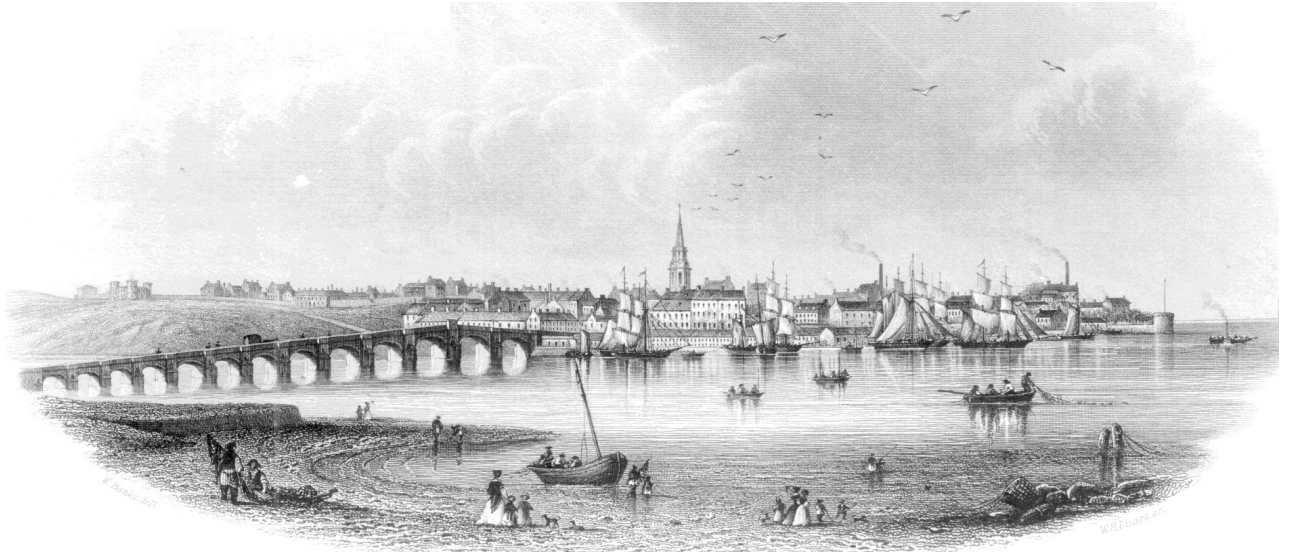


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



*NUMBER 59– September 2008*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Workhouse Project Workshop led by Paul Carter, 2-5pm in the Record Office (see article)

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Friends Autumn Lecture: The 16<sup>th</sup> century Fortifications and the Berwick Documents by Francis Cowe. 7pm in the Guildhall, Berwick

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Oral History Workshop, in the Record Office, 2- 5 pm (see article)

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Bowling Clubhouse**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Berwick and the Coldstream Guards

Connection: Rev Alan Hughes

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October

The Great North Road: Netta Rae

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November

People on the Road: Hector Sutherland

& George McNair

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Roman Frontier Policies in Scotland: Ian  
Goldsack

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Rock Art: Kevin Malloy

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November

Northumberland Murders: Phil Rowett

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas get-together in the Church

Gallery: Mary Pinder

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009

More Minor Railways: Roger Jermy

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October

An Aspect of the Golden Age of  
Northumbria: Colm O'Brien at the Guildhall.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November

Joint Meeting with the Civic Society

Bondagers on both sides of the Border:

Dinah Iredale

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December

The Chillingham White Cattle: Phillip Deakin

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009

The Life and Times of Dr. Henry Richardson:

Jane Bowen

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November

The Glen to the Eden: Paul Frodsham  
Iron Age Ferrari-The Chariot Burial at  
Newbridge-Fraser Hunter

**No Lectures in December & January**

### **BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose**

**Time: 2.30pm**

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September

Captain Cook and the Ednam

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October

Connection: Ruth Boreham  
Land Records as a Research Tool:

