



Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 63– September 2009

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday and Sunday 12th and 13th
September 2009

Berwick Food Festival and Doors Open
Weekend – see short article

Friday 23rd October 2009

Friends Autumn Lecture “Eleanor’s Diary
- An account of life in North
Northumberland in 1804” at 7pm in the
Parish Centre, Berwick. All Welcome.

BERWICK MUSEUM & ART

GALLERY EXHIBITIONS 2009

OPENING TIMES

1st April – 27th September 2009
including Bank Holidays

Wednesdays – Sundays, 10am – 5pm

9th - 27th September

Icon of the Steam Age: A detailed look
at depictions of the Royal Border Bridge
since 1850, staged as one of the local
events marking the 150th anniversary of
the death of Robert Stephenson.

OTHER SOCIETIES’ LECTURES

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 23rd September

AGM followed by
Reminiscences and Remembrances: Lord
Walton

Wednesday 21st October

History of Postcards: George Nairn

Wednesday 25th November

Belsay Hall: William Taggart

Wednesday 9th December

Hidden Northumberland: Steve Newman

(In The Church Gallery)

Wednesday 27th January 2010

Berwick Churches: Bernard Shaw

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time:7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 7th October

William Elder Building 7.30pm

The Revived Waverley Route And The Future of The Railways: Andrew Mackie and Steve Milligan, Atkins Global Consultancy.
Chillingham Wild Cattle: Philip Deakin
Wilson's Tales of The Borders: Phil Rowett
Prehistoric Archaeology of The Cheviots and Milfield: Roger Miket

Wednesday 18th November

Wednesday 9th December

Wednesday 20th January 2010

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick upon Tweed.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 7th September

Monday 5th October

Monday 2nd November

Monday 7th December

No Lectures in January 2010

Title to be Confirmed- Steve Speak
Landscape in the National Park: Chris Jones
Egyptian Farming: Peter Rowley-Conway
Members Christmas Night

BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose

Time: 2.30pm

Sunday 20th September

Sunday 25th October

Sunday 22nd November

No Lectures in December

Court of Session Records and broken Promises: Norrie Mcleish
Border Abbeys: Rollo Duncan
Tracing My Russian Ancestors: Dr Chris Cameron

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 1 st October 2009	Old Norham: Mr J Gibson
Thursday 5 th November	Local History and Poetry: Mr N Hodgson. This is a joint meeting with Cornhill W.I. at Cornhill
Thursday 3 rd December	The Chillingham Wild Cattle: Mr Philip Deakin
Thursday 10 th December	Christmas Social in Eildon Centre Coldstream
Thursday 14 th January 2010	Lord Armstrong at Craigside: Mr Alan Fendly. This is a joint meeting with Cornhill W.I.at the Eildon Centre Coldstream

DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 30 th September	Tartans and Clans: Gordon Nicolson
Wednesday 28 th October	Burns' Tour of the Borders: Ian Landles
Wednesday 2 nd December	The Great Unknown-the writing of the Waverley Novels: Dr. John Milne
Wednesday 27 th January 2010	Gungreen House: Derek James

GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: The Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.

Time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 9 th September	"Flodden! John Heron the "Bastard" of Ford- a recall of his part in the destruction of the Scots Army": John Sadler
Wednesday 14 th October	Drove Roads of North Northumberland: I D Roberts
Saturday 17 th October	Drove Roads walk led by I D Roberts

Wednesday 11 th November	Grace Darling (talk and DVD),
Wednesday 9 th December	Grace Darling Museum: Jill Fenwick Farming in Northumberland- A Local Illustrated History: Roger Manning
Wednesday 13 th January 2010	Title to be confirmed: Chris Burgess (Northumberland County Archaeologist)

NORHAM HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time : 7.30 pm

Monday 14 th September	Gunsgreen Visit £3.50 each
Monday 12 th October	Piper Laidlaw: Neil Laidlaw
Monday 9 th November	Midwifery: Ruth Mary Young
Monday 14 th December	A Social Night with a Local Flavour

NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 23 rd September	The Early Days of Fishing on the Northumberland Coast: Katrina Porteous
Wednesday 28 th October	Dancing Over Cheviot: Noel Hodgson
Wednesday 25 th November	The Farne Islands: John Walton
Wednesday 27 th January 2010	Rev Dave Herbert plus Party Night

NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH

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

Time: 10.00am

Wednesday 19 th September	C J Leyland of Haggerston: Chris Shaw
Wednesday 17 th October	"A Poor Little House" the story of Belford Workhouse: Jane Bowen
Wednesday 21 st November	Mining Memories: Barry Mead
Wednesday 12 th December	Christmas Lunch

STEPHENSON 150 LECTURES

Wednesday 7th October

William Elder Building, Berwick, 7.30pm

The Future of The Railways: Andrew Mackie
and Steve Milligan, Atkins Global
Consultancy

ARCHIVE NEWS

I know I say this every time but the last couple of months have been exceptionally busy at the Archives – the summer has just flown by without me realising it.

The Summertime is always a very busy period on our public days. We have had lots of visitors from all over the world this year and they have all gone home, having found something. Whilst most of them have been undertaking Family History research for pleasure, we have had one lady undertaking it as part of a research project – looking at local surnames in this area which also appear in the Carribean. You don't know where Family History research will take you!

