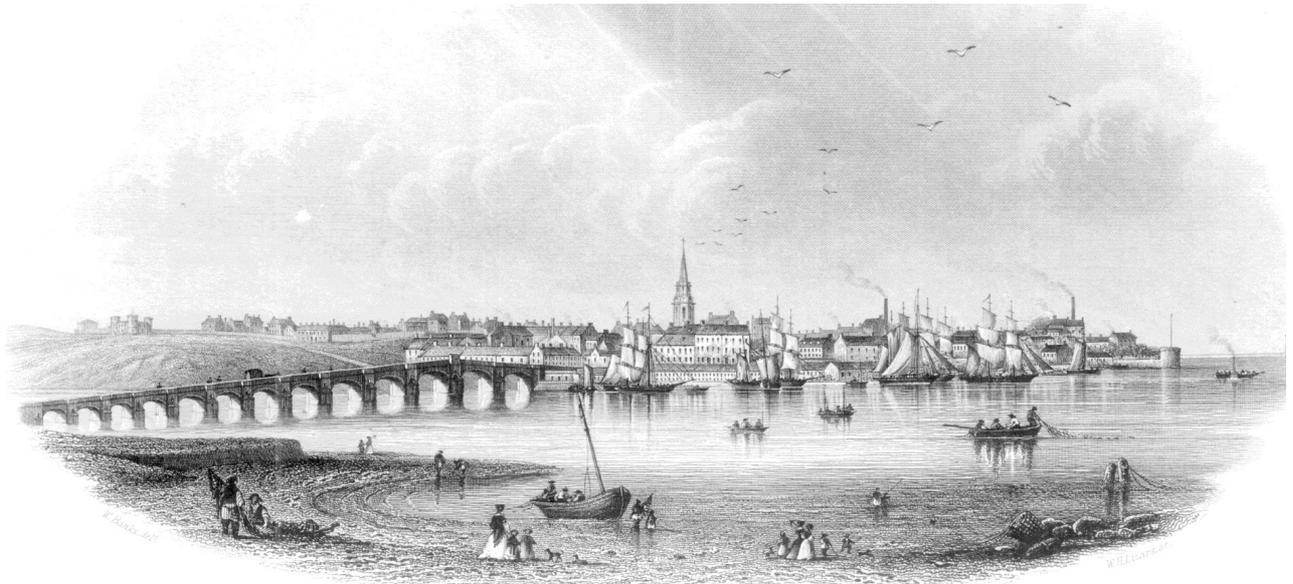


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 48 October 2005

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October -  
Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005

Photographic Exhibition – **Odyssey : A Photographic Voyage** by Jim Walker in the Gymnasium – free entry

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Autumn Lecture – “**Berwick Shops in the 1930s – and before** “ by Fred Kennington in the Guildhall, Berwick starting at 7 pm

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November -  
Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November  
2005

**Spittal During the Second World War** – Exhibition in Spittal School Hall, 3.30 to 5.30 pm. Also Thursday evening, 6.30 to 8.00 pm

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November -  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2005

“**Their Past, Your Future** “ – Second World War exhibition in Gymnasium – Wednesday – Sunday 11am – 3 pm  
Free entry

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday

**Second World War Living History weekend**

27<sup>th</sup> November 2005

- in conjunction with **Their Past, Your Future and Berwick at War** exhibition in the Gymnasium

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006

**Friends AGM** – further details in next issue

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Bowling Clubhouse.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2005

The Limestone Industry of Lindisfarne :  
Roger Jermy

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005

The Lowland Clearances :  
Peter Aitchison & Andrew Cassell

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005

The History of Berwickshire's Towns  
and Villages : Elizabeth Layhe

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005

AGM + The Story of Heatherslaw Mill :  
Mr J. Bradley.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Getting the Fish to Market :  
Mr J. T. Walker.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005

The Development of Agricultural  
Machinery : Mr. D. Thompson

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005

Supper Party at Welcome House.

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: The Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Trafalgar and Collingwood, The  
Northumbrian who saved the Nation : Eric  
Grounds

*(Note : This is a joint meeting with the Civic Society in the Guildhall)*

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Dr Gillie of Norham : Canon Huxley.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005

Newspapers in Berwick and Berwickshire  
Tony Langmack.

## **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick upon Tweed.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005

Small Finds : Philippa Walton.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Greek Youths-Meeting and Dating:  
Margery Deakin.

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005

The Viking Age : Kristian Pederson.

## **COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Anglo/Scottish Borderline : David Walsh

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005

Wark Castle : Eric Grounds

(**Note:** Joint meeting with Cornhill W.I. at Cornhill )

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005

My Father in World War 2 :  
Major General Charles Ramsay.

## **DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Coldingham Priory : Rennie Weatherhead

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Before we had Cars : Fred Kennington.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005

The Scottish Plant Collectors : Alan  
Dennell

## **EMBLETON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Church Room, Embleton.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005

AGM plus Four legged heroes in two  
World Wars: Mr & Mrs B. Cato

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Geordies at Trafalgar: Dr T. Barrow

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Archaeological Investigations at  
Bamburgh Castle : Mr G. Young

## **GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Life on the Roman Wall (The  
Vindolanda Tablets) : Dr Jeremy  
Paterson

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005

The Life and Works of Newcastle  
Architect John Dobson : Mr Henry G.  
Dobson.