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November

Gregory Lauder-Frost  
Scots in Poland: Mrs Mona Lewis

**No Lectures in December & January**

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

**Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

Pictures from the Potting Shed at

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November

Coldingham: Mr Bob Thompson  
Joint meeting with Cornhill WI at Cornhill:

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December

Dr Burgess  
Thousand years of Traditional Net

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Tweed Fishing: Mrs Martha Andrews  
Christmas Social: Venue Eildon Centre

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Wizard Earl of Northumberland:  
Professor D Batho

### **DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Mutiny on the Bounty-The True Story: Mr

Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> October	Stephen J Walters The Witch Hunt in Scotland 1563-1727: Mr Roy Pugh
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	Border Families and Castles: Mr Andrew Spratt
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	The Rise and Decline of Scottish Textiles: Mr Peter Johnson

### **GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: The Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.                      Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Close to the Land-Farmers & Farming in the Roman World: Jeremy Paterson
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	Old School Life in the Cheviot Valleys: Dorothy Sharpe
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	A Poor Little House-The Story of Belford Workhouse: Jane Bowen
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Doctor in the House-Life in the House of Lords: Lord Walton of Detchant

### **LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP**

**Venue: Lowick Village Hall                                                                      Time: 7.30pm**

Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> October 2008	From Primeval Forest to Millennium Bridge: a brief history of Newcastle- upon-Tyne: Alan Morgan
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	Berwick Bridges: Jean Sanderson
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Belford Workhouse: Jane Bowen

### **NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Norham Village Hall                                                                      Time : 7.30 pm**

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> October	A lecture: Mr Chris Burgess, County Archaeologist
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Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December

Bondagers: Mrs Dinah Iredale  
Winfield Aerodrome: Mr David Heywood

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

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September  
Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November

Rag Rugs: Margaret Kenny  
Bondagers: Dinah Iredale  
Archive Film of Seahouses & District: Jimmy  
France  
Fishing photos plus party night

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009

### **NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY** **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH**

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

**Time: 10.00am**

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2008

The Blue Lonnen-Fishing Traditions in North  
Northumberland: Katrina Porteous

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October

The Abolition of the Slave Trade and links  
with the North-East: John Charlton

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November

The Northumbrian Language: Kim Bibby-  
Wilson

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Christmas Lunch

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

It's been a busy couple of months in the Archives with lots going on. During the summer months the Record Office has been used by a lot of visitors as well as our regulars. Between May and the end of August, we had 657 individual visits to the Record Office. Many of these people have been tracing their Family History and coming from all over the country and the world to visit the Record Office – it's amazing where people from North Northumberland have ended up.!

The month of June was a very busy time for exhibitions. At the beginning of the month, we held the Facades of the Fifties weekend in the Guildhall. This was a great success with nearly 1500 visitors over the two days. It was encouraging to see so many people standing around reminiscing about the shops and life in Berwick in the 1950s. I know the 1950s doesn't seem like history for those who lived through it but it is important to collect archive material – documents, photographs and memories - about that era now so that there will be information about it for people in the future. So, if you have anything that you think should be preserved, just get in touch.

June was also an important month for Spittal School. The school's official anniversary day was in April, however, in mid June a week long exhibition was held in the school hall illustrating the life of the school over the past 100 years. About 700 people attended the exhibition, many of them returning several times to look through the wonderful albums of photographs of school events, pupils and teachers. It was great to see such a mixture of ages there – from those who had left over 60 years ago to those who had only left a couple of years before. The oldest surviving pupil, now in her 90s who lives in Edinburgh also came down and met up with a lady who was one of her bridesmaids whom she hadn't seen for over 50 years! All the material from the exhibition and the books of photographs will come to the Archives at the end of the Centenary year and this will be a wonderful record of a school which is an integral part of the local community.

Re Exhibitions, I also helped the Etal group who put on an exhibition in the Village Hall about Etal during the past 100 years. The exhibition was very well attended throughout the summer.

