



# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 35 – June 2002*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Saturday 6th July 2002

**Wooler Churchyard Survey**, Meet at Wooler Parish Church at 10.30 am. We will be there until about 4pm. Bring a pencil and your lunch.

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2002

**Visit to the Alnwick Garden in Alnwick Castle, 3 pm.**

Monday 16 September 2002

**Bondington Project – The Nunnery at Bondington**

A talk by Francis Cowe at the Maltings, Starting 7.30p.m.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2002

**Autumn Lecture : Use of the Berwick Archive.**

**Guildhall, Berwick, at 7.00 p.m.**

A talk by Doreen Grove on her work using the Archives for her research on the Berwick Fortifications.

## **Other Societies' Lectures**

### **Border Archaeological Society**

Venue : Parish Centre, Berwick

Time : 7pm

- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002      Archaeology of the Christian Conversion in North Northumberland : Prof. Rosemary Cramp
- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002      Walking the Walls : Walk led by BAS Project Group
- Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2002      The Kirknewton Magi : talk by Roy Humphrey at **Kirknewton Church starting at 7.30 pm**
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2002      North Northumberland Prehistory : Steve Speak

### **Belford Local History Society**

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

Wed, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2002.      Trip to Lindisfarne.

### **Coldstream & District Local History Society**

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

July 4<sup>th</sup> 2002      Field Trip to Duns Castle ( at 7.00p.m.)

### **Embleton Local History Society**

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

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2002      No Meeting.

July 17<sup>th</sup> 2002      Members Only: Outing to Norham.

Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> 2002      A.G.M. followed by  
The Percys in America: Mr B. Cato

### **Norham Local History Society**

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

September 9<sup>th</sup> 2002 Latest investigations at Sutra Medieval : Dr Brian Moffat

**North Sunderland & Seahouses Local History Society**

Venue: St. Paul's Parish Hall, North Sunderland. Time: 7.30p.m.

Wed. 26<sup>th</sup> June 2002 Members Only: Summer outing to Cragside.

**Northumberland & Durham Family History Society**  
**(North Northumberland Group)**

Venue: White Swan, Lowick. Time: 10.00 a.m.

Sat. 15<sup>th</sup> June.2002 A.G.M. followed by Bits and Pieces of the History of Coldstream: Dr Brian Sproule

Sat.21<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2002 Genealogy on the Internet: Neil Richardson

Sat.19<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2002 A Newcastle Guide: Ann Robinson  
**NOTE** : Venue will be St Paul's Parish Hall, Seahouses.

Sat. 16<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2002 A glance at the Family History of some of Berwick's M Ps, including the present one: Rt Hon Alan Beith.

**ARCHIVE NEWS**

I'm not sure where the time has gone since the last newsletter but I have certainly been very busy with all aspects of the work of the Record Office - I never have a dull or spare moment!

As usual, the Searchroom has been very busy with lots of people tracing their Family History and pursuing their own research. It is interesting to see that the overseas visitors are starting to return again after a lull in the last couple of years.

Well what has been happening in the Record Office ? During the last couple of months I have been involved in a lot of education work with local schools. Spittal First School visited the Office at the end of February to look at old maps of the area and I also went out to the school to do some follow up work in the classroom. In March, after a 2 year break, I went back to Holy Island to spend a morning with the boys from the Newcastle Royal Grammar Junior School who were researching the history of the Island and its occupants. I have also been

working with Berwick Middle School – all 4 classes in one year have come to the Office to find out about the Victorians and the Coming of the Railway to Berwick. Through NEMLAC ( North East Museums, Libraries & Archives Council )I have also been working with a teacher from Longhoughton First School who is planning to bring her class of 6 year olds to Berwick for a day in July – archives can even be used by very young children.

As well as working with children, I am continuing to do some adult education work. At the end of May I started a 3 week course in the Record Office with Northumberland College on Palaeography and Local History. In September, I also plan to run another two Family History for Beginners courses for the College.. If you are interested, look out for further information in the local newspapers.

The last month, May has been particularly busy for outreach work. At the beginning of the month, I gave a talk to the Civic Society on Royal Celebrations in the Borough in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have used some of the information I collected in my article. The week, 5 – 12 May was Local History Week and as part of this, a “ Bygone Berwick “ weekend was held in the Guildhall on 11 and 12th May. The weekend was a great success with many people visiting the event. As well as the exhibitions in the main hall; there were lectures in the Council Chamber and some living history re-enactment based on a Berwick Court Case in the Gaol. We have had very positive feedback about the whole event and we would like to run it again. So, keep your fingers crossed that we can find some funding to do this. Just to finish off the month, the Record Office also held a Film Night in the Maltings with the Northern Region Film & Television Archive. This was very well attended and we were able to show some films which had never been seen on a large screen before, including Fred Stott’s amateur cine taken in the 1950s and some footage taken on a summer holiday in Berwick in August 1945, just at the end of the war.

Finally, I have also been involved with the Bondington Project which had a very successful launch at the end of February. About 150 people attended our meeting in the Maltings and since then we have been working away on various aspects of the project.

## **FAMILY HISTORY**

The last time I looked, the 1901 census for England was still not available online. However, thanks to the Friends, the Berwick Office has now got copies of the returns for Newcastle and North Shields as well as all of Northumberland and Berwickshire. Unfortunately, we don’t have any indexes for the Newcastle & North Shields fiche but they are here for people to use. So, if your ancestors moved south to Tyneside by then, you may wish to look at them.

Thanks to everyone who responded to my request in the last newsletter for volunteers to index the 1901 census. Some people have been able to start but I'm still waiting for some of the copies from the Morpeth Records Centre which hopefully will arrive soon. If anyone else would like to help, just let me know.

The census is a home based project but if anyone would like to come and do transcription work in the Record Office, I always have plenty of tasks to do! Why not come and try it – you might enjoy it!