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005

“The Stevensons” (Early Railway History  
In the North East) : Mr Alan Fendly

:  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005

Folklore of Northumberland and the  
Borders : Mr Vince Kelly.

## **LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP**

**Venue : Lowick Village Hall**

**Time : 7.30 pm**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Upsettlington : Eleanor Moffat.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Second World War Defences: Phil Rowett

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005

The Bondagers : Dinah Iredale.

## **NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue; Norham Village Hall.**

**Time; 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Norham Station : Mrs C. Short.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2005

Norham, The War Years : Neil Robertson

## **NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: St Paul's Parish Hall.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Seahouses Past : To Be Arranged.

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005

War Memorials : Janet Brown.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005

Lime Kilns : Roger Jermy

December

No Meeting

## **NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY (North Northumberland Group)**

**Black Bull, Lowick.**

**Time: 10.00 a.m.**

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific :  
Mr John Nichol.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2005

The History of the Vincent Motorcycle:  
Sir Mark Goodson.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2005

Christmas Lunch.

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

The last few months have been a bit hectic for the archives and me for various reasons. However, hopefully, things will settle down now.

As most of you will now be aware, I am on maternity leave and won't officially be back at work until March 2006. My departure wasn't quite what I planned which has caused problems but everything seems to be sorted out now. Many thanks for all your good wishes, cards and presents on the birth of my little daughter, Niamh ( an Irish name , pronounced Neeve ). Her arrival into the world was very quick and I suppose, fitting for an archivist – she must be the first child to be born where I live for over 100 years !

Before my departure, life at the Record Office was very busy trying to get everything done and up to date. Needless to say, I didn't achieve that but I did complete a number of things.

### **SPITTAL AT WAR**

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I have been working with Spittal First School on a project "Spittal during the Second World War ". During the summer term, people who lived in Spittal at the time came in to talk to the children about their experiences and we also ran a "Reminiscence Session". We invited people to come in and talk in a small group about the bombings and life at the time – some of them had not seen each other for many years. It was very emotional for them, particularly when we talked about the bombings. Near the end of term

the school found out that they had received a grant from the Home Front Recall fund to do further work on the project. As part of that, we held a small exhibition in the school in July about Spittal during the War. A lot of people came along and gave us additional information which we are using to put together another exhibition in the School from **7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November, 3.30 to 5.30 pm** and on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30 to 8.00 pm**. Everyone is welcome to come along. We have also held another Reminiscence session which was very successful. In November, we are holding a Second World War Day in the school when all the children and staff are going to dress in period dress and lunch will be a typical meal of the time.

If you would like to help with the project in any way or know anyone who could provide us with information or artefacts, please leave a message at the Record Office and I will get back to you. We are particularly keen to find photos of Spittal at the time which we could copy.

### **EVE OF TRAFALGAR/HERITAGE DOORS OPEN WEEKEND**

During the summer, I was also involved with this project which culminated with the events over the weekend 10<sup>th</sup> /11<sup>th</sup> September ( see Derek's article). I was working with the Maltings Youth Theatre who were re-enacting a trial which took place in Berwick in 1816 – counterfeit coiners. I attended some of the rehearsals and gave historical advice on the case. The result was that the group produced a 3 part re-enactment in period dress. The first scene was held outside the Guild Hall, the second in the Gaol upstairs ( trial) and the third down at the Quayside when the prisoners were transported –Niamh even took part in this bit as one of the prisoner's baby who had to be left behind!. The re-enactment was a great success with lots of people coming to see it. The Youth Theatre really enjoyed doing it and it would be great if we could do something similar again.

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As well as these two special projects, before I left, I also gave talks to the Creative Writers Group and a Local History group in Chatton.

Whilst I am on maternity leave, you will see two new faces in the Record Office – Carole Pringle and Ian Johnston. Carole is working as a part time temporary Archive Assistant until the end of March 2005 and will be helping in the Searchroom and doing lots of other tasks. Ian Johnston who started at the beginning of October has been appointed as the Borough Archivist in my absence. He will be running the service. I'm sure you will all make them feel at home in the archives and help them as much as possible.

I must go as Naimh is crying. Thanks again for all your good wishes and support of the Record Office.

*Linda Bankier*

### **R.C CLEMENTS AND SPITTAL SCHOOL**

Recently I have been doing some further work on the artist, Robert Cooper Clements whom I have written about in the past. Robert was a teacher at Spittal School and the following are some extracts from the log book relating to him and the school during the First World War. :

**5 Jan. 1909** - School re-opened after Christmas Holidays. Mr Robert Cooper Clements began duties as Assistant Master. This causes a few changes. Miss Jeffrey is removed from Standard Vi VII to Standard IV and her place is taken by Mr Clements. Miss Gregg who has had Standard

IV now takes Standard II and Miss Davey leaves Standard II to assist Miss Johnson with a difficult Standard...

Mr Clements is engaged to take entire charge of the teaching of Form throughout the school.

**22 Jan. 1909** - Mr Clements gave an outline at the weekly conference of the scheme of drawing he proposes....

**25<sup>th</sup> June 1909** - Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> school was closed by order because of Sunday School excursion. On Wednesday evening 18 boy scouts represented the school at the inspection by General Baden Powell...

**21<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1910** - ....Mr Clements was absent on Monday and Tuesday – Influenza .....

