



Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER - 2003

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 19th/ Sunday
20th July 2003

The Great Siege of Berwick and the Battle of
Halidon Hill

Saturday 13th September

Doors Open Day in Berwick, includes guided
tour and historical commentary on the Council
Offices. Tours every half hour 10am – 12.30.

Friday 26th – Sunday 28th
September 2003

The Story of Norham Castle and exhibition by
Norham and Ladykirk History Society in the
Village Hall

Saturday 27th September

Friends Summer Outing to Norham Castle
event (please use the enclosed form to order
your tickets)

Other Societies' Lectures

Please note only a few Societies hold meetings in the summer months.

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Monday 1st September

Lecture by Steve Speak, Tyne and Wear
Museums Service

Monday 6th October

Lime Trade on Holy Island : Roger Jeremy

DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Time: 7.30 p.m.

GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 10th September

AGM and Snippets from the Archives : Linda
Bankier

Embleton Local History Society

Venue: Parish Church Room, Embleton.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wed 17th September

AGM: speaker to be arranged

Northumberland & Durham Family History Society (North Northumberland Group)

Venue: White Swan, Lowick.

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Sat 20th September

The Cully Brothers: Dr. Ann Ord

NOTICE: FROM THE TREASURER

Data Protection Act. Details of members of the F.B.D.M.A. are held on a computer, purely for administration purposes. As such we need to comply with these regulations. Because of the size and purpose of our society we do not need to be registered. **Every member has to agree with having their details being stored on a computer. If they do not can they contact me, Keith Wills on 01289 387366 or Linda Bankier at the Record Office.** The information is purely for the use of the F.B.D.M.A. and will not be given to a third party without permission of individual members.

Distribution of newsletter.

Last year we spent 10% of our income on postage in sending out the newsletter. In an effort to cut costs we are experimenting with the idea of sending out the newsletter by e. mail. If anyone would like to take part in this can they please e.mail me at keithcwills@aol.com

In order that those members who have taken out standing orders regarding their subscription can remember, the letters S/O will appear on the newsletter mailing label. (You have probably already thrown this one away).

Thanks

Keith Wills
Treasurer
F.B.D.M.A.
Lough House
Berrington Lough
Berwick upon Tweed
TD15 2PP
Tel: 01289 387366
Fax: 01289 387482
E.mail keithcwills@aol.com

ARCHIVE NEWS

It seems a long time since I last wrote a bit for the newsletter, however, it has been very busy in between both with Record Office business and Union of the Crowns 400.

Since the last newsletter, one of the activities which has taken up a lot of my time has been the Union of the Crowns 400. Our first event was held at the beginning of April and as part of it, there was "Bygone Borderlands" which was held in the Guildhall and the Committee Rooms at Wallace Green. Thank you to everyone who supported the event - the organisations on both sides of the border who put together the displays (not an easy task); the individuals who gave the talks and lecturettes; the individuals who manned the displays and those who worked very hard in the background. I think the event was a great success although the Friday night was very fraught trying to get all the displays up. It was great to see so many people coming in to the Guildhall to see the displays and spending time looking at them and talking to the people manning them. It was also encouraging to see a mixture of local people and visitors to the town. I met a number of people whom I had corresponded with or who come in to the Office once a year who had made a special trip up for the weekend to see everything that was going on. I would reckon that a couple of thousand people visited the Guildhall over the two days.

Obviously, that was only the first event of the series. King James' sports have gone well and now we are working towards the Medieval Weekend in July and the Norham weekend at the end of September. See other articles for information.

As well as Union of the Crowns, I have been involved in a lot of other outreach work. One of the exhibitors at the Bygone Borderlands exhibition was a newly formed group based at Seahouses - Old Parish of Bamburgh Local History Archive. The group are trying to set up a Community Archive on the Bamburgh/Seahouses and Beadnell area - photographs/ transcripts, maps, etc which they want to make available to the people in the area. I have been helping them, giving them advice on professional issues and supporting them. Their intention is to make available copies of archives in Seahouses but place original items here in the Record Office at Berwick. The group are planning to hold an exhibition in Seahouses at the end of August - see dates for your diary.

