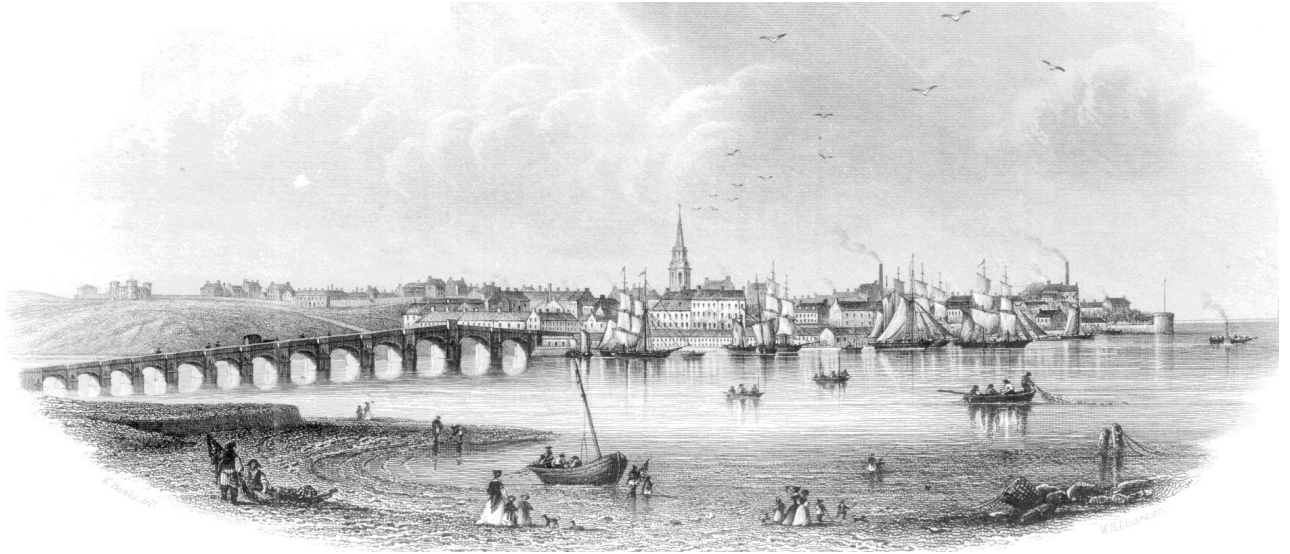


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 55– September 2007*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Autumn Lecture: “Berwick Shipyard” by  
Billy Swan at 7pm in the Guildhall,  
Berwick. All welcome.

## **OTHER SOCIETIES’ LECTURES**

### AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Ayton Bowling Clubhouse**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2007  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.

The Aytons of Ayton: Jim Eaton  
Memento Mori, Gravestone inscriptions:

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Nov.

David Eaton  
The Lindsay family, From Down Under to  
Ayton : Alistair Lindsay

### BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept.2007

AGM followed by 'Northumberland Murders':  
Phil Rowett

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Nov.

'Minor Local Railways': Roger Jermy  
'St Oswald & St. Oswald's Way': Peter  
Carter

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec.

'A Thrill in the Dark' : Derek Greenacre

### BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2007

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

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> Nov.

More snippets from the Archives: Linda  
Bankier

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec

Slavery to Freedom: Grenada to Paxton:  
John Malden

### BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. 2007

Archaeology of the last ten years: Steve  
Speak

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Nov.

*Title to be announced:* Chris Burgess

**No lectures in December or January**

### **BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose**

**Time: 2.30pm**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007

Open Day at Gala House, Scott  
Crescent, Galashiels, the Society

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Oct.

Archive  
Development of Border Roads: David

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Ashby  
Lowland Clearances: Peter Aitchison  
and Andrew Cassell

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

**Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2007

Paxton House: Martha Andrews

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.

War Memories: Mr. McLure. This is a  
joint meeting with Cornhill W.I. at  
Cornhill.

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Recent Excavations at Bamburgh Castle:

Thurs. 13<sup>th</sup> Dec.

Mr. G. Young  
Christmas Social in Eildon Centre  
Coldstream

### **DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Elizabeth Murray Duchess of Lauderdale:  
Ruth Borham

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.  
Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov.