**20<sup>th</sup> June 1910** - Owing to the visit of Messers Wombwill's Menagerie, the school was closed in the afternoon by order of L.E. Authority.

**1<sup>st</sup> July 1910** - ...The Headmaster, accompanied by all the members of the Staff and 50 scholars paid the annual visit to Edinburgh. The party started at 3 am and returned at 10pm. The visit by steamer from Leith to the Forth Bridge gave all a rest and was a new feature of the outing. A most enjoyable day was spent ...

**7<sup>th</sup> July 1910** - This morning Mr W.J. Dixon presented a pair of field glasses to the company of Boy Scouts belonging to our school. Mr Clements is the Secretary of the Borough Scouts Association. Delicate boys are becoming robust; manners, alertness and general tone have much improved and the training of boy scouts is truly educational when properly conducted. I cannot speak too highly of the work Mr Clements is doing for boys in the Borough and in our own school. He has gained the esteem and affection of all the boys.

**9<sup>th</sup> September 1910** - .... It may be interesting to note that a Boy Scout's Camp was held at Wooler for 10 days during the summer holidays. Twelve of our boys with the two assistant masters and myself spent a pleasant holiday and I can say from experience that the movement is worthy of support and is educational.

**3<sup>rd</sup> February 1911** - ....Evidently there is much sickness. The doctor and nurse have been in school every day during the past fortnight. ...The Headmaster and members of the staff assist at the Soup Kitchen on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Only those children whose fathers are out of work are fed. No less than 1/5 of our school children ( 80 children) are present regularly.

**10<sup>th</sup> February 1911** - The number attending Soup Kitchen this week = 119 or 30% of the school.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 1911** - Mr Clements was not in time to inspect his class this morning.

**3<sup>rd</sup> July 1911** - Mr Clements with some boys at present attending school has gone to Windsor to the rally of Scouts – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

**6<sup>th</sup> July 1911** - Mr Clements summoned as witness in a local case.

**29<sup>th</sup> August 1911** - ...Richard Teesdale has won a scholarship and goes to Grammar School. Harry Forrest and Robert Moffatt are also going to Grammar School. Evelyn Borthwick will go as a day scholar to St Mary's Convent.

**8<sup>th</sup> December 1911** - Took Mr Clements class to enable him to make preparations for the School Concert. ...

**15<sup>th</sup> December 1911** - A concert and operetta have been given by the children during the week. No part of the operetta was learned in school hours. The success has been most gratifying and the response of the parents, who have loyally supported the school and the teachers has inspired the whole staff and renewed hops and vigour. All the Managers supported us by their presence. The concert consisted of Recitations, Swedish Drill, Folk Songs, Games and Morris Dances. Mr Clements, senior assistant designed and painted a beautiful proscenium and two beautiful scenes, which will be stored for use on a future occasion. On Thursday afternoon the Infants rendered a programme. The Central Hall was crowded with happy mothers. The Headmaster was present and testifies that the work done by Miss Grigor is refined and excellent in tone, and has given unbounded delight to the little ones.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May 1912** - Our School Football Team has been successful in winning the Shield and Medals in the Borough Schools Football League. This success is a record, and they did not lose a single match.

HMI Report – Inspected 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September 1912

....Composition is the subject in which the Headmaster'[s ideals have been most nearly realised, and in good classes such as the VI<sup>th</sup> standard [Mr Clements] – which is in the hands of a very capable teacher – much good work is being done. This teacher deserves praise for the enthusiasm which he shows in all subjects and especially in Drill and Drawing....

**20<sup>th</sup> March 1913** - Closed today at noon for Easter Holidays  
Annie Cringle , 11 ½ year of age has been awarded First Prize offered by the Berwick Debating Society for essay writing in a competition open to all boys and girls in the Borough under 14. The second prize was awarded to Richard Davidson, another scholar of this school. Both reside in Spittal. The prizes were presented in Berwick by Dr Maclagan, Chairman of the Education Committee.

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 1913** - His Worship the Mayor (Alderman Adam Logan) presented each child in the school with a new penny and an orange.  
The School Football Team retain the Darling Challenge Shield for another year having beaten all records. They have not lost one point and have 50 goals to 3 to their credit. The team has been solely in the charge of Mr Hunter.

**31<sup>st</sup> October 1913** - Mr Clements has been absent all week: he is very unwell. Headmaster took Standards VI and VII as one class

**21<sup>st</sup> November 1913** - Mr Clements still absent. Mr Joseph Hince ( certificated) from Backworth began duties on Thursday morning Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> ( on supply)

**12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1913** - Mr Clements still absent. Numerous cases of German measles among the younger scholars.

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1914** - Resumed after Christmas Holidays. Mr Clements absent Tuesday and Wednesday owing to mother's death.....

**15<sup>th</sup> July 1914** - School closed tonight at 4pm for summer holidays. Mr Clements and Miss Gregg were presented with wedding presents from the Headmaster, Assistant Teachers and Scholars.

**25<sup>th</sup> August 1914** - School re-opened today with a good attendance. Miss Iris Allott began work as Student Teacher. Owing to the absence of Miss Gregg ( Mrs Clements) the Student Teacher took charge of Stnd III.

**4<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1914** - Mr Clements absent today owing to inspection of scouts by General Baden Powell ....

