

Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 33 – December 2001

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 8th March 2002
at 7 pm

Friends AGM in the Parish Centre, Berwick, followed
by "Royal Berwick " , a talk by Chris Green.

Other Societies' Lectures

Belford Local History Society

Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre. Time: 7.30p.m.

- Wednesday 23rd January 2002 The Medieval Hospitals of Berwick: Mr. F. Cowe
- Wednesday 27th February 2002 Budle and other Northumbrian Bays:
Mr. J. M. Clark
- Wednesday 27th March 2002 F.R. Wilson of Alnwick: Mrs. M. Brown

Berwick History Society

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick . Time: 7.30p.m.

- Wednesday 16th January 2002 Finding out about air crashes in the Cheviots :
Peter Clark
- Wednesday 20th February 2002 The Haggerston Family and Estate: Jocelyn Lamb
- Wednesday 20th March 2002 The Coal Mines of the Scremerston Triangle :
David Heywood

Border Archaeological Society

Venue: The Parish Centre, Berwick. Time: 7.30p.m.

- Monday 4th February 2002 Harbottle Castle: Jim Crow
- Monday 4th March 2002 Build yourself an Empire: Jeremy Patterson
(Joint Meeting with the Civic Society)

Coldstream & District Local History Society

Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream. Time: 7.30 p.m.

- Thursday 17th January 2002 Memories of a Land Army Girl: Mrs I. E. Sproule
(Joint Meeting with Cornhill & Tillmouth W.I.s at
Coldstream)
- Thursday 7th February 2002 Berwick Archives: Linda Bankier

Thursday 7th March 2002

“Mair O’ my Borderland”: Ian Landells

Dunse History Society

Venue: Duns Social Club, 41 Newton St. Duns. Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 30th January 2002

“Richard Hillary”: David M. S. Ross

Wednesday 27th February 2002

The Haunted Borders: Norrie McLeish

Wednesday 27th Marcy 2002

Costume through the Ages: Mrs Esther Sharpley

Embleton Local History Society

Venue: Parish Church Room, Embleton. Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 16th January 2002

Social Evening at the Olde Ship, Seahouses

Wednesday 20th February 2002

The Stagecoach: Mr D. Brodie

Wednesday 20th March 2002

John Dobson, Architect: Mr H.G. Dobson

Glendale Local History Society

Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler. Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 9th January 2002

Heraldry in Berwick and the Borders:
Mr. R. Humphrey

Wednesday 13th February 2002

Annual Dinner

Wednesday 13th March 2002

Recent Archaeological work in the
Northumberland National Park:
Mr. P. Frodsham

Norham Local History Society

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 14th January 2002

A.G.M.

Monday 11th February 2002

Churches of Berwickshire: Dr. Alan Binnie

Monday 11th March 2002

A Potted History of Berwick: Francis Cowe

Monday 8th April 2002

The Culley Brothers, Agricultural Improvers
Dr. Anne Orde

North Sunderland & Seahouses Local History Society

Venue: St. Paul's Parish Hall, North Sunderland.

Time: 7.30p.m.

Wednesday 23rd January 2002

Members Party Evening

Wednesday 27th January 2002

Members Evening (Talks by Members)

Wednesday 27th March 2002

To be arranged

Northumberland & Durham Family History Society
(North Northumberland Group)

Venue: White Swan, Lowick.

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 19th January 2002

Members Forum

Other meetings to be arranged.

Autumn Lecture

A good number of friends gathered in the Guildhall to hear Mr. Ian August (Project Director) give the Autumn Lecture. Entitled "The Alnwick Garden – A Garden for the Community;" it was fascinating. Mr. August talked us through from the early beginnings in the 18th century to the future when wonderful things will happen.

The talk was accompanied by many slides, all of them sharp and to the point. One reason that made Linda Bankier jealous was that the whole project is being filmed and photographed at every stage. What an Archive!

There has been a garden on the site for centuries. When the excavations were being dug for the Duchess of Northumberland's garden they found six different levels of garden development. One very interesting slide showed the old greenhouse, which must have been most impressive. It housed exotic fruits – for the Northumberland's London house, Syon, - which were warmed and watered from the most complicated cellar structures.

Apart from the past; the present and the future hold marvels too. The Duchess has travelled the world to bring back the best ideas for her vision. Basically the garden is foliage and water but constructed in such a unique and intriguing way. The main vista will be the enormous cascade but there will be futuristic fountains, jets and sprays that are all controlled by computer. There will be special controls for passers-by to alter the speed or direction of water flow – Magic! – and there will be coloured lasers so that there can be a sparkling rainbow of light and water.

The Duchess has many ideas yet to come to fruition – the Ornamental garden, the Rose Garden already planted with 3000 David Austin roses, a Poison Garden and many others.

One thing that impressed us all was Mr. August's enthusiasm for this wonderful project. His careful preparation paid off because he held the audience captive throughout.

After several questions had been answered Linda Bankier gave the vote of thanks. Then there was time for some refreshments and more conversation with Mr. August who eventually had to tear himself away from an appreciative crowd.

B.M.Herdman

ARCHIVE NEWS

Well, another year is almost over and yet again it has flown by. The last few months in the Archives have been very busy. Despite it being the supposed "quiet time" for visitors, the Record Office has had on average 20 visitors on each public day over the last couple of months. Most people are tracing their Family History but there are also people tracing the history of their property, researching their community or other events.