Other outreach work I have done recently include giving a talk to Berwick History Society on Berwick's charter granted in 1604 and to the Soroptimists Club on my work as an Archivist. I have also hosted a visit to the Office by a group from Alnmouth who were interested in finding out about the resources kept here and the work of all the volunteers.

The last few months have also been busy with education work. In March, I made my annual visit to Holy Island to spend a morning with the Junior School of Royal Grammar School in Newcastle. In May, Berwick Middle School were doing a

project on the coming of the Railways to Berwick and so three classes came in to find out about the Royal Border Bridge and how we look after archives.

As well as teaching children, I have also been doing some more work with Northumberland College. At the end of March, we held a taster evening in Etal Village Hall on the Internet and the Genealogist. Since then, I have run a 5 week course on the Internet and Genealogy at the College Annexe in Berwick and at the beginning of July, I will be running a 5 week course at Etal. This should be interesting as it will be my first experience of teaching on the College' travelling bus with laptops and Internet access !

Many of you will be aware that the Archives and the Museum are working at the moment with the consultants, PLB who are investigating the possibility of moving and integrating both services on one site. We have had several meetings with the consultants and held a successful public meeting in May. The consultants will be producing their final report shortly and then we will have to see where we go from there. Hopefully , we will be able to update your further in the next newsletter.

Linda Bankier

OLD BERWICK DOCUMENT

Recently, Bernard Shaw from the Civic Society brought in the thr
To all Christian People to whom this present writeing shall come,
William Scott of the Borough of Berwick upon Tweede, Burgesse sendeth
Greeting. **Whereas** the said William Scott and Anne his wife and
Thomas Crawforth of Berwick upon Tweede aforesaid gentleman, sonne and
heire
of Thomas Crawforth, late of Berwick aforesaid, Burgess, deceased have by their
Indenture beareing Date the nynteenth day of July in the Thirty ffifth yeare
of his now present Majestie King Charles the Seconds Reigne over England, etc.
In this same yeare of our Lord one thousand sixe hundred eighty and three given
Granted, Bargained, Sold, Aliened, enfeoffed and confirmed unto Arthur
Edmeston of the
Borough of Berwick upon Tweede, aforesaid Burgesse, his heires and Assignes
forever
all that Burgage or Tenement with the Appurtenances scituate, standing and
being in
Berwick aforesaid on the south side of a Streete there called Marygate betweene
a

tenement belonging to William Keymish on the east and a Tenement belonging to Robert Moore gentleman on the west, As in and by the said recited Indenture relation being thereunto had more fully may appeare. **now knowe yee** that the the said William Scott doth hereby Authorize, ordaine and Appoint his trusty Ffriends Lislye fforeside and Joseph fforster of the Borough of Berwick upon Tweede, Burgesses or either of them Jointly or severally to be his Lawfull Attorney or Attorneys for him and in his Name Into and Upon the said Burgage or Tenement with the Appurtenances or any parte thereof, in Name Of the wholl to Enter and thereof peaceable possession and seizin to Take. And after such peaceable possession soe by them or either of them Had and taken Like Quiet and peaceable possession, Livery and seisin for Him, and in his Name to Give and deliver to the said Arthur Edmeston And his heires forever According to the true Intent and Meaneing of the said Rented Indenture of Sale. In Witnesse whereof the said William Scott hath hereunto sett his hand and seall the Sixeteenth day of October In the Thirty fifth years of the Reigne of our Sovereigne Lord Charles the Second by the grace of god king of England, Scotland, ffrance and Ireland defendor of the ffaith etc. Annoque Domini 1683

Signed Sealed and Delivered
In the presence of

Rich : Davison
Hen : Hewitson
Richard Davison Junyer
John Stanton

The above indenture relates to a property on the south side of Marygate. On 19 July 1683, William and Ann Scott and Thomas Crawforth sold the property to Arthur Edmeston and on 16 October 1683, William Scott drew up this document appointing Lislye [Lesley] Foreside and Joseph Forster as his attorneys to ensure that Arthur Edmeston gained possession of it.