**22<sup>nd</sup> Jan. 1915** - J.Wilson Esq., Mayor of Berwick accompanied by Major Bose visited and conferred with Headmaster about a possible bombardment. The Mayor saw the whole school emptied in less than one minute.

**30<sup>th</sup> June 1915** - Scholars and staff entertained 54 wounded soldiers with their nurses during the afternoon.

**14<sup>th</sup> July 1915** - Mr Clements informed the Headmaster that he had joined the 7<sup>th</sup> N.F and would be leaving on Monday. The day was spent in re-arranging classes, removing desks, etc.

**15<sup>th</sup> July 1915** - These two days have been spent in preparing for the departure of Mr Clements....

The Headmaster takes over St VI, VII and EX VII = 65 scholars....

**29<sup>th</sup> September 1916** - With deep regret we record that Robert ( Roy) How Hunter M.A. who was an assistant in this school for 5 years from 1909 to 1914 was killed in action in France on Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> 1916.

**13<sup>th</sup> October 1916** - A considerable number of families have removed to Pegswood. They were miners who had dispute with owners of Scremerston Colliery.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 1916** - More families of miners have removed.

**15<sup>th</sup> June 1917** - Lieut. Tate , one of our assistant masters from the front, visited. Miss Noble is absent news having come that her brother Charles ( an old scholar) has been killed in France...

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1917** - School reopened after summer holidays. Mrs Clements took charge of Standard III. All members of staff were present. Very wet weather.

**18<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1917** - ...Mr Clements visited. He is home from the front to take up his commission.

**14<sup>th</sup> June 1918** - Again it is my painful duty to record the death of another assistant teacher, Mr J.M. Tate B. Sc. Mr Tate was a Captain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion N.F. and was killed in France on May 27<sup>th</sup> 1918.

**28<sup>th</sup> June 1918** - Mrs Clements absent today to see her husband off to the Front.

**16<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1918** - With deep sorrow, I have to record that Mr Robert Cooper Clements , 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant N.F. the third and last of the assistant masters who have served in this school, has been killed in France. Mrs Clements is absent this week.

**25<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1918** - Mrs Clements not yet returned to her duties.

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1919** - ... James Palmer Huffam, a former pupil of this school has won the V.C.

**17<sup>th</sup> April 1919** - School closed this afternoon at 4 for Easter Holidays.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. James P. Huffam V.C. made a visit this afternoon in the company of his parents. He was entertained by the scholars and teachers and congratulated on the honour he had brought to the school. The teachers presented Lieut. Huffam with a pocket wallet.

**11<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1919** - Armistice Day. Two minutes silence kept in Central Hall. Special lessons given. Half holiday in afternoon.

## ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

### TRAVERS' TRAVELS , Part 1

In September 2005 Berwick saw the staging of its first Film and Media Arts Festival at which the final evening screening was the one voted 'Berwick's favourite film' the classic Frank Capra picture *It's A Wonderful Life* starring James Stewart. The showing was sponsored by the Museum, partly to support the good work of the Festival, and partly because the film has the best known appearance of Tweedmouth's own Henry Travers in the role of Clarence the angel. 18th October is the 40th anniversary of Travers' death in Hollywood and it is exactly 100 years since Travers wrote his first letters to the group of friends who called themselves the 'Quintet'. These letters, bound together with splendid water-colours by James Wallace, now reside in the Museum, having been presented by Berwick Grammar School in 1986. It was there, and in the choir of St.Mary's Church, that the friends first met. When in 1898 it was apparent they were going to different parts of the country following different professions it was resolved they should send in monthly accounts of the exploits to be circulated to the others and bound for posterity. At that time Henry Travers, or as he was then Travers J.Heagerty was not part of the writing group. He had been born in 1874, in, it is usually said, Tweedmouth, but according to recent research by Andrew Foster it may have been Ireland and he was only brought to Tweedmouth as a child. His father was a local doctor and from early on he was engaged in amateur theatricals. The first Quintettists had been James and William Wallace, Rupert and James King and George Green. It was Rupert King's idea to start circulating the collected letter which were first put together in February 1899, unfortunately very early on the Quintet became a quartet with the sudden death of James King in September 1899. It was then not until the end of 1904 before Travers Heagerty was invited to contribute. By then they had collected six volumes, so Travers' work first appears at the beginning of the seventh. He was then a travelling player touring with a variety or musical-hall show making his Broadway debut in 1901, and his letters back to Berwick give the latter volumes of the Quintet a international spice that is lacking in the whimsical accounts of minor mishaps and vicarage tea-parties from the others. There is too much to deal with in one article, but this first selection, covering just 1905, gives a good idea of Travers' style and sense of humour. It was always difficult to get the busy Quintettists to commit to writing and Travers's first letter is introduced by the editor with the exhortation "Wake up England!" and saying that Heagerty's prompt reply to their invitation was an example of "Yankee smartness and the Britishers characteristic dilatinness". The letter itself, written on the 5th.Febr 1905 was sent from Kansas City. It was mostly asking for practical advice about how to contribute to the Quintet. The February issue ended with a splendid studio photograph of Heagerty taken the previous November. A month later in March 1905, Heagerty was writing from Louisville, Kentucky. He says since his February letter he had visited New Orleans, Toledo and Lima, Ohio. The temperature was 20 below zero in Kansas and he watched with interest "the gradual transition from fur coats to heavy ones, then from heavy to medium, and from that to light, before reaching our destination, no coats at all, sun shining, trees all green and from extreme winter to summer in two days". Similarly as they travelled south he could "hardly help noticing" the "gradual to the overwhelming preponderance of the

