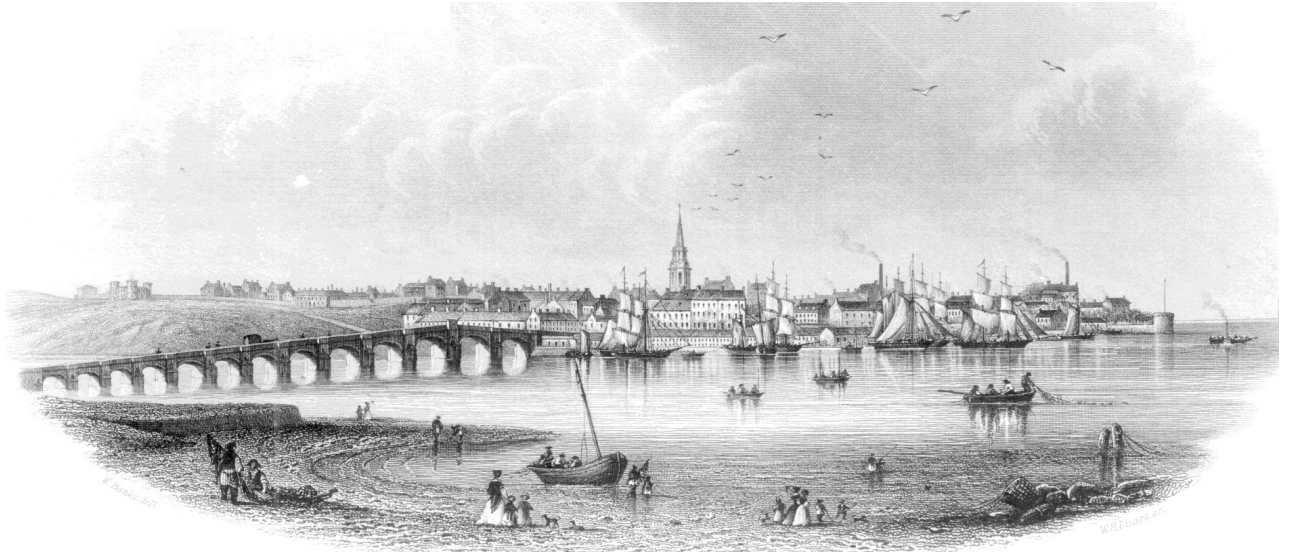


Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 54– June 2007

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 25th June 2007

Presentation by Dr Paul Carter from the National Archives on the Workhouse Project. Start at 11am in the Record Office (see article)

Friday 31st August 2007

Summer Outing to the Armstrong Household and Framing Museum. Meet at 6.30pm (see article)

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

Many Societies do not meet in the summer months and so there are very few dates in this newsletter.

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wed. 27th June 2007

Evening visit to Hulne Abbey: Mr T.

Braidford

Wed. 25th July 2007

Evening walk around Alnwick: Mr.A.Ions

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: The Parish Centre, The Parade Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wed. 17th Oct. 2007

“Cholera and the Struggle for clean Water in Berwick”: Dick Hunter. Joint meeting with Civic Society in Wm.Elder Building 7.30pm.

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick upon Tweed.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Mon. 4th June 2007

Northumberland Defences from 1066.

Joint meeting with Berwick History

Society: Dr Richard Lomas

No Lectures in July and August

Mon. 3rd September 2007

Archaeology of Fishing in the North-East:

Kristian Pederson

Mon. 1st October 2007

Archaeology The Last Ten Years: Steve

Speak

BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose

Time: 2.30pm

Tues. 18th Sept 2007

Open Day at Gala House, Scott
Crescent, Galashiels (the Society
Archive)

Sun. 21 Oct. 2007

Development of Border Roads: David
Ashby

Sun. 18th Nov. 2007

Lowland Clerances: Peter Aitchison and
Andrew Cassell

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Tues. 28th August 2007

“Emigrant Recruitment by the New
Brunswick Land Company:
Northumberland and Borders Settlers in
Stanley and Harvey, New Brunswick” :
Bruce Elliott

Thurs. 4th Oct. 2007

Paxton House: Martha Andrews

DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Tues.12th June

Outing: “Boughting” home of Admiral
Bertram Ramsay at 7pm

NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall.

Time: 7.30pm.

