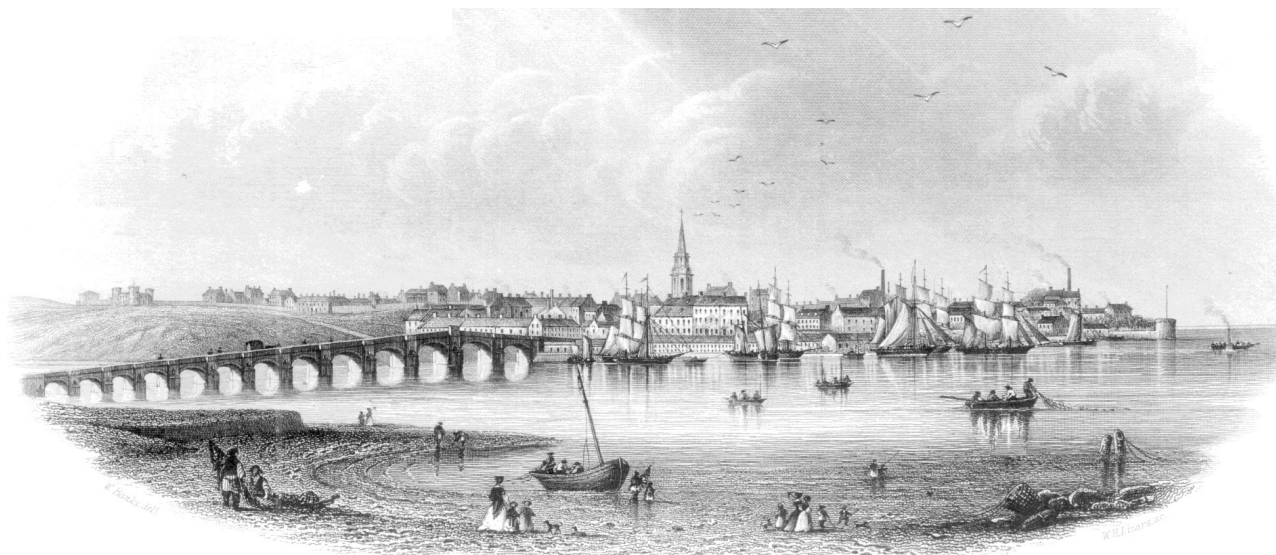


Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 58– May 2008

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June 2008

Facades of the Fifties Exhibition in the Guildhall, Berwick. Saturday :10 am – 4pm ; Sunday : 11am – 4pm

Tuesday 17th – Saturday 21st May 2008

“Spittal School in the past 100 Years”
-Exhibition in the School Hall. See article for further details

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th
September 2008

Berwick Food Festival and Heritage
Doors Open Days

BERWICK MUSEUM & ART GALLERY EVENTS

OPENING TIMES

21st March – 28th September

Wednesday – Sunday, 10am – 5pm

4th June – 3rd August

Landscape Paintings: Scenes from the
Museum's Burrell collection

18th June – 31st August

The Famous Dr Jones and Archaeology:
What's the real archaeology behind the
Indiana Jones movies?

23rd July – 29th September

Food: An Historical A-Z: The quirky
history and culture of food (In
association with Berwick Food Festival)

9th August – 29th September

Undercover Story: The History of
Underwear: A remarkable "private"
collection comes to Berwick.

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Ayton Bowling Clubhouse

Time: 7.30pm

Lectures resume in September

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 28th May 2008

Old Embleton : George Skipper

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Lectures resume in October

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick upon Tweed.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 2nd June 2008

“The Archaeology of North Sea Fisheries”: Kristian Pedersen

July & August No Lectures

Monday 1st September 2008

To be announced

BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose

Time: 2.30pm

Lectures resume in the Autumn

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Lectures resume in the Autumn

DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Lectures resume in the Autumn

GLENDALÉ LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: The Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.

Time: 7.30pm

Lectures resume in the Autumn

NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time : 7.30 pm

Monday 9th June 2008

Monday 14th July 2008

Wark Castle: Eric Grounds

Maelmin and Geffrin : a visit led by

Roger Miket. **Meet at Maelmin Carpark,**

Milfield 7pm

August 2008 No Meeting

Monday 8th September 2008

History of Polwarth Church : Mrs Rosie

Letts

NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Lectures resume in the Autumn

NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH

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

Time: 10.00am

Saturday 21st June 2008

Saturday 20th September 2008

AGM and Member's Workshop

The Blue Lonnen-Fishing Traditions in North
Northumberland.

ARCHIVE NEWS

I know it is only a couple of months since the last newsletter appeared but a lot has been happening in the Record Office during that time in addition to the normal day to day tasks that we undertake.

Education in one form or another seems to have played a major part in our recent activities. As part of the Heritage Lottery funded School Project that I have been involved in with Berwick and Glendale Middle Schools, both schools brought their classes in to the Record Office. Glendale Middle were looking at the Second World War in the area and spent half a day in the Record Office (in two groups) finding out about the subject. The children all dressed up and they had a great time looking through the old newspapers and researching the Second World War gravestones at Kirknewton Churchyard. Berwick Middle were researching the “Coming of the Railway to Berwick” and we looked at Inquests of those who died constructing the Royal Border Bridge and maps of the town. As part of school visits, the children are allowed to go into the strongroom and see how we store everything. The children really enjoy this bit and it seems to be the part they always remember!