black race over the white". New Orleans was "as you know" where most of England's cotton came from, and he described walking along the 'levees' there "a wooden kind of platforms which meets the water (the Mississippi) and goes clear along for miles, all piled up with cotton". He refers to the Civil War and the murder and mayhem of the reconstruction period that followed. The events of the Civil War being just forty years previously "one meets these people all the time in the south", whereas in the north "one never hears anything about it". He had visited the brother of George Green, one of the Quintettists in Lima, Ohio and enclosed with his letter the menu from Sam Gong & Co, "The Original Chinese and American Restaurant". Heagerty noted he had chop suey "a favourite American-Chinese dish". The menu is preserved in the Quintet volume, complete with gravy stains from Heagerty's meal. In response to the missive James Wallace painted a extraordinary energetic picture of various black Americans striding along entitled "As seen from T.J.H's window". April saw Heagerty in Baltimore, Maryland and he starts off by recounting the controversy over a \$100,000 donation from John W. Rockefeller to the Congregationalist Foreign Mission Society. The papers, he says, "are full of letters from the clergy of all denominations, some upholding, some denouncing the acceptance of the gift". The money being, some alleged, acquired from crooked dealings. Maryland he notes "is famous for the manufacture of illegal whiskey and feuds". Although, he says, mention of feuds might bring to mind stories of Corsica they might of heard in their youth, feuds go on today. Everyone in the locality knows from "infancy what feud exists in its midst" and the murders go on, almost immune from the law as judges and juries all come from the same districts as the feuders and support one party or another so convictions for murder are nearly impossible. "I am glad to say this sort of thing is dying out but it still exists". At the end of the letter he announces that he will be returning to London in July to try his luck on the British stage under the name of 'Henry Travers'. He hopes this will give him the opportunity for a "permanent location in Merrie England". Before his return though, it was on to Philadelphia from which he sent postcards and which prompted him to give a brief account of the events of 1776-87 conceding that it was "all very dry reading for you fellows". But he notes that at Berwick Grammar School "all we heard of these affairs was contained in a little note at the bottom of the history page:- 'contemporary foreign events: 1776 war of Independence in America". From Philadelphia he travelled on to Detroit "positively the prettiest city I have ever been in". Back in London in July he recommended the Quintettists to see the play *Leah Kleschna* "a really fine piece". It was a vehicle for the American actress Minnie Madden. At the end of the letter he says he hopes to make it back to Berwick soon and indeed the next letter is from his childhood home at 6 Main Street, Tweedmouth. He went for a walk on the pier with James Wallace and attended a sports days at which record numbers turned up. But although "the races were not so monotonous as usual as there were not so many bicycle events" to Travers the whole thing was "very uninteresting, as one can hardly get up any enthusiasm about unknown Smiths, Browns and Robinsons". He had taken up bowling and deep sea fishing "an excellent pastime and productive of much food". Whether he was actually very successful at this can be doubted by a jokey reference to old fishing methods given way entirely to the "more up to date method of calling in at Ralph Holmes [the fish merchant] on the way home". Before setting off on his travels again Travers attended the annual lifeboat procession and helped "John Crow the painter" (a previously unknown artist?) prepare a group of children to represent fairy-tale characters on one of the floats. With a role in a London pantomime promised that Christmas Travers set sail again for America again two days later. Arriving in New York he noted that it was his seventh voyage across the Atlantic. His future plans were even more grandiose. After a brief return to England in March 1906 he was due to sail with his musical-hall company to Australia, then on to Honolulu, San Francisco and back across America completing a circumnavigation of the globe when he returned to England. He had brought a camera to record all this for the benefit of the Quintet, but was not really looking forward to the trek "I am willing to let all the world go, and settle down along with the Pluck Turnbells of Berwick-upon-Tweed". In a flight of fancy he imagined the Quintettists in the future, all with grand positions in their chosen fields, James Wallace as President of the Royal Academy, his brother Dr. William

