

# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 41 – December 2003*

## **NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES**

Another year is almost over and this one has gone extremely quickly. The Record Office is getting quieter now coming up to the Christmas period – you all have other things to do – but it has been busy through October and November. It is interesting to note that we have had a lot more foreign visitors this year – in the last couple of months, visitors from America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Germany have used the Office. The German couple were researching their ancestors who originally came from Tweedmouth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As well as helping the public, I have been involved in a number of other projects recently. At the end of September, we held the last big event of the Union of the Crowns 400 in 2003. This time, we moved out of Berwick to Norham and had a very successful weekend. I helped the Norham & Ladykirk Local History Society with their exhibition in the Village Hall. This was very well attended by both local people and visitors and we estimate that over 600 people came in over the weekend. The Local History Society put a lot of work into researching and mounting the exhibition – well done .

Autumn is traditionally the time that I run some Family History courses. This year, I ran 2 successful 5 week Family History for Beginners classes in the Record Office. The classes were

well attended and some of the participants have started to come in to research their families. Next term, I hope to run a Local History class.

Over the past couple of months, I have given a number of talks to local groups. In September, I spoke to the Glendale Local History Society and in October, I went to Horncliffe and Norham Village Halls to talk to people from both villages interested in local history. Both talks were well attended and Lowick is now in the process of setting up its own Local History group.

School groups don't tend to come in much in the autumn term but this year I have had a class from Tweedmouth West School visiting the archives to find out about the Victorians. The children really enjoyed their visit and they especially enjoy seeing the strongroom – they are fascinated by the mobile shelving !

Finally, thank you to everyone who has helped in the archives this year in any way or with the Union of the Crowns 400. I know I can't do my job without your assistance and encouragement.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Linda Bankier*

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FAMILY HISTORY EVENT IN EARLY 2004**

The Record Office has received some funding from NEMLAC ( North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) to work with the Berwick Youth Project on a Family History project. As part of the project, we are planning to have a Family History afternoon in the Youth Project building in Golden Square on either Saturday 28 February or Saturday 6 March. We are encouraging young people and their parents to come along and find out about tracing their family history – how to start and what information is available. Obviously it would be helpful if there were other people there as well as me who have traced their Family History and could advise people on how they have done it and how they started. If anyone would like to help me with this event, please contact me after Christmas. Even if you can only spare an hour, that would be great.

*Linda Bankier*

## **ETAL AND CROOKHAM TILLSIDE GAMES**

*In the last newsletter, Muriel included an account of the Wooler Gymnastic Games. This type of event was obviously very popular at the time. The following is an account of the Etal and Crookham Tillside games which were held in 1836. It would appear that the Nevins family were invincible !*

BERWICK ADVERTISER 9 APRIL 1836

The first meeting of the Tillside Border Games took place on Crookham Haugh - a fine grass field on the banks of the Till - in Ford Parish, Northumberland on Easter Monday, the 4th inst. The day being exceedingly fine, a considerable number of persons had collected on the ground at an early hour; and this number was progressively increased as the day advanced till it became a vast assemblage, amounting to several thousands, and including, of course nearly all

the gentry of the surrounding district, many from a greater distance, and not a small proportion of the fairer sex. A Band of Music from Coldstream was in attendance and played many national and appropriate airs. The games which were in general contested with great spirit and good feeling commenced at 10 o'clock within a spacious ring of 60 yards in diameter and came off in the following order :

1. Quoiting - at 18 yards distance and eleven points to a game. Prize, a handsome Silver medal. Sixteen competitors contended for this prize which was won after a keen competition by Mr Robert Nevins, Heaton Mill, gamekeeper to the Earl of Tankerville. Mr William Forster, saddler, Coldstream was second and Mr David Smith New Etal and William Brady, Cornhill were third and fourth.

2 Rifle Shooting - at a target 180 yards distance, 3 shots each. Prize - silver medal. The competition in this exercise was confined to Members of the Games; the competitors were twelve in number and the medal was gained by Mr Charles McLeod, farmer, Etal whose shots scored most on the target although not nearest the bull's eye.

3. Standing, Hop, Step and Leap. Silver medal. 5 competitors entered the ring, and had five trials each. The prize was gained by Mr Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who cleared 27 feet 3 inches. John MacIntyre of Liliesleaf, Roxburghshire being second.

4. Running, Hop, Step and Leap. Silver medal. 12 competitors entered for this prize, which was also gained by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who cleared with ease 35 feet 10 inches. Francis Brown, Cornhill and John MacIntyre, Lilliesleaf were second and third.

5. Standing High Leap - without a hitch. Prize, a silver medal. There were three competitors for this prize which was gained easily by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill whose leap in perpendicular height was exactly 4 feet. Second best, John MacIntyre.

6. Running High Leap. The silver medal for this event which was contested for by four competitors was also carried off by Mr Thomas Nevins, the height of whose leap was 5 feet exactly and that of John MacIntyre 4 feet 11 inches.