The Minstrelsy of the Borders: Walter Elliott  
Antique Clocks and Clockmakers: Grant  
Less

### NORHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Norham Village Hall.**

**Time: 7.30pm.**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2007  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2007  
**No meeting in December**

Maps Lecture: Mr Barry Woodward  
History of Norham : Collingwood Thompson

### NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2007  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct.

“Lindisfarne Castle”: Catherine Atkinson  
“The way of life in Northumbrian Villages”:

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Nov

Noel Hodgson  
“Grace Darling”: Chris Bell

### NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

#### NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH

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

**Time: 10.00am**

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2007  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.

Preserving our Records: Julia Millard  
Forensic Science: John Yearnshire  
Dialect of Tyneside and Northumberland:  
Bill Griffiths  
Christmas Lunch

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec.

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

I know I always say it but the last few months have really flown by – I'm not sure where the summer went to!

The time has probably disappeared so quickly because the Record Office has been so busy with various projects and just doing the day to day job of looking after the Archives – we seemed to get involved in a number of things.

Before the schools broke up, the office undertook a fascinating project with Berwick Middle School. The Record Office had been asked to help create a Time Capsule for the new Incubator Business Units which are being built in Walkergate. I wanted to involve a school and so I contacted Nick Shaw, a Year 5 teacher at Berwick Middle School. I talked to the children about the project and explained that I wanted them to contribute information about their lives today and what they thought life in Berwick would be like in 50 years time. It was amazing what they produced – diaries, pen portraits of themselves as well as drawings of future cars and houses. As well as their work, I took some photos of buildings in Berwick today and also copied some old archive photos of the site in the past – some of you may remember it as Ayton's Beehive Bazaar. The children and I really enjoyed doing the project and the icing on the cake for them was the chance to meet Bill Bryson, the well known author. Half of them got the chance to meet him on a bright sunny day at the site and bury the capsule! The project has shown me that we should consider creating time capsules for buildings in other locations in the Borough. I would love to be there in 50 years time to open one!

August turned out to be an extremely busy time in the Record Office. You may remember that sometime ago I mentioned that a group of people were coming to the area to celebrate the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their ancestors leaving Berwick on board the Cornelius, bound for Canada. Their visit was scheduled for the end of August. Along with Trevor Swan, a member of the Friends and Tony Brown, I helped organise parts of their visit. We were mainly involved in sorting out a couple of specific events for them. This included their visit to Glendale Show on the Bank Holiday Monday. Thanks to the Tweeddale Press and the Northumberland National Parks, the group had a hospitality marquee at the Show. It's all very well having a marquee but how do you fill it and make it interesting for the group and visitors to the show ? This is where the Record Office got involved. We put together two exhibitions - one on life in the Glendale area from 1820 to 1850 and another of old photographs of the area. Carole, my assistant's help with this was invaluable - ; invited representatives from the Northumberland and Durham Family History Society and the Borders Family History Society to come along ; co-ordinated the display of the posters provided by the Cornelius descendants; and organised some DNA testing. The day at the show went really well and we must have had over 1000 people in the tent throughout the day. The group enjoyed their introduction to rural

life in Northumberland ! To commemorate their visit and their ancestors' departure from the area, the group wanted to erect a commemorative plaque in Berwick. After much deliberation, we decided to erect the plaque on the Chandlery building on the Quayside – the boat left from the Carr Rock but this seemed more appropriate and more visible. On the Wednesday, the group were invited to a Civic Reception at the Townhall after which the Mayor and one of the group unveiled the plaque down on the Quayside. The weather was fine and we had a very moving ceremony – to have over 100 people down there, all descendants of people who left this area in 1837 for a new life in Canada was quite something. To round off our involvement, members of the group were also able to come in to the Archives on the Friday and trace their own family history. A number of them came in and we managed to find some info.

This visit and working with the organisers has been the highlight of my year so far. It was wonderful meeting the organisers after all the e-mails and also getting to know the group – people had come from Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand and East Africa and so it was truly international. If any of you want to know about the voyage of the Cornelius, the settlement they founded in Canada (Harvey) and the families who went out, they have a very informative website – <http://history.earthsci.carleton.ca/harvey/genealogy/genealogy.htm> which is well worth a browse.

Once the Cornelius visit was over, it was on to the next project – Heritage Doors Open Days. On Saturday 8 September, I made my usual contribution by leading guided tours of the Council Offices (old Gaol) and this year, for the first time, setting up an exhibition in the Foyer. It was a very successful morning with over 70 people taking part, but I didn't have much of a voice left by the end!