During this quarter, I have also worked with other schools – in March I spent my annual morning on Holy Island with the boys from the Newcastle Royal Grammar Junior School. We look at how the Island has changed over the past 150 years by studying its population and occupations. The boys are always amazed at how many people lived on the island in the past, particularly young people of their own age. Several years ago, I visited Belford First School as part of a Heritage Play Area project. This year, Seahouses hope to build a Heritage Play Area and so on a very wet day at the end of March, I spent a morning in Seahouses First School talking to the children about Seahouses’ historical connection with the sea. The children then drew pictures on this topic and designed their own play areas on this theme. It was a very successful day and the children were very enthusiastic and full of ideas. We often underestimate children’s imagination and their ideas. Fundraising is still ongoing for the play park but hopefully the children’s ideas will come to fruition.

Many years ago, the Record Office and the Civic Society produced a Young Explorer’s Guide for Berwick which was successful at the time but is now updated. As part of my work with Cittaslow, we have been looking at updating the production. Coincidentally, Seahouses are interested in producing something similar and so I’ve been to several meetings about this. Hopefully over the next couple of months we will be reproducing new trails for both places aimed at families and children.

In the past couple of months, I have also given a number of talks or hosted visits to the Record Office. At the beginning of March, I gave a talk on Family History as part of the “Berwick’s Buzzing” week in Berwick Library. In the middle of the month I talked about the more unusual family history resources in the Office to the North Northumberland Branch of the Northumberland & Durham Family History Society. In mid May, I also made a trip down to Dilston Hall near Corbridge to talk to “The Fifteen” group about Berwick sources relating to the 1715 Uprising/Rebellion. Some groups have also visited the Record Office – in April members of Probus and the Community Writers Group both came in to find out about sources kept here.

A number of people who visit the Record Office on my “Open Days” are working on publications about the area and it is always great to see them actually get their book published. In April, I had the great pleasure of going down to Belford to launch a book published by the Belford & District Local History Society entitled “Aspects of Belford”. The book covers many facets of life in the village including law and order; the Parish Church; Belford’s contribution in the Second World War; Belford Hall and its owners; Health and Welfare; the pubs and the Presbyterian School. It is well worth reading and is based on original research.

In February, there was the great debate on whether Berwick should be part of England or Scotland which was well covered by the National and International Press. It’s interesting that it brought people to the Record Office who wanted to cover the story from the historical perspective. In the last couple of months, we have been visited by a reporter from the Bloomberg Press in America and some documents were filmed as part of a German television programme on the town!. I wonder who will appear next!.

Finally, as you will all probably know the 16th century documents are now safely housed in the Record Office. They are fascinating, beautifully written and in very good condition. They certainly tell us more about Berwick in the mid 16th century and confirm the importance of the town to the Crown at this time. Their arrival received a lot of publicity, including a feature item on “Look North”.

Linda Bankier

MAIL AND STAGE COACHES

As part of the Education Project with Berwick Middle School, we looked at how people travelled in the area before the advent of the Railway. A common way of travel was by mail or stage coach and both Berwick and Belford were on the main route between London and Edinburgh. The following are some extracts from the local newspaper about incidents involving this means of travel :

BERWICK ADVERTISER, 28 NOVEMBER 1829

On Friday last, the Union coach was overturned on its way from Newcastle to Edinbro', about 2 ½ miles north of Belford, by the horses taking fright at a party of gypsies on the road side. Fortunately, none of the passengers were hurt and the coachman only had his foot sprained.

BERWICK ADVERTISER, 16 DECEMBER 1843

MAIL COACH ACCIDENT – On Tuesday last there was an investigation before the Justices at the Petty Sessions at Belford, - present, Prideaux John Selby, Esq., and Rev. J.D. Clark, - relative to an accident which occurred to the mail coach on Tuesday morning the 5th instant. It appeared that when near to Kettleburn, on the road from Berwick to Belford, one of the leaders came in contact with a cart belonging to Henry Elder of Coldstream, by which the leader was thrown down and much injured, and the pole of the coach broken, which detained the mail upwards of an hour. Elder appeared to answer a summons against him for careless driving, and was convicted in the penalty of £2 and costs; and as he had no name upon his cart at the time of the accident, he was also fined £2 for that offence – and in default of payment was committed to Morpeth Goal for one month. A gentleman from the General Post Office, London was sent down to attend the hearing of the case.

BERWICK ADVERTISER, 30 DECEMBER 1843

On Saturday last the Union Coach on her arrival at the Red Lion Inn here from the north was seized by Mr William Hurst, excise officer, who had apparently been waiting her arrival. On a search being made amongst the luggage, there were found, in her front and hind boots, three gallons of whiskey and a dozen bottles of ginger wine, which were unaccompanied by any transfer permit. The former was in a

greybeard enclosed in a hamper, which was again covered by a coarse wrapper, and was addressed simply "Belford"; the ginger wine was in bottles arranged in a wine merchant's basket, and was addressed to a gentleman, also at Belford. The horses, which had been detached from the coach before it was seized, were, with the coach and all its contents placed under arrest. After being detained for half an hour, in the course of which satisfactory bond was lodged, the coach was allowed to proceed. Subsequently, however, an express was sent after her, and the guard George Nailor, taken into custody and brought back to Berwick. An additional bond was given on his account, and he was again at liberty. The circumstances occurring on a market day caused considerable commotion in front of the inn. It is but fair to presume that the proprietors, and those on their employment, were ignorant of the contraband goods they had in charge. The persons, therefore, who thus jeopardized the property of others for the paltry gain which would have been made by evading the excise laws cannot be too severely censured. The bond, which was given on Saturday, has since been renewed, and the consequences are yet unascertained