As well as our public days, the Record Office has been involved in a number of projects over the past couple of months. As I have mentioned in earlier newsletters, we have been heavily involved in the Stephenson 150 Celebrations in Berwick. In the middle of June, we held three Bridges to Schools Days for local schools in England and Scotland at Longridge Towers. This was organised jointly between the Stephenson 150 group and the Institution of Civil Engineers (North East and Scottish branches). Nearly 300 children (aged 10 and 11) attended the event and I went along on the first day. It was really enjoyable making bridges from paper tubes and testing them to destruction – they could withstand a considerable weight !- and putting together a steel model of the Forth Road Bridge which we could actually walk over. The children had a great time as did all the adults who helped. It was a fun way to introduce them to Civil Engineering and it was the first time that the two branches had worked together on an education project.

Shortly after that, we had our big Railway Exhibition weekend in the Guildhall. This consisted of exhibitions mounted by local history Societies, a wonderful track layout, displays of photographs of railways and stations, many of which had been lent to the Archives, short talks and drama. The weekend was a great success with over 1700

visitors, a mixture of local people and those from outside the area. It was exhausting but well worth doing – I needed my holiday after that !

Normally, I don't undertake any education work during the school holidays but this year, thanks to the Stephenson 150, we were able to hold a week long Drama School in the Maltings for 8 – 13 year olds. The theme was the Coming of the Railways to Berwick and the opening of the Royal Border Bridge by Queen Victoria in August 1850. The children looked at Archive sources and led by Wendy Payn, developed their own drama about the topic which they performed for their parents and others at the end of the week. It was a pleasure to work with the 24 children and Wendy. We had an action packed week and the children learnt a lot about the topic – one parent told me she was amazed at what her daughter knew about Queen Victoria and the Royal Border Bridge. I would love to repeat this again, and so, if anyone can find any funding for it, Wendy and I are keen to do it!

Finally with the Stephenson celebration, I organised another event over the August Bank Holiday weekend. This time, it took place in Etal Village Hall in conjunction with the Ford and Etal Estates and the Heatherslaw Light Railway. We had exhibitions on railways and children's activities, including art and bridge building which was very well received, with over 450 visitors over the three days.

This summer I have also been working very closely with Derek Sharman on the Food Heritage Project organised by Slow Food. Over the summer, we have been gathering information for a display at Glendale Show. Derek and his volunteers were concentrating on the food production and all that it has involved whilst I was finding out about the History of Glendale Agricultural Society and "the Show". We both put together exhibitions and went to the Show on Bank Holiday Monday. We had an excellent response with just over 1000 visiting our marquee in the course of the day. The Society lent me their "Archive" of records and I have had a fascinating time going through them, finding out what has happened and supplementing it with information from the newspapers. I have learnt a lot.

Finally, over the past year or so, we have been helping Dr Adam Menuge from English Heritage with his research and illustrations on a book about Berwick. The book was finally published in July – "Berwick-upon-Tweed, three places, two nations, one town". It is a very readable book on Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal which includes illustrations from the Record Office and the Museum. If anyone wants any more information, just get in touch.

As you can guess, it has been an action packed summer. Autumn may be slightly quieter but there are still plenty of projects to complete or coming to fruition! Watch this space for more information.

Linda Bankier

QUEEN VICTORIA'S VISIT TO BERWICK

When Queen Victoria came to Berwick in August 1850 to open the Royal Border Bridge, this was not the first time that she had visited the town or crossed the River Tweed by train. In 1849, she made a very short stop in Berwick on her way south from Balmoral, crossing the temporary wooden bridge. The following is an account of her visit which appeared in the Berwick Advertiser :

BERWICK ADVERTISER SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1849

ARRIVAL OF THE QUEEN AT BERWICK

Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and her Royal Consort Prince Albert, accompanied by four of their children, namely, their Royal Highnesses Princess Victoria; Albert, Prince of Wales; Princess Alice Maud; and Prince Alfred, with the royal suite, arrived at the Berwick station of the North British railway at quarter before eight o'clock last night.

The intelligence that Her Majesty was to pass along the North British and Berwick and Newcastle Railways, and that an opportunity of seeing her might probably be obtained, had from the first caused great excitement in this town and neighbourhood. Early yesterday forenoon the town assumed a bustling appearance, and every hour multitudes of people flocked in from all directions of the country; there arrived by the railway from Dunse alone a party occupying twenty carriages. The vessels at the quay mounted their colours, and on the ramparts, at the custom-house, railway station, and public houses of the town, flags of all descriptions were hung out during the day. Though it was known that it would be dusk, if not quite dark, before the arrival of her Majesty, multitudes flocked to the neighbourhood of the railway station early in the afternoon. At four o'clock the 33d Regiment was stationed along the line, but long before that hour the best positions from which to obtain a view of the Royal party were occupied. At six minutes after six o'clock it

was intimated by the telegraph that the train had left Edinburgh, and the announcement was made public by the ringing of the bells. An immense multitude had by that time assembled. The railway was lined by people on both sides for a considerable distance. Such a multitude has certainly never been witnessed in the neighbourhood since the days when Scotch and English armies alternately occupied the spot on which the people of both countries were now assembled to give expression to their enthusiastic loyalty towards their common sovereign, - the descendant of those kings whose armies used here to meet in deadly conflict. When it became known that the Royal party had left Edinburgh, a buzz of expectation arose as if the train were in sight, and when the telegraph announced that they had passed Dunbar station, the anxiety of the spectators became still more excited.