As there was no second prize announced for any of the leaping exercises in most of which John MacIntyre was second, and he had come from a considerable distance to attend the Games; in which his most strenuous efforts to obtain a Prize were rendered ineffectual, because opposed to superior opponents - the Managers considered this a case deserving of an extra prize, and accordingly a purse of silver was awarded to him.

7. Short Foot Race of 100 yards. Prize, a silver medal. Upwards of ten competitors started for this race, which was well contested and won in fine style by John Gillie, tailor of Cornhill. Mr George MacLeod, Etal and Andrew Archer, Lowick coming in second and third.

8. Throwing the light or 10½ lbs Hammer - Silver medal. Thirteen competitors, including several gentlemen, entered for this game but it was merely for amusement that they did so; as the superior throwing of Robert Nevins put all competition out of the question. Mr Nevins, to the astonishment of the spectators threw the hammer with perfect ease and with only one hand 129 feet 1 inch and thereby became entitled to the prize.

9. Throwing the Heavy Hammer of 16lbs Silver medal. This prize was gained by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who beat Henry Glendinning, Berryhill, his brother David Nevins, and six other competitors - thus making the third Medal won in the course of the day. The distance performed was 71 feet, 6 inches. Mr Robert Nevins who had previously won four medals did not enter for this prize but after it was gained by his brother, he took the hammer in one hand and made a couple of throws to amuse the spectators and exhibit his own superiority. In one of

these, the distance cleared was exactly 90 feet 4 inches, being merely 19 feet further than the throw which won the medal.

10. Long foot race of 300 yards with a turn - silver medal. This race, like the short one was won in beautiful style by John Gillie, Cornhill who had again to contend with George MacLeod, Etal, Robert Barber, Chillingham - by whom he was hard pressed - and five other competitors.

11. Putting the light or 16lb ball - silver medal. Eleven competitors appeared for this prize, which however was won in one throw by Robert Nevins who threw the ball 37 feet 10 inches being just five feet 6 inches further than Peter, his brother who was second.

12. Putting the Heavy Ball of 22lbs. Prize, a silver medal. Only three competitors offered to contend for this prize which was also won at one throw by Robert Nevins whose superiority in this as in almost every other athletic exercise excited the admiration of the beholders. This was the sixth medal won in the course of the day by Mr Nevins and the distance thrown was 32 feet 6 inches.

13. Wrestling - a main of 16 competitors. Prize, a silver medal. The interest excited during the competition for this prize greatly exceeded that which had been manifested at any of the games which had previously taken place. In several instances the struggle, though short was very severe. That between William Cockburn of Yetholm and Thomas Clarke of Tiptoe was highly interesting and called forth the admiration of the surrounding multitude : Cockburn however ultimately floored his man but was himself grassed instantly in the next bout by John Stevenson, shepherd, Attonburn, near Yetholm who previously in the first class, and subsequently in the third, threw his adversary in a similar manner. Stevenson's fourth and last opponent was George Trotter of Crookham, one of the projector of the Games who also had thrown his three opponents successively, in fine style. The match between these two competitors who had both acquitted themselves so well, was therefore of itself more interesting than any of the fourteen wrestling trials which preceded it; but it became doubly so when it was considered that the winner of it would also be the winner of the prize. All therefore remained in breathless anxiety during the contest which, though not long was particularly severe; much science and agility were displayed on both sides ; and the twisting and twining on their part along with the running about of the judges to ensure fair play, kept the lookers on in a state of feverish suspense during its continuation. Stevenson, however, who appeared the heavier and at last got the advantage and succeeded in flooring his scientific antagonist amidst the shouts and congratulations of the assembled multitude.

14 A Foot Steeple Race .Silver medal. There were six competitors for this race who were directed to run round a pole placed on the top of a rather steep hill about half a mile distant, and return to the ring. This race afforded much amusement to the spectators on account of some awkward obstructions which the runners had to encounter in their course; but these were successfully got over and the prize gained by William Cockburn of Town Yetholm who had previously distinguished himself at the Wrestling - though unable to obtain the prize.

Archery - the target (at 150 yards distant) was the next exercise and being a novelty in this quarter, of course it attracted considerable attention. No prize, however, being announced for this game, the present exhibition was to be considered merely as a preparatory step to its being practised and introduced among the other exercises at the next meeting. The competitors were Mr William Foster, Coldsream, Mr Robert Nevins, Heaton Mill and Mr Percy Foster, Alnwick by whom several ends were shot for the amusement of the spectators.

A Sack Race for which two prizes were awarded finished the sports of the day. The competitors were about ten in number and the race afforded more merriment to the dense throng who

witnessed it than all the games put together. The prizes were gained by John Harbottle, joiner, Etal and John Moffatt, tailor, Cornhill.

At 5 o'clock 30 gentlemen members of the Games sat down to dinner in Mr Cockburn's tent.