### **WOOLER CHURCHYARD SURVEY – SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

If you are free on Saturday 6 July, please come along to our Churchyard Survey at Wooler. This year will be slightly different to our normal surveys as we have two tasks – to recheck work which has already been done on the original churchyard around the church; and also start copying the inscriptions in the new churchyard opened in the 1890s at the other end of the village. I will have to work out some way of splitting myself in two! If you have never been before, it is always a good day out. Last year we did not have good weather but I'm keeping my fingers crossed for this year! Do come along, even it is only for an hour – every little helps. All you need to bring is a pencil and a packed lunch and if you have them, a garden spray and soft brush. See you there!

Linda Bankier

## **ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY**

### ***4: Berwick's Coronation Pageant of 1937***

The abdication of Edward VIII in December 1936 was a disaster for one section of the community -the manufacturers of Coronation souvenirs. On 30<sup>th</sup>.December Fattorini Ltd of Birmingham wrote to Berwick's Mayor saying they were working "night and day" to prepare new items to reflect the change of king in time for the Coronation on 12<sup>th</sup>.May 1937. They urged the council to place orders without delay. The Council took almost two months to decide it would indeed order 2300 medals from the firm to distribute to school children. The medals were one of the many ways in which the Berwick Council decided to mark the Coronation - there were to be tree-plantings, laying out a new garden, bonfires, flood-lighting, fireworks, a procession of floats, a cinema show, a historic pageant and a presentation to pensioners of 5 shillings. Of all these things the most difficult to organise was the presentation to pensioners, as nobody knew how many there were in the town. In the end Post Office clerks had to be asked specially to count the numbers coming in to collect their pensions. The procession of floats also proved a headache and eventually fell through because of lack of groups willing to take part. The big event that did succeed, however, was the historic pageant.

The pageant first makes its appearance in the Borough records in a note dated 30<sup>th</sup>.January 1937 reminding the Mayor he has a meeting with Mr. Stephens of the Grammar School to discuss the event. It may be that Stephens suggested the form that the pageant could take, but this meeting was by no means the first discussion of a pageant in Berwick. The issue had first been raised by the Berwick Merchant's Association in 1931 who asked the Town Clerk if it was true, as had been rumoured, that the Council was planning to stage a pageant in Berwick in 1933 to commemorate the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Halidon Hill. The Council was indeed considering such a venture and a joint sub-committee was formed to gather up information about various pageants around the country, notably a major show staged in Newcastle in July 1931. Of this show's eight scenes, three were of events in Berwick's history, St.Cuthbert, Edward I and Margaret Tudor. The committee discovered that the Newcastle pageant had taken no less than £30,000 at the gate. The profit had been £5000 of which £2000 was given to charity. An Empire fair organised alongside raised a further £11,000. Even by today's standards this is a healthy return, in the 1930s this was big business indeed. The man responsible for the Newcastle pageant was Edward Baring of Cheltenham. The chairman of the Newcastle committee told Berwick to "get Baring and the success of your Pageant is a foregone conclusion". Indeed Edward's list of credits was staggering Bath, Chester, Cheltenham, Stafford, Harrow, Carlisle, Salford, Manchester and the great Imperial pageants at Wembley in 1924 and 1925. These were all celebrations of British, or rather mostly English, history, presented as processions of sometimes thousands of costumed performers. Renaissance pageants and spectacles have been well researched but their 20<sup>th</sup> Century successors have been very little studied by scholars. It is thus difficult to be precise but it does seem that the 20<sup>th</sup>.century pageant as a theatrical form appears to be an Edwardian invention. Of just on a thousand scripts and souvenir programmes held by the British Library, scarcely any date before 1901. Many Edwardian and inter-war pageants were based around Church history and indeed today the local church or school pageant, with all its implied air of amateurishness and eccentric vicardom, is the main living survival of the form. But if sophisticates might now mock, in the 1930s the pageant did seem to have possibilities as a new form of serious theatre. T.S.Eliot is perhaps the best known of a number of important literary and musical figures who devoted time and effort to the pageant medium. The profoundest impression was also left on the audiences that attended Max Reinhardt's indoor stagings of very serious pageant-dramas in London between 1911 and 1932. But apart from whatever merit the events might have as serious drama, they also had huge pulling power as mass entertainment. In the cinema audiences could see the latest epics, courtesy of Cecil B.De Mille and Hollywood, while on the local playing fields their own history could be re-staged by the likes of Edward Baring. "In fact", he wrote to the Berwick committee "I have never yet failed to show a substantial surplus at any pageant I have organised". For a modest fee of 5 guineas he would visit and speak to the committee. But if the entertainment potential and the lure of huge

profits were dazzling to some on the committee they did not prevail. The initial expenditure was considered too much and the committee resolved to form a new committee that would “promote a small production by local amateurs”. Councillor J.M.Edney was the secretary of the new committee, but if it ever met, nothing came of it. Nearly three years later, with the 600<sup>th</sup>.anniversary long past, Edney returned some pageant booklets he had just been sent by the Town Clerk with the irritated note “*in view of the general apathy and lack of enthusiasm which was shown over the suggestion to hold a pageant commemorating the battle of Halidon Hill, I do not propose to devote any further time and trouble to the matter.*” And there the matter lay until 1937.

