Surrey! He'll come from battle to my arms. Martial voluptuary, his victor blade crimsoned with routed blood up to the hilt, his face ablaze with slaughter, and his breast, like hammer upon anvil, beat on mine in love's own furnace!"

Actually the play is a lot duller than this quote implies, as for every piece of flamboyance there are several pages of stilted discussion of war, love, poetry and the hidden meaning of smiles. It all ends badly for Lady H. The play, we learn, was performed at His Majesty's Theatre in June 1903 "without success". Another play that has been lost to view is the one act *Prologue to Flodden* by George Reston Malloch (1875-1953). It was produced in 1936, the last regular season of another doomed theatrical project, the Scottish National Players, who had been touring Scotland with works on rural and historical themes by Scottish playwrights since 1922. By contrast the only success William Douglas-Home, brother of Sir Alex, had in the late 40s and early 50s was with *The Thistle and the Rose* (1949) a serious historical drama on the death of James IV. The fate of James IV has inspired more novelists than any other Scottish king. One of the first, *For Stark Love and Kindness* (1896) is the sole work of the obscure N.Allan MacDonald. This was followed by *In the King's Favour* (1899) by Joyce E.P.Muddock (1843-1934), a widely travelled journalist who is better known as the creator of arrogant detective 'Dan Donovan'. He despised his own successful mystery fiction and wanted his historical novels taken seriously. On the other hand Halliwell Sutcliffe (1870-1932) considered his only serious work to be his books about the Yorkshire Moors, so *Crimson Field: A Flodden Tale* (1916) must be counted as frivolous. And so it has continued with at least eleven novels appearing on the subject between 1940 and 1979 from (in alphabetical order) E.Byrd, P.Hill, D.M.Mackenzie, D.MacLaren, J.Oliver, C.Orr, A.J.Stewart, N.Tranter (2), S.Trotter and E.A.West. What are they like? Of *Flowers of the Forest* (1962) by Elizabeth Byrd, one critic said:- "This is history as it should be..vivid, vital and real, pulsating with dynamic sixteenth-century life, dramatic, compelling and full of movement"

Follow that, as they say - I will, but not just now.

Further Reading

Baird, I.F. (ed) *Scottish Feilde and Flodden Feilde: Two Flodden Poems* (1982)
The Battle of Flodden Field [editions by R.Lambe (1774); H.Weber (1808); C.Federer (1884)]

Bell, J.(ed) *Rhymes of Northern Bards* (1812, facsimile edn 1971)

Hodgart, M.(ed) *The Faber Book of Ballads* (1965)

Kinsley, J.(ed) *The Poems of William Dunbar* (1979)

MacKenzie, W.M. *The Secret of Flodden, including 'The Rout of the Scots'* (1931)

Percy, T. *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1794 ed.Wheatley, 1886)

Tyrrell, H.(ed) *The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare* (nd.1850s)

Veitch, J. *The History & Poetry of the Scottish Border* (1878)

Walker, G. "And Never a Scot Slayne!": John Skelton & the Anglo-Scottish Border Crisis of 1522' in *Northern History* v.24 (1988) pp.56-74

HERRINGS AND OTHER FISH

One of the chief factors in the history of the early shipping industry of Northern Europe was the demand for tonnage for the carriage, by northern ships, of English wool and of rough half-made cloth to the manufacturing centres of Flanders and Italy. Although the traffic in English wool was lucrative enough, it is doubtful whether it gave employment to as much tonnage as was set afloat, directly or indirectly, by the fish which swarmed in the Northern seas, of which "herring" was the King.

The realisation of the importance of fisheries to the peoples of the Middle Ages requires much imagination. Although we should miss our fish if it could no longer be procured, few of us look upon it as a life necessity.

To understand what fish meant in the Middle Ages, it must be remembered first that all Europe was then either of the Catholic or Orthodox religions, and many of the "Fast" days rigidly observed, especially the "Lenten Fast", would have been unendurable, particularly in cold climates, if fish had not been available in place of meat, which was both scarce and expensive, and the poorer classes got very little of it at the best of times. In winter, when supplies were short all round, the scanty hay harvest barely sufficed to keep a few beasts alive, and apart from the curing of hams and the salting of a certain amount of pork, preserved meats were confined to costly luxuries such as spiced beef. In such circumstances, large supplies of dried or salted fish were absolutely indispensable as a supplement to the local fisheries on "Fast days", as Winter store, and for the provisioning of towns expecting to stand siege and of the armies in the field.

The effect of all this was threefold. In the first place, the fisheries employed a larger proportion of the population than to-day. Secondly, the centres to which the fish catches were brought became busy marts, importing large quantities of salt and fish curing together with other provisions and necessities for those engaged in the trade.

Finally the fisheries, especially the great Herring fisheries of the North Sea and Baltic, found themselves with a bulky product much in demand and which could be traded for whatsoever they lacked. This led in turn to the building of bigger ships, capable of long voyages in order to dispose of their catches.

Although coastal fishing had been carried on all over Europe from prehistoric times, the first appearance of the Herring, as a dominant factor in commercial development, was the rise of the great Danish Scania Fishery at the mouth of the Baltic in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For the months of August and September of each year the Scania Peninsula was one of the busiest parts in Europe. Fishermen came in their thousands from far and near to share in the rich harvest of the northern seas; workmen in thousands came to salt and pack the catches and merchants came in hundreds to deal in the herrings both for themselves and for the needs of the fishermen and packers.