In consequence of the late hour at which her Majesty was expected to arrive, and the short time she was to remain at the station, no extensive preparations had been made for her reception, that is to say, there were no triumphal arches or other decorations. The space between the station and Castlegate Bridge was occupied by the Trades of Berwick with their banners and insignia. Inside the station were his Worship the Mayor, the Sheriff carrying the wand of office surmounted by a beautifully carved crown, and the Aldermen and Town Council- all in full dress and wearing favours; the colonel and officers of the 33d, with a guard of honour consisting of a detachment of the regiment; and a large assemblage of ladies and gentlemen. Sir George Grey, Bart., had arrived at 4 o'clock by a special train from his seat at Falloden, and was in waiting at the station for her Majesty. A body of the Directors of the York, Newcastle, and Berwick Railway, including the Lord Mayor of York, Mr Duncan McLaren, Mr Woods, and other gentlemen, who had arrived by the same train, were also present. The band of the 33d, which had occupied a position outside the station since four o'clock, was removed to the inside shortly before it became dark, and enlivened the interval which elapsed before the arrival of the Royal party with strains of military and other music.

At twenty-four minutes before eight o'clock it was telegraphed that the train had arrived at Ayton. The great concourse of spectators were now eagerly on the outlook. Sir George Grey, accompanied by the Mayor and Town Council, and by Colonel Blake and a body of officers, took up a position in front of the platform, near the middle of the station. At length the clear whistle of the engine and the "stifled hum" of the distant crowd announced the near approach of her Majesty. Gradually the cheering waxed louder and louder, till the train slowly entered the station amid the deafening cheers of the assembled thousands, and the strains of "God Save the Queen" which arose from the band and mingled with the enthusiastic expression of

loyalty on the part of the people. As the train moved along her Majesty and Prince Albert graciously acknowledged these marks of devotion by bowing at both sides of the carriage.

The train stopped so that the royal carriage was exactly opposite the spot occupied by Sir George Grey and the civil and military authorities. The door was then opened, but neither the Queen nor Prince Albert alighted. Sir George Grey then introduced the Mayor and Town Council, informing her Majesty that his Worship had a very loyal address to present from this Corporation. The Mayor then presented the address, (which will be found in the proceedings of Town Council) which was most graciously received, but the cheering was so loud and incessant that the words her Majesty was pleased to address to the Mayor were quite inaudible. The address to Prince Albert was then presented in a similar manner, and was likewise graciously received, but the reply of his Royal Highness was also inaudible. Lieut-Colonel Blake had next the honour of being presented to Her Majesty as Commander of the regiment in the Town.

During the time the train remained in the station we enjoyed an excellent view of the Royal Family. The Queen appeared in excellent health and spirits, and though to her there was no novelty in the sight, she was evidently gratified by the enthusiasm displayed on the occasion. She wore a Royal Stuart tartan shawl, and a broad plaited straw bonnet, with crimson ribbon and flowers. Prince Albert, who looked exceedingly well, and evidently sunburst after his life in the Highlands, wore a loose shooting coat of a dark colour, and his dress was altogether of a similar shade. The two princesses wore white silk bonnets and black visites; and the young princes were in dresses of a dark grey material, and they, as also Prince Albert, had their heads uncovered. Whether the dresses of the royal party were well or ill made we, unlike a contemporary in the West of Scotland who pronounced them misfits, feel incompetent to determine. They were evidently very plain and simple;-indeed no private gentlemen's family could appear in more unostentatious costume. The splendid saloon carriage, of which a description is furnished below, is so constructed as to afford an excellent view of those within. During the time occupied in changing engines the royal family continued standing, the Queen and Prince Albert going from side to side of the spacious interior, bowing and smiling good humouredly to the spectators, and occasionally looking out at the doors to gratify their curiosity with a full view.

The royal carriage was placed about the middle of the train, which consisted of four or five carriages occupied by their suite and the Directors of the North British

Railway, and an equal number of trucks for the conveyance of carriages and luggage. The engine which brought the train to the station was beautifully decorated with wreaths of flowers, floral devices of crowns, and inscriptions, in letters of gold, of "God Save the Queen," "Long live the Royal Family," &c. Sir George Grey and the railway directors for the South joined the train before it started.

The fresh engine having been attached to the carriages, the Royal party was once more gradually put in motion after a stay of exactly eight minutes. The cheering of the spectators, which had never altogether ceased, was again raised to its former pitch of rapture, and the Royal family proceeded on their journey to the south amid hearty expressions of reverent affection by the assembled inhabitants of the ancient "gude town" and its neighbourhood.

The destination of the train for the night was Earl Grey's private station at Little Mill (twenty-six miles south of this), which it reached about half past eight o'clock. The different stations on the line exhibited flags on the occasion, and the Station at Little Mill was tastefully decorated with blue and white calico and flowers. Her Majesty thence proceeded in Earl Grey's carriage to his lordship's residence of Howick Hall, distant about a mile, which she was expected to leave this morning at ten o'clock.

At dusk the spire of the Townhall was illuminated, and a large bonfire was kindled on the mount at the Bankhill, which continued to blaze for a considerable time after the royal party had crossed the Tweed.

The behaviour of the numerous spectators was patient and altogether unexceptionable throughout. No accident occurred, though the provision against such casualties was by no means complete, but in the crush which necessarily took place several articles of wearing apparel were lost.