As well as being busy on public days, I seem to have been involved in a number of projects recently which have filled my other working days. Tomorrow's History has taken up a lot of my time over the last couple of months – I have now completed my contribution to Phase 1 of the project which should be going live in January 2002. This will be a series of digital images from the archives here and information about them. I have also been helping with the Friends Maritime leaflet (see later article) which will be completed by the end of December. You will all receive a copy with the next newsletter.

That apart, I have also been involved with the Bondington Project which is resubmitting a bid to the Local Heritage Initiative under the auspices of the Berwick History Society and the Borders Archaeological Society. Hopefully we will know within the next couple of weeks whether our bid is successful.

Over the last couple of months, I have also done some outreach work. A class from Tweedmouth West First School visited the office to find out about Berwick in Victorian times and the Creative Writing Group came in to find out about sources for historical research. At the beginning of November I talked to the Borders Archaeological Society about archive sources for Archaeology and I have also given talks to staff at both Berwick and Alnwick Libraries about sources kept in the Office. Finally, I have also completed my two Beginners Family History classes which saw 20 people finding out how to trace their Family History.

At the beginning of this year, the Record Office helped the Borders Memory Bank by allowing it to copy some of our oral history tape recordings which covered Berwickshire. The Borders Memory Bank has now ceased as a project but Wendy Ball, the project Co-ordinator has kindly donated a mini disc recorder to the Record office for us to use for our own Oral History recordings. If anyone would like to do recordings using the machine, please let me know. It comes with instructions as I have no idea how to use this new technology !

Family History Resources

The beginning of 2002 is very important for Family Historians because it sees the release of the **1901 census** returns for the British Isles. It is also the first time that a census for England and Wales will be available online from its release date. Thus, from 9am on Wednesday 2 January, people from all over the world will be able to access data from this census via their computer. Consulting the indexes will be free but there will be a charge to look at detailed entries. The Record Office will not be offering the online service, however, hopefully I will be able to offer you access to the returns for all of **Northumberland** from 2 January. The Friends have kindly bought microfiche copies of these returns for the Record Office. They haven't arrived yet but they have been promised to us by then. So, if you want to look at them, just give me a ring to make an appointment. As well as buying the returns for Northumberland, the Friends have also bought microfilm copies of the 1901 census for Berwickshire. I will not have these copies by 2 January but hopefully later on that month. As so many people did not consider the border existed in this area, it seemed sensible to purchase Berwickshire to provide a better Family History service.

Well, that's all the news from the Record Office for now other than to wish you all a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2002.

Linda Bankier

HOLY ISLAND GOLF COURSE

Recently I was sent a photocopy of a small booklet on Holy Island which was published in 1907. The person who wrote the booklet (anonymous) was obviously very keen on golf as he implied that the Monks played golf on the Island in the very distant past. However, in the booklet, the author did mention that a Golf Course had recently been open on the Island. As we wanted to verify this and find out a bit more, my Tweed Training helper, Alan Potts, looked through the Berwick Advertiser for 1907 and after a lot of searching found the following article on the official opening of the Golf Course. :

BERWICK ADVERTISER, 14 JUNE 1907

OPENING CEREMONY by Mr L MORLEY
CROSSMAN

There is no spot on the soil of England that has greater interest for the visitor than the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne, the birthplace of English christianity. In the early ages when from within the walls of its ancient priory radiated much of the learning and scholarship that graced those otherwise rude and semi-barbaric times, twice daily with the receding tide did the sandalled feet of many a pilgrim tread the wet sands connecting it with the mainland, their eyes turned to the noble pile of buildings on the island's furthest point, and their hearts turned heavenward by the thought that there holy men were praying for the safety of their souls. Still in these enlightened days the stranger finds his way across those same sands, no longer it is true on sandalled feet, and it may be no longer with the same object in view. But the memories of the past linger over the place, and the ancient shrine of St Cuthbert even in its ruined state has power to attract many visitors. No place that aspires to cater for the summer and holiday visitor can nowadays be without its golf course for the game has become well-nigh universal and it is not surprising therefore that Holy Island has brought itself into line in this respect. The place itself is naturally splendidly adapted for a course, and indeed a recent conjecture that the old monks had found this out many

centuries ago, and played the game on the sandy links of their island home, has all the plausibility of truth. At any rate whether the followers of St. Aidan saw its golfing advantages or not, they are today apparent to the merest novice. It was some time ago accordingly mooted that the charms of the island as a health and holiday resort would be greatly enhanced by the formation of a golf course, and the idea being received with enthusiasm on all hands, steps were taken by a number of the more energetic inhabitants to put that matter into practical shape by starting a club. A number of these, headed by Mr H G Winship approached the lord of the manor, Mr L Morley Crossman regarding the acquisition of a suitable portion of his territory and Mr Crossman at once generously acceded to their request, and gave the scheme his hearty assistance. Mr E Hudson, Holy Island Castle, also gave his invaluable co-operation, and indeed too his generous aid is due not a little of the success which has so far attended the venture. Mr Hudson volunteered to send down a practical professional golfer to advise the promoters of the club if they would select the ground on which they proposed to layout the course. With the permission of Mr Crossman they looked over two different parts of the island. One of these parts, however was not favourable for the reason that it was going to be too costly to make the course over it, but the other part situated on the left of the entrance to the island, was pronounced to be a far superior course in every way. James Braid the well know Romford professional, and present Open Champion, laid out the course, and under his experienced and capable hand, it is needless to say, every advantage has been taken of the ground, and the several putting greens have been placed in the most advantageous positions, the result being a course which all exponents of the game must acknowledge as a splendid one in every way, and one well calculated to tax the skill of even the most skilful lover of the game. It is throughout a natural course, with some excellent natural hazards, and at every hole fine sporting features present themselves, bringing the best qualities of golf into play. A sliced or low ball means invariably a severe penalty, but the golfer who can keep the line with a lofty ball will reap a corresponding reward. Altogether, it has been pronounced a most excellent course by many who have played over it, including Braid himself. Mr Horace Hutchinson, the amateur champion of 1886 and 1887, and runner up in 1903, has expressed the opinion that it is a splendid course even at the present time, and has extremely grand possibilities before it, providing the funds of the club will allow it to be improved as it goes on – a consummation which it is to be sincerely hoped will be realised. So far the club has spent very little on the course, all the work being done voluntarily by the island residents, who have worked willingly and well. As a result of their labours, the course, although the club was only formed in November last, is already in fair condition. Owing to the rough nature of the turf the greens as yet are some-what heavy, but improvement in this direction will come as the result of time and the enter-prising efforts of the club officials. The ground is held under an agreement with Mr Morley Crossman on a yearly tenancy. The course is one of nine holes, their lengths being: -First hole, 161yards, second, 428; third, 256; fourth 393; fifth, 182; sixth, 317; seventh, 421; eight, 200; ninth, 374; a total length of 2740 yards.