As well as exhibitions, I have also been involved in a lot of Education work. The Old Parish of Bamburgh Group have been working on an Education Project for several years and the last part of the project has been to produce a Young Explorer's Guide to Seahouses. As part of the project, Jimmy France was producing a DVD to accompany the walk with the help of Seahouses Middle School. We spent a couple of mornings working in the school with the children talking about old Seahouses and taking them around the route. Then we filmed them in period costume acting as members of the old fishing community. They had a great time. We also involved Seahouses First School in the project as they trialled the walk to make sure the directions and the questions were OK. Over the winter, the group will be putting the finishing touches to the guide and hopefully it will be available in the spring for families and schools to find out more about Seahouses.

Work on the education project with Berwick and Glendale Schools is still progressing. The website which will contain some of the images we used will be live next month and then we are going to talk to schools about the resources.

Finally, we've all been aware of the awful weather we have had recently and the flooding in this area must remind some people of the 1948 floods. Whilst this is still fresh in everyone's mind, I am keen to collect photos or digital images of the floods and their effects in the area – it's easier to do that now than in years to come. So, if you have any photos, please get in touch.

Well I'd better stop but hopefully, this gives you a flavour of what has been happening in the Archives. There is never a dull moment!

*Linda Bankier*

## **MELANCHOLY CASE OF DROWNING**

Whilst researching the history of Heatherslaw Mill and its owners, I came across the following article in the newspaper about the tragic death of two of John Blacks' son. The Black family ran the mill and Ford Forge for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the business passed from father to son. John Black was involved in modernising the mill in the 1860s and seems to have had his share of tragedy in his life – his first wife died within months of their marriage and later two of his sons from his second marriage were tragically drowned.

The following extract from the Berwick Advertiser records the Inquest on his sons' death :

### **BERWICK ADVERTISER**

**15 JULY 1870**

**MELANCHOLY CASE OF DROWNING** - A very distressing occurrence took place on Saturday evening when Thomas and James Black, sons of Mr John Black farmer, Ford West Field, were drowned while bathing in the River Till. The circumstances in which the accident happened were detailed at the inquest, which was held at Ford Westfield on Monday afternoon before Mr Smith, Deputy Coroner.

The Jury, having viewed the bodies, evidence was given as follows : Mr John Young said – I am a student of Divinity and for the last two years have acted as tutor to the deceased. I identify the bodies now viewed by the Jury, as those of my pupils Thomas and James Black, who were the age of 14 and 12 years respectively. I saw the bodies drawn out of the River Till on Saturday evening, at a place about four or five hundred yards from the steading. I was driving from Berwick with Mr Black on that evening and when we reached Etal, about two miles from here, a man told us that there was something wrong at Ford West Field, and he was afraid the boys would be drowned. That would be a few minutes after seven. I drove very rapidly the remainder of the road, and not far from the house I left Mr Black and the Reverend Mr Ashmead (whom we had overtaken) to go on in the wagonette to inform Mrs Black, and ran myself through the fields to the waterside. I found that the boys had been under the water for fully an hour and a quarter. I saw their clothes on the bank, and gathered that they had been bathing. A few minutes after I arrived, James' body was brought to the bank. That would be about twenty or five and twenty minutes past seven. About eight or ten minutes afterwards the body was found. I had no doubt that life was extinct, but saw that every effort was made to restore animation. Mr Andrew Allan and others exerted themselves in employing the means usual in such cases, and after fully an hour had been thus spent, I had the bodies removed to the house. The groom had ridden for the doctor immediately on the alarm being raised and brought him from Cornhill. He came about a quarter to nine and pronounced both to be dead. I never knew of the boys bathing before, and had not the slightest idea that they would attempt it in the Till. – George Trotter said – I am fifteen years of age and was assisting my father as gardener here. On Saturday evening, I went to bathe about six o'clock. The deceased were with me, also Thomas Lockie. We all went in together. Thomas Black almost immediately came to a place where he could not reach the bottom. He had not been trying to swim. He cried "Jamie" and sank. His brother was a yard or two from him, and made a movement towards him, but sank also without reaching him. I saw Thomas rise again and caught his hair, but could not keep hold. I can swim a very little. I never saw James rise again. I ran up the field to alarm the people at the cottages. A great many came on both sides of the river, but none that could swim. About half an hour after a man came, who swam in and dived, but could not succeed in getting them out. A boat was brought from the Forge, and the bodies were recovered about half past seven – A Juryman stated that at that place, the river has a sandy bottom more than half way across, where it is between four and five feet deep, but near the opposite side it becomes suddenly deeper. The bodies were found on a hard, stony bottom in about seven feet of water – The Jury then returned the verdict – " That the deceased were drowned by accident while bathing".