The Royal party left Balmoral yesterday morning at 8 o'clock. They posted by the Spittal of Glenshee and Blairgowrie to the Cupar-Angus station of the Scottish Midland Junction Railway, a distance of 49 miles, where they arrived at 2 o'clock. The Royal state carriage, belonging to the London and North Western railway Company, was there in waiting, and the royal party took their seats without loss of time, and were conveyed along the line by a special engine, by the way of Perth and Stirling to the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, along which, without changing engines, they were carried to Edinburgh. They arrived at the northern metropolis about six o'clock. The length of their entire journey from Balmoral to Howick was about 230 miles.

MUSEUM NEWS

The museum at the Barracks has had a successful season, with visitor numbers up on last year – on one day in August we managed 288 visitors!

The “Icons of the Steam Age” exhibition will open to the public on 9th September, running concurrently with a slightly altered “Beside the Seaside” exhibition until the museum closes for the end of the season on October 4th. We have opened up an extra ground floor gallery to house this exhibition, and much elbow grease has been expended in cleaning and altering the paintwork from black to white. A great deal of thanks is due to the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Robert Stephenson Trust – particularly in the person of Mr. J. M. Taylor, who loaned us a very special selection of pictures for the exhibition, one of which – a splendid work by the artist Jon Hall (known also as “the Limner”) - is so new that the paint seems to have only just dried, and has been specially framed for us to put into the exhibition. We must also thank local man Mr Clifford Crook for giving us the opportunity to display his Terence Cuneo print “Giants Refreshed” as well as other railway memorabilia.

But just because the season is ending doesn't mean that the work stops, as there is plenty of “behind the scenes” work to be getting on with. We have already begun to reorganise the picture store, and we will be looking to reorganise the Natural History Society's library next, in order to free up some valuable space and also to redistribute more evenly the weight of all those wonderful books on the fragile 18th century floors. We are hoping to restore the back staircase to use, and reopen the small exhibition space at the top of the stairs – a frequent comment from visitors this season has been a query as to whether the famous wardrobe is still there...

We have received some interesting donations recently. Mrs Stella Straker-Wilson has given the museum a small brass box embossed with Princess Mary's image which once contained a 1914 Christmas present (of cigarettes and chocolate, long since eaten though) for her father, WW1 medical officer Steve Smith, who later became a chemist in Berwick. We have also received some commemorative royal china ware, some linen items and some lead toy battleships from Mr and Mrs Fred Kennington.

As the end of the season beckons we will reluctantly have to say goodbye to our seasonal staff, who were seconded from Woodhorn Museum in June. Joe Bamborough, Lorna Winn & Laura Keating have been absolutely indispensable in the smooth running of the museum. Joe has produced the artwork for both of the summer exhibitions, as well as coming up with well designed interpretation panels for the telephone exchange and the museum shop. Lorna has been putting her Ancient History degree to good use, by sorting out the archaeology and the painting stores when not customer hosting. Laura, who worked inventively and artistically on “By the Seaside”, has moved on to a permanent job at York Minster. We have had regular and good humoured help from volunteers Sue Handoll and Victoria Ross throughout the season.

Looking forward to next year, we are aiming to hold a major retrospective of the works of Frank Watson Wood, whose paintings have been much admired by visitors throughout this season. So if anyone who reads this newsletter knows of any examples of Wood’s work which might be suitable for display, please do get in touch.

Anne Moore

**BERWICK FOOD FESTIVAL
AND
DOORS OPEN WEEKEND**

Over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday 12th and 13th September, there will be lots happening in Berwick and the surrounding area for those interested in history and heritage. Berwick Food Festival this year includes a food heritage element – displays in the Townhall and street theatre involving the Maltings Youth Theatre and Brass Bastion Theatre Group as well as the main Food Festival in the Barracks. This weekend also coincides with Heritage Doors Open where buildings not normally open to the public can be visited. A number of buildings in Berwick and the surrounding area are taking part. Further information on both events can be found on www.berwickfoodfestival.com and www.nect.org.uk .

Linda Bankier

DEWAR'S LANE GRANARY PROJECT CAN YOU HELP?

As part of the Dewar's Lane Granary Project, Kathryn Hodgkinson has been commissioned to undertake some public art. Kathryn and John Smithson, the Director of the Project came to talk to me and they would value some input from the Friends. If you would like to help, please read the information below and respond directly to Kathryn either by e-mail or letter. Your suggestions would be appreciated and will help her in this creative process. If you have any connections with the town, either past or present, I'm sure Kathryn would like to hear about your favourite places here :

Newcastle artist Kathryn Hodgkinson has been commissioned by Berwick Preservation Trust to carry out research prior to the possible creation of some artwork for the Dewar's Lane Granary. As part of her research, Kathryn would really like to receive input from local residents of Berwick, Tweedmouth, and Spittal, and in particular would like answers to the following questions:

What does it mean to you to live in this area?

Please describe the area in 10 key words

Do you have any particular favourite places in the area?

If so, what is it about these places that makes them such a favourite?

Kathryn hopes to use the responses she gets as part of the input to a creative process that will result in proposals for an artistic element to be incorporated into the restored Granary. If you'd like to take part in this novel exercise in consultation, please send your answers to the above questions (anonymously if you wish) to Kathryn on e-mail at Studio@HodgkinsonGlass.co.uk or by post to 60 Nuns Moor Road, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9AY

John Smithson

WHERE DID EDWARD I SPEND HIS “GAP-YEAR”?