It is not possible to identify the exact site of the property. However, I have discovered some information on both the Edmeston and Scott families. Both William Scott and Arthur Edmeston were Freemen of the town and from the Freemen rolls, I have established that William must have survived until the late 1720s/ early 1730s, as did Arthur Edmeston.

Both gentlemen had a number of children in the 1670s and 1680s. In the Berwick, Holy Trinity baptisms registers, I have found 6 children of William and Ann Scott – 2 sons and 4 daughters. Two of these children must have died because they have reused the christian names Sarah and William.

According to the parish registers, Arthur Edmeston was married to Mary. They had 8 children between 1678 and 1696 – 5 sons and 3 daughters.

Lesley Foreside and Joseph Forster who acted as the attorneys were both Freemen.

Linda Bankier

King James' Sports Sunday 11th May 2003
Falconry at Longridge Towers School

I've always fed the birds in my garden – but there's a huge difference between watching a greenfinch on a bag of peanuts and helping to feed a Harris Hawk with a wing span of four feet in a howling gale on a school field.

Sunday 11th May dawned bright and breezy. I was to help with the Border Marches – nothing too physical – just filling in forms and making sure people were at the right place at the right time. The Council helpers had been there since 6:00a.m., but I turned up just after eight. It was a pleasant morning's work, perhaps a little hectic at times but enjoyable.

Then, about 1:00p.m. we left and went to Longridge Towers to see the 17th Century Fete and Falconry display. The school grounds lend themselves well to any outdoor activity but on this day the setting surpassed itself.

I'd never seen birds of prey so close and was thrilled to see the beauty of their plumage, the vicious talons and the sharp tearing beak. There were five birds on show, ranging from a tiny Scops Owl to the enormous Eagle Owl.

Lots of people were crowding around the area where Mohamed, an Egyptian who runs the falconry display at Jedforest, was with his birds. When we arrived the Harris Hawk was playing hide and seek in the wind-blown trees. Mohamed would call and down the bird swooped onto an outstretched gauntlet. I had to have a turn so I moved forward. Then it was just me and the bird. I wore an ancient gauntlet on which rested some unmentionable offal. Stand still and straight! This I did and out of the dark trees came the hawk. I could just imagine it being 400 years ago with me having my first lesson of falconry. The bird landed and tore at the flesh (young pheasant?). I chatted quietly to the creature – private, human to hawk stuff. Then off she went again into the trees. A great thrill!

I had another chance to hold one of these magnificent birds of prey. It was the Eagle Owl and only adults could hold it as it was so heavy. Again the beauty of the plumage was intriguing – so many shades of brown.

Mohamed brought out another hawk and with a lure enticed it to fly and pounce. As the wind was so gusty this bird began to wheel high into the sky, against the sun so that Mohamed could not see it properly. Just as we thought it was off into the wide blue yonder it came plummeting down and down. It caught the feast on the lure and held it on the ground with its wings open so no-one could take it's prize from it.

The afternoon was wearing to a close. Some small pupils performed a Mummers Play. There were mediaeval games and some very modern mobile phones but there was great good humour. I wished I'd had time to go to the Stanks and do archery and sword-fighting and watch Cumberland wrestling – but I didn't. I'd been 400 years back in time with some beautiful creatures which were greatly prized by those at the Court of King James VI and I. A wonderful experience.

Barbara Herdman

COMMEMORATION OF THE UNION OF THE CROWNS 400

A poem sent to our president, Lord Joicey, wishing us success with our Union of the Crown Celebrations. It was inspired by George MacDonald Fraser's book about the Reivers.