There are still some more events to come in September – an Archive Film Night in conjunction with the Film and Media Arts Festival and the Cittaslow Launch. However, hopefully after that, things will quieten down again.

There is never a dull moment in the Record Office!. \_\_

*Linda Bankier*

## **WORKHOUSE PROJECT**

You may recall that in the last newsletter I mentioned a possible joint project with the National Archives. In June, Dr Paul Carter from the National Archives came up to

the Record Office and talked to a group of Friends about the project and what we could do to help. Paul gave us some background to the Old and New Poor Law – not an easy subject to explain – and told us about the project and the records involved.

Basically, the National Archives have a series of Poor Law Commissioners records (post 1834) which tell the other side of the story to the local records. They both complement each other. The purpose of the project is to digitise some of the records in the National Archives, involve local groups in cataloguing records for their own area and then publishing the end result on the Internet (images and catalogue entries). There are three Poor Law Unions in our area – Berwick, Glendale and Belford. Initially we will look at the Berwick and Glendale entries and then look at Belford later.

Paul has now got about 20 local groups throughout the country, including ourselves, who are interested in taking part. He doesn't envisage the project starting until February next year (2008). If anyone who was not at the meeting would like to help, please let me know. We are asking for a commitment of a couple of hours a week. You can either work at home or in the Record Office as we will be provided with digitised copies of the documents. There will also be sessions where we can all get together and discuss what we are doing. Paul has produced a newsletter about the project – if anyone would like to see it, just get in touch.

This is a really exciting project which will help us understand the Poor Law Unions in our area. I'll keep you posted as and when I hear more.

*Linda Bankier*

## **THE BERWICK ROLL AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

The Berwick Record Office has been approached by an Antiquarian Bookseller in London who are selling some 16<sup>th</sup> century Berwick documents. I have been aware of the existence of this collection which is in private hands for a number of years. It consists of the following documents :

### **The Berwick Roll**

***The account roll of Sir William Ingleby, “Treasurer of Barwick and paymaster of the Woorkes and fortificacons thear. And of the Garrisons and Bandes of horsemen and footmen lyeing upon the Borders And also of the Campe lyeing thear before they wente to Leigh in aide of the Skottes agaynste the ffrench”*** covers the period 1557 to 1560. The account deals with various payments for the Garrison in Berwick ( more detailed summary attached)

### **Richard Bunny Documents**

Richard Bunny was Treasurer of Berwick from 1550 to 1555. This series of documents include

***“A Boke of all manner of payments made by Richard Bunnye ...”*** between ***1550 and 1553***. This document (56 pages) lists all the people receiving payment for their services in the town

***A Brief Declaracon of Thacompt of Richarde Bunnye.. for the period 1549 to 1552.***

***A Boke of Chardges of the kinges Majestes Workes ffor his newe ffortificacions upon walles...*** for 1552. It lists the pay given to various people employed.

### **Others**

***The Peticuler Booke of payments of all and singular the Quenes Chardges... for diverse and sondrie buildings and reparacions made and done in and about her highness saide Towne ....*** This is dated about 1586 and notes various work done in Berwick at the time.



***Letter from Thomas Percy, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland to Sir Richard Bunny,  
25 Sept. 1565***

The documents are extremely important because they deal with the period of the town's history when the old fortifications were being repaired and the new Elizabethan ones being constructed. We have a lot of information in the Archives about what was happening in the town on a social basis and also about the Council who governed the town (Government appointed officials and the Freemen) but practically nothing about the fortifications and the garrison and how the government was spending its money here. Therefore they complement the archives we already have and would greatly increase our knowledge of the town at the time.

The Record Office would like to purchase the documents but they are not cheap. The asking price is £30,000. So far, I have managed to procure pledges from the Friends, the Borough Council, the Guild of Freemen, the Friends of the National Archives and some individuals for £20,000 but I still need to raise another £10,000. If any member of the Friends would like to pledge some money towards the purchase price, it would be really helpful. These documents belong in Berwick and it would be so wonderful if we could purchase them. I have not seen them myself but a very knowledgeable local person has viewed them on my behalf. He reported back that they are in good condition and contain information which will definitely help us to understand the history of the town at that time.