On August 12, 1910 an article appeared in the *Berwick Advertiser* under the headline ‘Interesting Find at Berwick. Stone Coffin Unearthed’. The coffin was found while cutting a drain towards one of the new houses that was being built in the Magdalene Fields, the so-called Garden Suburb, what is now Lovaine Terrace, Warkworth Terrace and Percy Terrace. The coffin was of considerable length—well over six feet—and was hewn out of a solid block of stone. Captain Norman, President of the Berwick Museum, was called in and he pronounced the coffin to be from the Edwardian period. There were no bones in the coffin and the lid was missing. Capt Norman declared that the coffin should be secured for the museum.

The following week another article about the coffin appeared in the *Berwick Advertiser*. In this article the Rev James King of St. Mary’s Church put forward the theory that the coffin might be the temporary resting place of Edward I., who died in July 1307 at Burgh-by-Sands near Carlisle on his way to quell an insurrection in Scotland. It might seem a little strange that his body would be carried to Berwick and not left closer to where he died, but Rev King argues that according to Froissart (c 1335—c 1407) Edward I died in Berwick. This second-hand information is clearly wrong, but it also implies that Froissart draws the wrong conclusion based on the information he had been given that the body lay in Berwick, before being brought to Westminster Abbey for burial. Two more things point towards the theory that the coffin was that of Edward I. Edward I was a very tall man (he was nicknamed Longshanks) and his coffin in Westminster Abbey and the one found in Berwick are the same length, and furthermore his body was not buried in Westminster Abbey until the year after his death. The coffin was placed in Mr W Lumsden’s garden and later transported to the museum at Mr Lumsden’s expense. Once deposited in the museum further possible proofs were found. Near the top end of the coffin Mr Jafray, the custodian of the museum, found the incised letter E on the right side and I on the left side, taken by some to be further evidence of the coffin being that of Edward I. As mentioned before there were no bones in the coffin, but the bottom was covered in a coating of clayed soil about one inch thick, and when this layer was removed there appeared the initials E. I. in ornamented three -inch letters. All in all the evidence for claiming that the temporary resting place for Edward I had been

in Berwick seemed rather conclusive. But rather than settling matters the question led to a heated debate for and against.

On August 26, Capt. Norman writes in the *Berwick Advertiser* 'I am happy to say that we have the sarcophagus kindly presented by Mr W. Lumsden, safely lodged in the Museum, but not before the most perfect parts of it had been badly chipped by ruthless relic-hunters. The fractures in this highly interesting relic have been successfully cemented together, and in course of the work a duplicate of the external figures or marks. E.I. were discovered on the floor of the coffin.' He continues 'the discovery of the inside duplication of the E.I. is certainly interesting and leads towards the supposition that the lettering may be more than mere mason's marks'. The large letters 'E.I.' inscribed on the floor of the coffin were put there in the interval between its exhumation and its removal to the Berwick Museum.'

On September 2 Rev James King wrote a letter in the *Berwick Advertiser* in which he told about a recent trip to London where he had the opportunity to inspect the tomb of Edward I in Westminster Abbey and goes on 'and am now more amicably disposed in favour of the conjuncture that the huge sarcophagus recently unearthed near the ancient Edwardian Walls of Berwick-on-Tweed, may have been the temporary resting place of the royal remains of the mightiest of the Plantagenet kings.' He further says that he has himself seen the letters at the museum in Berwick and he is convinced of their genuine character, and they were probably carved on the stone about 1560. He ends his letter by saying 'A silly report has been spread that a wag inscribed the initials on the bottom of the sarcophagus a few days ago, but it is clear from the above evidence that if such a droll exists, he has only perpetrated a hoax on his credulous auditors.' In the same issue of the *Berwick Advertiser* a letter appeared from Mr C. L. Fraser, Elder House, in which he talks about 'Berwick is hoary with authentic history inside and outside both walls, and it needs no distortion of officially recorded facts to manufacture something new and wonderful to render the old town more famous, not should we be asked, for the same reason to stretch our imagination to the breaking point.' He then offers to clear up the affair of the stone coffin and says 'I have spoken with the person who carved the Royal initials on the bottom of the coffin, and he at the same time assures me he cleaned up the marks outside which are asserted to mean EI. If it should be necessary he is willing to confirm this before witnesses.'

On September 9 none other than the Rev J. Armitage-Robinson, D.D., Dean of Westminster, comments on the question of the origin of the coffin. A letter from him

to the Mayor of Berwick published in *The Penny Illustrated* and quoted in the *Berwick Advertiser* says 'Your Worship,- Your townsmen have found a coffin marked with an E on one side and an I on the other, and they are trying to make out that it is the coffin of Edward I. Please restrain them. We have already one Edward I in the Abbey; how many more tombs of his do you want scattered about? Besides, Edward I wasn't twins. Yours faithfully, J. Armitage-Robinson.' In the same issue Rev James King answers Mr C.L. Fraser's postulation that he knew who had incised the letters on the bottom of the coffin, by stating that since the clay on the bottom of the coffin had to be broken up with a steel chisel it would have been impossible for anybody to have incised anything underneath it. In a second letter published in the same issue of the *Berwick Advertiser* arguing that the letters on the coffin were probably made about 1560 as they are of a late kind of Gothic known as Old English or Elizabethan and resemble the lettering on Elizabethan coins. But still in the same issue Capt F.M. Norman tries to put an end to any conjectures about the coffin. He writes in a letter 'I have this day satisfied myself by being present at the declaration before witnesses of the individual who carved the marks E. I. on the floor of the coffin, that a hoax has been perpetrated.'