There was some movement towards spectacle at the Jubilee celebrations in 1935 with a fancy dress parade featuring Miss Edna Cross enthroned as Britannia but there was no suggestion of anything more substantial. In 1937 however, within a week of the Mayor’s meeting with Mr. Stephens, a request was being sent, with a postal order for three shillings and nine pence [19.5p], to the Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath for a copy of *The Wedding Ring of England*. The author of the work, Miss Consuelo de Reyes, was in charge of the Little Theatre as well as being a lecturer in drama at University College, Exeter. She is a somewhat obscure character but obviously had a commitment to community theatre. The Citizen Theatre had been running practical courses in stage-craft for some fifteen years when in 1932 Miss de Reyes leased the Everyman Theatre in Hampstead to extend her operations. The Everyman had been a famous venue where Noel Coward’s *Vortex* was premiered, but by 1931 had fallen into financial difficulties. The founder of the theatre, Norman MacDermott, recalled de Reyes ran her theatre courses there and staged “short plays of a religious character with amateur actors.” One of these was *The Wedding Ring of England* and photographs of this production, in February and March 1937, appear in the published script. The title refers to the coronation ring and the pageant was very adaptable with different groups, she writes presenting the piece “in its entirety and also in individual scenes, in wordless fashion and also in dance form. The main essential in production is undoubtedly to retain a picture of flowing movement, similar to a series of brilliantly coloured tapestries, which will represent the personalities, humours, tragedies and high adventures of all those who have worn *The Wedding Ring of England*.”

Berwick’s copy of the 157 page script came back by return of post. A fortnight later the Berwick Operatic Society pledged its full support and the pageant organising committee met for the first time on 25<sup>th</sup> February. It was agreed that the pageant would be produced by Mr. Stephens and A.J.Cogbill with the latter taking the lead in the artistic direction of the piece as well the role of one of the narrators. A.J.Cogbill was an up and coming star with a curious chance connection to royal events. When the *Berwick Journal* announced the death of George V in January 1936 the same issue praised Cogbill in a play produced that week, saying he was a talented theatrical newcomer to the town. Eleven months later he was playing at the Grammar School, to equal acclaim, in *Much Ado*

*About Nothing* the same week as Edward VIII abdicated. Perhaps these coincidences convinced him he was fated to play a part in the Coronation celebrations as well.

*The Wedding Ring of England* consists of twelve scenes and an epilogue. For each scene the script gives a narration and elaborate notes on mime, staging, settings and even how to make the costumes. Berwick decided to hire the costumes used in the original London production and very grubby and expensive they turned out to be costing no less than £78 15s. The Bell Tower School was booked for rehearsals which were to be held every night, except Thursday and Saturday from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April until Coronation eve, twenty-two evenings in all. In terms of amateur theatre this should have been perfectly feasible. The large scale musicals staged by the Maltings Community Theatre in the 1990s normally had a six week rehearsal period, the equivalent, counting day-long Sunday sessions, of some thirty five evenings to learn dialogue, action and all the songs and dances. The advantage of the pageant form, with a narration over mimed action, is that the cast only has to learn the moves and some stage noise, cheers and such like. Against that because the cast is very much larger in a pageant, crowd control becomes a major issue. Likewise talent, most dedicated amateur theatre players have at least some talent, they can play at least one 'character' well. Pageants include a vast number of people there for that occasion only, who have no sense of theatricality and will probably never learn it. Any producer faced with dozens of shuffling non-actors and no witty or engaging dialogue to distract the audience has their work cut out to mould them into an interesting spectacle. Similarly with non-actors levels of commitment are significantly lower, and this proved the case in Berwick. Within a week of rehearsals beginning the Mayor was having to appeal in the local paper:-

*“..it is essential and of the utmost importance, that all those who have promised to take part should be regular and prompt in their attendance at practices and rehearsals...I know that the people of this loyal and ancient Borough can be relied upon to honour the event in an enthusiastic manner, and, that, therefore, I am not appealing in vain.”*

Well the producers struggled on and Coronation day dawned. It was an overcast day and a bitterly cold wind swept Flagstaff Park beneath the Ramparts, now a children's play-area, where the Pageant was to take place. The cast of 200 performers, according to the *Berwick Journal*, “gave an excellent account of themselves and there was no hitch from start to finish.” *The Berwick Advertiser* agreed saying “No praise is high enough for the hon. Producers, commentators and those who took part.” But the paper did comment on all those missed rehearsals that miffed the Mayor:-

*“..the acting, except for the crowd parts which were a little disappointment, was first class. A little longer practice and a little polishing up of the crowd scenes and the show would have been perfect.”* Another critical comment came a week



later in a letter in the *Berwick Journal* from 'A Citizen'. "*The pageant, while quite good for the point of a pageant itself, was served up in a cheap way. There were the actors and actresses in fine costumes on a decorated stage, and alongside bare wooden fences stretching for yards. Surely there might have been a little decoration here at little cost and so put the necessary polish to such an event.*"

Leaving aside the production values what did the large crowd see during the three chilly hours of the show? *The Berwick Journal* commented that "*it was really wonderful how under the conditions some of the most famous scenes and incidents in history could be made so interesting.*" *The Berwick Advertiser* had no doubt that the "*whole pageant was a most interesting backward view into English history as seen with the truer perspective which our remoteness from past centuries gives us.*"

Following from this comment, and the fact the show was being presented under the guidance of Mr Stephens of the Grammar School it is appropriate to ask just how accurate was the history presented and how much of Berwick's history got included. The answer to the second question is hardly any at all, while the answer to the first is more complex. The narration and mimed action give a fascinating insight how English history was popularly viewed in the mid-1930s, with some very forthright opinions about the qualities of the kings and queens represented. The quantity of events Miss de Reyes felt she had to cram into three hours, and which the Berwickers faithfully reproduced, means that the show in its latter stages must have begun to resemble a rather more serious version of *1066 and All That* (1930). Indeed, one is tempted to claim that Sellar and Yeatman's book (on its 25<sup>th</sup> reprint by 1937) was a comic response to a lot of very serious pageant versions of abbreviated history they had witnessed. Not that *The Wedding Ring of England* was all gloom, the *Advertiser* notes "There were touches of humour which relieved what might have become tedious".