## MUSEUM NEWS

### EXTRACTS FROM THE QUINTET

#### 1: A Tale of Two Widows

With the help of volunteers from the Friends, the Museum has finally got round to indexing the illustrations and other added items included in the 13 volumes of the Quintet which, as many will know, is the collected letters of five friends all of which sang in the choir of the former church of St Mary's Castlegate at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Chief among the treasures of the volumes are the fine watercolours and drawings by James Wallace junior, but as we have been indexing the volumes a mass of other material has come to light in terms of the documents and cuttings the Quintet members added for amusement or curiosity. From time to time I plan to transcribe some of these items, for much the same reasons, amusement, curiosity and of course, historical information. The first two documents illustrate two aspects of the Quintetists' late-Victorian sentiments, laughing at natives and doing good works. The first of these is now (of course) considered deeply politically incorrect, so I hesitate to include it, but it does take us immediately into the heart of the British Empire.

Document 1: *Speech of a Bengali Babu lawyer delivered at Burisaul - Bengal in an English Magistrate's Court* (transcribed by F.McLaughlin, a judge at Burisaul [now Barisal, Bangladesh] [Quintet volume 1 (1899), pp.483-486]

"My learned friend with mere wind from a teapot thinks to browbeat me from my legs. But this is mere gorilla warfare.(1) I stand under the shoes of my client and only seek to place my bone of contention in your Honour's eye. My learned friend vainly runs amuck upon the sheet anchors of my case. Your Honour will be pleased enough to observe that my client is a widow, a poor chap with one

postmortem son. A widow of this country, your Honour will be pleased enough to observe, is not like a widow of your Honours country. A widow of this country is not able to eat more than one meal a day, or wear clean clothes or to look after a man. So my poor client had not such physic or mind as to be able to assault the lusty complainant. Yet she has been deprived of some of her more valuable leather, the leather (2) of her nose. My learned friend has thrown only an argument and homing upon my teeth, that my client's witnesses are all her own relations. But they are not near relations: their relationship is only homeopathic (3), so the misty arguments of my learned friend will not hold water - at least they would not hold good water. Then my learned friend has always said that these is on his clients side a respectable witness mainly a pleader.(4) But until the witness explains what has become of my clients nose leather he cannot be believed. He cannot be allowed to raise a castle in the air by beating upon a bush. So, trusting in that administration of British justice on which the sun never sits, I close my case"

### Notes

1 - This is written 'gorilla' - OED records first use of 'guerrilla' warfare in 1814. It comes from Spanish and was first used in the Peninsula War.

2 - a note in the original says "the vernacular word for skin is chumra & means leather also"

3 - original note "meaning slight, distant"

4 - original note: "=lawyer"

Document 2: Letter to Rev. R.W.King, [Quintet volume 1 (1899), pp.576-77] King includes the original letter as "an example of what a clergyman in a big town has to put up with"

"Rev R.W.King, 3 Derwentwater Terrace  
142 Palmeston ??

Mr King

Sir I am very sorry to after ask you if you will help me a little as I am a widow and as been for 14 years my Daughter is out of a place and as been for 4 Weeks and I have a son deaf and dumb and very little to do. Just know every thing is so dear candles is 9 pence a pales. I belong the Church but cant get often and I am not tidie enough.

J.Brown"

Fortunately Rev King notes "I found it to be a very deserving case and gave the woman some help."