Mon. 11th June 2007

Outing: Heatherslaw Mill

Mon. 9th July 2007

To be arranged

Mon. 11th Sept. 2007

Exhibition of photographs: Mr Jim Gibson

Mon. 8th Oct. 2007

Maps Lecture: Mr Barry Woodward

NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wed. 27th June 2007

Outing

NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH

Venue: Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford

Time: 10.00am

Sat. 16th June 2007

Mary Anne Cotton: Stephanie Yearnshire

A.G.M.

Sat. 15th September 2007

Preserving our Records: Julia Millard

Sat. 20th October 2007

Forensic Science: John Yearnshire

ARCHIVE NEWS

Well, it is June already and it only seems like yesterday that I last wrote something for the newsletter.

As ever, the Record Office has been busy doing various things outside its “public days” with people in the Community. At the beginning of February, I ran a 5 week “Family History for Beginners” for the Berwick U3A which was very successful. I also did a short training session at JusRol on Family History. In March, as part of their course, some members of one of the Community Creative Writers’ group visited the office to find out about sources for research. This quarter has been very quiet for giving talks. However, in February, I did speak to Berwick History Society about snippets from the Archives. This was a very successful evening.

In relation to education, I have done some work with schools and others. In March, I spent my annual afternoon on Holy Island with the boys (about 50 of them) from the Royal Grammar Junior School in Newcastle. We looked at life on the Island in the past 200 years and the changes that had happened during that time. The boys are about 10 years old and they find it hard to believe that there were so many children of their age on the Island 150 years ago, particularly as there are so few now. In the middle of May, I was asked to lead part of a training session on “Bringing Archives to Life for adults and children” which was organised by the Society of Archivists in Edinburgh. I talked about my work with the Maltings Youth Theatre and the Heritage Play Area at Belford amongst other things and got small groups to do some activities based on North Northumberland sources. Twenty people attended from as far afield as Mull and London and it was really successful and enjoyable to do.

The past few months have also been busy with exhibitions. At the beginning of April, I resurrected my “Ford at the Time of the Waterfords” for the Lady Waterford Hall. It remained there until the end of May. I also provided the Museum with some material relating to Wooler for an exhibition that they mounted in one of the High Street windows.

During the year, a number of Family and Local History Fairs are held throughout the North East and I try to attend at least one to make people aware of the Office’s existence. At the beginning of May, I went to one in Durham. It was amazing how many people said that they had connections with the North Northumberland area. As well as the above, I am also involved in a number of ongoing projects. I have been working with the Cittaslow Berwick for a number of months now and after going through our Assessment process in late March, we have now been awarded Cittaslow status. We are the first town in the North East to become a Cittaslow town

and you should hear some more about it in September. I have also continued to work with the Bondington group who are nearing the end of Phase Two of the project. Although we thought that most of the project would be archaeology based, it is amazing how important archive sources have been in confirming and linking information. Lars Rose's close inspection of the local newspapers, particularly when many of the houses in Castle Terrace were being built, has thrown up some gems and increased our knowledge of the area.

There is never a dull moment in the archives and no two days are the same !

RECORD OFFICE SOURCES

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends, the Record Office now has microfilm copies of the **Berwick and Kelso Warder** from 1835 to 1855. These compliment our holdings of the Berwick Advertiser and the Berwick Journal which are kept in the Library. All the newspapers give a different slant on events and it is worth checking them all. Through time, I hope to build up my holdings of this newspaper – at the moment, the nearest places it can be consulted are Edinburgh or London.

Some of you may have seen publicity that the Library now has free access to **Ancestry.com** which contains many family history sources including the English and Scottish census from 1841 to 1901. Well, you can also access it free through the Record Office. We have three PCs and you can book time on them on any Wednesday or Thursday. As well as providing access to the site, I am happy to give advice on how to use it and also on where to look for information on individual families. It's a very useful site to use, particularly if you have lost family members in the census period – I was trying to locate a family on the 1901 census who should have been in Berwick. I eventually found them on the site staying at Peebles Hydro !. I would never have thought to try there!.

In relation to websites, one of my volunteers, Kevin Graham, has kindly set up links on one of the computers to a great variety of websites which will help people interested in Family History, Railways, Maritime History, old maps, the Military, etc. Kevin has found some wonderful sites, so please come in and have a look.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Record Office is always looking for volunteers and so if you have an hour or so to spare on a Wednesday or Thursday, why not come to the Record Office to help out? At the moment, as well as general transcription of church registers, I am looking for people to continue work on two computer projects relating to the local newspapers – entering details of Ship Sailings to and from Berwick; extracting information about accidents and inquests. The databases are very easy to use and so, if you would like to help, please get in contact. The Record Office volunteers do a lot of valuable work which make it easier for visitors to access the information we hold.