In all this trading it was the merchants of the Hanseatic towns who attended such a predominance that any rivals were edged out, or compelled to trade on sufferance and within restricted limits. The Hanseatic League, which dominated the sea routes of Northern Europe for at least three centuries, was a self-governing confederation of German trading towns such as Lubeck, Bremen and Hamburg.

During the sixteenth century the Dutch, through sheer hard work and the desire to make as much money as possible through trading, gradually ousted the Hanseatics from the fish trade by conquering the German and Baltic markets, even getting the bulk of the North Sea fisheries into their hands, even off the English and Scottish coasts.

The Dutch found excellent opportunities in their hands since the second quarter of the fifteenth century had seen the chief centre of the herring fisheries tend away from the Baltic to the North Sea. Although heavy catches were still made off Scania from time to time, the North Sea fisheries seem to have been the more reliable, and the discovery, by a Dutchman, of an improved fish-curing method, gave the Hollanders a further advantage. Around the mid 1400's the fishermen of Holland discovered a silver mine of herring a few miles east of Shetland and with their new found wealth built the city of Amsterdam together with a large new fleet of warships which challenged, with great success, the naval power of England.

During the sixteenth century the Dutch gradually ousted the Hanseatics as suppliers of salt fish to France, Flanders and England, and from the beginning of the seventeenth century began to dominate the German and Baltic markets. In addition to the herring they also fished for "white" fish such as Cod and Ling on the newly discovered Dogger Bank and off Iceland and the Newfoundland Grand Banks. Their catches from these sources were exported to Northern Europe, Spain, Portugal and Mediterranean.

However, even the herring would not have raised Holland to the position once occupied by the Hansa, had not Amsterdam and Rotterdam, like Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck of old been commercial centres for the import and export of the produce of Central Europe. The Hanse towns by now had fallen into decay and the ruin of their trade was completed by the desolation of a greater part of Germany during the thirty Years' war of 1618-1648

The extravagant twentieth century saw the exhaustion of the vast shoals of herring in the North and Baltic seas which, in the Middle Ages, sustained the daily life of a large part of

Europe. This scenario of “fish stocks exhaustion” is now being repeated by the current over-fishing in the North Sea, the Grand Banks and off Iceland.

Dennis Nicholson

GLEANINGS FROM THE BERWICK **ADVERTISER**

MAY 7th 1825

**TO MASONS -
ESTIMATES
WANTED**

**For repairing, Paving and Pointing the Peaks, Branders and Cope
Stones of the Parapet Walls of the BRIDGE. Estimates to be given
in to the Committee in Words at length, sealed up on
WEDNESDAY evening the 25th instant, at the Town Hall at half
past 6 o'clock. The amended Specification may be seen at the
Town Clerk's Office.**

Town Clerk's Office 20th May 1825.

NOVEMBER 1825

SIZE OF BOTTLES

The period for the important change in Weights and Measures is now at hand. We are however a good deal surprised that nothing certain is as yet heard about a regulation for the size of BOTTLES. Bottles certainly come under the heading 'measures'; and we know of no article under this head which stands more in need of regulation of one Standard fixed for them than Bottles. Instead of Quarts or 12 Bottles to 3 gallon, the bottles most generally used of the Large size, are 15 Bottles to 3 gallons; but the greater number of Bottles in use at present are the

following:- 21 bottles and 22 bottles to 4 gallons; 16 bottles and 17 bottles to 3 gallons; of which latter kind a considerable number are made and sold in the North of England. In London we have been informed that Bottles are now used so small as 18 to 3 gallons, or 30% less than the proper Quart. Under such a state of things, to talk of the comparative price of anything liquid is out of the question, without knowing whether 3 gallons of Wine, for instance, is included in 12 bottles or 18 bottles. The matter, we believe, has been for some time under consideration of the Government, and the decision has probably been delayed by the complete change which is about to take place in the Liquid Measures of the country. Under this change, it is evident, that the old Quart Bottles, where any of these remain, will not do to take as Standard. This being the case, we cannot conceive any moment more favourable for the introduction of that size at present pretty generally in use, as a Standard Bottle, namely 5 bottles to the present Gallon. As the Imperial Gallon, which comes into use on the 5th January next, is in the proportion of 5 to 6, or exactly one fifth larger than the present gallon, so it is clear that to fix the future Standard of Bottles at 5 to the present Gallon, would be the readiest possible mode of computation to the Revenue Officers, to the Trade and the Public; as under the Imperial Gallon, 1 Gallon would fill 6 Bottles or ½ a dozen; ½ a gallon 3 bottles; and a size of Bottles could readily be made to hold one fourth of a gallon; which would come near the old Magnum and be extremely handy and useful.

Glasgow Herald.

(work all that out if you can !!!!!)

Muriel Fraser

FINALLY

If any Friends would like to write an article for the newsletter or have found items which might interest us, please forward them to Linda at the Record Office for inclusion in future issues.

Dennis Nicholson
Hon. Editor