Chris Green ([museum@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk](mailto:museum@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk))

## THE WORKHOUSE PROJECT

It seems a long time ago now that I originally asked the Friends to be involved in this project. However, despite various setbacks (The National Archives (TNA) funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was unsuccessful), the project is about to start. Initially, we will be working on it for 18 months but hopefully, it will be extended beyond that, providing the TNA can find more funding. Our group is to work on the Poor Law records relating to the Unions of Glendale and Berwick which covers a large part of North Northumberland. Paul Carter who has been our contact at the TNA is coming up to Berwick on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October** to hold an introductory workshop on the project. It will be a mixture of background information and also hands on practice at cataloguing the documents. If anyone would like to get involved in the project who hasn't already contacted me, please do get in touch and come along to the workshop. The project is home based and so you don't need to be able to come into the Office. You will be provided with digital images of the material or we can print them off for you. This is a great project which will enhance our knowledge of the post 1834 Poor Law in this area, particularly as the first Berwick Union minute book has been lost and there are no records for the Glendale Union until the 1880s.

*Linda Bankier*

## PLANNING PROJECT

For the last few months I have been working with a small group of volunteers who have been busy extracting information and cataloguing Berwick's original planning files which date back to the late 1800s. We have found some exciting plans including the following :

Plan of the shop of James Weatherhead Plenderleith, Bookseller & Stationer in Marygate (now W.H. Smith), dated 1896

Houses to be erected at St Helen's Terrace, Spittal, dated 1897;

Coloured plan of the War Memorial, Castlegate, including the name of the sculptor, Alexander Carrick of Edinburgh, dated July 1923

Development of the Meadows Estate, North Road between 1934-1938. These plans give details of the plots and different types of houses which were erected.

Four detailed plans of the Married Quarters at the Barracks, Parade, May 1946

Looking at more recent times, there are also the Building Control plans, for the controversial development at the Quayside in 1973 which include details of

- Boatyard, marina & associated uses
- The Shipyard, The Quay, Berwick upon-Tweed
- The Carr Rock, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Through the planning files we have been able to establish some of the social history of the town - proposals for a new drainage system, 1918-1919,; underground and overground telegraphic lines in the 1920s, and more recently the introduction of inside W.C's and garages in the 1930s.

If you wish to join the group and do something when the weather is horrible, we meet on Tuesday afternoons between 1- 4 pm in the Records Office. It's up to you how long you come for – most people come for an hour or two. If you want to find out more about the project, please contact me on 01289 301882 or [cap@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk](mailto:cap@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk) . Thanks to all those who have worked so hard on the project so far – we couldn't have got so far without your dedication and enthusiasm.

*Carole Pringle*

## **ORAL HISTORY**

The Record Office is about to get involved in two projects which are to include an element of Oral History. Firstly, there is a School Project involving Tweedmouth Middle School which has been funded by Their Past, Your Future. The project is looking at this area in the Second World War but it has an additional element in that the school will swap and share information with a school in Poland. We eventually hope to set up a bi-lingual website. Secondly, there is a Food Heritage Project in conjunction with Slow Food in Berwick which is supported by the Heritage Lottery

Fund. As part of that project, we want to find out about food production and farming in the area in the past and present.

Liz O'Donnell from the Northumberland Collections Service at Woodhorn who has been working on an Oral History Project for the County has offered to give us a half day training course on Oral History – how to do it, etc.