BERWICK ADVERTISER, 30 MAY 1846

ACCIDENT TO THE MAIL COACH – On Tuesday evening as the mail coach was proceeding from the town northwards, and when near to Lamberton Pit Houses, about four miles from this, it came into collision with a cart proceeding in a contrary direction. The violence of the contact broke the splinter bar of the coach from which the pole and the horses became disjoined. The driver was thrown from his seat, and the horses being without control and yoked together by the harness proceeded without the coach to Flemington Inn, a distance of a mile, where they were stopped. The coachman had no bones broken, but was severely bruised by the fall; and the guard, who dismounted on the first occurrence, also sustained a slight injury. None of the passengers were at all injured. Another coach, being sent from this the passengers and guard proceeded on their journey, but the coachman, George Muers was brought back to the town. There were seven outside and four inside passengers. The occurrence of this accident though very much to be regretted on account of the personal injuries sustained, cannot excite any surprise. The unreasonable and disgraceful manner in which the mail coaches in this district are loaded, has for some time rendered such accidents highly probable. Not only has the mail itself very much increased in size, and apparently rendered some additional conveyance necessary, but the number of passengers has been increased, and the limit to the amount of their baggage withdrawn; so that the coach in passing through this town more nearly resembles a stage- wagon than the medium of a rapid conveyance. Previous to this change the coach was limited to 4 outside and 4 inside

passengers; now the former are increased to 8. Previously the utmost care and attention was paid to the deposit of the mail bags – their safe custody was attended to with a prudent care, and until they were lodged in the boot and secured with lock and key, the coach was not allowed to start. Now, however, the bags are to be seen strung round the seats in the rear of the coach, not unfrequently amongst the passengers' feet; and wherein consists their security being purloined or lost we cannot discover. Although we are on the eve of an alteration, in the conveyance being transferred from the road to the rail, still we think there is too much at stake to allow the demand for some additional security in the interim to be hushed or denied.

Linda Bankier

MUSEUM NEWS

ASPECTS OF BERWICK'S CULTURAL HISTORY

EXTRAVAGANT LOYALTIES

Continuing my exploration of newly opened up on-line resources, I have now obtained access, via the National Library of Scotland website, to Early English Books Online. This is slightly less searchable than the NLS 18th century database but has already thrown up some fascinating stuff, concerning 16th and 17th century Berwick. Most notable are two books written by one Thomas Smith, a gunner employed on Berwick ramparts in 1600. He wrote the very first manual of gunnery to be published in English and once I have done some essential background research I'll be writing it up for the newsletter. In the meantime here is something from the 17th century. Late in 1679 James, Duke of York, Catholic brother of Charles II passed through Berwick on his way north to suppress the latest Covenanter uprising following the murder in May of the dictatorial Archbishop of St. Andrews. The beginning of the brutal period known as 'the killing time'. But this was in the future when the Civic Party turned out to greet the Duke. The Recorder's speech of welcome was published as a broadsheet and a copy has been preserved in the Huntington Library in the USA. The tone is as you would expect

more than fulsome, and almost certainly not sincere. Berwick was anything but loyal to the 'popish' Stuarts and had just elected a militant Presbyterian as their MP, and indeed

John Henderson, one of the murderers of the Archbishop, was a Berwicker. I've preserved some of the style of printing and the occasional quaint spelling.

THE LOYALL SPEECH

Of
Sir Richard Stott

RECORDER of the Ancient TOWN of

BARWICK upon TWEED.

SPOKEN

To His Royall Highness the Duke of **YORK**
upon his Entrance into Barwick

"May it please your Royal Highness,

WE humbly, and heartily congratulate your coming to this poor but Ancient Town, a place more considerable for its situation than its fortune, yet happier now than in former times when it was made a Butt for the two Kingdoms to shoot at. Without our Walls (Great Sir) you may see those Hills, where that Royall blood which runs (happily united) in your Princely veins, whilst it was divided between your English and Scottish Ancestors, did contend for Empire and for glory; and it is our happiness that this place which was once the utmost limits of the two great Kingdoms, is now the middle of our Sovereigns Dominions. We of this Corporation were the most ingratefull of Subjects, and the unworthiest of men, if we did not pay all Duty and Obeysance to your Princely Person. Your Royall Grand-father (whose Sacred Name you bear) was our Founder; He gave us not Only our Priviledges (which are great) but our subsistence which supports us. And he tells us plainly in his most munificent Charter, that he did it to oblige us to pay the greater Duty and Loyalty to him, and his Posterity for ever. Your Royall Father (the Mirror of Kings) was our

Benefactor, and our Gracious Sovereign hath largely extended his Bounty to us and we know that we cannot better express our Duty and Loyalty to him, than in giving Testimony of it to you (Great Sir) his only Brother. We have yet powerful motives

from yourself: Your Noble and Heroic actions have been the wonder of *Europe*, nor can any Loyall heart forget how boldly and prodigally you ventured your life for the Honour and Prosperity of his Majesty and these Kingdoms, when in the Year (63) by the blessing of God upon your incomparable Valour and Conduct, you overthrew and vanquished the Greatest Fleet that ever the Sea bore. Then it was that you made *Neptune's* Trident bow and pay homage to the English Sceptre. Let the Ancient *Romans* tell us of their great Sea fight at *Actium*, between *Augustus* and *Mark Anthony*. Let our own Histories relate the famous Victory of your Glorious Progenitor King *Edward* the 3 at *Scluse*. Let the Modern Histories of *Europe* declare that Celebrated Victory of *Don John of Austria* at the Battle of *Lepanto*, those must all strike sail and veil to your Glorious Triumph. If we search the Annals of Former Ages, we can find no thing like it and it is more than probable that the Times to come may not produce a Parallel. What shall we then render to you (Great Prince) for such inimitable Actions and Merits? All we can say is, that next after our Prayers for the long Life and Happy Reign of our most Gracious Sovereign, we ardently with all increase of Honour, Renown, and Happiness to the Glorious JAMES his most Princely Brother.”