The following are the office-bearers of the Holy Island Golf Club: - President, Mr L Morley Crossman of Cheswick: vice- president, Mr E. Hudson, Holy Island Castle: captain, Mr John Gray, sen, : hon. secretary and treasurer Mr H. G. Winship; committee, Rev. J. Crawshaw, Messers W. Halliday, John Gray sen.; John Gray, jun.. B. Kyle, G. Allison, J. Wilson, J.Markwell, J. Renton, and Rev. Mr Smith. The membership at present is 36, so that the club has had a good send-off in that respect, and it is hoped this may be largely increased as the course becomes known. In Mr Winship the club has an ideal secretary, full of energy and initiative, and he is ably backed up by the other office-bearers, who are all inspired by the determination to make the venture a successful one, so that one may safely prophesy a prosperous career for Holy Island Golf Club. The opening ceremony in connection with the new course took place on Tuesday afternoon, in the presence of a large gathering. The proceedings were carried through under the happiest of circumstances, the weather after a long spell of rain day after day, suddenly showing a welcome change for the better, and the sun re-appearing to grace the ceremony. Among those present were- Mrs Leyland and the Misses Leyland of Haggerston Castle, Mr L Morley Crossman of Cheswick, Mr E. Hudson of Holy Island Castle, Mr and Mrs R. Liddell, Mrs Dunlop, Mr T. Darling, Mr and Mrs W. J. Bolam, Misses Harris, Miss M. King, Misses Alder, Dr and Mrs Fraser, Mr W. R. McCreath, Mr Horace Hutchison and Mr S. D. Winkworth of London. A large number of golfers were also present from Berwick, Bamburgh, Alnmouth, Newbiggin, and Newcastle. The visitors were entertained to luncheon by Mr Crossman at the Manor House prior to the formal ceremony, which was held at the first teeing ground. On the company assembling there, Rev. J. Crawshaw vicar of Holy Island, in the name of Holy Island Golf Club, asked Mr Crossman to open the course, and presented him with a driver and a ball for that purpose. The driver was suitably inscribed.

Mr Crossman in the course of a short speech expressed regret that Mrs Crossman, who warmly sympathised with the institution of a golf course on the island, was unable to be present at the days proceedings owing to indisposition. He himself was highly gratified with the result of the effort that had been made to establish a course, but he would like to remind them that it was really through the generosity of Mr Hudson that the course had been laid out. Mr Hudson had at his expense sent down Braid to stake out the ground, and he thought the thanks of the whole island were due to Mr Hudson for what he had done, and also in great measure to Mr Winship for the work undertaken in connection with the laying out of the course. He hoped that the venture they were that day inaugurating would flourish, (Applause)

Mr Crossman then, amid much enthusiasm drove off the first ball and declared the course open for play.

Mr Hudson, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr Crossman for performing the opening ceremony, also expressed hope that the club would go on and prosper in the future.

Thereafter an exhibition game was played between Mr Horace Hutchinson, the famous ex- amateur champion, and Mr S. D. Winkworth, both of whom were guests of Mr Hudson at the Castle. Both gentlemen played well, and the game was followed with keen interest by a large number of spectators, who thoroughly appreciated the opportunity of witnessing the play of so able an exponent of the "royal and ancient game" as Mr Hutchinson. The ex-champion gained an easy victory.

An open scratch competition followed for a handsome silver cup presented by Mr Crossman. This was won by Mr W. Atkinson, Alnmouth, with a creditable score of 45, the second prize, a dozen golf balls presented by James Braid, falling to Mr C. de S. Paynter, Alnmouth, who returned a score of 47. Other scores:- A. D. Darling, Berwick, 48; J. L. McCreath, Berwick, 49; W. R. McCreath, Berwick, 50; A. Binks, Alnmouth, 51; G. Longstaff, Newbiggin, 51; S. Edwards, Goswick, 52; D. W. Darling, Berwick, 52; J. S. Tiffen, Berwick, 53; Dr. Coldstream, Bamburgh, 55; W.A. Caverhill, Berwick, 55; J.C Campbell, Berwick, 56; R.R. Riddell, Berwick, 56; Collingwood Gray, Bamburgh, 56; Rev.- McCall, Bamburgh, 56; J. Crisp, Berwick, 57; J. Gray jun. Holy Island, 57; E. Parkinson, Newbiggin, 57; Rev.- Watson, Bamburgh, 60; J. Wilson, Holy Island, 61; J. Carter, Bamburgh, 61; J. Renton, Holy Island, 61; G. Allison, Holy Island, 62; R. H. Dodds, Berwick, 63; G. Marshall, Bamburgh, 64; J.Gray, Holy Island, 66; Dr. Worth, Wooler, 66; S. Esden, London, 67; A. Purvis, Bamburgh, 68; M. Robertson, Goswick 71. There were 34 competitors.