*Linda Bankier*

## **FUND RAISING**

As a group we are not given to fund-raising in a big way. We tend to use any leftovers to finance smallish items for the Archives and the Museum. For once, however, we find we'd like just a little extra to help with the Union of the Crowns 400 Project and the Committee has decided that it would instigate two events. The Steering Committee of the Union of the Crowns 400 has also agreed to help us in these ventures.

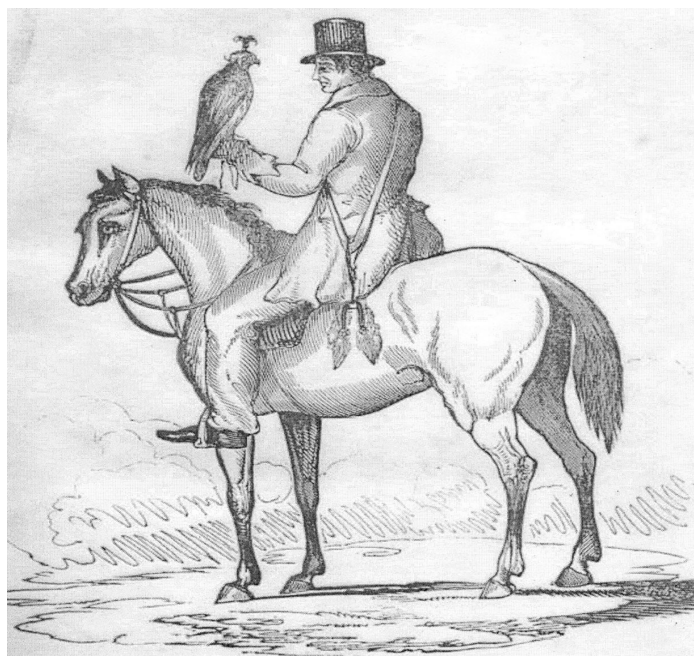
The first event is to be a 'pub' Quiz Night. Keith Wills and Gus Fairburn are seeking premises and questions and a date in January will be announced soon.

The second event is on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004 and will take place in the Guild Hall. This will be a social occasion with refreshments (both liquid and solid) a raffle, an auction of famous autographs (hopefully) as well as a group of musicians who can play Jacobean and later pieces for our entertainment. There will be tickets available for this, so do keep an eye out for further information.

If anyone would like to help organise either of these two events in any way, please contact me on 01289 307524. Also if you have any other fund-raising ideas, please get in touch.

*Barbara Herdman*

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



## The Beastly “Doctor” Belany

Like other readers of the *Friend's Newsletter* I was intrigued by David Donaldson's piece, 'The Belany/Skelly Story' in the issue for June 2003. That told of the violent reaction in North Sunderland to James Cockburn Belany's acquittal at the Old Bailey in August 1844 for the alleged murder of his wife Rachel Skelly. Convinced of his guilt a local mob went on the rampage, stringing up and burning effigies of him and eventually stormed his house and set it on fire. A few years ago I compiled a bibliography of books printed in Berwick and district, updating the work of J.L. Hilston published between 1916 and 1925, and was looking through it as part of my research into 19<sup>th</sup> Century Berwick for next year's exhibition in the Main Guard. There, under 'Belany, James C.', was listed *A Full Report of the Evidence taken at the Thames Police Court on an alleged poisoning case; also the trial of J.C.Belany for the murder of his wife at the Central Criminal court*. Published in 1844 at Alnwick by G.Pike, a copy is now in Newcastle Public Library (6486.B.7). That was interesting, but not particularly relevant to Berwick, but the next entry, also 'Belany, James C', was even more intriguing, *A Treatise upon Falconry*, printed for the author by W.W. Fyfe at the Warder Office in Berwick in 1841. Fortunately a copy of this is held by the National Library of Scotland so I took the opportunity to go along and check it out. The book is adorned with a fine frontispiece of a top-hatted horseman proudly holding aloft his falcon. This I presume is intended to be the beastly 'doctor' himself, perhaps even a self-portrait. The main text, 277 pages long, is divided into two parts, with a six-page glossary of falconry terms at the end. Sadly there is no dedication and the author says little about his situation, but we can glean from the book a lot about his attitudes and opinions, not just about hawking, but, especially fascinating given his trial, about women.