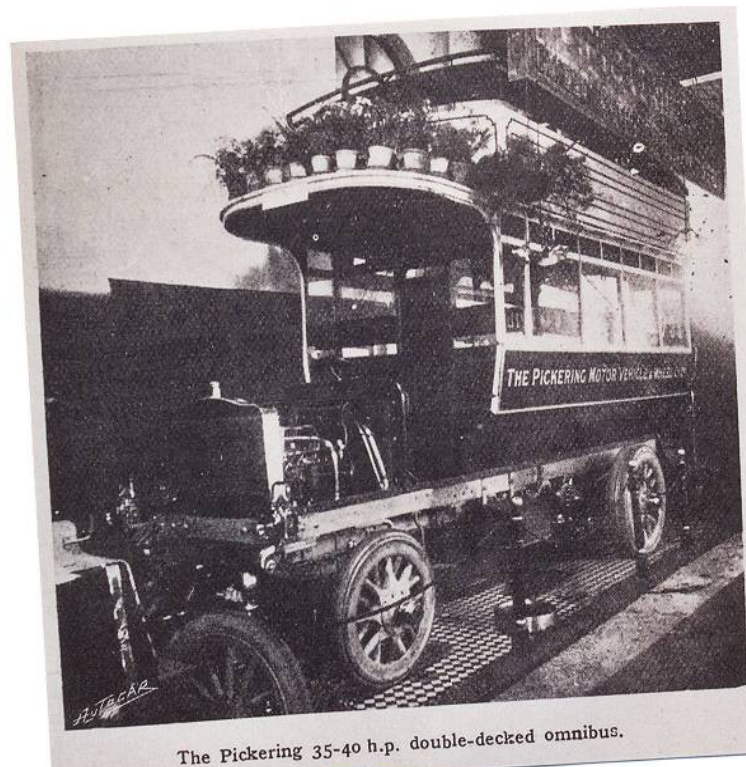
We are looking for volunteers to go out and talk to people and record their memories on the above subjects and so, if you are interested in either project, please come along to the Workshop to find out more. It will take place in the Record Office on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October from 2 – 5 pm**. These are two really worthwhile projects and if you would like to take part ( either by recording people or being willing to be recorded), please contact me in advance on (01289 301865) or e-mail [lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk](mailto:lb@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk)

*Linda Bankier*

## **THE INDUSTRY THAT DIDN'T QUITE..... PICKERINGS OF TWEEDMOUTH – PART 2**

The Penrith saga was not the end of Pickering's troubles. The business went into liquidation in November 1906 but not before Pickering had sold a lorry to H.O.Short, flour millers, Tweedmouth. This had been delivered not long before the firm collapsed and the dispute between Short and Pickering for repairs to what was considered an unsuitable vehicle found its way into Berwick County Court – the first case there for twenty-five years. The 'Berwick Advertiser' for 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1907 contains a long report of the case. It seems that Pickering had 'thrown the lorry together' in his last days of working. Not that Short had done everything right. His driver started up in reverse at the Tweed Dock and the lorry tilted over the dockside and had to be hauled up. Some of the exchanges in Court are amusing – 'His Honour' – they (Pickering) only guarantee against faulty workmanship. If you buy a horse without a head, you cannot complain but you can complain if the other limbs are wrong.' Judgment was entered for the plaintiff – the Foreman of the Jury asked if they would be allowed their expenses. 'I'm afraid a grateful country only allows you

one shilling each!



**Figure 1 Pickering's double-decker on show in London in 1906. The bodywork appears to be by Bayleys.**

What about the personalities? What about the premises? Pickering had a showroom at 80, Main Street, and at sometime, also 84, Main Street. His works, Highgate Works, were at the top of the Main Street, and taken over afterwards by A.C.Burn. Only the Court papers give any clue to the staff. George Shand had been working foreman for Pickering for two years and 'had designed the first motor wagon driven about Berwick'. At the time of the Court he was no longer employed by Pickering. Pickering used an engineer from Glasgow, David Hope, to train Short's driver for several weeks. Otherwise there is a reference to the Company Secretary, a Mr. Lumsden.

But who was F. G.Pickering? I don't yet know! There is no record of him at Berwick on either the Electoral Roll or in Rating documents. I had a look at the 1901 census at all 'potential' Pickerings aged between 26 and 45. These are they:-

Frederick Pickering	36	b. Newcastle-u- Lyme	steam engine fitter
Francis Pickering	27	b. Birmingham	engineer's fitter/turner
Frederick Pickering	27	b. Stone, liv. Birmingham	machine engineer

If he was one of the above, the machine engineer is the most likely. I'll keep trying!