This was followed by a ladies competition, for a pretty silver flower vase presented by Mrs Crossman, 16 competitors taking part. The winner was Miss Parkinson, Newbiggin, who handed in the score of 63. Other scores:- Miss Campbell, Berwick, 66; Mrs Bolam, Goswick, 71; Miss L. Alder, Berwick, 71; Miss King, Berwick, 76; Miss N. Alder Berwick 79; Miss Longstaff, Berwick, 80. The others made no returns.

Afterwards the competitors on the invitation of Mr Crossman returned to the Manor House, where they partook of his hospitality at tea. The prizes were presented to the successful competitors on the lawn in front of the house by Mr Crossman, who was warmly thanked for his kindness during the afternoon, the proceedings, which throughout had been of a most happy and auspicious nature, then terminating.

During the course of the afternoon an interesting announcement was made. It was stated that a gentleman interested in the formation of the golf course had offered to give five guineas towards the club, provided two or three other gentlemen would do the same, and Mr Crossman also announced that he would give a further five guineas towards it, an announcement which needless to say, was received with enthusiasm.

Tomorrow's History Project.

The FBDMA's part in the Tomorrows History project is to publish a folded leaflet concerning Berwick-upon-Tweed and the various harbours/ports included in the registration district. (All use the letters BK) The assembly of condensed information with illustrations is now well on the way to finalisation of a draft to send to the printers. We are very grateful to all those persons who have helped us with research, articles and illustrations without which the project would not have been possible. Many of these people were not at the inception members of the Friends but we trust that now they will be with us for the future.

In addition to the printed leaflet there will be submission to the website of fuller versions of the articles and further illustrations and these items will be forwarded in the next couple of weeks. All the full research, articles, essays, illustrations etc. will be lodged within the Berwick Archive. The Archive will have additional sources for research for anyone wishing to go into this matter further.

Beadnell

The first reference to any maritime trade at Beadnell comes in a record of the Prior of Holy Island, "Lindisfarne" when he sent a present of "Bidnelfysh" to his bretheren monks at Durham and that tithes were paid on all fish landed at Beadnell to the "Augustinian Canons" at Bamburgh. When that monastery was suppressed the Crown farmed out the tithes at £6 –14s-4d per year ; this would indicate a substantial trade as it continued to be paid in kind up to the end of the 18th century.

The 1700s saw an increase in the maritime activities of Beadnell with the setting up of a trade in lime that was quarried from the coastal outcrops, smelted in kilns, initially built at "Dell Point" the remains of which can be seen today, and later at the present harbour. The original harbour for the export of lime, Whin stone and salt was at Bent Hall, between Beadnell village and the

harbour, where a dyke was cut through the broad basalt ridge, to allow shipping in to be loaded. So much limestone was quarried from Dell Point that it allowed the north-easterly gales to render this harbour useless and to destroy the limekilns and salt pans erected near the high water mark. The present harbour was built in 1798. This harbour is unique in that it is the only west facing harbour on the East Coast of England.

Beadnell was also an important site used by Scottish smugglers with records of a considerable seizure of brandy, rum, geneva, wine and tea by customs officers in September 1762.

In 1788 the "Northumberland Branch of the British Fishery" was established and by 1800 herring became the main export, with Herring yards being built and the limekilns at the harbour being used for curing herring until the end of the century. Fishing continued as the major employment until the 1950s when a steady decline set in and by the 1970s the fleet was down to a few "Northumbrian Cobles" fishing for crabs, lobsters and salmon. By 1998 it was one of only three harbours in England still owned by the fishermen.

In January of 1997 the south wall of the harbour collapsed and by the end of 1997 the damage worsened. In 1998, the 200th anniversary of the building of the harbour, an appeal was launched to restore it and the restoration work was completed in 2001.

Robert Shepherd

I was a Fisherman

dictated by Jack Stewart over 20 years ago when he was 90 years old.

"I've been a fisherman all my life, as was my father and his father before him so it goes back a long way. They do say we were chased over the Border but I don't know about that, it was before my time. I don't know much about my grandfather as he died before I was born. I believe he lived in Crow's Nest Lane and is buried at Shilbottle. He was a Jack too. He was born in 1802 and died in 1886. My grandmother's family were at Shilbottle and she was Elizabeth Storey before she married.

My father was born in Alnmouth in 1849 and he was one of six boys. His name was Henry and the others were Jack, Adam the eldest, William, Storey and Robert. My father was married in about 1869 to a Lesbury girl named Eleanor Smith and their first home was the cement house over on Church Hill where Ned Lake, the ferryman, lived. His wife was my mother's auntie. They moved to a house, behind the Sun Inn, where I was born in 1889 when my two sisters were

18 and 19 years old, I didn't have a brother, but a cousin who my father adopted. That house was condemned and there are garages there now. We came to live in this house as tenants of the Duke when my father became coxswain of the lifeboat and I was 14, and I've lived here ever since.