Steel Bonnets

Hobblers,heels are softly clapping,
Scarce heard in the country lane,
Changing to a muffled rattle as they cross the rough terrain;
Lammas long past, nights are darker,
And the Reivers out again.

Hidden by darkness crossing the Border,
No warning beacons lit in haste,
Travelling swiftly, undetected,

Through the bleak Bewcastle Waste;
Seeking spoils from sleeping farmers,
Gone before the alarm is raised.

Hurrying home now, turning Northward,
Stolen shaggy cattle complain,
Complaint that's echoed by the takers,
Cursing a sudden squall of rain;
Wet, bedraggled, but spirits rising,
Bound for Scotland once again.

Wharton's waytchers are awake now,
At the crossing in armed array,
Awaiting any unwary raiders
Who unwisely come their way;
On the moor they spy the Scots and
Spur their mounts to take the prey.

The Reivers break, but make a stand then,
On the steep banks of a burn;
Numbers that had seemed so many
Now look pitiful as they turn;
But they face the Borderers bravely,
Surrender is not their concern.

From the bracken, hidden around them,
Comrades rising, lances high,
Call on the surrounded English
To lay down their arms or die;
Some fight and fall in dawn's first light,
Their bones forever there to lie.

The rest are spared, set free on foot now,
Stripped of all but jacket and hose;
The Reivers know tomorrow's allies
May well be this morning's foes;
In the Marches there's little choosing
Between Thistle and English Rose.

Don Henderson

ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

John Crabbe, pirate and siege master of Berwick

One of the more memorable incidents of Edward II's siege of Berwick in 1319 is described in characteristic style in Sheldon's *History of Berwick* (1849):-

"..in the next assault the [English] soldiers constructed a huge machine which they called a Sow...This mighty machine, unknown to modern engineers, was moved close to the wall and the miners began to undermine the foundation of the walls; but an English engineer, detained amongst the Scots for this purpose...threw from the balistae a stone of such monstrous weight, that falling with terrible force upon the Sow, it split it into pieces. The besieged, seeing the success of this experiment, instantly followed it up, and threw burning faggots into the machine...the soldiers and miners concealed within, to escape roasting alive, fled from the machine, on seeing which some witty Scot cried out "the Sow has farrowed her pigs""

The story comes from John Barbour's poem *The Bruce* (1370s) which identifies the engineer responsible for the English embarrassment as John Crabbe. For Sheldon, and for John Scott in his history of Berwick (1888), Crabbe is no more

than a name to be recorded, but since then scholars have unearthed a lot more about the colourful career of this defender of Berwick.

Crabbe was not English as Sheldon supposed, nor Scots, but Flemish, from Muiden, a small town on the now dried up river Zwin. Nothing is known of his origins until he explodes into the historical record in 1305/6 with the dramatic seizure of a ship, the *Waardebourc*, off the port of La Rochelle. Crabbe's pirate crew carried off 160 tuns of wine along with a stack of other luxury items, took the sailors prisoner and burnt the ship. The haul was estimated to be worth £2000, then a vast fortune. The owner, John de Warde, had to wait seven years to get any sort of official compensation and in the meantime Crabbe and his band went on plundering the high seas, becoming a legend along the east coast of England. A legend helped by a series of lucky escapes. The first of these seems to have been in 1309 when Crabbe was captured by the English and thrown into prison in Scarborough Castle to await execution. His career should have ended there but for the factional infighting among the burgesses of Scarborough which somehow Crabbe was able to turn to his advantage to obtain his release. He returned to the sea and promptly carried off another rich prize, a ship crammed with cloth, jewels, gold and silver belonging to Alice the Countess Marshall. Edward II wrote to Robert the Count of Flanders demanding immediate action against Crabbe, but it took the Count five years even to reply to that letter, by which time it had been overtaken by many more sent by the exasperated English. Crabbe meanwhile moved his base to Aberdeen to prey more easily on English East coast shipping and in 1311 seized two ships out of Newcastle removing 89 sacks of Northumberland wool. Wool was a favourite target of Flemish pirates at the time and this consignment was dealt with by a scam that became the bane of English merchants. Landing the cargo at Aberdeen the English seals were removed and substituted by seal from a legitimate merchant, then the wool could be openly sold in Flanders, the merchant and the pirates sharing the profit. This was one of a mass of such incidents that forced Edward II into establishing a wool staple at St. Omer in Artois to which all English wool was to be sent under heavy naval guard.