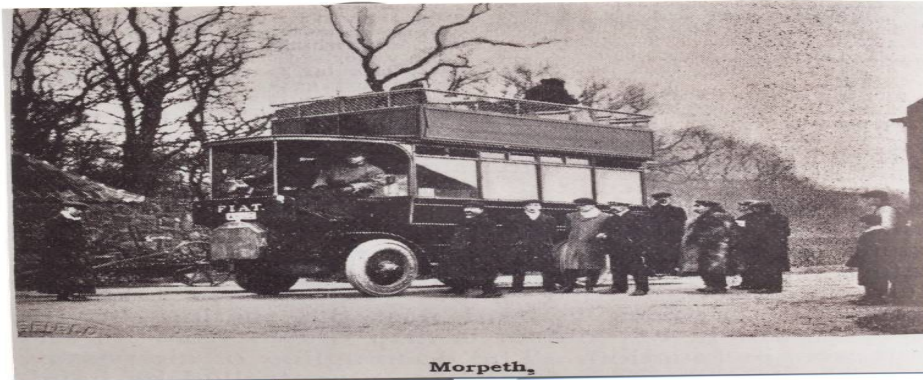
One might be forgiven for thinking that little vehicle development was taking place contemporary with Pickering.

One of the interesting test runs at that time was done by Fiat and reported by the 'Commercial Motor'. Fiat set out to produce something that would bear comparison with anything on the market at the time and, to prove it, they arranged a through run from London to Edinburgh. It was non-stop - in so far as the engine was never allowed to stop - with meals eaten on board except at a couple of places where they did stay long enough to eat. That was the chance to refuel and oil and grease.



The bus left central London at 0810 on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1906, arriving in Edinburgh at 1615 the next day, Saturday. The route was the Great North Road, with a short stop at Berwick where it arrived at 11.52 on Saturday morning, remaining there for an hour for them to eat lunch on board. Unsurprisingly the magazine quotes 'at 11.52 am we have reached the border town of Berwick, crossing the long and narrow bridge with some difficulty, in consequence of the fact that we met a drove of cattle in the middle!'

The magazine article tends to describe more about the scenery and the food they ate rather than the technical points of the run. Fuel consumption was about 6 mph.



Pausing at Morpeth on Saturday morning en route to Berwick

The Fiat was not the only bus to be tested between London and Edinburgh. There was a flurry of vehicle building going on at the time. Another one to pass through Berwick on test was the 'Granton', built by The Scottish Motor Engineering Co. Ltd., of Granton, Edinburgh. It travelled south on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1906. The write-up in the 'Motor Traction' was very favourable. It had averaged more than 11 mph for the journey – at a time when the maximum speed for that type of vehicle was 12 mph.





A 'Granton' bus was shown at the Edinburgh Motor Show in 1907 but no more buses were produced after 1907 despite the good reports.

Thus Pickering departed into oblivion and Berwick lost its motor industry – but maybe he prospered elsewhere. It would be another short seven years before the motor industry took off, pushed by the events of 1914. When that ended there was a surfeit of lorries capable of being used as, or converted into, buses and came the start of the years of unbridled competition in running buses – but that is another story.

*Fred Kennington*

## **THREAT OF SEDITION IN BERWICK?**

[Over the last few months, several of the Friends have been involved in preparing indexes of Home Office documents (HO52) relating to Northumberland, for the National Archives. It became clear that the early 1830s was a period of considerable political unrest. Much of what we read related to the Newcastle area, mining, and shipping, but one particular group of documents described happenings in Berwick.]

On the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1831, Viscount Melbourne, Home Secretary, received the following letter from John Langhorn, Berwick's Mayor.

*Berwick Nov: 12<sup>th</sup> 1831*

*My Lord*

*I have the honor to send y<sup>r</sup> Lordship the enclosures accompanying this Letter, not as anything affecting this place, for here we really have no Political Associations & in my official capacity I am perfectly at ease as to the good Government of our Good Town:----- but in receiving, at this very moment, the Communication which I have the honor to enclose, I am induced at once to enclose it to your Lordship for the purpose of shewing that there seems to be a Design on the part of most unworthy persons to rouse the lower Classes of Society to give Disturbance to His Majesty's Government. ----- Attached, as I most sincerely am in my own person to His Majesty's Ministry, I am anxious to seize any opportunity in my power to render them my best Services & with the Feeling of doing towards them, what is nothing more than my Duty, I hope I may be excused in thus intruding upon your Lordship.*