The following week Rev James King addresses a letter to the Very Reverend J Armitage-Robinson, Dean of Westminster in which he sets out twelve points arguing in favour of the Berwick sarcophagus having been the temporary resting place of Edward I. Among the most important points are: the size of the coffin, the time that passed between his death and his burial in Westminster Abbey, the fact that Jean Froissart wrongly thought that Edward I had died in Berwick, the missing lid might indicate that the coffin had rested immediately beneath the chancel floor of St Mary's Church and, finally, that the royal remains rested at Richmond in Yorkshire on the way to London, an unlikely route if the body had come from Carlisle. Rev James King sums his deliberations up thus 'The conjecture that this colossal stone coffin might have been the temporary resting place of the mightiest of the Plantagenet kings may be only a pleasant fiction, but the strange concatenation of the foregoing co-incidences renders the conjecture worthy of serious consideration.' But this statement did nothing towards putting a damper on the matter. Also on September 16 a number of letters appeared in the *Berwick Advertiser*. One is from Mr C.L. Fraser, who states that he saw the coffin clear of soil on the forenoon of the day on which the letters were carved, and that there were no letters then on the stone. He encloses a copy of the alleged perpetrator's confession : 'I, John Barker, declare hereby before the undersigned witnesses that I with my own hand, did carve the letters E.I. inside the stone coffin recently disinterred at Berwick while it lay exposed in Mr Lumsden's garden.'

John Barker

Declared before us at Berwick-on-Tweed on this day, Sept. 7th, 1910.

J.W. Plenderleith, Mayor.

(Rev.) J. Scott Morrison.

Nicol M. Craig.'

Rev James King's response to this is prompt. In a letter published in the *Berwick Advertiser* on September 16 and states that all the witnesses did was to say that they had heard the statement without in any way vouching for its truth, and furthermore he adds 'One of the gentlemen, however, feeling ill at ease with what transpired at the meeting, like Nicodemus of old, came to St Mary's Vicarage by night to say that he felt morally certain the lad was telling a falsehood, for he could prove to a demonstration that the youth had neither the ability nor opportunity of cutting the letters.' He further goes on to point inconsistencies in John Barker's argument, who himself had admitted that he had never used a chisel and mallet but says that he did the letters with a hammer and nail, and the fact that the bottom of the coffin was covered by an inch thick layer of caked clay he explains that after he had done the letters he covered the bottom with soil which mysteriously got hardened very quickly. This and the fact that the coffin was covered with heavy planks to protect it from injury means that, according to Rev James King, John Barker could not have done it. But John Barker is not one to give up a fight easily, and in reply to Rev James King's letter, writes a letter published in the *Berwick Advertiser* on September 16, where he claims that the witness who had allegedly gone to Rev James King to say that he did not think John Barker had done the carving, had said to him (John Barker) that he had never approached Rev King about this matter. Furthermore, the claim that he had been away at a scouts' camp at the time where he could have done the carving was also untrue, he had returned from the camp on August 13 and the letters were carved on 'August 16, between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m. when the coffin lay as it had done for about a week, and as it did for nearly another week, without any covering except "the dust of ages," which the antiquarian has been pleased to call the mud'. To prove that he is right John Barker, who signs the letter J. Barker (Amateur Sculptor), encloses the following 'We the undersigned, were present when the letters "EI" were cut on the floor of the coffin on the night of August 16th, 1910.

Bertha Barker.

James Campbell.

George Buglass.'

On the same day Rev James King answers the letter from John Barker. In it he says ‘. . . those who are acquainted with the earnest character and deep religious of Mr Jaffray, the custodian, who first discovered the letters E.I. after the coffin was lodged in the Museum, would not for a moment cast a shadow of doubt on his veracity, words in striking contrast with the flippancy of your correspondent who accuses me of language I never uttered, and who signs himself “an amateur sculptor”, instead of a pupil teacher.’ This letter seems to bring the debate to a halt, as no letters appear in the following weeks.

So we are left with a number of unanswered questions: did Edward I spend his ‘gap-year’ in Berwick, if not whose coffin was it then, were the letters there from the beginning and finally where is the coffin now?

I have found one account in the *Berwick Advertiser* that some children had been to see the coffin at the museum, so we can assume that it was on exhibition there, but on January 13, 1911 a letter was published in the *Berwick Advertiser* signed ‘A lover of Antiquities’. The letter starts ‘ I do not know whether it is the intention of those who have custody of the stone coffin, which was recently unearthed in Berwick, to allow it to remain for all time in a backyard where it will never be seen and where no doubt it will soon become quite neglected and forgotten.’ Either the writer of the letter is ill-informed or the coffin had been moved. Anyway, he suggests that ‘endeavours be made to raise a fund by subscription from the town’s people and others interested in the ancient borough to have the coffin placed in a small stone structure built on antique lines open at the sides and enclosed with iron railings and a tablet relating the date and recovery of the coffin, and it might be added that it was SUPPOSED to be the coffin of Edward the First. . . . I would further suggest that the resting place of the coffin be at some convenient place somewhere near where it was found’. We do not know who ‘A lover of Antiquities’ was, but obviously his plan was never carried out. All we are left with is another loose end in the history of our town.

Lars Rose

STEAMSHIPS

THE HIGH PRICE OF MODERNISATION!