By 1315 open warfare had broken out between France and Flanders and England was drawn into the conflict on the French side partly as a result of the activities of Crabbe and other Flemish pirates. At first things went badly for the French who got bogged down in the incessant rains that were a feature of the year. But the same rains ruined the Flemish harvest and it looked as if Flanders might be starved into submission early in 1316. It was then that Count Robert turned to Crabbe for help, and Crabbe had his first involvement with Berwick. Crabbe was put in charge of a large fleet that raided English shipping of all types along the East coast, especially the vessels trying to re-supply the English garrison in Berwick, under blockade by the Scots following the disastrous English defeat at Bannockburn. Supplies intended for the English in Berwick ended up on the tables of the hungry Flemings. The stealing of one particular wine shipment particular outraged the English and Edward II wrote yet again to Count Robert demanding that Crabbe be brought to justice. The Count's reply was breathtakingly brazen. He claimed to know nothing of Crabbe's activities, despite having put the pirate in charge of the fleet, but he did assure Edward that should Crabbe happen to turn up he would have him arrested and broken on the wheel. The letter despatched the Count then sat down to sample the best of the wine intended for Berwick, which his pirate had thoughtfully put aside for him.

Crabbe was so successful at his campaign that it became impossible to supply Berwick by sea, thereby paving the way for the betrayal of the town to the Scots by starving inhabitants in 1318. Just as this was happening Crabbe thought it prudent to settle in Scotland. Apart from his pirate activities there was a murder allegation lodged against him, and the Count's mood might change at any time.

Once Berwick had returned to Scots control Crabbe saw that the town had distinct advantages over Aberdeen as a base for East coast raids and consequently moved there with his pirate fleet. Helped no doubt by plentiful supplies of ill-gotten gold Crabbe was welcomed by Berwick's elite and was immediately elected a burgess. He arrived just in time to help defeat Edward's siege the following year. Already referred to in a Flemish poem of 1317, Crabbe's prominent role in the 1319 siege secured his legend and established

his reputation. Over the next decade Scots Berwick came to rely on this gentleman of sea. He kept the town supplied with vital equipment and continued his piracy supplying the Scottish court with luxuries from plundered English ships. So valuable was his role to Scotland that outraged continental merchants who might accidentally have their cargoes plundered along with those of the English received prompt compensation on application to the Scots treasury. In Berwick Crabbe honed his engineering skills and took part in the siege of Norham in 1327. By 1331 he was described as the Constable of Berwick responsible for supplying guards for the town's defence. His fleet was still based in the harbour and in 1332 when the young Edward III invaded Scotland in support of Edward Balliol's claim to the Scots throne, Crabbe sailed with ten ships to blockade the English via the River Tay. The attack was a disaster. The English put up an unexpectedly strong resistance and all Crabbe's ships were burnt, the captain only narrowly escaping to stagger back to Berwick. He was soon in action again marching with a Scots force to attack Edward III at Kelso, but this too was a disaster and Crabbe's luck finally seemed to have run out when he was captured in a skirmish by a fellow continental Sir Walter de Mauny from Hainault. The English were exultant that at last the notorious pirate was in their hands, in chains and heavily guarded. All his past crimes over the decades were dredged up and the Parliament that met in York in January 1333 was unanimous in baying for his blood. But before condemning him to a horrible death King Edward was intrigued to meet this famous pirate and master of siege craft. Unfortunately there is no record of their conversation, but the result was clear enough. The King bought Crabbe from Sir Walter for 1000 marks and immediately the Fleming returned to Berwick. Again to help in a siege, but this time on the English side. The Berwickers were incensed at what they saw as a betrayal and immediately slew Crabbe's son but it was empty revenge. Berwick fell to the English soon afterwards, handed over by agreement after the Scots defeat at Halidon Hill. It is impossible be precise how much Crabbe contributed to the English siege effort but the King was pleased enough, granting the Fleming a full pardon for all his past offences on land and sea. He received a grant of a property in Berwick and