The opening, "the dawn of English history", is decidedly bucolic, a woodland setting with a sacred circle of trees, the narrator tells us "from woodland creek and fresh stream" come the 'ceorls' and 'eorls' to the moot hill to elect their 'elderman' with cries of "Hail-O!". No doubt the Saxon terminology was intended not to confuse the audience, but to give them confidence at the outset that they were seeing a work of authentic history. The scene concluded with the stirring lines that just as a small Cotswold stream becomes the mighty Thames so these tiny moots flowed into "a mighty Parliament at Westminster which should frame laws and do justice to a great Empire." Scene two gets the king of Kent baptised by St. Augustine, and scene three concerns the "Dawn of Literature and Art". There was in the Saxon period, says the narrator, a "tendency to national unity" and, in language that reflects the pre-occupations in the 1930s, "The quickened racial consciousness is now expressing itself in the first great English song [by Caedmon]." Bede enters next, represented by an old man followed by young scholars bearing symbols of the seven liberal arts. Alfred the Great is seen writing the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle with no beastly Vikings or burning cakes in evidence. "Aelfred the Great", we are told lives "solely for his people...and in so

doing first endows with a sense of moral grandeur the English theory of kingship". This moral grandeur continues into the next scene with Edward the Confessor gathering up the wise men, including Siward of Northumbria, to form the "witenagemot" of England. The scene should have ended with Westminster Abbey brought on as an off-stage choir sang 122<sup>nd</sup> Psalm ("I was glad..."), part of the coronation service, unfortunately the model was damaged in transit and was unusable.

The Norman Conquest is a smooth transition, a wounded Harold (with arrow in the eye) is carried across the stage followed by William the Conqueror carrying a model of the Tower of London followed by a clerk carrying the Domesday Book. No oppressive Norman yoke this, but an enquiry that establishes direct contact between king and each of his subject and that "loyalty to the king is the supreme and universal duty of all Englishmen." Then we have a bustling crowd amid which wanders Henry I, his Queen and their daughter Matilda "of true Saxon blood as her fair hair betokens". Unfortunately Matilda's wig got lost in Berwick and even an advert in the paper failed to secure its return. The main part of the scene, and the first real drama in the show is the news of the loss of the 'White Ship'. "Sunk. It struck a rock. Drowned – all drowned – but the prince – the king's only son – the hope of his people – drowned also – it cannot be true... What will the king do?" Go out looking miserable is what happens on stage. Then Stephen's gang chases Matilda across the stage and behind the curtains a clash of swords is followed by a "deep groan and the sound of a body falling". Poor old Thomas Becket. Henry II grieves and Richard I strides across the stage, the curtains part to reveal King John. *1066 and All That* has "He was a Bad King. Indeed, he had begun badly as a Bad Prince." And Miss De Reyes lets herself go on poor old John, he laughs at the cross, kicks people over, is cruel to women and children, personally tortures prisoners and steals from the altar to pay his soldiers. The only happy people are the royal torturers delighting in the "the fiendish malignity of his mind". The Magna Carta gets signed only to get immediately used to sketch a battle plan on the back and with great, if not accurate ingenuity, the text then suggests that John deliberately lost his treasure in the Wash to get rid of the Carta.

Fortunately for English democracy the clever Archbishop Langton had a second copy of the Magna Carta up his sleeve and the next scene has it being accepted happily everywhere. Next Henry III grants more freedoms; Simon de Montfort battles for liberty and Edward I grieves at his death. Edward I, says Miss de Reyes, "manifests..those principles of self-restraint, law and good government..which earn him the title of the English Justinian." Scots might not agree.

The Edwardian scene contains the only direction mention in the script of Berwick. The narration refers to the swearing of homage at Berwick in 1296 and the stage instructions have. "At the mention of the ceremony of homage at Berwick, two workmen enter Right with ropes, attached to the Scone stone which they are dragging, while a third follows bending over the stone easing it in the rear. The

workmen go out Left.” And that’s it for the official script, but it is clear that in the Berwick production the whole homage scene was acted out as well, complete with Baliol and the Governor of Berwick.

Alas “the wisdom of Edward I’s rule...was as suddenly reversed when his worthless son Edward II, wholly under the influence of his foreign favourite, Piers Gaveston, succeeds him in 1307”. The action has Edward’s arm “thrown carelessly over the shoulder of his favourite” as they preen across the stage. Risky stuff in 1937.

A banquet for Edward III comes next which is in full swing when “look here comes young Master Chaucer...gazing shyly at the ground...the usual pen at his belt for they say the lad is always writing.”

The 8th scene, “Fresh Ideals in National Life” is “an epoch of shame and suffering such as England has never known”. This apparently because Wycliff was not listened to, the Black Death arrives, Richard II betrays the peasants (off stage) and the Welsh are defeated. The scene ends on a happier note with Henry V wooing Katherine of France adapted from Shakespeare.

Scene 9 starts with Death claiming Henry V and the Wars of the Roses are mostly shown by Queen Margaret being chased by robbers (near Hexham). Thus, the narrator says “A gleam of romance lights up the gloom of civil strife”. Richard III is ruthless and bad, but gets to chat with Caxton about printing. Bosworth Field gets mentioned but the Princes in the Tower are left out of the story.

The treatment of the Tudors is characteristic of popular views of the time, Henry VII is obsessed with money, Mary pious but unhappy, Edward VI not mentioned and Elizabeth glorious. But the real spite is reserved for Henry VIII. As he dances “a courtly version of ‘oranges and lemons’” the disapproving narrator recounts a sorry tale of divorced and dead Queens, the fall of Wolsey and More and the seizure of Church lands. This concludes “the tragic-comic humours of Henry’s domestic life form the only relief in a reign of cruelty and terror... [England was bound] by a chain to the heel of the most unscrupulous tyrant who ever occupied the throne.”