Langhorn's concerns had been raised when on Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November he had received a panicky message from Mr C. Cuthbertson who had in turn been given a circular letter by one Richard Richardson. The letter which caused all this concern is given below:

*To the Council of the Political Union of Berwick upon Tweed*

Manchester, November 10, 1831.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

We, the POLITICAL UNION OF THE WORKING CLASSES of Manchester, request a deputy or deputies from your body, to attend a Delegate Meeting, to be held on Wednesday next, the 16<sup>th</sup> of November, at the King William the Fourth, Great Ancoats-street, precisely at twelve o'clock.

We consider the time to be arrived when the People of England should make known their sentiments towards their oppressive rulers, in one united voice.

We therefore earnestly request your attendance by delegate, to cooperate with us, and the surrounding towns, at this critical period; and upon a matter which we consider of vital importance to our liberties, and the liberties of Europe.

By order of the Council,

*W<sup>m</sup> A Secretary.*

*King W<sup>m</sup> 4<sup>th</sup>*

*Great Ancoats Street*

We can trace no other reference to the Political Union of Berwick-upon-Tweed - so perhaps the Mayor was correct to have faith in the good government of his town. In the circumstances it certainly seems unlikely that a representative from Berwick went to the Delegate Meeting. Neither has it proved possible to find out more information about the Meeting at the King William 4<sup>th</sup> in Manchester.

*Jane Bowen and Janet Ward*

## **SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER**

**Berwick Advertiser, January 30, 1864**

### GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

We understand that it has at length been determined by the Government to dispose of the Barracks, Parade ground, Ordnance House, and Magazine, and that information to that effect has reached the Town Clerk. Upon what grounds the Government base their decision we are not aware. For the last few years the

Barracks have been tenanted by the depot of the Northumberland Artillery Militia, and at the annual meeting of the regiment for drill they have afforded comfortable quarters for all the men. It is to be regretted that the Government has thus resolved, for we are convinced that with little repairs the Barracks would afford comfortable accommodation for troops, as they have done in times past.

**Berwick Advertiser, March 19, 1864**

#### TWEEDMOUTH READING ROOM

Arrangements are now nearly complete by the Reading Room Committee to take the room above the new Co Operative store, as the best fitted, both as regards size and convenience, for the purpose of a public reading room, to be found in the locality. The room is 23 feet in length by 16½ feet broad, and commands a view of the river. The subscribers to the reading room now number 120, so that, by the day of opening the 12<sup>th</sup> May, there is little doubt but that number will be considerably increased. Besides a good selection of the best newspapers there will be laid on the table of the reading room some of the best periodicals of the day. It is also intended as a further attraction to introduce the amusements of chess and draughts; so that, besides possessing the advantage of storing the mind with useful knowledge, the frequenters of the room will also have the opportunity of enjoying innocent amusement.

**Berwick Advertiser, April 2, 1864**

#### BEAUTIFYING THE BOROUGH

We understand that the Town Improvement Committee have within the last few weeks planted nearly one thousand trees of various descriptions in and near Berwick and Tweedmouth, and is hoped that the police will do their duty and see that they are not destroyed. As the scarcity of trees in and around our ancient borough has long been observed and deplored, now that the indefatigable Improvement Committee have planted so many of these adorners of nature, it is to be hoped that, under the protecting and fostering care of a grateful public they are destined to wave in rich luxuriance for any a year to come.

**Berwick Advertiser, April 16, 1864**

PREVALENCE OF SMALL POX

We regret to state that small pox is becoming rather prevalent in this district, and in some of the villages to the south a great many cases have occurred, many of them proving fatal. We hope that the parents of children who are not vaccinated will lose no safe-guard against the virulence of that loathsome disease. In the districts where the malady is most prevalent, we are glad to learn, that every opportunity has been given by the public vaccinators to parties who may wish re-vaccination, and in many cases the opportunity has been embraced even by adults.

Carole Pringle