soon afterwards was made constable of the castle at Somerton in Lincolnshire. Crabbe entertained his new Royal master at Somerton that same autumn and shortly afterwards added architect to his list of achievements designing a new moat, gate and drawbridge. Berwick was the turning point in Crabbe's career. Prior to that time he was a freebooter, sometimes loyal to a prince, but mostly loyal to himself and his shipmates. Once in English employ he settled down to become a loyal servant of the English crown. Despite what must have been intense hostility from the Scots residents Crabbe stayed on in Berwick throughout the rest of the 1330s. He built siege engines for the King's continuing campaigns in Scotland, designed and supervised the building of new sections of Berwick's defences and was also called upon to give the King advice on dealing with Scots nobles and officials. But as the Hundred Years' War with France began to develop Berwick saw less and less of Crabbe. In 1340 the old seadog had the chance to command a fleet again, and help his Flemish countrymen. The French fleet was sailing to blockade Bruges and Antwerp and Edward III was all for rushing in to stop them. The Archbishop of Canterbury advised caution and suggested gathering more ships. The King brushed this aside and called in Crabbe and his admiral Robert Morley. They agreed with the Archbishop and the King flew into a rage screaming "I will cross despite you, and you who are afraid, when there is nothing to fear, you stay at home!" The two seamen said that he was putting the whole kingdom in danger, but if he insisted they would lead the way into certain doom. Then, Crabbe's luck again, the wind suddenly changed direction – an immediate crossing was impossible and the king agreed to wait and gather more ships. Even so by the time they reached Flanders the French fleet still outnumbered the English by at least fifty, and possibly, eighty vessels. The French boats were massively fortified and brimming with crossbowmen, but very few men at arms. By contrast the English ships were stocked with veterans of the Scots wars, and, with a 1000 longbowmen. The battle of Sluys was a crushing English victory and Crabbe was put in charge of chasing the enemy ships that got away, notably a detachment lead by a pirate called Spoudevisch.

It was a last dash on the high seas for a man, at probably 60, considered elderly by Medieval standards. Crabbe had though several more years of active service ahead, at various sieges in Edward's French's wars and on missions in England, before he died in comfortable retirement at Somerton in 1352. His last notable mission brought him back into contact with the Scots, helping in 1346, to arrange for suitable prisons for a number of Scots nobles captured at the battle of Neville's Cross outside Durham. These included the Scots king David II, in whose service Crabbe had been when the pirate was captured near Berwick, fourteen years earlier. There is no record of what they said to each other.

Further Reading

Balfour-Melville, E.W.M. 'Two John Crabbs' in *Scottish Historical Review* vol.39 (1960) pp.31-34

Lucas, H.S. 'John Crabbe: Flemish Pirate, Merchant, and Adventurer' in *Speculum* vol.20 (1945) pp.334-50

McNamee, C. *The Wars of the Bruces: Scotland, England & Ireland, 1306-1328* (1997)

Rogers, C.J. *War Cruel & Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III, 1327-1360* (2000)

The Belany/Skelly Story

James Cockburn Belany arrived in North Sunderland in 1838. An unqualified Doctor, he set up a practice in the village and in 1843 he married 21 year old Rachel Skelly. She was an only child and lived with her widowed mother in Seafield House. Mrs Skelly owned the land that is now the Golf Course and held leases from the Lord Crewe Trustees on Seafield Farm, the Lime Kilns, the Lime Stone Quarries and the Colliery, in partnership with Robson of Greenhill Farm.