The tenth scene, “Elizabeth – our Royal Heroine, the New England” is a “burst of enthusiastic joy” and the action of this scene is a masterpiece of concision summarising the whole reign in a flow of action. Elizabeth flirts with Essex in the Council, looks at petitions, a globe of the world brought in by Drake, impresses everyone with her wit and judgement and then watches a masque of Truth, Justice and Temperance as Shakespeare, Spenser and Francis Bacon look on. Mary of Scotland and the Armada get only brief mentions.

“Charles I – Our Royal Martyr”, the eleventh scene, opens with “a group of people in Scotch costume” crossing the stage in the middle is “the uncouth figure of James I”. He is bad because of his “blind recklessness” and his theory of absolute rule. No mention of creating a smooth Union of the Crowns and keeping the peace for forty years. The gunpowder plotters creep across the stage and there is a maypole dance to celebrate Charles I. This, the *Berwick Advertiser* tells us, “won round after round of applause, and was exceedingly well done.” Unfortunately Puritan soldiers arrive and knock down the maypole and the Pilgrim fathers tearfully leave driven out by “persecution at home”. Then Charles I is executed. This is the only scene where the order of events on stage is wrong historically. The Pilgrim Fathers left in 1621, not through persecution, but because they could not stand a rising tide of liberalism, maypoles did not get banned until more than twenty years later in 1644.

The last scene has to cram in everything from the disappointing Cromwell to Victoria “the soul of our nation”. King and Queens flit across the stage and off again in the blink of an eye. The narrator has scarcely enough time to mention them before they are gone. Charles II (with spaniel) walks across “at a pleasant, indolent rate, constantly doffing his hat to the crowd”. The “mirth of the crowd” though is quelled by the morose entry and exit of James II. The characters of a silent and taciturn William and the “well meaning but undistinguished” Mary are contrasted. As she “trots contentedly behind him...the expression on the herald’s face is significant of the feelings of England”. Queen Anne is also personally “insignificant” and appears arm in arm with the Duchess of Marlborough. George I and II cross the stage arguing, “under them”; the narration says, “the power of the Crown lies dormant”. No mention or sight of the Jacobites. George III, dressed as John Bull, teases a milkmaid and George IV treats his wife badly and “it is as a bad son, a bad husband, and a bad father that George IV goes down in history”. Clear influence of *1066 etc* there. William IV “one of the most insignificant of the English kings” has scarcely time to take off his royal mantle, signifying the Great Reform Act, before the curtain rises on Kensington Palace at dawn on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1837. Victoria is told she is Queen and the scene closes with a masterpiece of semi-religious monarchical fervour as she is left “alone with the Charter held in her right hand and an expression of fear and wonder in her eyes as she looks up as if supplicated Divine aid”. The narrator intones “Thus, one hundred years ago there dawns the greatest chapter of England’s history beneath the radiance of a Queen who is called upon to rule half the habitable world, and for a longer period than any of her predecessors, wears with an abiding love. ‘The Wedding Ring of England’”.

But if there was thunderous applause at that moment it was premature, as there was still the epilogue to get through. The *Advertiser* thought ‘The epilogue might have been taken a little more speedily, but it was a big undertaking to get so many characters forward and it made a most impressive finish to the pageant.’ Many indeed. The epilogue was a grand procession of ten kings each laying the part of the coronation regalia they introduced at the foot of a throne. After that

children representing all parts of the British Empire came forward with national emblems and flags to take up position around the throne, though New Zealand got missed out in Berwick. The show finally concluding with the Union Flag laid across the throne and the singing of *Land of Hope and Glory* and *The National Anthem*.

Miss de Reyes published two more plays about Queen Victoria, as well as a book on how to act in Shakespeare, and her historical opinions are completely consistent not only with the jokey opinions in *1066 and All That*, but most of the history textbooks available into the interwar years. De Reyes' pageant was in fact a classic statement of what is called the 'Whig interpretation' of English history. In other words, the Saxons invented our political freedoms that were confirmed by Magna Carta, further strengthened by the invention of Parliament in medieval times but lost under the Tudor tyranny and only recovered after a long struggle against despotic Stuarts and lazy Hanoverians. The Reform Act was the final glory and Victoria defended it all into the High Noon of Empire. Since 1937 there has been a revolution in historical studies, kings and politics being no longer at the forefront of historical narratives. But in the context of the monarchical enthusiasms of that coronation year, coming so soon after the divisive abdication crisis, it is easy to understand that such a celebratory work would be popular. What is less easy to understand is why there was not more local modification of the script or indeed why was not something completely original composed locally for the occasion. *The Berwick Advertiser* hinted at the time to a species of disappointment at the content of the work: - "I hope the hon. producers will not be discouraged by the many difficulties encountered, and that they will before long give us another pageant perhaps with the many colourful scenes which could be drawn out of Berwick's long history".

Such a pageant was not to be seen until 1992 when another epic was staged in the Maltings entitled *The 1251 from York to Berwick*. As with the 1937 version this celebrated kings, in this case those associated with medieval Berwick. As before it was a long sprawling piece running at near on three-hours with two narrators and a cast of 100 including crowds of non-actors. And as before it was not entirely successful dramatically. Perhaps pageants are ever thus. The postscript to the 1937 pageant is a sad one. In recognition of their work Messrs Stephens and Cogbill were presented with silver watches by the Mayor and Council, and the last letters in the Berwick Record Office file on the 1937 Coronation concern that given to Mr Cogbill. At the outbreak of the War he became an R.A.F. pilot and in May 1944 his sister, Mrs.J.Humphreys Gadlys, wrote from Wales to say he had been killed in a flying accident. She said of the watch "I am keeping it as my brother was wearing it when he lost his life. I shall treasure it the same as I know he did – it was the link of the Pageant of which he was so very proud of being the producer."