Linda Bankier

LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF THE WORKHOUSE – JOINT PROJECT WITH THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives is planning to undertake a project to make their volumes of correspondence with local Poor Law Unions in the 19th century more accessible to the public. As part of this, they want to form partnerships with local groups who would undertake work on National Archives sources relating to their own area. As I thought this would be an interesting project for the Friends, I have been in contact with the National Archives and expressed an interest in being involved. As far as I can gather, the project would be a mixture of home and Record Office based and we would be working with digitised images of their archives. Dr Paul Carter is leading the project and he is coming up to Berwick on **MONDAY 25 JUNE** to tell us more about the Project. The meeting starts at 11am. If you would like to find out more about the project or get involved, please come along and find out about it. This is a very exciting project which will provide us with the “other side of the story” to our Board of Guardian minutes for all of North Northumberland – we had three Unions (Berwick, Belford and Glendale) – and give us the chance to work with a National Organisation. Further information on the project can be found on the National Archives’ website–

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/partnershipprojects/workhouse/default.htm

If you can't attend the meeting but would like to be involved, just let me know by e-mail (lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk) or by phone (01289 301865).

Linda Bankier

WOOLER WORKHOUSE

Unfortunately, only one minute book survives for the Glendale Board of Guardians in the 19th century which shows the value of the National Archives' Workhouse project. It gives us the opportunity to fill the gaps in our records. However, recently, Collingwood Thompson brought in a letter, transcribed below, which gives some indication of what it was like in Wooler Workhouse:

*Workhouse
Wooler, Sep 2/67*

Sir,

A little information about this "Model Workhouse" may be found interesting if not useful.

On the 8th of April, 1859 Jane Halliday had a child to old David Henderson (?) an inmate of the House.

On the 19th of Sept 1864 Janet Haigh had a daughter to young Henderson – said to be the very image of its father. She was actually allowed to sleep in the same bed with him for some time when he was ill.

Margaret Johnston has been confined here twice (beside several mis-carriages) and she will be confined here again in a short time if I am not mistaken.

The woman here have stolen rugs, clothing, coals and even beef and out of the pot in the kitchen, and sold them for drink and tobacco in the town.

On the 6 of April 1863 (I am copying from the book) Janet Haigh went out without leave and returned drunk (7 hours in Refractory)

On the 25th Dec 1863 Mary Johnston went out and returned drunk- the police had to be sent for and she was locked up all night. This was Christmas Day (at Christmas she behaved better than any one in the House)

On the 12th April 1864, Janet Haigh went out and returned drunk (8 hours in lock-up)

On the 13th July 1864 she went out again and returned drunk.

All these cases happened before I came.

Now if you had had a Porter they could not have got out so easily, and you may depend upon this, that for once that they were reported- they would have been out a dozen times. I know very well that no master could stop them unless he was constantly at the door himself.

When I came the place was in a complete state of demoralization- the women did just as they pleased- and had the complete command of the House. Women were hired out of the town at a cost of about £12 per year to do work that the women in the House ought to have done. They carried away both meat and clothing. I soon stopped their proceedings and sent them about their business. We make the women do all the work on the House- my wife cuts out and makes, the greater part of their clothing- all the knitting, is done on this premises- and when she asked for an increase of £5 it was refused.

The fact is that instead of being a "Model Workhouse" it was a scandal and disgrace long before we came. An old lady told me just after I came that she wondered why a judgment had not fallen upon the place for the iniquities perpetuated in it. The door used to be open half the night and the lady of the town came upon as if it to a public-house.

Misfortunes you know will happen in the best regulated families- and instead of wondering at the care of them two young women there was ... were likely - seeing how little your place has been guarded.

I could mention a great many other matters about the place but it would be no good whatever.

We have over 50 inmates sometime the average is over 40- and 35 is nearly our lowest number.

I am the last person to quarrel with any man, for inquiring into abuse like what have recurred and I am much obliged to you for speaking out.

I remain Sir
Your most

Geo. Richardson

CANADIAN VISIT

You may recall that I mentioned in an earlier newsletter that a group of descendants of North Northumberland and Berwickshire people who sailed from Berwick on the CORNELIUS to New Brunswick in Canada in 1837 were coming to the area. Well, they will be spending a week at Ford Castle at the end of August. I am helping to co-ordinate part of their programme and as part of that, they would be interested in contacting living relations in the area. So, if you think you are related to them in any way, please get in touch with me. They have a very full programme but are keen to meet people with family connections.