I was still at school when the trawlers began knocking out the small men and when I was 13 I got a half labour pass. You see I had been kept away from school to help my father when one of the men who worked for him in the boat left to go to work in the pit at Newbiggin. You could get a full labour pass to go to work when you were 13 provided you had a good attendance record at school but I hadn't. In those days you left school at 14 and you were reckoned to be ready for work.

Before the war it was all sails and oars. A coble was manned by three men, who were share fishermen. Each man had a share and there was one for the boat, four shares in all and each man came from a different family so one share supported one family and three families shared the work. Then, soon after the first shareman had left, the second took ill and he went too. Now at that time Henry, who was a cousin and who was named after my father, was working for a cabinet-maker in Alnwick. There was consumption in his family and the Doctor said he should work in the open air. So he left and came to live with us as one of the family so my father had two teenage boys to man the boat with him but it wasn't the same as working with sharemen because now the boat had come into the house and all the work had to be done in one home instead of three.

When the boat was manned by three equal sharemen it worked like this; each man had 1000 hooks as his share and so, if the boat was to go out every day as it did when the weather was suitable, then each man had to get his 1000 hooks baited every day. He had these on two lines, 500 on each line and the bait was limpets gathered from the rocks, lugworms dug for at Boulmer and sometimes mussels which came in the first place from as far away as Boston and Morcambe Bay. The hooks were attached to the main line, which was made of cotton, by a short piece, which was called a snood and this was made partly of cotton and partly of horsehair. The horsehair gave it extra flexibility, which was said to prevent it getting twisted around the main line when the fish got hooked and thrashed around. The snoods were fixed to the main line every four feet. The biggest job was baiting the hooks and there is no doubt the women kept us going. The limpets were knocked off the rocks with a pick and carried home in a bucket, where the bait was scooped out of the shell with a half mussel shell or a teaspoon. The mussels from Boston were used as bait but part of each consignment was put on the rocks and part in a special enclosure on the slake (mud flats) off Pease's Park where they could breed. So again they had to be collected from the rocks or scooped out of the mud by hand. Joan's mother didn't like baiting worms, which wriggled. Preparing the lines was a lot of work and all the family had to help at home doing the baiting all over the living room floor. It took 3 hours or more to bait one line of 500 hooks, some folks being smarter at it than others. At the end of it all there was an awful bloody mess all over the floor, which then had to be cleaned up but there was lino on the floor and the clippy mats were just shaken out. The baited lines had to be carefully laid in swills

which were baskets rounded at one end where the main line was coiled and flattened at the other where the baited hooks were laid either on a bed of sand or grass to prevent the hooks getting snagged when the line was being paid out from the boat. The swills were made with willow twigs but later on the men got lazy and began to make them of wood. My father used to make two swills every winter for the next season. When the boat came into the house and one family had to do it all, the boat took out only 1500 hooks, which still had to be baited every day, if we were to go out daily.

When I started work there were four cobbles and twelve fishermen working in Alnmouth, but boys like me were not allowed to join in the men's talk. But I used to listen to them and I picked up a lot of what I know that way but I cannot spell some of the words I use because I have never seen them written down. Our cobbles were all clinker built and before the days of engines they had a square lugsail and a jib sail. Some of the bigger ones had a mizzen sail as well. They were usually about 20 foot on the ram, which would give you a boat about 29 foot long overall. You see when you order a boat you just have to specify the length of the ramplank and the rest is up to the builder. Cobbles are essentially flat-bottomed craft best suited for working off beaches and their use is restricted to the North-East coast of England. Their origin is unknown but they are obviously a very ancient type of vessel but why a ramplank is so called no one seems to know. It is in fact the shortest plank in the boat and is laid out flat instead of on edge as you would a keel. All the other planks, as they are fixed to the framing members, get progressively longer as they extend from the raked stern to the curved forefoot of the bow. So you can see how the length of the ramplank decides the length of the coble.

We did mainly line fishing, the lines were set from a buoy and were allowed to lie on the bottom for ½ an hour before being hauled in again. All kinds of fish were caught and we just had to take what came. An average catch was 60-80 stones but I remember bringing in a record 109 stone catch and we were nearly swamped. We used to gut the fish on the way home, weather permitting, and those on the shore could follow our progress home-wards by the cloud of gulls circling around us.

I can remember my grandmother, she lived with us to begin with and she used to go out on foot with a donkey and a couple of creels of fish on its back. We didn't have much to do with money in those days ...you were either rich or poor and there was nothing much in between and my grandmother used to walk to all the local farms and barter her fish for what we needed in the way of flour, bacon and so on. When we needed money she went further afield, still on foot, to the bigger houses like Shortridge and as far as Felton and Swarland, places like that and there she sold her fish for money. My mother did the same too but she didn't have a donkey, she just went out with a creel on her back.

There were the wholesalers with their spring carts to take the fish to the bigger towns. Each wholesaler had his own fish-way, a sort of sunken road between two raised platforms from which you could load the fish barrels and boxes without having to lift them up. The coming of the railway meant that the fish could be sent to more distant markets.

Came the war, the first war, you understand and I went as a gunner in the navy. They mounted a gun in the big wooden herring drifters and our job was to patrol off the Island of Mudros in the Mediterranean where the navy had their base. After a while our wooden boats began to leak because of the wood-borers you get in the warm waters, so we had to stop using them and we got steel ones instead. I was away for 3 ½ years and while I was away my father got a job as a roadsweeper, so they didn't need to touch my pay, which accumulated for the whole time. When I came home I bought this house and the Duke took all of my £300 to pay for it!