### **Further Reading**

Berwick Record Office: 794/55/1 & 794/62/2

Chancellor, V.E. *History for their Masters: Opinion in the English History Textbook* (1970)

De Reyes, C.M. *The Wedding Ring of England* (1937) (National Library of Scotland R.22f)

Sellar, W.C. & Yeatman, R.J. *1066 and All That* (1930)



**Chris Green**

### **QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE**

The last time a Golden Jubilee was celebrated in the British Isles was 21<sup>st</sup> June 1887 when Queen Victoria had completed 50 years on the throne. Throughout the area, there were great celebrations and there follows some extracts from the local newspapers about these events:

#### **NORHAM**

The celebration of the Jubilee at Norham was held there on Wednesday, when the Reverend Dr. and Mrs Waite entertained all the children of the village and their mothers to tea in the afternoon in the Vicarage grounds. A Punch and Judy Show was provided for the amusement of the children and there were games of various kinds for the young people. Each child received a commemorative medal. Several ladies and gentlemen assisted in carrying out the games and superintending the arrangements, amongst them being Captain and Mrs Herriott, Mr and Mrs Orde, Mr and Mrs McCreath, Mr and Miss Dunlop, Miss Smith, Misses Dickinson, Misses Paxton, etc. On the previous night upwards of 40 bonfires were observable from an eminence in the village.

## LADYKIRK

The demonstration of loyalty at Ladykirk were quite in keeping with the instructions and feelings of Lady Marjoribanks of Ladykirk, who is now at her London residence. Everything was carried out in accordance with her Ladyship's wishes. She sent a supply of flags from London and a number were made in the House by Mrs Matthews, housekeeper, and every available point was decorated with them - the mansion house, stable, gates, church and manse. There was a service in the church as in most parishes in the district. The Swinton Brass Band had been engaged and on arriving at the Steward's house, some slight refreshment was given them and about two o'clock they marched to the House under an inspiring tune, followed by the factor and steward, and a large company. On arriving at the Mansion House, Mr Melrose said that although her Ladyship was absent, he wished everything done as if she had been present and asked the band to play the Queen's Anthem and afterwards Rule Britannia, after which three ringing cheers were given for the Queen. The band and company then marched to where the tea tables were set and the band continued playing enlivening tunes. Shortly after this, the schoolchildren appeared on the scene, conducted by the Reverend Mr Dobie and Mr Milne, schoolmaster, preceded by the bagpipes. In all, nearly 500 persons sat down to tea at two successive tables and the ample provision from the Mansion House was distributed by the willing hands of ladies and gentlemen in the district and amply enjoyed. After enjoying the tea, the company adjourned to a closely shaven lawn in front of the house for dancing. As there seemed a reluctance to commence, Mr Melrose got Mrs Dobie to join him to the first reel and then it moved on with great vigour and spirit. In the course of the evening Mr Dobie produced a box containing a supply of Jubilee medals sent by Lady Marjoribanks to be given to the children, and handed them to Mr Melrose a her Ladyship's factor for presentation in her absence, and they were pinned onto the breasts of the children by Mrs Dobie and Mrs Matthews in terms of Her Ladyship's request. After this interesting proceeding, Mr Melrose addressed some suitable remarks in regard to the amiable life and character of Her Majesty and the example it presented for the imitation of her subjects and asked the band to play God Save the Queen and Rule Britannia in which many voices joined, and then sent up three lusty cheers, first for the Queen and then for Lady Marjoribanks. A more enjoyable day, everyone attended, was never seen at Ladykirk. The weather was all that could be wished. The supply from the Mansion was worthy of all praise, and the kindness of the lady and male assistants worthy of best wishes. The dancing was kept up with the finest feeling until near nine o'clock. The band played the company up to the steward's house, and gave again ringing cheers before parting. About ten o'clock three bonfires were lit on the estate, one at Fawside in Gordon parish and one at each of the Ladykirks overhanging the River Tweed, and to each a barrel of beer was forwarded. On no estate on the Borders had more loyal demonstration been given.

## **FORD**

Here the grounds and gardens at the Castle were opened after two o'clock to all the people connected with the different farms on the estate. The schoolchildren assembled at Ford School and after receiving Jubilee commemorative medals – the gift of Lady Waterford, proceeded to the site of “Jubilee Cottage” which is to be built by Lady Waterford in commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Her Majesty. The foundation stone of this building was laid by Mr Thomas to whom there was presented a silver trowel in commemoration of his 50 years service on the estate. At three o'clock refreshments were served out to the children. A band supplied by Mr J.H. Amers, Newcastle, played music in the grounds, while there was dancing to the enlivening strains of Mr Lock's violin. Cricket, quoits and other games were enjoyed on the recreation ground, while bowls were trundled in the Castle Court, and in the rose garden refreshments also were served. At nine o'clock a bonfire was lit on the White Hill and thus the rejoicing of a memorable day were brought to a close

### **SCHOOL LOG BOOK – FORD**

25 June 1887: On Monday afternoon the scholars were dismissed at 3 o'clock so as to allow time for preparations for tomorrow's festivities. The Queen's Jubilee was celebrated at Ford on the 21<sup>st</sup> instant and the children took a leading part in it. There was a general holiday. The scholars attended and sang "God save the Queen" at the laying of the foundation stone for "Jubilee Cottage" at the head of the village. They then had tea in the Schoolroom. Each child afterwards sowed some seeds of the Fir in a pot at the Castle Garden. The name of each child was written on the pot. It is intended if possible to rear a "Jubilee Plantation". Races with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes for each race, succeeded and after the distribution of prizes to the winners by Miss Thompson, the children were allowed to join their parents in the general festivities, the whole of the people on the Estate having been invited to Ford by Lady Waterford. Medals were also given to the Children by the generosity of Her Ladyship, who having gone into residence at Highcliffe was unable to be present at Ford. The attendance at School during the remainder of the week has only been poor.