The second half of the text, the serious bit, need not detain us long. It is 160 pages on the natural history and training of the birds and the equipment needed. Knowing little about the practicalities of the sport it is difficult for me to say how accurate all this is, but clearly Belany is still regarded today as an important source among falconry enthusiasts as an American web-site currently offers for sale a CD-ROM version. Certainly by the 1840s falconry was something of an oddity. A favourite pursuit of most of the aristocracy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>.Century trained falcons were hard to find. The Hawking Club founded in about 1775 by Lord Orford had closed down in 1838, and some of its members had transferred to another, equally exclusive club based at Loo. Devoted to hunting herons, this club also closed in 1853, despite Royal patronage. Prior to Belany the last book on the subject was by Sir J.S.Sebright in 1826, to which our author gives due acknowledgement and it was to be another decade or more before a revival really got underway. Part of that revival certainly started in Northumbria, and some it seems, within Berwick's own district. A key figure was Francis Salvin (1817-1904), who *The Field* referred to in 1889 as "the father of the craft in England." He was born at Croxdale Hall in Durham and in 1843 undertook a notable hawking tour of the north. Salvin also promoted fishing with trained cormorants and in 1847 one of his favourites, 'Izaak Walton', died and was stuffed by John Hancock for his natural history museum in Newcastle. Salvin had a great affinity for all animals, trained two otters to sleep on his lap and kept a wild boar also as a pet. One of Salvin's closest fellow enthusiasts was William Brodrick (1814-88). Like Belany he had studied medicine but decided not to practice and after his marriage he settled at Belford Hall, near to his uncle the celebrated ornithologist Prideaux John Selby of Twizel. Selby was entranced by his nephew's abilities to tame, train and draw birds, which was Broderick's main interest in life. On 13<sup>th</sup>.October 1853 Broderick entertained the Berwickshire Naturalists Club at Belford Hall with "a sumptuous breakfast". Dr.Johnston, the Club's founder, showed drawings for his first volume of *Natural History of the Eastern Borders* and after a foray amid the geology of Belford Crags the party assembled on higher ground to witness the flight of Mr.Broderick's falcons. This turned out to an anti-climax, the falcons did succeed in downing one partridge, but others escaped into a turnip field. A grouse

wouldn't fly at all, and a pigeon flew rings round the falcons, and escaped into a haystack. Merlins were flown at larks, but "soon gave up the toilsome pursuit; and the shrill lark not long afterwards carolled high and safe from his aerial tower". A few years earlier, in 1846, Broderick's birds were similarly unlucky at another B.N.C. meeting at Chatton. Describing the event the President of the Club, H.G.C. Clarke, described the prospect of the demonstration in lyrical terms: -

"We can conceive few scenes so animated and brilliant as that of a hawking party in days of yore, when large unenclosed tracts of country spread on every side, when the hawk and its quarry...could be distinctly seen, and the gay cavalcade joyously followed in pursuit." But now, "the time for this sport seems to have gone by" and the members were "to speak truth... disappointed". Everywhere the land was "enclosed and cultivated, and the partridges, which we flushed in the stubbles, betook themselves immediately to the sheltering covert of the turnip fields, from which it was impossible again to start them". Nevertheless the hawks themselves with their equipment "were observed with great interest...and we only required an open country and a heron or two, to have had excellent sport."

Belany had of course fled the region two years previously but it seems impossible, given their mutual interest, that he would not have known Broderick in earlier happier times. It should not surprise us either that meetings of a natural history society should be attended by the attempted slaughter of wildlife. At another jolly meeting of the Club, at St. Abbs Head in 1844, after viewing the numerous birds nesting on the cliffs several of the members produced rifles and started shooting at the very creatures they were there to study. Nothing was hit on that occasion, to everyone's amusement, but few would have worried in any case. To be a hunter, was, in their view, to be a lover of nature, and Belany in the first part of his book conforms and promotes this opinion. He begins by regretting the decline in falconry and recounts the invention of gunpowder, which has caused it. Guns, he thinks, have their uses but to use them in hunting birds is more warfare than sport. For a sportsman with a gun "every enjoyment [is] made subservient to an insatiable thirst for slaughter", he pours "showers of shot on every side and carries wholesale massacre over hills and valleys..leaving the countryside overstrewn with maimed and mangled game. Alas! Is this sport? Instead of finding pleasure at such a scene, who that is not dead to the proper sympathies of our nature must not turn away from it with horror? By contrast hawking is precise, less random, gives the quarry a fair chance and "affords more pleasure than wanton slaughter." Enclosed land, Belany writes, need not present too much of an obstacle to a trained hunter. Getting hawks and other birds of prey to train though is sometimes difficult, and Belany at this point embarks on a tirade against the killing of any bird not considered "useful" to man. This includes "spurious naturalists and bird stuffers, that now swarm in every town and village...caricaturing nature." Surely he does not mean the Berwickshire Nats? Belany finds it absurd that people believe by killing birds of prey gardens will be improved, and points out that there is a balance of predation throughout the animal kingdom which provides "a constant restraint..upon the increase and destructive powers of all". Falcons are especially victims of "the mad doctrine of the day" that sees "the slaughtering of an innocent and useful bird...as a step on the advance towards the improvement of the nation, or the civilisation of the people". Nature has its place alongside mankind and the elements of earth, air and water are all divine gifts "to be lawfully shared and enjoyed by the creatures of Providence." Belany then moves on to attack 'Mr.Scott's' book on *British Field Sports*. Scott apparently believed that cock-fighting should be preferred as it was less cruel than falconry. Belany declares that cock fighting is unnatural and cruel and practised in former times mainly by drunks. The present day, Belany thinks, is just as cruel as the past, just look at the newspapers and true out-door sports are not suitable for drunks. The true sportsman "eats heartily, drinks moderately, sleeps regularly, is fond of animals, and a hater of nothing but poachers".