As part of their itinerary, there will be a talk in Coldstream on Tuesday evening 28th August. The speaker is Dr Bruce Elliott who has carried out a lot of research on both the North Northumberland and New Brunswick sides of the story. His talk is entitled "*Emigrant Recruitment by the New Brunswick Land Company: Northumberland and Borders Settlers in Stanley and Harvey, New Brunswick*". Everyone is welcome to attend, so if you are interested, please come along. I'm afraid I'm not sure of the start time or the venue at the moment but if you get in touch with me nearer the time, I will let you know.

Linda Bankier

MUSEUM NEWS

ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

BERWICK'S FIRST GHOST WALK

Well now, I'm finally able to write about myself as an historical character, the man who led Berwick's first ghost walk. No it's alright, this is not one of those pieces of journalistic diary writing (aka 'the week when I did something interesting for a change'), just a record of the route, the stories and the sources. As regular readers of this newsletter will know I've been aiming to add to ghost stories to the Museum's stock of knowledge for a while now. Back in October 2004 (*Newsletter* 44) I wrote a piece on the subject and since then I have collected whatever has come to notice. A letter to the *Berwick Advertiser* elicited only two replies and Berwick does seem to remain in the curious position of having a long and complicated history, but almost no traditional oft-repeated ghost tales. This notwithstanding, when the Walking Festival was being discussed it seem the appropriate moment to try to gather together what stories there were to see if there was enough material for a ghost walk. Ghost stories have obviously been part of all tour-guides' stock-in-trade since there were tour-guides, but the dedicated 'ghost-walk' is a more recent cultural phenomenon the history of which has still to be written. The first in my home-town of Brighton was in 1981 organised by 'blue-badge' guides who are known for their accuracy and adherence to precise source material. Brighton's ghost tour still runs and I caught a glimpse of it last week and it is, I think, rather dull; an ordinarily dressed man clutching an over-filled tatty briefcase recounting stories in a low monotone. The other approach, seen in York, is completely different. What claims to be the world's first ghost-walk was founded in 1973 and has now developed into a highly successful commercial operation. Up to six ghost-walkers bestride the streets nightly under different titles, 'ghost hunter', 'ghost detective' etc, but they are all actually employed by the same company. Some are better than others but the approach is the same: a guide in full-dress Victorian gear recounting just a few macabre stories in a highly theatrical comic-melodramatic style. The intention is primarily to entertain and as such the York ghost-walkers are street performers and not guides. Or as one 'real' York guide said "we've agreed not to tell ghost stories, as they've agreed not to tell the truth". It was this performance style rather than the 'blue-badge' style that I decided to adopt in Berwick, partly because it enabled me legitimately to play around with the 'truth' of the original material but also because I think the 'ghost-story' is a literary-folkloric-theatrical genre and not really 'history' as such. Anyway the following was the route, the stories, the sources and comments on why the locations were chosen. There were 25 people on the walk, the maximum number.

Guildhall: Introduction and general account of trials, prisoners & executions.

The old chapel, Crawford's Alley: The servant Oliver Lamb who in 1722 imagined he was inspired by the Devil to commit crimes including murder; *Source: The Cries of Blood, or the Juryman's Monitor* (1757), which locates the story in Tweedmouth, but a chapel is mentioned, so this might be the one. (See *FBDMA Newsletter* 44 for the details)

Chapel Street: John Griffin's 'murder' by his wife Grace; *Source:* News reports (1823).

Primitive Methodist Chapel, College Lane: The ghosts of the victims of cholera in 1832; *Source:* Thomas Marshall's *Reminiscences* (1835) for the Methodists & cholera; the lane is a spooky one which ought to be haunted, but there has yet to be a sighting.

Scots Gate: Castlegate wine-shop: Haunted atmosphere and store boxes moved about; *Source:* Reported by staff in the wine-shop.

Lady Jerningham Statue: Appearance of Lady Jerningham brushing her hair after her death; *Source:* J.Weatherley: *Letter*, 1/10/2004 (Museum files); the original location cited was the gardens of Longridge Towers, but the tale is easily transferable to the statue.

End of the Old Bridge: (1) Mysterious black cat & demonic wind blowing open the locked gates of the English Gate before dawn on 22nd August 1639; *Source:* *Calendar of State Papers*; (2) Cursed and mysterious death of the Earl of Dunbar in 1611: *Source:* Contemporary rumours gleefully reported by the puritan historian Calderwood.