Wallace receiving a knighthood for attending the king, George Green revolutionising photography, the Rev King becoming Archbishop of Canterbury and himself having a theatre named after him. None of these things came to pass of course, and Travers' own career almost ended in New York when he was suddenly taken ill with appendicitis. He was saved by the timely application of ice "which is always handy in an American house" to keep the swelling under control into an operation could be performed. Travers had fully recovered by the time of his next letter from New York on 14th. October which noted that he had visited Yale University and with his camera had "snap shotted" an old blockhouse from the war of 1812 still standing in Central Park. This was later pasted into the Quintet. He had just heard that the famous actor Sir Henry Irving had died, "a great blow to our profession". Irving, Travers reckoned, had "raised the moral tone of the theatre higher than any other actor". He had been very generous and thus had always been in the throes of a financial crisis. Travers concludes "I refrain as much as possible from any illusion to theatrical affairs in these pages [a great pity for us in 2005] but I hope and believe that Sir Henry Irving will be mourned not only by the theatrical profession but by all right thinking people". Early in December Travers was preparing to leave New York just as the election for Mayor and other local officials was taking place. This was the time of the notorious Tamany Hall and Travers notes that "for corruption and debauchery of the ballot in general New York has surpassed itself." The Tamany Hall candidate was elected "although no one believes that he got a majority of the votes". Multiple voting by the same person under different names, impersonation of legitimate voters and violent attacks on rival voters were just some of the abuses. The whole compounded by the fact that "Tamany officials count the votes and their man gets in - well its all very disgusting & thank goodness we don't have that sort of thing in England". He moves on to briefly note "Russia's sanguinary struggle for a republic", (the failed 1905 uprising) in a world "seething with republicanism, socialism and anarchy". In a contrasting moment of quiet Travers attended a service at an Episcopal church and "saw a choir with girls robed in surplices and cassocks with three-cornered caps on their heads. Is this common I wonder, I rather like it". He set sail for England on the RMS *Baltic* on 12th. December observing a Royal Navy fleet under Louis of Battenburg's tied up in the Hudson River alongside the American Navy. In the evening the ships were illuminated "a very imposing sight". The *Baltic*, he notes, was a fine ship "the largest in the world at present", but he was less impressed to go to his second-class cabin to find a drunken traveller already in his bunk. Eventually persuading this "gentleman with a very ruddy countenance" to get in his own bunk Travers was then harried by the man's dreadful snoring "a loud challenging, relentlessly accurate snore as to time - no humour in it, one begetting rage and despair - rage at being quartered with such a man and despair at the prospect of a week under these close conditions". Nevertheless, so regular was the snore, Travers reckoned it was in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, that it was better than counting sheep and he soon went to sleep. In the morning Travers awoke to find the man using his hairbrush, initially he feared his ruddy companion might have made free with his toothbrush, but a glance at the man's teeth immediately convinced him that "no brush had ever polluted those by-ways". The rest of the voyage fell into a familiar pattern with deck games and endless comments about the weather and how fast the ship was travelling. Within a couple of days people were longing for anything to break the monotony and Travers was constantly asked if there was to be a concert, "I answer yes - alas I know too well - it is inevitable". As a rule he reckoned, a concert at sea was "a very horrible thing". There were times when "the very best talent is on board - but seldom in second class - however anything is good on board ship and everyone cheers up considerably at the prospect - except me". Travers made a rule never to get involved, having learnt from bitter experience that to admit to being an actor lead to being "overwhelmed with decidedly impudent questions about my profession". Everybody, he reckoned, believed that actors always wanted to talk to everyone about themselves. So the concert went ahead without him "and strange to say is quite as successful". Despite this the monotony did effect some people badly and by the time they reached Liverpool three men had gone mad and had to be restrained in the ship's hospital. Setting foot at last in England he wrote out a long account of the voyage, but it was stolen with his overcoat on the train to

London and so the record above is an abbreviated re-write. He had a pleasant Christmas reunion with three of the other Quintettists at a restaurant in Cockspur Street at which it was decided the Travers would edit the next couple of issues of the Quintet before setting off for Australia. On that voyage we will follow him on another occasion.

*Chris Green*

## **THE EVE OF TRAFALGAR**

### **Berwick-upon-Tweed - Sat. 10<sup>th</sup> & Sun. 11<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

Berwick stepped back to the year 1805 on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September, during the event organised by the Borough Museum and Archives to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The weekend's programme was staged to coincide with the annual Doors Open Day, co-ordinated by Berwick Civic Society and English Heritage.

Northumberland has close associations with the battle of Trafalgar through Nelson's second-in-command, Admiral Lord Collingwood, who was created Baron Caldburn and Hethpool in recognition of his taking control of the Fleet after Nelson fell mortally wounded on the quarter-deck of HMS Victory. Another connection is Alexander Davison, Nelson's friend and treasurer, who lived at Lanton House and lies buried at Kirknewton.

Colourful living history displays were staged in the superb settings of the town's Georgian period buildings and fortifications. Members of five re-enactment groups specialising in the period 1780-1815 recreated aspects of the life of soldiers and civilians in the port and garrison town of Berwick-upon-Tweed on the eve of the Battle of Trafalgar, when the town was preparing for an expected imminent French invasion.

An authentic military encampment was set up throughout the weekend on the Palace Green, where the public were able to visit the tents of the officers and soldiers, and find out about life in the army at the time of the Napoleonic Wars.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Wine Vaults beneath Blackburn & Price's Garage in Silver Street provided the appropriately spooky setting for "Phantasmagoia", a mix of Georgian Gothick, projected images and live action by costumed local actors.

Marines, soldiers and camp-followers demonstrated drill of the period, fired muskets and cannon from the Saluting Battery in front of Wellington Terrace, and carried out a variety of duties at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Barracks, Main Guard and Gunpowder Magazine.

The Naval Press Gang circulated around the Quayside and Quay Walls, and delivered their unfortunate victims to the "Black Hole" at the Main Guard.

Young actors from the Maltings Youth Theatre staged a series of dramatic scenes in and around the Town Hall, re-enacting a Berwick Court case of the period. The final scenes in the story formed the centrepiece of the finale staged on the Quayside at the end of each day's programme.

Market stalls in the Avenue were populated by civilians of the period, showing how prices have changed dramatically in the last two hundred years. For example, lobsters were on sale in Berwick for 8d each in 1805!

On the Saturday, a dozen youngsters from the Berwick Family Centre joined in a variety of children's games, and worked with their slates and pencils under the (friendly) supervision of their "teachers".