Having got that off his chest he spends the next four chapters on a brief history of falconry and a contrast between the decadence of the present and the nobility of the past. Chapter 10 is devoted to the loyalty and good companionship to be gained from hawks. He advises that they can be easily allowed to fly about the house and he has personally travelled everywhere with his favourite falcon, 'Sappho', including on steamboats, stagecoaches, gigs, buses and all other forms of transport without the slightest trouble. But it is in the final chapter that we have to consider that Belany really reveals his character. Hawking is a very neighbourly sport that does not trespass on the rights of others and above all it is ideally suited to ladies. Ladies, he is keen to point out, are particularly apt to get ill if they do not get outdoor exercise. On this subject he becomes completely carried away. How wonderful it is, he says, to observe a drawing room full of ladies, "beings moulded to every grace, and crowned with every charm, endowed with all those mental and personal gifts which can adorn society and bless mankind with the kindest offices – when we see amidst such a constellation of beauty and innocence, smiling faces and buoyant hearts, the lurkings of fell disease that must soon crush their slender forms – see them dropping off around us, like untimely lilies upon the lawn – alas! such pleasures are of a melancholy kind!". The disease that lurks is "phthisis", the infamous tuberculosis which developed such a fascination for the Romantics, especially as it seemed you were not really poetic and interesting unless coughing up blood. Belany believed it all came from unnatural habits and a general degeneracy of the species. How different were the women of the past who were not frightened to get blown about by the wind. To avoid TB then get out and about in all weathers, far better for you than cold baths and electrical cures, up onto the high hills then with the hawks. He concludes by hoping that, as a bachelor, he will be forgiven for addressing himself so much to ladies, but cannot help himself because:-

"Still do I love the gentle sex,  
And still with cares my brain perplex  
To keep them free from every pain  
Disease begets, or tyrant's chain  
To see them shining in their sphere,  
Like cloudless planets around the year  
All pure, all simple, all refined  
The sweetest solace of mankind."

Within two years of writing these lines he had married the 21-year-old Rachel, and less than a year later she had been poisoned and he was on trial for murder. Whether he really did kill her, we shall probably never know, but there is a curious epilogue. I have not been able to trace Belany's fate after leaving the north, but research by Kenneth Brower reveals that his great nephew, George Belaney was "a scam artist, bigamist, pedophile, drunk, and lecher". Having secretly married a 15-year-old George abandoned her with her child and ran off with another woman, Elizabeth Cox, who then fell violently ill from suspected poison. A family tradition preserved, as is the final twist of the story. Elizabeth Cox recovered from the poison but died within the year, so George married her 13-year-old sister. Their child, Archie, was brought up by aunts in Hastings, became fascinated by Red Indians, made his way to Canada to transform himself into "Grey Owl", half-breed hunter and woodsman in touch with nature and a world-famous passionate advocate of ecology and conservation. His story was recently filmed by Richard Attenborough with Pierce Brosnan in the title role. On his death in 1938 *The Times* said of 'Grey Owl':- "He..gave his extraordinary genius, his passionate sympathy, his bodily strength, his magnetic personal influence, even his very earnings to the service of animals". Bad old 'doctor' Belany would surely have approved.

### **Further Reading**

Belany, J.C. *A Treatise on Falconry* (Berwick, 1841) [Nat.Lib.Scotl. I.36a]



Brower, K. 'Grey Owl' in *The Atlantic Monthly* vol.265, no.1 (Jan.1990) pp.74-84  
[available on the internet @ Atlantic Online]

*History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club* vols.2 (1842-49) pp.197-98; 3 (1850-56), pp.127-28; & 13 (1890/91) pp.395-98 (Brodrick's obituary)

Oswald, A. *The History & Practice of Falconry* (1982) [Mus Lib: GL 11246]

Chris Green

## TWEEDMOUTH MANOR COURT BOOKS

The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Berwick whose prosperity was visibly receding after the Union of the Crowns, cast envious eyes on the coal mines, mineral deposits and fishing wealth belonging to the thriving community on the South side across the river. By one of their clever '*slight of hand*' (that is by paying for something from a source not strictly theirs) they saw the chance to buy and become Lords of the Manor of Tweedmouth at the price of 570 pounds. The Manor included Spittal, Ord, Unthank and Murton.

Very soon the Presbyterian/Puritan influence began to make itself felt. The Parson of the Cure of Tweedmouth was somehow pushed out of his living, and for 15 years from 1647 a lecturer from Berwick one William Mein, was in charge. The extruded Mr. Ochterlonie and his family lived on in Tweedmouth in a dwelling house and two cottages, on the high bank above the river, in Tower Road. He let out '*a handling cobble*' or fishing boat to George Moody and had to sue him through the Manor Court for a plea of debt of three years rent :

*'The jury do find due to the Plaintiff for nyne shillings and two pence and the cost of the Court.'*

But the Reverend gentleman himself was FINED, along with others over the years '*for not keeping the forefront of house and garden in sufficient repair.*'

Edward Cook was fined for '*want of a back door*' and Richard Fenwick '*for his Back Dike is broken down*' referring to the Yard Heads Wall.