I got married in 1923, to a Washington girl called Sarah Turnbull. She was in service with a family in Newcastle and this family came up to Alnmouth for the summer and that is how I met her. She died in 1965 aged 76.

The first boat that my father had that I remember was a sailing boat named 'Widgeon' and then another called 'Rose of England', which was second hand from Newbiggin. When I came home after the war we got our first boat with an engine and this was 'Smiling Morn'. It was a keel boat and it had a two cylinder Kelvin engine and by the time it was delivered it cost nigh on £200but it was no good because a keel boat is harder to handle off a beach and in a bit of a sea the propeller came out of the water and the engine raced. We sold it for £38. Then came the 'Girl Joan', which I got 6 months after my daughter was born. This boat was built in Amble and the propeller was tunnelled by which I mean it was let into the bottom of the boat. Then there was the 'Kindly Light' with a Morris engine and lifting gear for the propeller shaft.

My cousin Henry died in 1918 after being invalided home from France as a result of gas. My father retired from the Lifeboat when I became a crewman; that was before the war, and after the war I became second crewman and my nephew was bowman. When we lost our lifeboat in 1935 we joined up with Boulmer. I was second coxswain.

There were three methods of fishing for a living, there was still line fishing for the small man to which I had been brought up, drifting was by bigger boats and then trawling by mechanical means for bigger boats still.

I gave up regular work when I was 78 but I still go out in the summer when I can get someone to go with me."

This was taken from the notebook given to me by Jack's daughter Joan whilst researching the Port of Alnmouth for the Tomorrow's History Project. Editor.

ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

2: Sir Walter Scott and the Artists

By 1826, Sir Walter Scott was becoming a little fed up with being a celebrity. On Sunday, 7th January he noted in his diary: "Knight, a young artist...came to paint my picture. This is very far from being agreeable, as I submitted to this distressing state of constraint last year to Newton, at request of Lockhart; to Leslie at request of my American friend; to Wilkie, for his picture of the King's arrival at Holyrood House; and some one besides. I am as tired of the operation as old Maida [Scott's dog], who had been so often sketched that he got up and went away with signs of loathing whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper and handle his brushes."

His own fame aside, Scott had decided views about art. Just over a month later, when the Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts opened an exhibition at Somerset House, Scott was moved to pour out his opinions into his diary. "All the Fine Arts" he said, "affect the human passions, [and] smooth and alleviate for a time the more unquiet feelings of the mind". They "excite wonder, or terror, or pleasure or emotion of some kind or other." This he suggested happened well in music and poetry, but painting had been hijacked by the critics: "it is all become a mystery, the secret of which is lodged in a few connoisseurs, whose object is not to praise the works of such painters as produce effect on mankind at large, but to class them according to their proficiency in the inferior rules of art."

Rules and techniques were "steps by which the higher and ultimate object of a great popular effect is to be attained." The neglecting of the big picture, for matters of detail was "the cause of the decay of this delightful art, especially in history, its noblest branch." It is not surprising that Scott, the inventor of the historical novel, should think history painting the noblest branch. It was an opinion only briefly shared by his contemporaries. British history painting never really developed successfully, one of the key exponents Benjamin Robert Haydon, shooting himself in 1846. Scott had often sent money to the starving artist and thought him "certainly a clever fellow, but somewhat too enthusiastic"... But Scott, a true romantic, firmly believed that painting should be emotionally engaging:

"a painting should, to be excellent, have something to say to the mind of a man, like myself, well-educated, and susceptible of those feelings which anything strongly recalling natural emotion is likely to inspire. But how seldom do I see anything that moves me much!"

He goes on to praise Wilkie, "the far more than Teniers of Scotland", William Allan, overwhelmed by criticism of his colours and groupings, Leslie, Newton and Landseer whose dogs "were the most magnificent things I ever saw –

leaping, and bounding, and grinning on the canvas.” All these artists he knew personally, Allan indeed was at Abbotsford when Scott died. But of them all it was Wilkie’s painting of Scott and family as rustic peasants that appealed most to the writer. It showed Scott how he wanted to appear, an honest country laird with no pretensions – a man of the people. Of course, he was not a man of the people. Before he became a famous novelist with a Europe-wide readership, he had travelled the Borders recording folksongs that became the basis for *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1821). He visited the ramshackle lodgings of diverse country-folk to listen to their tales and songs, but this was not in the spirit of anthropological enquiry to accurately record a living popular culture. Scott’s interest was antiquarian. He aimed to dig up the fragmentary and debased remains of once noble and aristocratic ballads, these he then poetically reconstructed to the fine forms he imagined they once were. The same spirit of historicism inspired all his cultural projects. His poems, novels and staging of great events like George IV’s visit to Scotland in 1822 were all centred on a romanticised vision of a Medievalist aristocratic Scotland. The same was true for his view of art. His writings are hugely visual in effect, the opening, for example, of the *Lady of the Lake* is virtually a screenplay for the cinema of the reader’s imagination. But like cinema the visuals are there to tell a story. The artist C.R.Leslie recalled that when it came to choosing paintings Scott “had little or no taste, nor did he pretend to any. To him they were interesting merely as representing some particular scene, person or event; and very moderate merit in their execution contented him”. Probably because his own visual imagination was highly developed, Scott was not that keen to see artists illustrate his own writings. It was once suggested that arch neo-Classicalist Flaxman should illustrate the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott replied:

“I should fear Flaxman’s genius is too classic to stoop to body forth my Gothic Borderers. Would there not be some risk of them resembling the antique of Homer’s heroes rather than the iron race of Salvator’s engravings”.