The weekend brought echoes of the colour and excitement that Berwickers experienced during the Union of the Crowns festival.

The number of spectators far exceeded expectations, with over 200 people watching the finale on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and over 300 on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>. Each of the displays attracted audiences of 50 to 80.

The event was organised as part of this year's Sea Britain Festival with funding provided by the North East Museums Hub.

*Derek Sharman*

## **BERWICK WORKHOUSE IN 1853**

By 1852, the Berwick workhouse was the subject of a number of complaints - in particular that there were no adequate wards to cater for 'harmless lunatics', so the Union had to be at the expense of maintaining all such inmates in Asylums in Edinburgh, Newcastle or Dumfries. The girls' schoolroom accommodation was also inadequate and 'ill-ventilated'. As a result the Poor Law Board in London began to bring pressure on the Board of Guardians to build an entirely new workhouse outside the town boundaries. As part of this pressure, the Poor Law Inspector, Mr. Hurst, submitted the following report to the newly elected Board of Guardians on 25th April 1853.

### 'Berwick upon Tweed Union - Objections to the Workhouse

1. No Yard attached to the Hospital for Convalescent Patients, who, both Male and Female must now use the Men's Yard through which all persons pass into and from the Workhouse, an impropriety proved by the recent assault on a Female patient by a Male Inmate, said to be Idiotic and also on a former occasion in the case of a Female Pauper named Hunter.
2. The position of the Hospital as the Nurses in going to and from the Workhouse, pass through the Men's Yard and for this purpose the door of the Hospital must generally be kept open giving an opportunity for the men to enter it when so disposed. Its locality is also opposed to any effective supervision by the Master and Matron.
3. The necessity of the Girls passing through the Boys and Men's Yards to attend the Schoolmaster in School and aggravated by the admission of Out Door Children into the Workhouse School.
4. The urgency of a Schoolroom for the Girls to prevent their continued occupation of their Dayroom a low and ill ventilated Apartment occasionally overcrowded by 36 Children and of which the Schoolmistress complains from the consequent impurity of its atmosphere.
5. No separate Wards for Idiots, Male or Female.
6. The Want of Refractory Wards.
7. The unfavourable (sic) position of the Receiving Wards, especially the Female.
8. The Want of suitable Day-rooms, particularly for able bodied Females that all may constantly be kept at Work according to their ability.
9. That the Dormitories generally, are small, low, and inconvenient, that the Dayrooms, Dormitories, and Sickrooms for the Females, and Infants are on the same floor, and that it is necessary to pass through the Dormitories, to arrive at these Day Rooms and Sickrooms.
10. That its arrangements will not admit of any general supervision on the part of the Master and Matron, the old portion of it being originally built as a Sack-Cloth manufactory.
11. That there is no land for the employment of the Inmates, and that a Garden cultivated by the Inmates, separated from the Workhouse by a Public Street is too distant, and offers no facilities for the Industrial training of Pauper Children.

12. That its locality is open to serious objection, as its Walls on three sides abut on the Town Streets, and has Windows into each of them.

13. That there is no Waiting Room for the Out Door Paupers attending the Meetings of the Guardians except the Mens Day Room used for this purpose, when the Men are obliged to occupy the Receiving Ward for the day. This practice affords every opportunity for the introduction of infection and irregularity.

14. And that whatever improvements to it may be proposed, and further outlay incurred, from its confined area, it must always continue defective in that classification and arrangement essential to order and discipline, as well as comfort and convenience requisite for the aged and infirm in every well regulated Pauper Establishment.'

*Jane Bowen*

## **SNIPPETS FROM NORHAM KIRK SESSIONS MINUTES – PART 2**

25<sup>th</sup> February 1760

There Compeared before the Session George Bone and Confessed that He had been Guilty of Encouraging penny weddings by bidding several persons to his daughters wedding though such a wedding was made against his will the session agreed that He should be rebuked for the same which was accordingly done by the moderator.

12<sup>th</sup> September 1762

George Bouton being summoned to appear before the Session for Beating his wife & for Shearing upon the Sabbath

24<sup>th</sup> October 1762

Thomas Carse and Isaac Guthrie both being called in for promiscuous Dancing: Thomas Carse acknowledged the Sinfulness of that practice was Exhorted to be more watchfull for the future but Isaac not being Sensible of the Evill it was referred to his further consideration.

31<sup>st</sup> July 1763

There was called and Compeared Alexander Brown & Ninion Brown his son who at his wedding had allowed, accepted and taken an extravagant Reckoning at Dinner when by some it was Expected to be free and Likewise on the Sabbath after Allowed and taken a Reckoning at Dinner a florick and Sinful Custome in the Day we live in, was Rebuked for the Same and Admonished to be more Cautious for the time to come.

*Myra Johnson*

### **BOOK REVIEW :**

“The Story of Alnmouth”

by Gladys Bettess & Fred Bettess.

“The Story of Alnmouth” is a comprehensive and well documented history of an interesting Northumbrian village, showing the changes and development from its earliest traces up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The physical characteristics of this village are immediately obvious( particularly when viewed from a train), and they have played an important part in its development. The geography of this area has been integrated into this book alongside the political, social and economic developments.