When he was finally restored to his living in 1662 Mr Auchterlonie sued Gabriel Gotterson for the rent of the Vicarage House, but the case was held over for the next Court. The record of this Court '*went missing*' and Tweedmouth congregation never recovered their Vicarage.

Constables were appointed, six at a time, to carry out the orders of the Court, which met quarterly. In 1661 they were fined for '*neglect of their duties at Court*' at five shillings a time. In 1659 Martin Crawforth, tenant and copyholder, was '*bound to doe suite and service*' for refusing to be a Constable and fined £1:19:11. The office was not popular. They

*'presented – Catherine, the wife of Roger Allom for that she abuseth the constables when they were executing their Office according to Law, which tended to the Great Detriment of the Commonwealth, in discouraging the Office, impeding Justice and of Very Badd Example to Lewd Persons. Upon consideration whereof the sum of three shillings and four pence is to be levied on the Goods and Chatles of her husband for the use of the Lord of the Manor.'* May 1647.

No wonder they were not popular when 54 Householders, both male and female were up before the Court '*for not paying their brewferme*' that is their licence to brew strong drink. They also '*present the Towne of Tweedmouth for that the Highway at the end of the Loning called*

*Sunniside is much broken* and John Foreman 1660 *'refusing His Majestys service for repair to the highway.'*

The townfolks staple diet was threatened: *'We present them that boyle salmon heare as very noysome and dangerous and Order that none for the future boyle salmon in Tweedmouth in penalty of one shilling and eight pence for every such offence.'*

By 1710 constables were *'to go every 14 days to enquire into the Assize of Bread and give names of such Bread Bakers or others who shall be found faulty.'*

We present Thomas Law and Bartholemew Potte for keeping Geese and Ducks in Spittle which do abuse the water which is a great nuisance to the whole Towne *'FINED 1<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup> each.'* The water in question is the Horners Burn.

*'We find Thomas Patrick's daughter, Margaret, for washing her petticoate in ye Common Watter Course and when the Constable reproved her she told them she would do it again soe we find her xx shillings.'*

Thirty-one years later in October 1737 they were still at it. *'Ordered that if any person disturb the Horners Burn in Spittle by throwing filth into it or washing anything in it that muddies the water or that keep Geese and Ducke that puddle in said burn be liable for a fine for every offence.'*

There were not many activities that could be done on a Sunday. Ordered May 1660 *'apprehend all Begging on the Lords Day and sett them in the Stocks and there keep them until they engage to do soe no more and the Constable neglecting their duty herein are hereby fined.'*

*'For breaking the Stocks' – David Pearson*

The Miller of Spittle Mill and Robert Ramsay and John Rutter were all at various times fined *'for grinding on the Lords Day'* and Margery Cooke was fined for not keeping the Mill Shute clean in Tweedmouth.

Francis Moore's son was *'Gathering Thistles on the Lord's Day'* (and he was a clerical gentleman's son). After Jarett Robinson was apprehended for gathering thistles his wife abused the constable.

William Dunkin was found *'card playing in his house.'*

In 1678 Henry Morrice was FINED for being drunk and *'John Bolton of Cornhill, going home, fell drunk from his horse and died leaving a wife and four children. A true copy of the letter has been sent to the Coroner of Durham.'*

There was trouble in the churchyard – the Dike was broken down : *'Upon the Oath of Alexander Armstrong the Jury fines John Graham for his swine trespassing and rutting in the churchyard'* (you were not safe anywhere?).

Between 1658 and 1686 – Thirteen persons were FINED for Affray and seventeen assorted householders were FINED for Blood and Affray even *'affray on his own wife.'* Two men had to pay up when their wives committed affray on other men's wives' and *'even in church on the Lords Day.'*

Robert Renwick was *'fined for misbehaving in a very funnelnous and abusive manner in Open Court.'*

Many people were fined for harbouring strangers and for keeping inmates and for *'letting a house to a stranger.'*

In May 1647 *'John Graham of Tweedmouth and Spittle cometh against Jane, the wife of John Davidson of the same in a plea of slander saying he was a sheep thief.'* John Davidson made a Night Lair on the common to stay with his beasts FINED. His wife Jane FINED for abusing the constable.

James Richardson in 1658 was before the Court *'for harbouring John Younge who is a person suspected of adultery', and for it he left his own wife and went away with a whore,* (he had purchased a copyhold between Mr Ochterlonie in Tower Road and the Well Strand).