Yard off Quayside: The Berwick 'vampire' or a rejuvenated corpse of a 12th century rich but wicked merchant that raced through the streets pursued by demonic hounds; *Source:* William of Newburgh's *Historia rerum Anglicarum* (1196-8) and repeated in almost every folklore book since. The location is just cited as Berwick but in the yard are some of the earliest walls in Berwick.

View of Maltings: Appearance of old maltings worker in basement stores and once in theatre itself; *Source:* The Maltings staff.

22 Quay Walls: Ghostly atmosphere and poltergeist activity; *Source:* Personal account from former home owner of the house next door. No.22 was unoccupied it so looked like a better location to tell the tale.

The Main Guard: A drunken soldier locked up and then abandoned in 'the black hole' when his regiment unexpectedly left town, he went mad and died trying to get out.

Source: My own imagination, I added this story to fill in a gap in the route.

Oil Mill Lane: The ghost of a young girl whose head was crushed in the Linseed oil mill; *Source:* Jack Bainbridge's articles on the Berwick coal industry in the *History of*

the Berwickshire Naturalists Club records a very similar fatal accident at the coal mine on Berwick Hill. I shifted the location to the Lane and imagined the ghost.

Old Corn Exchange: An exorcism carried out in 1644 by the vicar Robert Balsom on the steward of Lord Grandison; *Source*: Nathaniel Crouch's *Wonderful Prodigies of Judgement & Mercy* (1729); the original location would have been Grandison's house in Berwick, but I told the story at this location because some of the grander houses were located on Hide Hill in 16th/17th century and the Corn Exchange had been a theatre, so a final performance here seem appropriate. My thanks go to Jim Herbert who played the Devil for this story. One other story was intended by omitted for reasons of time:-

The Medieval Ramparts by Main Guard: The mysterious sudden disappearance in 1448 of the future Pope Pius II then a Papal Ambassador to the Scots court, who reappeared a year later claiming to having visited a Utopian heaven; *Source*: Henry Lemoine's *The Kentish Curate* (1786). This is an odd book, a novel crammed with strange anecdotes some of which may be the invention of the author. This particular story looks like a re-working of Thomas the Rhymer's visit to fairyland. Pope Pius II certainly had been an Ambassador to Scotland and according to his own account did visit the Borders, but he avoided coming to Berwick, then in English hands. Nevertheless Lemoine's novel does precisely locate the tale as occurring on the old medieval ramparts in the area of the Bell Tower, so it may represent some local tradition.

Chris Green

THE GOLDEN AGE OF NORTHUMBRIA FESTIVAL

As Friends may have heard the big theme for 2007 and 2008 is the **Golden Age of Northumbria**. The History Society has been given Lottery funding for a series of events to celebrate the Christian heritage of Northumbria of the 7th and 8th centuries. A lot of the events will be occurring in 2008, but the Museum is fully involved in the curtain raising events this year. Our main effort is directed towards staging a one act play *The Making of Saint Cuthbert* at various churches around the Borough. St.Cuthbert (635-687) is probably Northumbria's best known and most admired saint and certainly the most frequently seen in stained glass and statues around the Borough. He is unique in having four near-contemporary hagiographies, three by Bede and the other by a now anonymous monk of Lindisfarne. The play is however not a straight biographical account of Cuthbert extracted from these

sources, but more about how these sources came to be written and why. Scenes of the life of the saint do appear as 'flashbacks', at some venues performed by other community groups, but my starting point in creating the drama has been the considerable scholarly attention focused in recent years on these hagiographies and on the nature of early Saxon saints' cults in general. It has become apparent to scholars that though many a saint might have become the subject of a local cult-following spontaneously, because of his or her holy life and example, to make the cult permanent through the centuries requires an effort by powerful advocates and promoters. So though Cuthbert might have been widely admired in his own time, for him to stay a saint for centuries afterwards required a considerable amount of promotional work, part of which was the Lindisfarne Gospels. The image of Cuthbert was updated several times to suit the then current agenda, but our play is the story of just the beginning of this process, showing how Bede subtly changed how Cuthbert was represented to conform to the agenda of his day. Today we are very familiar and cynical about how politicians, with the help of the media, 'spin' various issues, what scholars have revealed is that in the 7th century things were not so very different. I am aware that some people might regard this approach as depressing, even perhaps sacrilegious, but we have to recognise, I think, that whereas saints in their real lives might be beyond human reproach unfortunately how we learn about their lives are through biographies written at a time and a place and subject to all the usual human prejudices of a particular historical context. Also once a dramatized version has been chosen, we have to accept that drama is essentially about conflict and how it is resolved, or not. As we go to press not all the dates of the run of the show are absolutely fixed but the first performance will be in Tweedmouth Church on Friday, 20th July. Other appearances will be at Beadnell on 25th August, Bamburgh, 26th August, Kirknewton on 3rd September and Norham on 4th September. A leaflet with full details will be published by the end of June.