## **CORNHILL**

The rejoicings in this parish on the 21<sup>st</sup> inst were displayed in a manner worthy of those loyal inhabitants who exerted themselves to the utmost in showing their devotion to their Queen and country. The children attending the Sunday School at Cornhill and Castle Heaton met in the church at Cornhill at 9-40 in the morning, where the service and Jubilee Hymns were gone through, and a most impressive address given to them by the worth Rector of the Parish, the Reverend W.L. Holland who earnestly exhorted them never to forget that it forms



a great part of their religious duties to “ Fear God and honour thy King [sic] and gave them Scriptural proofs for so doing. The service concluded by the singing of the National Anthem. Leaving the church, the children marched in procession to the Railway Station with banners waving, accompanied by several in the district where they joined a special train containing the Sunday School children from Carham, Mindrum and Wark, for Spittal, where they passed a most enjoyable day – a day never to be forgotten by them. Dinner and tea were provided for them, also games of great variety; prizes for the successful competitors being awarded. All returned home by train at 7 o’clock – the delightful weather favouring their amusements. A beautiful flag from Major Dicken’s house at Cornhill, and extending across the road to the Church gates had a very gay and imposing appearance. There was a smaller one at each end, and a Union Jack attached to the belfry of the church. At Melkington a display of bunting was also seen. At Castle Heaton, the Union Jack waved over the old walls.... Bonfires also flared brightly from the above places and New Heaton in the evening so that the inhabitants of the parish may congratulate themselves that they have not been behind in showing their allegiance and loyalty to their Sovereign. There was a kettle and a tea held in a field kindly granted by Mrs Henderson who also honoured the company with her presence. The inhabitants young and old enjoyed themselves immensely with cricket games, quoits and dancing until ten o’clock when they finished with the singing of God save the Queen and Auld Lang Syne.

## **BERWICK**

### **BERWICK’S CELEBRATIONS**

This ancient and loyal borough excelled itself on Tuesday in showing its attachment to Royalty. For several months past, arrangements had been in progress to observe the Queen’s Jubilee in a befitting manner, the various Committees entrusted with these deserve much credit indeed for the satisfactory and successful way in which they conducted everything.

When the sun rose on Tuesday morning it never saw a fairer picture of Berwick than the old town presented on this auspicious occasion. The merchants and principal inhabitants of the chief thoroughfares of the town had vied with each other in the decorations of their premises to lend eclat to the celebration of the Jubilee and so great was the demand for bunting of all kinds that those who had purchased stores of flags to be sold for use on the occasion, had them exhausted on Monday and had to obtain a further supply from other towns. As High Street was to be the scene of most of the chief ceremonies of the day, it was the most gaily adorned, thanks to the exertions of Captain Forbes, R.N., Mr Collins, chief officer and the rest of the Coastguards. The Townhall, in particular was decked in real holiday attire and the handsome building looked better than

ever as the streamers of variegated flags attached to its spire and the houses that surround it fluttered in the breeze.

#### TREAT FOR THE CHILDREN

One of the most interesting and pleasant events connected with the Jubilee was the entertainment which was provided for all the juveniles from 5 to 15 years of age who attended the day or Sunday Schools in the town. For a treat of this kind there are always plenty of recipients and when the public learnt that no less than 3,500 were to take part in it, many wondered from where they all came. Amongst the children, the entertainment was looked forward to with great eagerness and the sports that were provided for their amusement seem to have aroused in them a keen desire to distinguish themselves for their fleetness of foot.

Shortly after noon, the juveniles began to assemble at their respective schools and thence with banners flying, they marched to the Parade where they were formed into 5 columns, four deep, facing the Union Jack which they approached after wheeling around a white ensign at the rear of the columns. The children, teachers and committee wore a Jubilee medal sewn on the left breast – 3145 were issued to children and 280 to teachers. The children then marched via Walkergate Lane and the High Street to the Town Hall. After an address by the Mayor, the children then sang the National Anthem and their photograph was taken by Mr William Green, photographer of Castlegate. The procession then went to the Cricket Ground in the Pier Fields where the children had various races and games.

At 4 o'clock each child was supplied with a bag of spice loaf and tea. In the course of the afternoon, fire balloons were set off while there was a Punch and Judy Show which seemed to be enjoyed as much by the old as the young. The chief attraction, however, was Signor Carlini with his performing dogs and monkeys who received great applause for the wonderful feats which he had taught them to perform. The dogs jumped on his back, stood upon his shoulders, jumped through paper hoops and moved in and out between his legs as he walked across the platform. The monkeys walked along a tightrope and one trundled a wheelbarrow along it empty and with the other in it. The larger animal was also dressed as a Huzzar and danced upon the platform. At 7.15 the children assembled again and left the field in an orderly fashion.

#### TREAT AT THE WORKHOUSE

On this occasion, the inmates of the Workhouse were not forgotten. During the day and evening, they were allowed a holiday to witness the rejoicings. At 6 o'clock, they sat down to tea and spice loaf, while at 8 o'clock they also had salt beef and bread. Those who indulged in tobacco and snuff had a supply of these luxuries which was kindly sent by Mr William Ainsley, Bridge Street. Mr W.C. Caverhill also sent a box of sweets for the juveniles and Miss Rutherford ,

through the kindness of a few friends who subscribed £4 2s was enabled to obtain a further supply of those for the enjoyment of the children. In honour of the Jubilee, Mrs Forbes of West Coates House entertained the girls to a garden party on Thursday.

*P.S. If anyone has any posters, programmes, photographs or any information on how their community celebrated our Queen's Golden Jubilee, please could you pass them on to me so that we will have a record for future generations. Also, if anyone would like to write a personal account of how they celebrated, I would be pleased to put it in the Archives. It seems sensible to collect the information now rather than wait until later when it will have disappeared.*

Linda Bankier

### **PORT OF BERWICK LEAFLET**

A big thank you to everyone who came to fold leaflets in the Record Office and also those who took leaflets home to fold. Thanks to all your efforts, all the leaflets are now folded. We distributed a lot at the Tourism Leaflet Distribution Day and also Bygone Berwick.