In August 1663 *'Ellina fferrer complains against John Bayne for damages plea for a middenstead lieing near the Bridge End of Tweedmouth. We doe find it doth not belong to any of the parties but is a high-way to several tenements and therefore do order that there be no more manure laid in that place upon paine of 39 shillings for every offence.'* William Soden was fined *'for letting his middenfold to a man of Orde.'*

They were still having trouble at the Bridge End in Oct 1724. *Present that timber lying at the East Side of the Bridge, and also Heaps of Fish there lying on the Common Passage and is troublesome to the neighbourhood – to be removed in a months time!*

All these incidents are to be found in the Manor Court Rolls and Court Books of Tweedmouth.

*May 6<sup>th</sup> 1617 Rec. then from the hand of Mr James Douglas, Bailiff, ten Court Rolls and ten Suite Rolls, the Old Book and New Book of Enrolment for Tweedmouth Court, (signed) John Douglas, Junr., Robert Jackson.*

These Books and Rolls were handed down through the generations. In 1675 there were 8 Rolls until in May 1686 when *'Rec from the hands of James Douglas – nine suite Rolls and nine Court Rolls – Tweedmouth.*

*By the Order of Mr Charles Jackson.*

I wonder where the missing ones went?

### **Sources**

Suite Rolls 1612 – 1620/1647.

Court Books 1658 – 1926.

Lists of Freeholders and Copyholders 1662, and of Jury and Constables 1658.

Joyce Stone

## **THE EARLY CHURCHES OF BERWICK AND BONDINGTON**

Developments over the last few years have thrown up problems concerning the early churches of Berwick and its neighbourhood. The discovery of a sizeable church at 21, Castle Terrace, in addition to that known to have existed on the site of Cheviot House at the top end of Castlegate threw doubt on the assertions made by Scott in his *History of Berwick(1888)*. He knew that records showed that the 'lost village' of Bondington had had two churches, one dedicated to St.Lawrence and the other to St.Mary.

St.Lawrence was founded by a local landowner in 1128 and its endowments entrusted to the abbey at Kelso but St.Mary's was probably already well established by then; in 1130 David I enjoyed the patronage of the living but exchanged it for that of Melrose in an exchange with the monks at Coldingham. At this time there is no evidence of any separate church serving Berwick and the residents of the latter probably looked to St.Mary's as their parish church. The first reference to Holy Trinity in Berwick came only in the thirteenth century. However by 1300 the village had ceased to have an independent parish church. St. Lawrence failed to appear at all in the record of papal taxation in 1292 whilst St.Mary's had been reduced to the status of a chaplaincy. Clearly Holy Trinity had become the principal church and, probably, Bondington fell within its boundaries of its parish .

Scott was confident that the site at Cheviot House was that of St. Lawrence and that St. Mary's had been located just west of modern Scotsgate. There were reports of burials found close to the modern Somerfields store when work was done on Berwick's water supply about 1800 and a tradition, recorded in Fuller's *History of Berwick* (1799) of a major church dedicated to St. Mary having stood there, demolished when the Elizabethan Walls were built, which Fuller described as simply "the old church" implying that it was the parish church.

Archaeological excavation suggested that the church at 21 Castle Terrace was associated with the burial of the dead of both sexes and a range of ages without any evident disease in common, while a division in the nave could be interpreted that it had been used as a hospital. It may therefore have been a parish church or a hospital or, at some time in its history, possibly both. If, the church at 21, Castle Terrace had been, at some stage of its history, a church with parochial functions then it could be either St. Mary or St. Lawrence and the same can be said of that on the Cheviot House site. Indeed a plausible argument can be presented that the St. Lawrence's lay at 21, Castle Terrace. This would fit with its foundation in 1128 and later disappearance from history as serving any parochial function. St. Mary's would have been on the site of Cheviot House where there was evidently a substantial church and burial ground.

On the other hand Marygate as a street name in Berwick was in use early in the reign of Alexander II (1114-1149) and fits well with a church located near Scotsgate, especially since, once the castle had been built, its continuation westward became known as Castlegate. If one accepts this argument then and places St. Lawrence at Cheviot House the site at 21 Castle Terrace has to be explained as a substantial hospital and the only likely candidate is St. Leonard's (to which only one contemporary reference is made).

Yet again the use of Marygate as the name for the gate in the medieval walls close to the castle might suggest that St. Mary's lay outside rather than inside the walls on the basis of gate names elsewhere. In the middle of the sixteenth century the only religious foundation recorded in a survey of the Bishopric of Durham dedicated to St. Mary was a chantry with a modest endowment without any parish functions; whilst this may, of course, have been a survival from Bondington's past there is no suggestion of a major building such as a parish church might have been.

Another piece in this historical jigsaw comes from the Tudor period. Before 1543 Berwick's parish church was knocked down in the course of improving the town's defences. It was reported to the government that Berwickers blamed a serious outbreak of the plague on "the grete multitude of people and the straitness of the litill churche" in which they had been forced to worship. Forty years later the Corporation complained that "in tymes past, the towne had as fayer and large a parishe churche as most was in Englande, which was taken downe for the use of the fortifications in the tyme of King Henrye the eight" and the replacement was "small, cracked and ready to fall". For more than a century, until the building during the Commonwealth period in the mid-seventeenth century, Berwickers complained of the small size and inconvenience of the premises they had to use. This is represented on maps as standing on the approximate site of the present church.