The Antique, had in Scott’s view effected the arts for too long, far better the drama of Salvator Rosa’s mountain landscapes with brigands and decently historical violence. As late as 1826 Scott was still saying “painting wants a regenerator – some one who will sweep the cobwebs out of his head before he takes the palette.” From our historical perspective, we know that such a revolutionary was already around and had already met Scott nearly a decade before 1826. This was Joseph Mallord William Turner. They met first in 1818 when Scott had been disdainful of Turner’s cockney accent and lack of refinement. Turner was in Edinburgh for Scott’s masterminding of the King’s visit, and even planned an oil painting *The Mission of Sir Walter Scott* to mark the writer’s visit to the Royal Yacht, but they mostly kept out of each other’s way. Ten years later Scott’s publisher broached the subject of Turner doing the illustrations for an edition of Scott’s works. Scott noted in his diary:

“Advised by Mr.Cadell that he has agreed with Mr.Turner, the first draughtsman of the period, to furnish to the poetical works two decorations to each of the proposed twelve volumes...at the rate of £25 for each, which is cheap enough considering these are the finest specimens of art going. The difficulty is to make him come here to take drawings. I have written to the man of art, inviting him to my house, though if I remember, he is not very agreeable, and offered to transport him to the places where he is to exercise his pencil. His method is to take various drawings of remarkable places and towns and stick them all together.”

In fact, Scott had only been persuaded with difficulty to accept any illustrations in the edition at all. Cadell convinced the author that the illustrations in the Waverley novels had helped sell an extra 5000 copies. It was therefore as a concession to popular taste that Scott consented. Then there was the issue of Turner’s style and Scott’s worry that Turner would insist on putting incongruous Highlanders into all the pictures. Cadell wrote to reassure the writer that he “did intend to scare him from the Highland dress”. Then there was the issue of which sites should be illustrated. Cadell drew up a list and there was a lot of discussion about Scottish scenes. Then Scott noted: “There is nothing to see about Flodden but a half cultivated braeside. I doubt even Mr.Turner’s talents could make something out of it.” A little later he writes:

“Twizell Castle as it now stands is a most detestable sample of modern Gothick with which Sir Francis Blake Delaval replaced what in my recollection was a genuine castle of moderate size. There is only one thing fit to draw at Twizell and that is the old bridge which consists of a beautiful Gothick arch ribbed beneath and I think pointed which would make an exquisite vignette but not for God’s sake no castle. Even the wise man who built the hulk is now blocking out from his eyes what cost him £50,000 to deform the situation with. Perhaps you meant to say Ford Castle instead of Twizell. The first is a grand ruin and indispensable, the second a mock castle with an extreme number of peaked windows.”

Eventually everything was agreed and Turner arrived on 11th August 1831 and Scott joined him on several expeditions, but clearly things did not go well for in September Cadell is writing again to the author apologising that Turner’s behaviour “annoyed” Scott “so much”. Quite what Turner did we shall never know, but it was probably just his old boorish self. But the resulting pictures, of Berwick, Norham and other places are now some of the best known local images from the age of engraving.

Chris Green

Further Reading

Hill, D. *Turner in the North* (1996)

Holcomb, A.M. 'Scott and Turner' in A.Bell (ed) *Scott: Bicentenary Essays* (1973) pp.199-212
Prebble, J. *The King's Jaunt: George IV in Scotland, 1822* (1988)
Scott, W. *Journal 1825-1832* (various editions)

Thoughts on writing a "History of Berwick"

A history book for Berwick? A daunting task, for Berwick is no 'peelie-wally' town which might merit a little genteel writing, and some rose-hued descriptions designed to appeal to the casual and superficial visitor.

Berwick's history is bloodier and more awesome in its abundance than any other town in these Isles. To condense Berwick's history to a pocketable book, with a reasonable price, is no easy feat.

But I had a debt to repay – not a financial debt but a moral one, and the debt had accumulated for more than 70 years – for I have known and loved Berwick that long. I had felt for some time that a straight-forward, chronological history of Berwick was needed, not only for the student but mainly for the average person with neither the time nor the money to spend acquiring and reading scarce antiquarian histories of Berwick. If I could accomplish this, then perhaps it would in some small measure, repay the debt I felt I owed to Berwick.

The book of necessity, had to be limited to under 50,000 words and of course had to encompass Spittal and Tweedmouth. A walking guide was also envisaged, taking in the principal sights of Berwick and the surrounding area. Although I have a large library of photographs, I still needed more to illustrate important points, and had to draw maps and illustrations for sections where photographs were not appropriate. In all 150 black and white photographs and 30 colour photographs were finally chosen, and the process of selection from thousands of possibles, is something I'd rather forget!

Another huge task was the compiling of a classified index, but in this I was greatly helped by my wife, Connie. There is nothing worse than looking for certain references in an index; turning to the page quoted, and finding nothing. This can happen, for the original text (with numbered pages) is sent to the publisher along with a computer disc containing all the written material and classified index. When the text is transposed to the book, all the page numbers are changed, so that every reference has to be altered to the new page number and this the author must do, for he knows the text and has the original classified index.

Doing the research for the book was very enjoyable although I must confess to often getting too engrossed in a particular facet of Berwick's history, and these digressions, though often fascinating, would (if they had all been included,) have made the book two or three times as long.