If we were able to purchase the documents, we would produce an exhibition on them, obviously transcribe them and also produce some educational resource relating to them. If you would like to pledge any money towards purchasing the documents, please do not send any cheques at the moment but contact Barbara Herdman on 01289 307524 or write to her at Devonia, 13 Bankhill, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 1BE. Any amount, no matter how small or large would help.

*Linda Bankier  
and Barbara Herdman*

**GATESHEAD ASYLUM**

I was contacted by someone in Tyneside who was researching the Gateshead Fell Asylum and thanks to Jane Bowen who had found this entry, we were able to

provide them with this account of the Asylum. It is interesting that there is very little information about the Asylum in the records kept at Tyne and Wear Archives which makes this extract even more valuable. We told Tyne and Wear Archives about the entry and so they have noted it in their catalogues and this was how the researcher found the reference :

The Report from Messers A. Robertson and William Young of which the following is a Copy was laid before the Meeting :

Messers A. Robertson and George Young beg to report to the Board that agreeably to its instruction at the Meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> November they had had a long interview with Mr Nicholson, Watchmaker in Berwick on the subject of the Lunatic Asylum at Gateshead Fell – and that the following are in general terms the statements made to them by Mr Nicholson viz. That he was an inmate in the above Asylum for upwards of Eighteen Months and left it in March 1841 – that during the greater portion of the above period he was not under any restraint as to his movements either within the Establishment, or in its vicinity and therefore had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the management of the Asylum and the condition of many of the inmates. That he considered there was often an unnecessary degree of harshness exercised towards several of the unfortunate persons confined in the house that the food was too frequently of very indifferent quality nor was this redeemed by its sufficiency in quantity. That as far as he observed, the Establishment (with occasionally upwards of Eighty inmates) was generally only visited once a week by a Medical Gentleman and he too the Brother-in-Law of the proprietor. That no attempt was made nor would the house afford the means for it being successfully accomplished to classify the patient and provide amusement recreation or employment to those recovering or convalescent. That he was cognisant of instances where persons subsequently removed were kept in the house without any attempt being made by the Proprietor to convey to their friends the happy intelligence of their being restored to mental health. That in his own case tho' permitted to walk at pleasure and alone not merely in the precincts of the Establishment but through Gateshead and Newcastle, and only that Morning having so visited the latter place- yet the proprietor on his brother calling to see him ( the inmate ) with a view to his removal home, induced his Brother not to have any knowledge of his being there conveyed to him, as such an intimation and more so, a personal interview, would set him ( the inmate) quite wild again- and that his Brother in consequence returned home without effecting his intention. That it was only after many strong representations of his long continued convalescence from two or three

individuals, especially a Mr Waddell who had seen an inmate for a short period concurrently with himself and had when recovered been taken away by his wife though much opposed in this by the proprietor that his Brother had him removed home to Berwick where he was since resided and been employed in his trade of a Watchmaker. That a pauper Lunatic from Tweedmouth of the name of Davidson has been long kept at constant work in the Garden attached to the House, indeed that he is in fact the Gardener. That the said Davidson always appeared to him to be in good bodily health and with the exception of some peculiar ideas on one or two subjects, in sound mind.

Messers Robertson and Young further reported that Mr Nicholson accompanied and illustrated his statement by numerous and minute details and referred them to other persons for a corroboration of his accuracy.

“ Resolved that Mr A Henderson Medical Officer and Mr James Blackett Atkinson Relieving Officer be empowered to visit at the expense of the Union the above Lunatic Asylum and that they arrange with Mr A Robertson when he will be in Newcastle so that he may accompany them, and that they report to the Board the result of their observation and enquiries as to the general management of the Establishment, the Capabilities of the house for Classification of the patients and the means provided equally for the safe keeping of the dangerous Lunatics as for the amusement and employment of the patients progressing to Convalescence- And in particular to seek a personal communication with all the pauper Lunatics kept there at the change of this Union for the purpose of ascertaining the condition in which they are in and if necessary for this or any other purpose connected with the object of their visit to call their Assistance any Medical Men they may think fit”

*Linda Bankier*

## **SUMMER OUTING TO THE ARMSTRONG MUSEUM**

**(FARMING AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS IN NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND)**

## FRIDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2007

Well, after a long, wet, summer we were looking forward to our Friends' Outing with some trepidation, but we need not have worried. I'd written about the Museum in the last newsletter and had had a lot of interest in the forthcoming visit. Unfortunately, some of those who'd booked couldn't make it at the last minute, but the fifteen who showed up really enjoyed their evening.