I have found it a most fascinating book to read as at least four generations of my family have lived there. Places and people, pictures and stories that I have heard throughout my life suddenly have so much more meaning. This book is a “MUST HAVE” for anyone who has any connection with Alnmouth and for anyone who hasn't.....

it is still an interesting book!

*Yvonne Gallagher*

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

*Whilst entering the Ship Sailings from the Berwick Advertiser onto the computer in the Record Office, Muriel found the following poem about Spittal. Michael Cullen , who has written a book on Spittal has added the notes at the end.*

**BERWICK ADVERTISER. DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup> 1852**

### **SPITTAL POETRY**

Sir – If you have any Room in the Advertiser and thinks this worthy of Notice, I would be obliged to you. I remain Yours, T.B.

#### **SPITTEL'S LAMENT.**

As I walked through Spittel Town one Day  
I was passing sloly on My way.  
I met a Man, his lokes was grey  
And bent with grief;  
These words I over heard him say  
As for Relief.

When Spittel first was known by Man  
That was when first the world began;  
Then no Bonnet was for Lady's Fan  
To deck the street;  
But there was plenty in the pan  
For all to eat.

This year like rome she's got a fall,  
The Herring fishings Ruined all;  
Theres no Babbing\* no nor neaver shall  
On Spittels shore;

The law Protects the fields and Spittel hall  
More than before

All ye that Fortunes frown has bent,  
With Me put up a sad lament,  
Until the very Skies is rent  
With earnest cry;  
Then fall upon the ground for want,  
And Wretched die.

Lament ye Marners on the seas,  
That spend your life before the Breeze,  
Lament ye howlets in the trees,  
With Dolfull Call;  
Lament ye littel Bissy Bees  
For Spittel's fall.

Lament ye pigs that's in the sty,  
For Spittel fetch a Deep Drawn sigh,  
Eaven when year going for to die  
With a Butchers knife;  
Lament in Spittel you can't fry  
To succour life.

Lament ye turneps in the field  
That sucor Now you Cannot yeald,  
A Protecting sword Around you weald  
Both root and shaw;  
R-----'s arm cannot sheald,  
But the tyrant Law.

Lament ye padecks and ye tods  
That Dwels upon the turf or soads,  
That Spittels Born Down with loads  
They Can Not Bear;  
Both the haddocks and the Coads  
Is scarce this year.

Lament ye Cocks, lament ye hens,  
And Dukes thats quaking in there pens,  
Ye will be sold for fives and tens  
For some rich fare,  
And can't be got by Spittel Men  
To sooth there care.

Lament ye salmon in the Tweed  
That Consent on the suction feed,  
When you span your numers seed\*  
For jesteries pallets;  
Better you would sute indeed  
For fishers wallets.

I hope once more to see the Day  
When we will make the salmon pay.  
R-----'s Bagies\* and his hay  
Will catch how can;  
And still keep up the good old way  
Rob Roy's plan.

- \* Poaching for salmon on the coast by means of 'Babnets'.
- \* As we interpret it 'span your numerous seed'.
- \* Swedish turnips.

*Muriel Fraser*

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These seem to have been difficult years throughout the Borough. In a public meeting to discuss whether or not to continue the winter soup kitchen, Dr. Alex Cahill stated he'd not seen such severe hardship since 1816 and that many would have starved to death without mutual support. (December 1848). In that year too there was a minor outbreak of cholera in Spittal. There were mixed reports of the herring fishing season in the Press. There was mention in one 1852 item of 'considerable' business but later it was being described as poor. The 1851 salmon fishing season had been dire – 'the most unproductive season we have any record of'. 1852 saw lessees being banned from using the sole-net and a crack down on poaching which left the Tweed Commissioners feeling confident that they'd got on top the problem.

The 'tryant Law' imposed hefty financial penalties for any breach of the Tweed Acts, non-payment of which often meant gaol. Much resented was the fact that you could be charged with 'intent' even if you hadn't done anything. Local farmers made regular use of the courts.

R-----, though the number of blanks don't quite fit the number of letters in his name, might have been James Ross who was tenant farmer at Spittal Hall then owned by William Dickson of Alnwick. The month that this poem appeared, December, 1852, he was engaged in action against John Clarke for stealing three tons of 'hay. A trail of hay had led to Clarke's house but he said it had been put there without his knowledge – 'he would not be blamed for other people'. He escaped while P.C.Carr was distracted but was later found hanging around by the Carr Rock. The following month he was found guilty and sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour. On other occasions Ross and Thomas Nesbit of Springhill brought cases involving the theft of hay, potatoes, eggs and turnips. Thomas Nesbit got three boys jailed for a few days – it was through the second offence of two of them. Other Spittalers were caught stealing two pigs and 52 couples of rabbits.

Things started to look up later in the 1850's after James Wilson established his chemical works on the Point and The Forge moved here from Etal. New building at the South End also boosted the Holiday trade.

*Michael Cullen*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to Fred Bettess who kindly gave me a copy of “The Story of Alnmouth”, a book based on his wife’s thesis, which I was priviledged to use whilst researching the Port of Alnmouth for the Friends part in the Tomorrow’s History Project.

Congratulations to Linda and Stuart on the birth of their daughter Niamh. That is one way of extending your family tree!!

Please don’t forget any **interesting stories, items, events, letters** or **queries** for the newsletter will be most appreciated. You may give them to Linda’s deputy 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*