On his marriage Belany gave up his practice and moved in with his mother-in-law at Seafield, taking over the running of the business on her behalf.

Soon after, Mrs Skelly died. The cause of her death, according to Belany was bilious fever.

On inheriting from her mother Rachel immediately surrendered her inheritance to joint ownership with her husband.

Belany started to build a new house at the Snook (later called Belany's Cave). The house was never completed, the walls being torn down and the stone carted away in 1849.

At the beginning of June, 1844 Mr & Mrs Belany left for a stay in London, where they arrived on Tuesday 4th. On Thursday, 6th Belany purchased prussic acid from a doctor friend in Stepney.

At 7.15 p.m. Mrs Belany drank a glass of prussic acid, thinking it was water, and within 20 minutes she was dead.

Belany was accused of murder and was tried at The Old Bailey on August 21st & 22nd and was found not guilty.

On Saturday 25th August Belany returned to North Sunderland with his brother, the Rev. Robert Belany, and his solicitor.

Many did not agree with the verdict of the trial and a hostile homecoming was planned for Monday, 27th. A throng paraded the streets, led by three men dressed as women, carrying three effigys. The noisy throng stopped at the ha ha wall in front of Seafield house and one of the effigys was burned. This so goaded Belany that he rushed out firing a pistol over the heads of the crowd. The crowd stampeded towards the house and Belany fled indoors. The crowd smashed all the ground floor windows and set fire to the gates and then hung the effigy of Belany from the chimney of the Harbour House.

On Wednesday, 29th August, a noisy gathering assembled at the Bamburgh Castle Inn at 8 p.m. they left and made for Seafield where they stormed the house and set it on fire. The Lord Crewe Trustees Fire Engine from Bamburgh attended the fire but, through lack of water, the house was gutted by midnight.

Belany, his brother and his solicitor escaped through the fields to the Blue Bell Inn (North Sunderland) where they hid all the next day until 4 a.m. on Friday 31st when a post chaise arrived from the white Swan Inn at Alnwick. All three left in the post chaise under the cover of darkness.

Belany, who was never to return, sold the Golf Course land to the Lord Crewe Trustees in 1846.

Four villagers appeared at Belford Court charged with causing the fire but they were found not guilty.

David Donaldson.

Date Stones

No, not the sort of dates you eat, the calendar sort that can sometimes be seen on the door lintels of old houses.

In Alnmouth there are five that I know of, there may be more because sometimes they are tucked away and difficult to spot. One is low down on the wall in Northumberland Street opposite to "The Hope and Anchor". Carved into it are the letters L T A and the date 1713 or it might be 1715, the earliest date inscribed in the Village. Because of recent erosion it is beginning to look like 1718. Another easily visible lintel carrying a date is in Pease's Lane, over the first doorway on the left as you turn down from Northumberland Street. In this case the inscription

is B W E 1724. The third is to be found in Chapel Lane, over the doorway of No 3 in the row of cottages. This one is not quite so easy to spot because it is partly obscured by waste pipes. I only noticed it when I was going down Chapel Lane one morning when the sun was just striking slantwise along the wall and so the carving showed up in relief. The lettering is A A M with a date of 1727. The next you will find by turning down the entryway from Northumberland Street as though you are going to Waleric House. The house name is on the sign on the wall at the corner, along with a sign about Waleric Terriers. Instead of going down the lane, look above the doorway immediately on your right where you will see B W E 1724 carved in the lintel. It seems strange that this is exactly the same as the second one mentioned above. The fifth example, and the one which was pointed out to me only recently, is in Carpenter's Court, itself not easy to find. The lintel is extremely low down in the wall, so low down in fact that I feel that it must have been re-used from somewhere else. It is difficult to read because it is only illuminated by the sun for a brief period late on a summer's afternoon. So far I have only been able to make out the date as 1721, and even then the last digit is not very clear.