Sylvia Armstrong was as attentive as ever and had even provided toy tractors for our two youngest members, Siobhan and Niamh, to play on. What amazed me was that, on this my second visit, I realized how much I had missed first time around. In the first room there was a pink gingham shepherdess's bonnet, intricately smocked and full of pleats and folds. There were various forms of early cooker, including a largish one like a primus stove which several folk could remember being used in their young days. There were tiny irons which held a heated stone to smooth the materials.

An old photograph of Bondagers working in a field brought cries of delight from one who held their history dear. My favourite items were two pairs of donkey ear-covers, made to keep the midges off. Apparently the donkeys preferred the cooler open work of the crocheted set to the warmer, but smartly hand-embroidered cotton ones.

Hand crafts are very well represented of course, as many items were often made in the home or on the farm. Sylvia has a great collection of sewing ephemera, both workaday and recreational. I particularly liked the tiny mother-of-pearl buttons used for glove fastenings, and the plethora of needles used for ????

Time was of the essence. Of course, we could all have spent hours browsing but there is so much to see we couldn't pay much attention to our own specialities and also see the extent of the collections. Sylvia has certainly made a wonderful contribution to the preservation of domestic and farming life over the last century. The Museum is still open on Fridays, 10am until 5pm to the end of October.

*Barbara Herdman*

**MUSEUM NEWS**

This is a busy and important time as we have the Consultants looking at every aspect of our operation and suggesting ways for the Museum to go forward to a new era. Their report is due in October/November but we are already beginning to get to grips with some of the issues raised so far. Everyone will know we have been spending a bit of time in the last four years in big outreach projects such as last year's highly successful *War with Russia Weekend*. With only the two of us on the staff, this has inevitably meant less time spent behind-the-scenes, updating the store inventories and modernizing the Museum's policy documents. Fortunately the winter closure of the site enables us to get back with these basic and important things and I'd like to invite the Friends to help in assisting with a stock check in the same way that we did in 1995. We aim to do this in probably February/March, once we have dealt with the policy document issue. Precise details will be given in the next newsletter.

In the meantime a Steering Committee is being formed to help shape the final report about the future. Part of this will be concerned with what it is that local people really want their museum to show and what activities it should undertake in terms of outreach and such like. Recently there was a mega-million refurbishment of the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow – the whole re-display was the result of a city-wide consultation with residents. Hundreds of people sent in ideas for the storylines and subjects they thought the Museum should represent. I hope we can introduce something similar in a formal way in Berwick. Details about this and how people can get involved in the future of the Museum will be in the press in due course, but in the meantime, if anybody has views about the subjects, stories or services that should be represented in the new Berwick museum let myself or Linda know. It looks like it will be an exciting project.

One thing that will be going ahead in the short term is the transformation of the Dragon Gallery into a Medieval Gallery. This will retain the basic structure, including the ever popular dragon, while changing the decoration and a lot of the exhibits. The Friends have generously sponsored the making of a model of Berwick castle as it probably looked in the 1370s, and this will be a key feature of the new gallery.

Using a grant from the Friends the Museum also agreed to sponsor the showing of Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill, jnr* at the prestigious 2<sup>nd</sup> Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival.

*Chris Green* (museum@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk)

# ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S SOCIAL HISTORY

## The Case of Mr Catto

The recent visit of Dr Paul Carter to Berwick to speak about the National Archives project about the 19<sup>th</sup> century Poor Law, prompts me to revisit one local example that I turned up during my research for the *Berwick in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* exhibition in 2004. The case of Mr Catto was not on the scale of the great Victorian workhouse scandals, but it does show how petty and mean-spirited those in charge of the Poor Law could be on occasion. Peter Catto fell foul of the notorious Act of Settlement and Removal (1662), described as “possibly the worse law ever passed by a British Parliament”, which found its way little changed into the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, that restricted out-door relief and ushered in the worse era of the workhouses. Catto had become an expense to the Edinburgh ratepayers and so, because born in Northumberland, he was forcibly removed on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1854 and taken to Berwick by train. Confused as to the Border line the official in charge crossed the river and giving the old man a shilling abandoned him on a snow-covered street in Tweedmouth. The money was only sufficient to buy lodging for one night and the following evening with the temperature plunging to 12 degrees below freezing a policeman discovered Catto desolate, in a state of complete exhaustion, and clearly near death. Taken to the workhouse everyone recognised that Catto was in the last stages of TB, with Dr Kirkwood noting “it seemed almost as if I were touching a skeleton...he was so fearfully emaciated that I conscientiously declare that I never saw any one more so, and yet be in life” and that “the only place to which he will ever be fit to be removed will be to his grave<sup>2</sup>. And so it proved to be, Catto lingered for two months before dying on 27<sup>th</sup> March. The Berwick Guardians, outraged that Catto had been removed in the depths of winter in such a condition, tried to reclaim from Edinburgh the £4 they had spent on caring for him. Rejecting this out of hand as “trying to get into the pockets of the Edinburgh ratepayers” the Edinburgh Guardians implied that it was the lack of treatment he had received in Berwick that hastened his death. That provoked Berwick into gathering a mass of evidence to prove he’d been doomed before he arrived. Soon letters were flying back and forth and legal opinions were being sought. This was typical: for decades

lawyers had grown rich on removal disputes, hundreds of pounds were spent arguing about who should pay the tens of pounds it cost to keep paupers in the workhouse. Berwick had spent nearly £25 trying to get back their £4 before they abandoned the case. But the issue still rankled and in March 1855 local solicitor Edward Willoby, Clerk of the Berwick Guardians, went over the whole thing again before a Parliamentary Select Committee investigating the Act.

Mr Willoby was a man on a mission: he wanted the Act amended because he thought it too lenient. He wanted the power to remove non Berwick-born paupers at anytime. He reckoned the worst offenders in Berwick's case were the Irish. They had arrived to build the railway and now, five years later when they were legally considered irremovable, they might at any moment crawl from their squalid hovels and happily rush to the workhouse and live at the expense of the ratepayers. There were about 100 to 150 of the 600 Irish in the town whose dwellings had no furniture and "their children are in a wretched state of emaciation...half clad, or with scarcely a rag upon them". The rest he had to admit were "respectable artisans, mechanics and many in trade". In fact when questioned closely Mr Willoby had to admit that the Irish paupers almost never went near the workhouse no matter how poor they were. According to figures published by the Select Committee in 1854/5 there were 83 irremovable people in the Berwick workhouse of which 23 were Irish. The total cost of these to Berwick Union was £56 and two-pence farthing out of a total bill for all the poor of £1414 and a farthing. Several of the committee members thought his comments "very cruel", heartless and unfeeling and they were not going to let him have his way. By 1864 paupers were deemed irremovable after one year's residence. Even so paupers went on being removed all over the country, and as late as 1907 more than 12,000 were removed annually.

**Source:** House of Commons: *Report from the Select Committee on Poor Removal* (1855), Minutes of Evidence, pp.58-73 & appendix 2 – a photocopy of this is in the Museum Library, available on request in BRO

*Chris Green*

**JIMMY STRENGTH-FOLLOW UP AND  
CORRECTION**

I have come across an article which sheds more light on the possible fate of the statue of Jimmy Strength. The article, which appeared on January 23, 1885 (Local News p. 3, column 4) in the Berwick Advertiser refers to a Mr James Purves who had had an article published in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle. Mr Purves writes about 'the information which your correspondents have given in reference to the remarkable character, James Stuart', this remark means that we can assume that the subject of James Stuart/Jimmy Strength has been covered by the newspaper earlier on, and that it had created an interest in the character of Jimmy Strength. The interest makes Mr Purves suggest that a committee be formed with the purpose of purchasing 'the statue which for forty years has been admired as a most true and excellent reproduction of the man'.

We know that the statue was sold for at least £ 10 in 1878, and that it stood in front of Bay View House until then, and that, for unknown reasons, it ended up in the yard of the Border Brewery, where it might have remained until Mr Purves took his initiative in 1885. Unfortunately there is no mention of who the statue might have been bought from. Mr Purves' suggestion was that after the statue had been purchased it would be presented to the Parks Committee in Newcastle and placed among the other statues in Elswick Park in that city. Mr Purves also suggested that the correspondence which had appeared in the Weekly Chronicle, along with any other material about Jimmy Strength, should be reprinted in pamphlet form, and 'this would answer the questions which are sure to be asked again and again about Jimmy Strength'. This view somehow contradicts the fact that the reason for selling the statue in the first place was that, as people had no knowledge about who Jimmy Strength was the statue was in danger of being neglected. And since, as far as I know, Jimmy Strength had no connection to Newcastle, it might be doubtful as to how much interest the statue would give rise to in Newcastle. I have not been able to find any evidence of whether Mr Purves' project ever materialised, but whether it did or not, it is still proof of the fascination with Jimmy Strength even more than forty years after his death.