The text has an interesting reference to James VI & I's idea of Berwick being in the 'Middle Shires' as part of his plan for Anglo-Scottish unity. And, just in case the "famous Victory" of the year '63 escaped your notice, in fact Scott gets the date wrong. It was not 1663 but 3rd June 1665 when James lead 100 English ships into battle against 107 Dutch and defeated them. This scrap at the beginning of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, hardly comparable to the world-changing battles of Actium and Lepanto, is (just about) known to history as the battle of Lowestoft. The Duke became James II in 1685 and threw out the existing Guild and put his own men in charge in Berwick. They in turn were expelled in 1688 and the old order restored.

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

THE INDUSTRY THAT DIDN'T QUITE..... PICKERINGS OF TWEEDMOUTH – PART 1

The following is the first part of an article about Pickerings of Tweedmouth which will be continued in our next issue.

If you think that Berwick was never likely to be a centre of the motor industry, then you'd be wrong!

In the wake of Gottlieb Daimler and Otto Benz and the internal combustion engine a century or more ago, the British motor trade developed quickly and a variety of firms went into production. They made everything from steam lawnmowers (that was the Lancashire Steam Motor Co., later to name itself Leyland) to motor buses. That didn't take place until the infamous Locomotives Act of 1865 was repealed in 1896 – but that was not before the wheel-kent Richard Waldie-Griffiths had been picked up by the local constabulary for driving along Bridge Street in the wee small hours without a 'red flag' man in front.

The first recorded bus services started in 1898 but were not initially successful. That was in Edinburgh and that would be followed up by the Scottish Motor Traction – the 'SMT' – who did much pioneer work in the mechanical development of buses, even to building their own – which were extremely successful. Locally Cuthbertson had motor wagonettes from 1904 running between Bamburgh and Seahouses to connect with the trains.

From 1900 on to the 1930s I reckon there must have been c.150 firms who built buses; there might have been even more who built only goods vehicles.

But to get down to the subject – F.G.Pickering, later to be Co.Ltd. The firm must have started by 1904. This is well ahead of many of the well-known manufacturers. At that time Milnes-Daimler was the biggest producer, with 600 buses in use in 1907. There is little known about Pickering or his Company. In fact the only memento is a plaque from the firm now in the Guildhall. It was found by Prideaux Swinney in a house on the Harrow Bank.

I have an advert (undated) from a 'Map of the Environs of Berwick' in which F.G.Pickering, Highgate Works, Tweedmouth, and a showroom at 80, Main Street, Tweedmouth (where the 'Spar' shop now stands) had a 'Motor Car and Cycle

Works'. He advertised that he had 'put down new plant for the production of motor cars and cycles' and would 'give estimates for any class of motor car or cycle, also motor haulage wagons'. That is the total extent of the information I've gleaned so far from Berwick.

The first real intimation of his 'motor' activities comes in one of the then motor trade journals.

This one is from 1905 when Messrs. F.G.Pickering & Co., Tweedmouth, exhibited a 2-ton petrol wagon, with silencer and air-cooled engine. It had Pickering's patent 'twin-spoke wheels and a total weight of c.35 cwt. That was exhibited at Olympia between the **10th and 18th February 1905**.

His next exhibition appearance was at Cordingley's 10th Annual Automobile Exhibition in London on **18th March 1905** with the same vehicle. He was in good company at both with Foden, Durham-Churchill, Garrett, Clarkson and Leyland, etc., etc.

But he was moving even further. He had planned to show a double-deck bus at the March Show. For whatever reason, it was a late arrival, missing the main write-up of the show but there long enough to be photographed in situ at the exhibition. The 'Motor Traction' of **5th April 1905** has a description of its mechanics. It had a 4-cyl., 35-40 hp Pickering engine 'which develops its power at 750 rpm'. There was a dual ignition system, Pickering patented wheels with a fixed centre flange, and steering-mounted controls for throttle, air and for both ignition systems. It seated 34 passengers.

The magazine reports thus:-

'we understand that, although the company have an output of 300 vehicles per annum, they are kept more than fully engaged'. Somehow I think this was ever such a slight exaggeration – bearing in mind the size of the Highgate Works. There is no record of what happened to that double-decker. It was probably returned to Berwick and re-used in a different format.

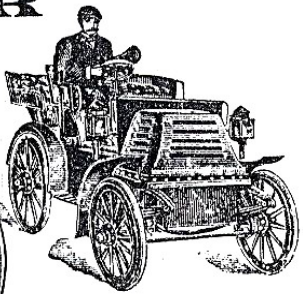
18

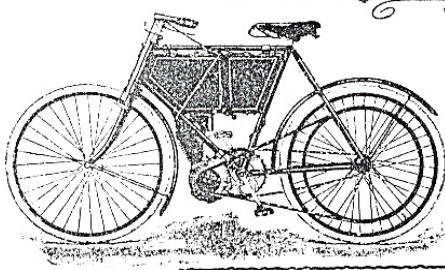
THE BORDER

MOTOR CAR AND CYCLE WORKS

Having put down **NEW PLANT** for the production of **MOTOR CARS & CYCLES**, I beg to state I am in a position to execute

All Classes of Work at Moderate Charges





Estimates given for any class of

**MOTOR CAR or
CYCLE, also
MOTOR HAULAGE WAGONS.**

Replacement Parts kept in Stock.