I believe that the use of stone as a house building material in Alnmouth, started with the upsurge of prosperity as the port trade revived about 1700. The custom of recording the owners initials, at least I assume they were the owners, seems to be a little justifiable swank at being able to afford this type of construction. Was this confined to Alnmouth or did it occur in other places, Berwick for example? There must be more date stones about, do you know of any and if so what are the dates? That swankiness may give us a little supplementary dating evidence and pattern of rising prosperity.

Fred Bettess

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

March 10th 1838. To CABINET MAKERS ETC. MR. JOSEPH PARK will offer for PUBLIC AUCTION, at the Salmon Inn Large Room, Hide Hill, on FRIDAY March 16th 1838 at 11 in the forenoon precisely. UPWARDS OF TEN THOUSAND FEET of CITY of ST. DOMINGO MAHOGANY VENEERS, comprising ROW, MOTTLED AND CURL, of the best description. Also a few ROSEWOOD VENEERS, MAHOGANY BOARDS, COCKBEAD BOARDS and BEDPOSTS. JOSEPH PARK respectfully invites the attention of the Trade to this parcel of Veneers, which he submits will be found in point of Beauty and suitable size, such has not been hitherto offered in Berwick. REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. Berwick
March 7th 1838.

April 21st 1838. WORKING CLASSES OF NORTHUMBERLAND !!! The False Tory and Whig Aristocracy are trying to prevent the circulation of the LONDON DISPATCH. Will you rally round it? There is no Journal more devoted to your interests, there is no paper in which there is more talent, nor is there one which is so feared by the Friends of the Poor Law !!! The enemies of the millions !!! Only 4d.

June 23rd 1838 BOROUGH OF BERWICK UPON TWEED.
SCHOOLMASTER WANTED.

Wanted immediately, a SCHOOLMASTER for the MATHEMATICAL SCHOOL in the Academy belonging to the Corporation, now vacant..

The salary is £70 per annum, payable Quarterly, for which the Master is to teach ARITHMETIC, the Elements of MATHEMATICS, and of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

No Candidate to be admitted under 21 years or above 35 years of age.

The Examination will take place at the Town Hall on Tuesday the Tenth of JULY next, at Ten o'clock in the forenoon, when the Candidates must produce Certificates of their Age, properly verified, and satisfactory Testimonials of their moral character to the School Committee.

The master will be confined to such regulations as to the Hours and Mode of Teaching as shall from time to time be ordered by the Council. No allowance will be made to the unsuccessful Candidates for their trouble or expenses.

The hours of Teaching and other Particulars may be known by application to the Town Clerk's Office.

Berwick 8th June 1838

February 16th 1839. REWARD OF TWENTY SOVEREIGNS.

Whereas on the Night of Monday the 11th instant, some Person or Persons did enter the Premises of J. S. DONALDSON Esq. of Cheswick, and thence did feloniously steal and carry away ONE SHEEP. A REWARD of TWENTY SOVEREIGNS is hereby offered to some Person who will give such Information as may lead to the Discovery and Conviction of the Offender or Offenders.

Cheswick February 14th 1839

Letter from the Editor.

I was quite amazed to read the story of 'Doctor' Belany of Seahouses. Although I have lived in Northumberland for most of my life I have never heard of him before! I am sure there must be more tales from the past so if you have **stories** of other **interesting people** or **events**, which can be used in the newsletter, they will be most appreciated. You may give them to Linda or send them by E-mail to gallagher@ukonline.co.uk or by post c/o. Records Office, Wallace Green, Berwick upon Tweed.

Yvonne Gallagher

Hon. Editor