The article quoted in the Berwick Advertiser finishes with an eyewitness account of the accident which led to Jimmy Strength's death. 'It occurred in the spring of 1844 as he was coming home from Berwick and was passing along the old bridge, which is very narrow. His fiddle bag was caught by a passing cart, and he was whirled round and fell behind the cart. I saw him lifted up, all covered in mud. He said he was not much the worse, but I remember it was only a few days afterwards that he died.'



Correction: Since writing the first article about Jimmy Strength I have been able to establish that Bay View House is not the same as today's Bay View Terrace. Bay View House is the house on the Walls with a sunken garden, now known as the Whaling House, and in the middle of the lawn can still be seen a foundation block—the one that the statue of Jimmy Strength stood on until 1878?

*Lars Rose*

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

### **Berwick Advertiser July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862**

North Eastern Railway

### **International Exhibition, 1862**

On and after MONDAY, 14<sup>th</sup> July, and continuing until further Notice, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2d, and 3d CLASS RETURN TICKETS at about ONE FARE AND A HALF, available for return on any day not exceeding 14 DAYS from the date of issue, will be issued Daily to LONDON, from all First-Class Stations.

Such Tickets will not be Transferable, and will only be available for return by the route mentioned on the ticket.

Third Class Tickets will only be issued and be available for return by Third Class Trains

Children above three and under Twelve Years of Age, Half Fares.

W.O'Brien, General Manager.

*York, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1862*

### **Berwick Advertiser, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1862**

State of Health in Berwickshire

We extract the following from the Registrar-General's Quarterly Report, ending 30<sup>th</sup> June. *Coldingham*- There has been much rain this quarter, with little sunshine. The health of the people has been excellent, and the parish free from Epidemics. The births and marriages are considerably above average. *Coldstream*- Measles are very prevalent during the month of June, and is so still, but not of malignant type. *Dunse* – Births and marriages about average. Deaths nearly 8 per cent. Below any of the corresponding quarters since the present act came into operation, no doubt owing to the sanitary arrangements of the place. No epidemic: and the parish is in a healthy state. *Eccles*- Measles was very prevalent among the young during May and June, but it was of mild type, and proved fatal in only one case. *Eyemouth*- The number of deaths during the quarter is far above average, on account of scarlet fever, which is still spreading. Many of the cases are of malignant type. Nine deaths have resulted from it. Throat affections have been very common, and three have died of diphtheria. The parish is in very unhealthy state, there scarcely a house in which there is not one or more ill.

**Berwick Advertiser, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1862**

Road at the Plantation

Workmen are engaged constructing a road along the banks of the river at the Plantation, which when completed, will make an excellent continuation of the present footpath, skirting the edge of the River Tweed, and at the same time avoid the steep and rugged routes which hitherto characterised the walks through the Plantation. The road will also be of much benefit in another point; it will serve to protect the property from encroachments by the Tweed, which of late years has made great inroads at that place, and annually carries off a portion. Several of the smaller trees in the Plantation are being hewn, and used in the formation of the road, being driven into the ground and the space filled by earth. A stone wall facing the river will divert the current into its proper course. It has often been a subject of remark and complaint by strangers and others why a favourite place of resort so near a populous town, and so much frequented at all hours of the day, as much so as the highway or any common thoroughfare, should be nothing better than a bog, without even a well defined footpath, and in wet weather almost impassable. There was much need of a road in such place.

**Berwick Advertiser, November 15, 1862**

Game! Game! Game!

Robert Downes, Game Dealer and Fishmongers, Piazzas under the Town Hall,  
Berwick.

Begs most respectfully to intimate to the Gentry and other Proprietors of Game  
Preserves, that he PURCHASES all kinds of GAME in their Season, for which he  
gives Cash on Delivery, when required.

Hares, 2s 6d each; Rabbits, 1s 10d per pair; Partridges, 2s 6d per brace.

*Berwick, November 5, 1862*

*Carole Pringle*