Chris Green

**THE ARMSTRONG HOUSEHOLD AND
FRAMING MUSEUM**

Last month I was taken by friends to meet Charlie and Sylvia Armstrong who live at North Charlton. Not only were they delightful company - but Sylvia has a special treat for visitors. She has her own museum in the outbuildings of their farm.

Over forty years ago she was distressed to realise that her home town of Wooler was being stripped of its assets by antiques hunters. Lorry loads of artefacts, both rare and everyday, were leaving town and the surrounding farms every week and Sylvia says she was greatly saddened to watch the reminders of her childhood and youth disappearing so swiftly.

So, she decided to do her best to keep the memories alive and started her collection. How it has grown! Aided and abetted by her family, and by her friends, she has amassed a collection of thousand of items which reflect life in North Northumberland over the last hundred years or so. There is not a lot of great intrinsic value but the history that lies within each small item is estimable. Sylvia has bought many items herself but she has also had them donated by people who wholeheartedly support her desire to stop the leaching away of our heritage.

As we wandered through each building we were intrigued to find so many things which made us stop and exclaim, "I'd forgotten all about those!", "Oh, my grandma had some just like that!" or, "What on earth's that?"

In front of a grate lies a cloutie mat, "Made to match my first Aga, " Ranks of teapots bustle on shelves which contain cruets, cutlery, eggcups and a hundred items of everyday life of yesteryear. On a table among pots and pans were the tiniest little tins. "What are they?" I asked. Sylvia told me they were sweet moulds from the beginning of last century.

Another building contains dolls and toys and games of a bygone age – fascinating! There is a great collection commemorating the work of the land-girls in this rural community. I was interested in implements hung on one wall. They were for making hay ropes. Hay ropes! Someone had made a hay rope for Sylvia 40 years ago and it still lies coiled beside the giant needles used to make it. Wonderful!

In the last outhouse, which Sylvia calls "the Parlour", there are clothes and "objects of vertu", lovely little items which take the imagination back over the years to when small was beautiful. There are some exquisite pieces once used by, or sometimes made by, landowners or their estate workers. One tiny "game counter" was intricately crafted and was a delight to hold. The clothes – wedding gowns, evening

dresses and fantastic hats all reflect their glamorous or mundane past. Six or seven pieces of gossamer-fine embroidered cloth about the size of a hanky turn out to be modesty cloths, tucked into the front of a gown to prevent an unseemly display of one's attributes! The cloth and the embroidery were so fine I was sure it had been made by fairies.

The information about the whole collection is in Sylvia's head. She knows the history of each item – who gave it and when – and she can often tell its own personal story. As we walked around she was able to give little anecdotes about so much. It was a fascinating experience and one I can thoroughly recommend.

Meanwhile, if you would like to visit Sylvia's museum it is open on Fridays from 10am to 5pm. She charges £2.50 which all goes to charity. The phone number is 01665 579 443.

As a postscript, we have arranged a Friends Summer Outing to Sylvia's Museum on Friday 31st August. If you would like to come, please let me know by Tuesday 28th August – Sylvia needs to know how many are coming. If you haven't got transport to get there, let me know and we can probably sort that out as well. This should be a really interesting Outing, so I hope many of you will come along. I can be contacted on 01289 307524.

Barbara Herdman

JIMMY STRENGTH

Most people have heard of, or seen photos of Jimmy Strength: he was the strong man – hence his name – who was over one hundred years old when he died, and whose statue once stood in Palace Green until it was vandalized some time in the 1950s, and ended up in the yard of Berwick Museum.

However, it turns out that the statue of Jimmy Strength did not start out in Palace Green. I have come across three entries in the Berwick Advertiser from 1878. The first one is from August 9, and states that the statue of Jimmy Strength is for sale. 'It has long been an object of curiosity to people perambulating the Ramparts.' (Local Gossip, p.3, column 2) The article goes on to say that since many people have no

knowledge of who the statue represents, it is in danger of being neglected and therefore the owner wants to sell it for at least £ 10.