In 1838 the Berwick Shipping Company bought its first steam driven paddleship - the *Manchester* to compete for passengers on the route to London. the following year, having discovered that steamships were more liable to total breakdown which took longer to repair than the sailing ships, a second ship the *Rapide* was also purchased, setting them up they thought for a successful growth of passenger trade to London. As this report to the Annual General Meeting of the Company on 24th November 1840 makes clear, however, progress was not without its problems!

'..I have to state in the first place that by the Company's two Steamers there have been 41 Voyages completed between this and London.

Total Expenses	£9672.1.4
Total receipts	£12031.10.5 ½

Apparently showing a profit of £2359.9.1 ½ but this, as will be afterwards seen - has all or nearly all been swept away by extensive repairs that were required, and by events of a disastrous nature that have unfortunately taken place; so that as regards the steam trade it may be truly said that it has been carried on to little or no advantage whatever.

.....At the last meeting of the Company you will all remember it was stated that the *Manchester* had been undergoing some repair but that as the expense could not then be ascertained it was necessary to leave it over to be charged in this year's account. The work then done was a new cylinder being put on board and several defective parts of the machinery made good which, with some repairs to the hull that were found to be necessary at the time, and other unavoidable expenses, amounting altogether on that occasion to £671.12.10 and, accordingly, this sum has now to be deducted from the profits that have just been named.

In the last year too, although not alluded to at the annual meeting as no claim had then been made, the *Manchester* had the misfortune in thick weather to run down a sloop off Shields which, with her cargo of coals, was totally lost. Fortunately the vessel was not a valuable one, and the committee were enabled to compromise the matter by a payment of £330 in full of all demands.

The outlay here mentioned has no doubt been very serious and a considerable drawback from the profits of the concern, but more has yet to be told. In the month of May 1839, when coming down the Thames, the swell from the *Manchester's* paddles was alleged to be the cause of swamping a barge laden with

coals, and the same thing took place with the *Rapid* a very short time afterwards, and, what was rather singular, both barges belonged to the same people. In each case the information was that the barges had neither been in contact or even in sight of the steamers, and your committee thought under such circumstances it would be very unreasonable for them to be called upon for payment. They were therefore induced to let one of the cases proceed to trial, but whether from the prejudices of the Jury against steamers generally, or whether the evidence produced by the other party gave a different view of the matter from what was supposed - damages were given against the company, which for the injury done to both barges and the law expenses incurred upon the trial amounted to £582.6..6 and this is another charge against the present year's account.

Painful as has been the recital of all these misfortunes, they are yet as nothing compared with another great and disastrous event that happened to the *Manchester* in February last by her coming into collision with the *Syrian*, when no fewer than 5 lives were lost and a great deal of property destroyed. That melancholy accident, as is generally known, was occasioned by an unexpected fouling of the tiller chains, and eventually it is considered that this will in a great degree excuse the loss that was occasioned, and therefore, as regards the interests of the Company, it is expected that it will not turn out so very serious in its consequences as at one time it was dreaded. In the very best view however that can be taken of the matter it must be obvious that already a great deal of expense must have been incurred - as from the outrageous verdict of the Coroner's Jury the Company were compelled - in addition the necessary expenses of watching the inquest - to defend Cap. Polwart from the charge of manslaughter that was preferred against him and from which he was acquitted at the Chelmsford assizes held in July last. They have likewise been obliged to take the necessary steps for laying aside the verdict as regards the monstrous deodands¹ that were imposed upon the vessel and this matter it is expected will come on for argument before the Court of Queen's Bench in the course of a very little time, when it is hoped they will be entirely be got quit of.

All this however as you may suppose cannot have been done without great outlay and when you add to it the damage that was caused to the *Manchester* by the collision and the charges which were unavoidable while the vessel was laid up until an understanding for her to ply again was agreed to - the sum total is no less than £811.10.8'.

1

full details of both income and expenditure were given in the report, but I have omitted due to their length.

² deodand is defined in English law as 'a personal chattel which, having been the immediate occasion of the death of a person, was forfeited to the Crown to be applied to pious uses'. Presumably in this case the Manchester was regarded as forfeit.

Jan Bowen

STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT BEAL STATION IN 1867

As a child growing up in the 1950's I heard from my grandfather the story of his uncle, John Redpath, who ran off to America in 1867 and who, in doing so, "broke his mother's heart". The adventurer returned to Northumberland, over 50 years later, having survived various vicissitudes of fortune during the intervening years, eventually making his fortune as owner of an iron foundry in McAlester, Oklahoma, USA. We had a few mementoes of him at home, photographs of him with his son, both in Free Mason's dress, a photograph of him with his younger sister, Eliza (only 8 years old when he left Northumberland) on his return in 1922 and a magnificent pipe sent as a present to my grandfather. Sadly by the time I heard the story all contact with our American cousins had been lost.

But what fascinated me most about the story was the fact that John had not told his parents about his intended departure and made his getaway on the train south from Berwick. As it passed through Beal Station he had thrown a note onto the platform bidding farewell to his parents and siblings. That was the first they knew of his plans. This is where the story becomes confused. The note was wrapped around a stone or was it a potato.....? A stone seemed more practical but I was sure my grandfather had mentioned a potato! Years later when browsing through a magazine I read that cutting a slice into a potato and wedging a note inside it was a common method of sending a message from a train in the early days of rail travel. It seems remarkable today that a young man setting off on such an adventure should rely on what seems such a dubious way of communicating. His parents at that time lived at Fenwick Granary a few miles away. However, the note must have reached them for the story had come down to me 100 years later. In the meantime the vision of young

John Redpath setting out for America and casting the note onto the railway platform at Beal Station remained vivid in my mind.