F. G. PICKERING

PROPRIETOR

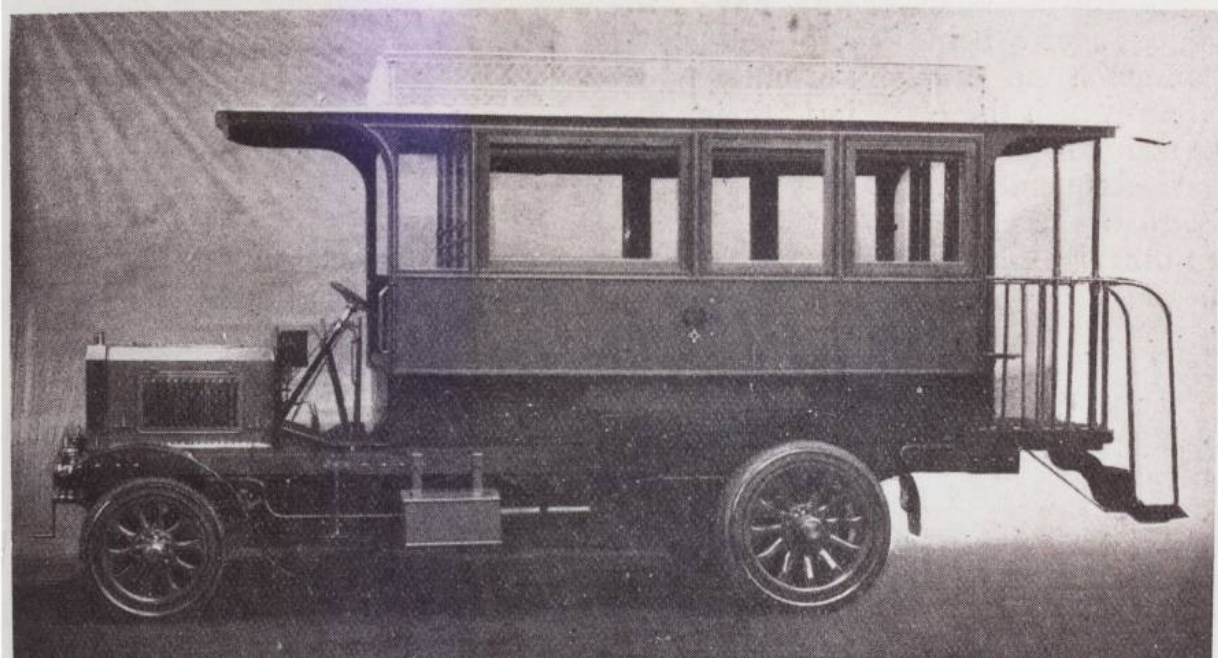
ADDRESS—
HIGHGATE WORKS, BERWICK-ON-TWEED

SHOWROOM—
80 MAIN STREET, TWEEDMOUTH.

Pickering inserted this advertisement in the local man

By the end of 1905, Pickering was producing single deck buses. Just exactly how many he built and sold is uncertain. 'Motor Traction' of 4th January 1906 contains a photo of a single-deck bus, one of three built by Pickering and bodied by the London coachbuilder, Bayley's, of Newington Causeway. These three were sold to an operator in Italy. The photo below was taken at the London works. Probably they constitute the first completed order by Pickering. It raises the question of how the chassis' were got to Bayleys in order to have the bodies fitted. Bear in mind that roads were not in ideal condition and that the vehicles were limited to 12 mph – thus

an awful lot of hours for driving – with the driver perched on an open chassis. The other possibility was that the chassis were sent by rail with Pickering's staff going to London to put them together.



One of the Pickering's buses with bodywork by Bayley outside Bayley's London premises before going to Italy. The photo appeared in 'Motor Traction' dated 4th January 1906.

Once the Italian order had been completed, the next buses would go into production – an order for three single-deckers for the Penrith & District Motor Service Co. Ltd. These were to operate between Penrith and Pooley Bridge, at the foot of Ullswater, where they would connect with the Ullswater lake steamers.

We know that these three buses actually operated in service, probably the only Pickering buses to do so in Britain. They were single-deckers. The background to the Penrith & District Motor Services Ltd. is somewhat confused when one looks at all the various documents. It was incorporated on 17th January 1906 with a registered office at 18, King Street, Penrith. Two of the Directors were also on the Board of the Ullswater steamer company and the prospectus for P & D indicated that the lake steamers had carried 38,000 passengers in the 1905 season of whom 9,000 had been through bookings from the railway. Agreements were duly entered into with Ullswater N & T, and the LNW Railway. An order was placed immediately with Pickering for three buses, ostensibly to be able to operate at the start of the Easter holiday on 9th April 1906.

This is where things become somewhat complicated.

I have a record of the names of the directors and officers.

I have records of the licensing of the buses – when they did arrive.

I have another record, taken from the 'Commercial Motor', relating to the Company's Annual Report of January/February 1907.

The last named indicates that the Board members reporting in 1907 were not those who had set up in 1906. In fact, the change in ownership must have occurred within weeks of incorporation.

Furthermore, the buses, having arrived in April 1906 were registered in the P&D name and address but licences were in the names of two other men, Tom Siddle, Crown Hotel, Penrith, and the Armstrong Motor Company (Fred Armstrong) of the George Hotel, Penrith. The names of Armstrong & Siddle would figure in the later transport history of Penrith.

The buses did go into service in April 1906 albeit a few days later than hoped on the Penrith - Pooley Bridge service. This is what the 'Penrith Observer' reported on Tuesday 10th April:-

'The motor omnibuses for the new service between Penrith and Ullswater are expected to commence running regularly on Thursday (12th April). One is to undergo tests tomorrow on hilly roads in the Kirkoswald district. Last evening, officials of the company expected one car to arrive during the night. The cars will accommodate 24 when seats are arranged charabanc fashion and 16 when the omnibus body is used in inclement weather.'