Jimmy Strength, or James Stuart as was his real name , was born on Christmas Day 1728 in South Carolina, USA. His father was general John Stuart, who, according to himself, was a close relative of Prince Charles Stuart, the Pretender, and therefore both he and his son James were allegedly descendants from the Scottish royal family of Stuart. This claim has never been proved. According to Sheldon's History of Berwick-upon-Tweed from 1849, James was brought to Scotland by his father when he was seven years old. He ran away from school and according to another entry in the Berwick Advertiser from September 13, 1878 (Local News p.3, column 3) 'followed the Pretender, being present at the battle of Prestonpan and Culloden as a spectator.' According to the same article he fought with General Wolfe at Quebec, and he was also present at Bunker's Hill in 1775. The article from September 13, however, ends on a sobering note saying 'His stories, however, were entirely disbelieved by most people on the Borders'.

Jimmy Strength came to Berwick around the end of the 18th century, and spent his last fifty years or so in this area. In the article in the Berwick Advertiser from September 13, 1878, he is described as 'half mendicant, half fiddler.' It is said that he played the violin so badly that people actually paid him to stop playing. But first and foremost his reputation was based on his enormous strength. It is said that the maximum weight he had ever lifted was 105 stones using both hands, or with one hand he only managed a little over 80 stones! Part of his strength was concentrated in his jaws. In an article in the Berwick Advertiser from August 9, 1878, it says he 'had such strong jaws that he could lift an ordinary kitchen table with, it is said, two people sitting on it, by his teeth.'

The entry in the Berwick Advertiser, September 13, 1878, says that the statue of 'Jemmy Strength' – notice the spelling of 'Jemmy', which probably reflects the local pronunciation of the name – has been sold for at least £ 10 and 'this piece of sculpture has for may years stood in the garden adjacent to Bay View House.' This would most likely be today's Bay Terrace.



The statue was made by a local artist James Wilson, who was not only a sculptor but also superintendent of the lighthouse and lived in Pier House. He was also a pupil of the local artist Thomas Sword Good.

When we start looking into something we often end up with more questions than answers. However, we know that after Jimmy's statue was sold it was removed from Bay View House and placed in the yard of the Border Brewery, ' where it will remain until arrangements are made for its erection elsewhere.' (Berwick Advertiser, Nov. 1, 1878, Local News p.3). Whether 'elsewhere' was Palace Green I have not yet been able to establish .

One more thing is known about the statue, it was made before Jimmy died, as it is mentioned in the Berwick Advertiser, April 20, 1844, in connection with his funeral: 'It will be seen by advertisements that the stone figure executed by Mr. Wilson is proposed to be disposed of by lottery'.

Shortly before Jimmy Strength died on April 11, 1844, a fund was raised to support him in his old age, and it is said that even Queen Victoria contributed towards it.

During his lifetime he married five times and fathered 27 children, one of whom, a son, 'still goes about the town of Berwick as a collector of rags and bones.' (Berwick Advertiser, Aug. 9, 1878,p.2, col. 2).

James Stuart/Jimmy Strength is buried at Tweedmouth Church, the vandalized statue has ended up in the Berwick Museum yard – so as Sheldon puts it 'The Border Samson and patriarch of Tweedmouth lies at rest for ever'.(F. Sheldon, History of Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1849)

Lars Rose

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 THE EDINBURGH AND NEWCASTLE NEWSPAPERS

Newcastle Courant

February 1 1731

Great fall of snow, the post is late.

March 16 1731

A horse is stolen or strayed from Wm Hailtie, tenant at Whitelaw, a mare of 4 years 15hh Bay brown colour, black main and black cut tail, scalded a little in the Main with the Brecham and bare in the sides wt working, having some white hairs in her brow. Reward.

March 23 1731

Stolen or Strayed form the Fields near Berwick on Tweed light gray colour'd mare, black mane and tail 13hh 3"10 yrs a little short necked bit long body'd almost white, only her lips gray. Also a raven black mare above 13hh 6 yrs Both wingalled in fore legs. Whoever can give notice of the sd 2 mares so as the y may be got to the right owners, may apply to Mr Gerrard Selby merchant in Berwick or John Loch, Laigh Coffee House Edinburgh where they shall have 2 guineas reward wt all expenses and no questions asked.

April 29 1731

Company's of General Tatan's regiment are to march from Edinburgh to Berwick.

October 22 1731

Berwick- Robert Blackman, soldier in Cpt. Daniels Company Lt Gen Tatton's Regiment, quartered in this town, having used traitorous words against his Majesty and offered to drink the Pretender's health, did according to sentence of a Court

Marshall receive 1 lash with cat of 9 tails from each man in the regiment, for 3 days and afterwards drum'd out of sd regiment wt a halter about his neck.