Sometimes, as in Fuller, this demolition appears to have been identified with the destruction of St. Mary's at Scotsgate but this raises major difficulties. Firstly the parish church of Berwick was Holy Trinity; St. Mary's, if it still survived into Tudor times, had long been of subordinate status. It does not fit the description of a fine parish church. Secondly no rebuilding of the wall took place in the years before 1543 anywhere close to modern Scotsgate. All the work during Henry VIII's reign took place along the line of the medieval wall, largely in the form of providing these with supporting earthworks; the materials of the old church were apparently used in their construction. Thirdly there is a reference in a survey of the town in 1562 that suggests that the demolished church lay along the line of Walkergate rather than along Marygate: "George

Bullock holdeth one tenement lying without the Rampier ramper) neare to the late Church yearde” in a site described as “Walkergate without the Rampiers” . Recent investigations suggest that the old Cowport lay somewhat to the north of its position in the Elizabethan Walls and it seems probable that, before the present churchyard was defined (and there are references to a new churchyard in Elizabethan times), Walkergate continued eastwards to the gate. This suggests that the church was the original Holy Trinity and lay somewhat to the east of the present site, probably under the Elizabethan walls. Some support to this is given by the fact that in 1543 the foundations were still there and available as a basis for rebuilding but by the 1580s, when rebuilding was again proposed, no such reference was made.

There are, unfortunately, many loose ends concerning the location of the medieval churches and I am conscious of having left most of them untied!. Comments and information are most welcome.

*David Brenchley*

## **Snippets from the Advertiser**

### **SEA-BATHING QUARTERS, HOLY ISLAND.**

April 29<sup>th</sup> 1841

Every accommodation will be secured to visitors, the proprietors being desirous to attract respectable families to the Island, the situation of which is so admirably calculated to afford all those advantages which persons or families in search of health and recreation through the medium of fine fresh air and exercise, whether on land or on the water is desirable.

May 8<sup>th</sup> 1841

The MANSION HOUSE on Holy Island, is now undergoing extensive alterations, and the addition of many conveniences are being made, for the purpose of affording accommodation to families resorting to the sea during the bathing season.

The house consists of three elegant Sitting rooms, and seven airy and comfortable Lodging Rooms, besides Kitchens and Servants' apartments, all of which will be furnished in an elegant and substantial manner.

The proprietor has also erected, in connection with the house, HOT, COLD, and SHOWER BATHS, supplied with fresh and salt water.

### **GREAT AGRICULTURAL MEETING IN BERWICK**

October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1841

“The bustle connected with the important and long-expected event commenced with the week. On Sunday considerable additions were made to the number of strangers, both biped and quadruped. The *Glenalbyn* steamer on passage from Hull to Leith came in, and sent ashore 2 Leicestershire tups from Lincolnshire, machines and implements from Beverly and several passengers. From Monday a.m., arrivals by both land and water became more rapid and numerous. Private conveyances came at frequent intervals, all the usual conveyances were crowded and extra steamers arrived from Newcastle, Dundee, Leith, and Montrose etc. On Tuesday the streets and walls were enlivened by numbers of strangers.”

The report followed for two full pages. The show was on the Pier Field. There is a charming engraving of some of the arrivals, one of the Show Yard and one of the amazing Pavilion erected for the 'Great Dinner' in the Barracks Quadrangle. It must have held hundreds, and well worth looking at in the archives.

*Muriel Fraser*

## **Letter from the Editor**

Well, 2003 has been an exceptionally busy year for the Friends, particularly Derek Sharman, the sub-committee and the many volunteers who have helped to make the 'Union of the Crowns' Events so successful. (Not to mention Linda, Chris and Jim for their outstanding effort!). We are lucky indeed to have such enthusiastic and hard working people in our Museum and Archives.

Last week I had the privilege of looking at an old scrap book belonging to Captain J.D. Hotham of Milne Graden. I believe it was compiled by David Milne-Home son of Admiral Sir David Milne. It contained mainly photographs/pictures of family, friends, ships and naval personnel, and the family home, Milne Graden. (A copy of this book has been made by the Greenwich Naval Museum for anyone who is interested in Naval History) But the photographs which fascinated me most were of Twizel Castle, (the ruins of which we have all probably driven past with barely a second thought!) So here is Twizell Castle in its finest hour....



I know very little of the history of the Castle except that Twizell came into the Blake family by marriage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The third Francis Blake started to build the castle in 1770 on the site of a medieval castle which was destroyed in 1496 when James IV invaded England. The castle was under construction for nearly 50 years but was never completed. Francis Blake died in 1818. Another photograph in the scrapbook dated 1860 shows that the top of the castle had been removed... to build, what is now, the well-known Tillmouth Park Hotel.

Don't forget 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.