That paper didn't tell the full story. Before the bus went into service it was taken out with 12 passengers and half a ton of wire to represent a full load. A consultant engineer from the Automobile Club attended and the bus was taken round a series of hilly and challenging routes before an Agreement was signed to provide the Penrith-Ullswater connecting service.

The following Tuesday, 17th April, the newspaper reported that 'the omnibuses have been very full indeed. Last night, special trips had to be run to get all the booked passengers back to Penrith in time for trains to Manchester, Carlisle, etc.' There was very obvious pressure on buses and drivers.

To put things into context I have to go back in time much further. The railway reached Penrith in 1846 and the branch line to Keswick and Workington came c.1860. The advent of the lines was the start of mass tourism opening up the area. Penrith became the gateway to the northern Lake District and people were clamouring to see more of Ullswater, the nearest lake to the railway. At that time facilities between Penrith Station and Ullswater could only be by horse-drawn wagonettes. Some visitors just walked and others were carried by the carts of enterprising local farmers. There was a proposal to construct a railway branch line from Penrith to Ullswater which did not come to fruition.

However, horse-drawn transport was insufficient to cope with the large potential and, since mechanisation was about, then the Penrith Company tried a bold experiment in buying these three buses. Even so, they would still have to be duplicated by the wagonettes. At the same time, S.M.T (Scottish Motor Traction) were developing their services very successfully around Edinburgh, with folk flocking on their buses to the Forth Bridge. How SMT solved their reliability troubles with their buses is another story, but they had done no differently than had the Penrith company.

Prima facie, the bus company had done as much as they could. The buses, themselves, had had to be driven from Berwick to Penrith – about 110 miles – and had withstood that journey.



The first Pickering bus in Penrith – April 1906

The picture above is the only good record of a Pickering vehicle on the road. It appeared in a contemporary 'Autocar'. I have identified the location as King Street, Penrith, the location of the Registered Office of the Company. It was probably taken on the first day in service (12th April 1906) doubtless on its inaugural journey. The picture would have been taken before 24th April. The registration 'XB 306' is a mystery 'XB' is a London plate and the bus must have been registered by Bayley before delivery to Penrith. Its correct number would have been 'AO 411' which did not come into effect until 24th April.

These are the details of the Pickering buses taken from the registration documents. These contain a welter of minor detail about weight, etc., but do not give the name of the manufacturer. All three were owned by Penrith & District but were licenced to Tom Siddle and the Armstrong Motor Company. The livery was blue and red, with the upper part, cream.

AO 411 --- registered 24th April 1906 as a motor omnibus, convertible to charabanc. It was converted fully to charabanc on 1st June 1906. It was the only one of the three to be given the 16 seat omnibus body.

AO 412 --- also registered on 24th April but delivered with the 24 seat charabanc body.

AO 429 --- registered on 26th May, delivered with a charabanc body.

Penrith & District bought another bus at the same time:-

AO 437 --- this was registered on 23rd June. There is no indication of the manufacturer on the registration. One source has suggested it was a Milnes-Daimler, more likely it was a Durham-Churchill but it was not a Pickering vehicle.

Later in 1906, Penrith & District tested a Darracq-Serpollet steam bus on the Ullswater route which was reported to be very satisfactory but is not thought to have been bought. In 1907 they bought a Durham-Churchill, AO 545, and must have had other vehicles between then and 1914 but no records have come to light.

The three Pickering buses were withdrawn from service on 20th August 1906 abruptly following an accident. Nothing more was heard of them until they were delicensed early in 1916.

This would be a disaster for Pickering. Yet they had given yeoman service! The 'Penrith Observer' again:- 'The public patronage of the service has been very good but the numerous breakdowns and mishaps of various kinds have convinced the directors that the particular pattern of vehicle is not suited to the district. At no

point is there a quarter of a mile of level ground...and the gear was constantly being changed. The strain put on the engines was excessive...'

In the period from Easter 1906 to August 1906, 7,400 passengers had been carried – no doubt some by wagonette – but the performance of the buses in the circumstances had been very good.

The deciding factor was this accident at Eamont Bridge which is a narrow, hump-backed bridge, now under traffic light control, on the A6, just south of Penrith and at the bottom of Kemplay Bank.

One of the charabancs was on its way into Penrith with the horse coach from the Crown Hotel following it. A private car overtook the coach and followed the bus. Part way up Kemplay Bank, the bus driver could not get up the hill. He started to go backwards to reverse into the nearby lane. The car driver also reversed out of the way.

By this time the horse coach had reached the brow of the bridge, failed to realise that the bus was reversing, and carried on forward. There was a collision causing some of the coach passengers to be thrown on to the road. The accident was not the fault of the bus driver and was accepted as such.

Thus the buses were withdrawn – I suggest – not because of the accident but the inability of the bus to take the hill. Thus departed Pickering's buses from service. In fairness to Pickering he used the engineering methods of his time. The clutch was leather on metal; they were chain-driven – and the buses were being used very intensively judging by the number of passengers carried in those months. We'll never know what defects they really had.

Looking back to Edinburgh's SMT – they were operating similarly around Edinburgh. Hordes of passengers travelled to and from the Forth Bridge, for example, and their buses were placed under pressure. The then Chief Engineer, Willie Thomson, set out a specification required for his fleet. I think the only firms to meet it were Maudslay and Fiat. SMT went on to build their own buses, the Lothians, which were very successful, the last of them still running in Galashiels in 1930.

Bayleys Ltd., who built the bodies, had premises at 42, Newington Causeway, SE1 and 142, Uxbridge Road, Shepherd's Bush. Kelly's Directory for 1906 quotes Bayleys as manufacturers of 'vans, wagons, water vans, fire escapes, omnibuses, motor vans as well as being wheelwrights and tyre smiths'.