Edinburgh Evening Courant

January 2 1740

Bitter frost, violent snow since Friday, great deal of damage to those whose stock consist in sheep. (Thursday night the grate eclipse being ½ an hour after 8pm)

January 8 1740

Boat broke their moorings in Newcastle.

January 14 1740

No so severe a storm since 1715 (or 1684) large flakes of ice done the Firth/Tweed frozen over but not to bear any considerable weight. A carrier attempting to cross the Tweed upon the ice fell in, his horse was drowned and he escaped himself with utmost difficulty.

January 17 1740

Eggs frozen and ale in bottles. No man living remembers so severe a frost. 800 keels on the Tyne can't move, water mills frozen. 14 feet of snow.

January 28 1740

A sheep roasted whole on River Tweed at Kelso. F11 Teviotdale lost most of their sheep (no grass) F12 In Dunse the poor are reduced to great necessity being at a vast distance from coal and everything at an extravagant price. Contributions from gentlemen of the Parish.

April 21 1740

Great fall of snow, lambing season just begun. Ap28 Last week most prodigious snow storm in the north of England.

May 22 1740 - Col Johnston's regiment of foot are to be on Isle of Wight

June 2 1740 - Earl of Hume promoted to Cpt in Church-hill's dragoons.

June 17 1740 - Edinburgh- day of humiliation, prayer and thanksgiving on account of the late bad and present agreeable weather.

June 30 1740 - We here there have been several terrible mobs in the North of England occasioned by the dearness of provisions of all sorts. Men have been killed in Newcastle.

April 18 1740 - Barley ready for cutting.

December 2 1740 - very high winds. Dec. 22 storm, frost almost as hard as last year. Dec.25 10 feet snow. Dec. 29 that snow gone.

Kath Tansley

SNIPPET'S FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

BERWICK ADVERTISER MARCH 15, 1862

ANOTHER CURE OF FOUR YEARS' ASTHMA BY DR.LOCOCK'S PULMANIC WAFERS.-

Matilda Shaw, of Haringhay, has been severely afflicted with Asthma for four years, so that she could only lie in one position in bed; after taking three boxes of Dr Locock's Wafers, she is so far cured as to be able to lie in any posture without pain or inconvenience, and can walk any reasonable pace or distance. Witness, E. Square, Bookseller, Louth. Dr Locock's Pulmonic Wafers give instant relief and a rapid cure of asthma, consumption, coughs, and all disorders of the breath and lungs. All throat affections are immediately relieved by allowing one occasionally to dissolve in the mouth. To singers and public speakers they are invaluable for clearing and strengthening the voice. They have a pleasant taste. Price 1s 1.½d, 2s 9d, and 11s per box. Sold by all medicine vendors. CAUTION.- Every box of the GENIUNE medicine has the words "Dr Locock's Wafers" in *white letters* on a *red*

ground in the Government Stamp, without which words ALL ARE COUNTERFEIT AND AN IMPOSITION.

BERWICK ADVERTISER MARCH 29, 1862

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR AND THE LOCAL POLICE FORCES.-

From the report of the Government Inspector of Police, just issued, we extract the following opinions on the local forces: - BERWICK –ON-TWEED – One constable to every 3,313 persons. Establishment in good condition but force not sufficient in number. NORTHUMBERLAND (COUNTY).- The officers and constables presented the appearances of a very intelligent, robust, and healthy body of men; clothing and accoutrements in good serviceable condition; books exceedingly well kept; station house, charge rooms, and cells clean and in good order. One constable to every 1,963 persons.- DURHAM (COUNTY).- The officers and constables, who are well clothed and appointed, appeared to be generally a healthy and very effective body of men. Discipline and efficiency of the force have been well maintained. One constable to every 1,575 persons.

BERWICK ADVERTISER, JUNE 7, 1862

A STURGEON CAUGHT IN THE TWEED.-

One of this royal fish, which seldom visits our waters, was caught in the Tweed on Friday last. The fish was captured in a salmon net by fishermen at Davie's Bat, Tweedmouth, while plying their usual vocation. It is classed as the Caviar Sturgeon; it measured six feet in length, and weighed between five and six stones. The fish was afterwards exhibited in the shop of Mr Joseph Milburne, Bridge Street, by whom it was purchased. Numerous parties were willing to purchasers of the fish at eight pence per lb., and the whole was readily disposed of. We understand the head and the skin have been preserved, and are to be stuffed and sent to Haggerston Castle.

Carole Pringle