If anyone did not get a leaflet with their last newsletter, please let me know and I will send you one.

Linda Bankier

### **VISIT TO THE ALNWICK GARDEN, FRIDAY 12th JULY, 3.00 p.m.**

For those of you who were at our Autumn lecture there is a further treat. For those of you who missed the talk there's a chance to make amends.

Mr. Ian August, Project Director of the Alnwick Garden will greet us at 3 p.m. on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July at the Garden. I had asked that we be allowed to see the archive but apparently it is in a filing cabinet in the project office. However, because of our interest in archives he is preparing a booklet on the history of the garden and its site for us. There will be many items of interest in the booklet and, of course, Mr. August's guided tour will ensure we know all about the history of each area of the Garden.

We can look forward to hearing about the discovery of the ruined 18<sup>th</sup> Century greenhouses with their subterranean heating system. Apparently exotic fruits were grown in Northumberland for the table at Syon House, 350 miles south. We

can also marvel at the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's contribution of computer- managed cascades.

Because our visit will be in July we are guaranteed a feast of colour and scent as all the thousands of David Austen roses should be blooming. It promises to be a wonderful opportunity to see the garden through the knowledgeable eyes and to be part of an historical adventure.

As we feel this will be of interest to many Friends and to their friends, please make sure you fill in and return the enclosed form to the Record Office by Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Barbara Herdman.

### **ALNMOUTH'S BAROMETER**

In the gable wall of the cottage at the west end of Victoria Place, facing out on to Northumberland Street, there is a narrow window which houses a barometer. A few people probably pass-by without noticing it, but to many it is a familiar sight and for those who are interested in the weather it is a source of interest and information. But what is its story, why is it there?

The four cottages which comprise Victoria Place were built in 1853, almost, but not quite, on the site of an earlier building, which was probably a granary. The alignment of the cottages is slightly skew to the building which they replaced. They were built to house the coastguards stationed at Alnmouth. The barometer was given to the coastguards by Algernon the IVth Duke of Northumberland in 1860. He had served in the Navy, risen to the rank of Commander and at one time was First Lord of the Admiralty, so he must have had a good practical knowledge of meteorology, all of which makes the gift explicable.

The Alnwick Guardian of the 6th February 1909, in the District News section, refers to the 'public barometer' and states that it had recently been put in its present location, under arrangements made by the then Duke of Northumberland. At that time the four cottages in Victoria Place belonged to the Northumberland Estates and the one concerned was the police station, and housed the village policeman, so putting the barometer there made a lot of sense as well as displaying it in a prominent place in the village.

In the early 1980s the person who owned the cottage thought that he owned the barometer and when he moved he took the barometer with him. This led to a storm of protest, and after long negotiations it was returned to Alnmouth Parish Council. A deed was drawn up which specifies that the Barometer belongs to the Parish Council, and at the same time the new owner of the cottage agreed to it being displayed in the special window which has been its home since 1906. The Council has the right of access to the barometer for maintenance.

There are one or two questions left unanswered. Where was the barometer located before 1906; was it in, or on, what is now the Golf Steward's cottage and which then was the Coastguard Station? When was the coastguard service withdrawn from Alnmouth; was it about 1905/6 or was it earlier? Did the Duke present barometers to any of the other Coastguard Stations along the Northumberland Coast?

**Fred Bettess**

### **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 1824. As doggerel rhyme frequently makes stronger impression on some minds, more than scientific productions, perhaps the following may tend to obviate many of the jostlings, bobbings and ludicrous mistakes which frequently occur in narrow streets.

“ The rule of the road is a paradox quite, so mind when you join in the throng. If driving or riding to keep to the LEFT, if you go to the RIGHT you are wrong. Reverse is the plan on foot if you go for this you should join in the throng – If you take the RIGHT you are sure to be so, if you take to the left you are wrong. But as custom to each rule admits an exception.

To give females the wall there can be no objection.”

### **FROM BERWICK DIRECT FOR QUEBEC**

March 31<sup>st</sup> 1832. The remarkably fine coppered Packet Ship DALMARNOCK, Capt. MacFarlane, 315 tons registered, and 500 tons burden.

This beautiful ship will be at Berwick in the beginning of May, and sail direct for Quebec, about the middle of that month. She will be fitted out in the most comfortable manner, and Capt. MacFarlane's well known attention to his passengers, renders this in every respect a superior conveyance.

As a great many berths are already engaged, it is therefore necessary that those intending to secure their passage will apply without delay to JAMES MUIR, Roxburgh St., Kelso, who will also be at Mrs. Johnston's, Black Bull Inn, Berwick, for the purpose of engaging passengers, on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> of April.

Wm. Allan & Sons, Brokers. Leith 21<sup>st</sup> March 1832.

May 1818. Among the costly rarities in the desert, at Sir Charles Morgan's entertainment on Tuesday night, were 60 plates of STRAWBERRIES, which cost ONE GUINEA a plate.

Muriel Fraser

## **Letter from the Editor.**

I hope most of you were able to attend the Bygone Berwick Exhibition in the Guildhall. It was a great success. I would just like to thank the people who kindly lent photographs, etc. for our stand and to those who willingly (No, I didn't have to twist anyone's arm!) manned our stall over the weekend.

Please remember any **interesting stories, items, events, letters** or **queries** for the newsletter will be most appreciated. You may give them to Linda or send them by E-mail to [gallagher@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:gallagher@ukonline.co.uk) or by post c/o. Records Office, Wallace Green, Berwick upon Tweed.

**Yvonne Gallagher**  
Hon. Editor