The Penrith saga was not the end of Pickering's troubles but we'll look at this in the next newsletter.

Fred Kennington

FRIENDS AGM

The Friends of Berwick and District Museum and Archives met for their 14th Annual General Meeting in the Town Hall at the beginning of March.

After the formal part of the AGM, the Curator, Chris Grrren and Archivist, Linda Bankier, gave their accounts of the past year.

Chris has had the threat of closure of the museum and the attentions of consultants and now he looks forward to a year of exciting exhibitions and a bright new future for the museum.

Linda's highlight last year was the visit of relatives of North Northumberland people who left to settle in Canada in 1837. 100 family members came over and were thrilled with Berwick and the kindness of its people.

Linda, of course, also mentioned the Berwick Roll and other 16th century items. She was delighted that these very rare documents had been offered to the archives and that with the help of the Friends, funds had been raised to buy them. The hope is to digitise them and to set up exhibitions to enable more people to have access to this treasure.

After a short refreshment break, Linda introduced the guest speaker, Dr Paul Carter of the National Archives. His talk was entitled "Punishments and Pardons, 1750-1850". Dr Carter is no dry-as-dust speaker!

To illustrate the justice system he had the audience participating as criminals, jurors and judges. Where once a set of archival papers might have had us yawning, here

we were laughingly sending Francis Cowe off to the “hulks” (prison ships) and Michael Herriott to be hanged-as an example to others.

Dr Carter explained how petitioning friends and family might result in clemency. However, the reprieve from hanging might still be commuted to transportation for some years, or even life. Guests looked at the case of Sarah Phillips, convicted for stealing 2lbs of tea. Although she was only 13 and had been given drink by older girls, she was sentenced to three months in prison with the first and last fortnights being in solitary confinement. Her mother wrote a very heartfelt petition-but alas, there was no clemency.

It was a most riveting talk and Dr Carter’s aim was not only to inform but to enthuse with his subject. He hopes people will volunteer to help transcribe some of the tens of thousands of documents which make up some part of the crime and punishment area of the National Archives.

Dr Carter was thanked, most amusingly by committee member Brian Chappell.

Barbara Herdman

16TH CENTURY DOCUMENTS

The Friends of Berwick and District Museum and Archives held a private viewing of the Berwick Roll and other recently purchased 16th century documents in the Borough Museum in the middle of April.

The Friends had invited the Civic Party and representatives of all those groups and individuals who had helped fund the purchase of these fascinating items.

The Museum’s newly arranged mediaeval exhibition and Tudor images of Berwick acted as excellent backdrops to the historical documents displayed in the temporary exhibition room. The invited guests were able to examine at close quarters pages written 450 years ago.

Barbra Herdman, Chairman, thanked all those who had contributed in any way, ensuring that these priceless documents returned to Berwick. She then officially handed the items over to the archives for safe keeping.

Linda Bankier, Archivist, thanked everyone and explained briefly what the documents meant to Berwick's heritage.

The Mayor of Berwick, Councillor Lance Robson, pointed out that it was the goodwill of all those present who kept history alive for everyone in Berwick now and into the future, and that it was cheering to have these documents back in their original site.

Over light refreshments, the guests were able to mingle and rediscover the treasures in the museum, including a scale model of Berwick Castle, which was commissioned by the Friends.

Thanks to further funding being made available, the documents will now be digitised and there will also be an exhibition staged later in the year.

Barbara Herdman

FACADES OF THE FIFTIES

Over the weekend of the 7th and 8th of June, the Record Office and the Museum will be holding an exhibition in the Guildhall looking at the town in the 1950s. The main part of the exhibition will be the pictures of the Shop Fronts in the town which were taken in 1959 as well as adverts from the newspapers about businesses in the town at the time. The exhibition was originally put together two years ago but we would like to add to it by collecting/copying photographs of events/people and buildings in the town during that era. If you have any old photographs which you would allow us to copy, please do get in touch with the Record Office (01289 301865 or e-mail lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk) . Chris is also looking for artefacts of that era and so if you have anything of that nature, please contact him (01289 301869 or e-mail museum@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk).

In addition to the exhibition, I also hope to show our 1950s films of Berwick and there will be a bookstall of local history publications.

Obviously the Record Office and the Museum do not have enough staff to man the exhibition by ourselves and so we are looking for volunteers who could help us for a couple of hours over the two days. We need people who would be happy to sit at the bookstall, help with the refreshments (Cittaslow are doing the refreshments on Saturday and the Friends on Sunday) and just generally stand around and help answer questions or direct people to us. If you could spare a few hours on either day, please contact Linda at the Record Office (01289 301865 or e-mail lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk).

Please do come along and support this weekend. It will take place on Saturday from 10 to 4 and on Sunday from 11 to 4. Admission is free, so encourage your friends to come too!

Linda Bankier

SPITTAL SCHOOL CENTENARY

On 29th April 2008, Spittal School held a small celebration event to mark the centenary of the school which was officially opened on 29th April 1908. The event was attended by a number of former teachers, the descendants of Councillor Edminson, the Mayor in 1908 who opened the school; the present Mayor and also the oldest surviving pupil of the school – a 93 year old lady who lives in Edinburgh. The Edminson family brought along the original silver key which was presented to their ancestor at the opening of the school. The children all got the chance to sing “Happy Birthday” to their school and to enjoy a delicious birthday cake!