One such example is my drawing of Palace Green interpreted from a plan of 1570. It shows the complex buildings which comprised the 'Pallace', with its courtyard and a fountain. A French traveller, Jorevin de Rocheford visited Berwick in the first half of the 17th century and wrote....."In the upper town the streets are straight and handsome; but here are not many rich inhabitants, they rather preferring the lower town , in which there are many great palaces. In all the open areas are great fountains.....and I discovered it to be one of the greatest and most beautiful towns in England."

Yet a few years later, an unknown chronicler was writing "I must not omitt the faire built Pallace some time a Court fitter for a Prince than a Subject, but since Berwick's desolation (or rather distruction) it is almost laid levell with the ground, the goodly houses gone to decay, obsolete and worn out. There were Bake-houses, Brew-houses, Slaughter houses,Stables for horses and Oxen, goodlie Corne lofts. To all these belonged Clerkes and Officers who supplied the Garrison with Bread, Beere, Beife, Butter, Cheese and all kinds of victuals for Man and Horses. Every Clerke and officer had his Chamber and Office house, all now lying low and ruined."

How Berwick's fortunes must have changed once it was no longer the massively important fortified frontier town. Are we still paying the price today for our pivotal role in history?

A sixth century Italian writer is quoted as saying

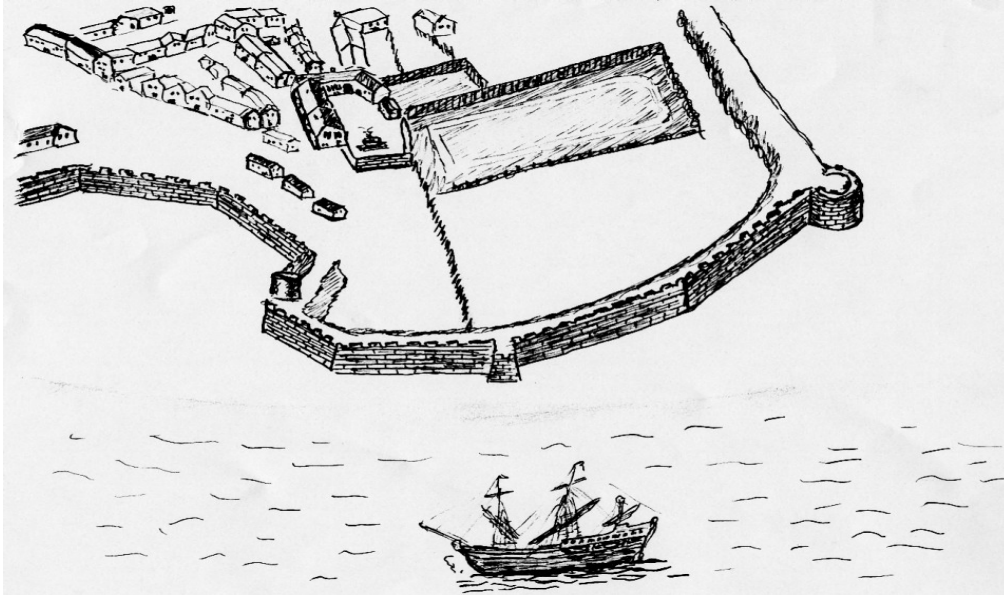
'To write more than one needs is vanity,

To suppress what is necessary shows disdain.'

I think I have avoided the first fault, and if I have sinned regarding the second, it is not because of disdain, but rather that practical commercial decisions cannot be ignored, much as one would like to.

As the Scots say" Facts are chiels that wunni ding"

Jim Walker



N.B. Jim Walkers History of Berwick, published by Tempus Publishers is available in all good book shops priced £12.99

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

Feb.28th 1829 **To the Editor, Berwick Advertiser.**

Sir,

In reducing the Imperial to the Linlithgow boll, it is customary to deduct 2.65 per cent; but, as the Linlithgow pease firloft contained 2214.25 solid inches, and the imperial bushel contained 2218.19072 solid, it appears that the reductions should be only .177655. Do not the clergymen therefore who receive wheat or pease reduced by the customary mode as part of their stipends, lose 2.672345 per cent on the conversion.

I am Sir, Your most obedient servant.

J.T.

July 18th 1829 SALT AN EXCELLENT AND CHEAP MANURE.

The following information has been communicated to us, as valuable to farmers and agriculturalists in general, and is the result of various experiments, made by several extensive land proprietors in England, who have themselves found the advantage of SALT as a manure, as well as in mixing with hay, fodder etc.

From experiments that have been made, it appears that salt, when judiciously applied to land, is a cheap and invaluable manure. The very limited use of it is owing to the want of knowing its valuable properties, and in what manner it should be applied; to supply that deficiency, the following observations are submitted to those who incline to use it. The value of SALT as a manure consists principally in its properties of retaining moisture in the soil and absorbing it from the atmosphere, and in the destruction of weeds and vermin.

(Have we any agricultural scientists among our members to confirm or refute this?)

Muriel Fraser

Letter from the Editor.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends,

I noticed in the Visitor's Book at the Record Office that the majority of our visitors are researching their family history. I, too, have been studying mine for many years now and in the course of my research I have often come across interesting and amusing items in church records, monumental inscriptions, newspapers etc. so if any of you find anything when you are transcribing or researching in the Record Office please make a copy of it and hand it to Linda for the Newsletter! Remember any **interesting stories, items, events, letters or queries** will be most appreciated. Please give them to Linda or send them by E-mail to gallagher@ukonline.co.uk or by post c/o. Records Office, Wallace Green, Berwick upon Tweed.

*Yvonne Gallagher
Hon. Editor.*

P.S. Don't forget to pay your Membership fees
.....and encourage your friends to join too!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New