This is the start of a number of activities to celebrate the school’s centenary. These include an exhibition on the School in the past 100 years which will be held in the School Hall in June. Two members of the Friends who are past teachers of the school and the Record Office have been beavering away collecting information and putting together the exhibition. The exhibition will be open to the public at the following times :

Tuesday 17 th June	3.30 to 6.00pm
Wednesday 18 th June	3.30 to 6.00pm
Thursday 19 th June	3.30 to 8.00pm

Friday 20 th June	3.30 to 8.00pm
Saturday 21 st June	10.00am to 3.00 pm

Admission to the exhibition is free and I'm sure there will be a lot of people who would like to come along. As well as the exhibition, the school is planning to produce a book on the history of the school and also a children's book. So, watch out for further information on these in the next couple of months.

Linda Bankier

BERWICK AND THE COAST'S BUILT HERITAGE - BUILDING PLANS PROJECT

In April 2008, the Friends were given a grant by the AONB to undertake some work with the Borough Council's Conservation section in the Planning Department. The project will run until the end of December 2008 and as part of this, Carole Pringle (our Archives Assistant) has been appointed as the Project Officer to work on the project for 6 hours a week. So far, Carole has been beavering away looking through all the Planning files, some of which are kept in the Archives but many of which are still looked after by the Planning Department. You may be interested to know that the files for Berwick itself go back to the late 1800s whilst those for the rest of the area date back to the 1920s.

As part of her work, Carole is looking at the contents of the Planning files at different periods – plans, correspondence, etc – to try and establish what was being built or altered and whether there has been any changes in the paper work. We hope to be able to produce a template for listing the files and put some of the information on the Internet by the end of the project.

Carole cannot undertake all the work herself and is looking for volunteers who would like to help her with this task which she has found fascinating. If you would like to help or would like to know more about the project, you are invited to a meeting on **Monday 23rd June at 2pm in the Record Office**. Please come along and find out about the project which is an opportunity to work with original documents and find

out about the area's built heritage. At the moment we are envisaging the group meeting regularly on a Tuesday afternoon for a couple of hours. If you can't attend the meeting but would like to take part, just let me know – contact details in earlier articles).

Linda Bankier

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

Berwick Advertiser, July 25, 1863

TWEEDMOUTH FEAST

The Anniversary of Tweedmouth Feast, which is looked forward to by some for the renewal of old friendships, by many for entertaining relations and acquaintances, and generally in the southern portion of the borough as an annual occasion for relaxation from labour and for amusements and jubilation, was observed on Sunday and Monday last in about the usual manner. The weather throughout was very favourable. About 200 persons here on Saturday night about a hundred on Sunday morning, and about 400 on Monday forenoon, by cheap railway excursions from Newcastle and other places in that district. On Sunday afternoon the Pilot steamer brought eighty-five passengers from the Tyne; and on Monday forenoon an excursion train from Kelso brought about 300 more persons. During their stay, there was a visible augmentation of the population, and generally they conducted themselves in an orderly manner. There was no lack of the constituents of the feast, the improvement in the salmon fishing's having enabled many to obtain the principal article for celebrating the occasion, while out of doors there were amusements for those who took an interest in such as had been provided. There were the usual stalls for the sale of gingerbread and gooseberries, roundabouts, shooting stands, Aunt Sally, and various similar juvenile attractions, all of which seemed to command a fair share of patronage.

Berwick Advertiser, August 1, 1863

ARISTOCRACY OF THE AMERICAN WAR

At least 150 persons in New York are known to have made fortunes varying from 100,000 to 1,500,000 dols. during the past eighteen months, some by stocks, some by contracts, some by shoddy, some by selling bad vessels to the Government, some by crackers and cheese for the army, and some by disposing of good offices. These shoddy aristocrats have added about 200 brilliant new equipages to the ring at the Central Park.

Berwick Advertiser, August 8, 1863

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES AT BERWICK STATION

Yesterday afternoon considerable interest was manifested in the borough among classes, from the fact that the Prince and Princess of Wales were to pass Berwick in a special train at 6.20 on their journey northward. Some time before the hour fixed for the arrival of the Royal Train, and until after its departure, the bells in the spire of the Townhall were rung at intervals; Lieutenant Mandeville, Lieutenant Inglefield, and other officers and men of the gunboats Surly and Lively and a portion of the Rifle Volunteers under Captain Ramsey, arrived at the railway station and formed a guard of honour to the Royal party. The Mayor, Alderman Ramsey, Bogue, Fleming, and Gilchrist, and other members of the Town Council, having assembled in the Town Hall, and Mr Cargill, M.P., smoking his dispensable cigar, formed in procession, and, headed by the sergeants-at-mace, marched to the station. As the train approached the station, shortly before the appointed time, the Artillery Volunteers commenced firing a Royal salute of twenty-one-guns from the battery on the ramparts, and at the station the gunboat men and the Volunteers presented arms.

Berwick Advertiser, August 22, 1863

SUPERSTITION IN THE NINETEETH CENTURY

The other day a labouring man from Worpolesdon called upon a chemist in Guildford and gravely informed him that his wife had been bewitched two years ago, and that she had remained in that state ever since, much to the grief of her husband and family, and annoyance of her neighbours. He said that he had been informed that if he got a quarter of a pound of mercury and mixed it up with the yoke of two eggs and gave a dose to his wife night and morning, in water “over which the living and the dead had been carried,” she would soon recover. Of course the chemist tried to ridicule him out of his silly notion, but the foolish man went away as fully persuaded as before that his wife was bewitched, and avowing his intention of getting the mercury and water before he quitted Guildford.-*West Surrey Times*.

Carole Pringle

FINALLY

To save on postage, we try to hand deliver as many Friends newsletters as possible in the surrounding area. At the moment, we do not have anyone who can deliver the newsletters in the Tweedmouth area and so we're looking for a volunteer to do this. For those who live further afield, if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by e-mail, please could you e-mail Carole Pringle (cap@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk) and confirm this. Carole will then set this up and send out your newsletter this way in the future.

Linda Bankier