Some years later, when I had embarked on researching my family history in earnest, the mystery of how the note reached John's parents was solved. I discovered through the census returns that his maternal grandparents, John and Mary Suthern, were living at Beal Station at the time of his departure. The note must have been passed to them and then on to their daughter (John's mother) at Fenwick Granary, a few miles down the road.

What is more, I also discovered from my American cousins whom I managed to contact through an advert in an Oklahoman newspaper, that John had been employed as a railway guard before his departure. So he could have a good knowledge of the speed of trains passing through Beal and how to take aim with his stone/potato! So far none of the American side seems to have heard the story of the railway platform. I suppose it made a much greater impression upon the relatives he left behind in Northumberland whereas John himself would quickly forget the incident in the excitement of the adventures which lay ahead of him; he survived a 6 week voyage across the Atlantic to disembark in Philadelphia and went on to work for the Union Pacific railway, being present at the Golden Spike ceremony when the railway tracks from the East and west Coasts were joined together. I have seen a photograph of this with numerous railway workers included but it is not clear enough to attempt identification. He married a young woman of Durham-born immigrants shortly after his arrival in America and produced a family of 11. Amazingly it was from my American relatives that I learnt where John's parents (my great great-grandparents) are buried!

I am sure there is more to find out about my illustrious railway ancestor!

Valerie Glass

THE DAY MONICA THE ELEPHANT WENT BACK TO SCHOOL!

Berwick Advertiser – June 17, 1965

Monica youngest of the herd, decided to see for herself what all this book learning stuff was about. She went to school at Tweedmouth yesterday. She followed a group of youngsters into the playground, then the corridors of Tweedmouth County Secondary School before being led away by her trainer.

Mr I. F. Gleig, headmaster, said the elephant was some distance away as the boys entered the school. "It followed on, went into the corridor and was then recovered," he said. "It came in, in a sort of quiet curiosity."

The elephant, 11 years-old Monica, youngest of five appearing at Sir Robert Fossett's circus, began its trip to school when it noticed a boy who closely resembled the trainer's son, Derrick.

Mr Ivor Rosaire, the trainer said: "Monica goes everywhere with Derrick, and when the boy ran away into the playground, the elephant followed."

A door at the school was damaged.

Postscript to this story.

Another schoolboy not mentioned in the Berwick Advertiser story was Edward Fairbairn of Prior Road, Tweedmouth. Mr Fairbairn, who now works as a taxi driver in Berwick, was at the time closely followed into the school by the elephant, narrowly avoiding being crushed as the elephant came through the doors just behind him.

The 'Boys entrance' was situated at the top of Billindean Terrace, next to the current Swan Centre for Leisure roundabout. The 'Girls entrance' was at Farne Road, Spittal Hall Estate, just off Billindean Terrace.

The circus itself was in the Bonarsteads Field, now occupied by the Swan Centre for Leisure. The elephants on that day were being taken from the circus to Berwick, where they displayed some of their tricks on the old A1 road outside the Advertiser Office before being led back to the circus in Tweedmouth.

Kevin Graham

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

Berwick Advertiser March 3rd, 1865

THE LATE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

The MAYOR said that they would be all aware of the death of the Duke of Northumberland. He considered it would be fitting on the part of the council to approach the Duchess with an address of sympathy and condolence on the death of his Grace. The Duke of Northumberland was no common man; he did more for the county of Northumberland than any other Duke before him. In all the villages in the county belonging to his Grace they found the whole of the cottages either renovated, restored or renewed, and in addition he made the Castle at Alnwick one of the most handsome to be found in the country. They all knew the Duke took deep interest in lifeboats, and he not only spent a large amount of money upon them but took an interest in their building and supplying the coast with them. They were not without evidence of his Grace's kind consideration for the borough of Berwick. He had greatly improved the landing place for fishing boats at the Greenses harbour, which had proved a great advantage to the fishermen.

Berwick Advertiser March 3rd, 1865

SLAVERY

On Sunday afternoon and evening, Mr J Watkins, an escaped slave from the Southern States of America, delivered addresses in the Primitive Methodist chapel. On Tuesday and Wednesday evenings he also lectured in the same chapel. The attendance was large. His subjects on each occasion had reference to slavery in America, the influence of Christianity among the slave population, his sufferings and escape from bondage, and the life of the slaves in general.

Berwick Advertiser March 17th, 1865

NEW BOWLING GREEN

We understand that a meeting was held in the Committee Room of the Corn Exchange, on Wednesday evening, at which it was resolved that a Bowling Club should be formed; and the field opposite the Military Hospital, extending from Ravensdowne to the walls should be taken on lease and converted into a Bowling Green. The club is, we believe, to be limited to forty members, and thirty-three were

enrolled at once. The duty of drawing up rules and regulations and making all necessary arrangements was referred to a Committee.

Berwick Advertiser March 24th, 1865

GLENDALE UNION-MATRON WANTED

The GUARDIANS of the GLENDALE UNION hereby give notice that, at their Meeting to be held at the BOARD ROOM, Wooler, on Thursday the 6th day of April next, they will proceed to the ELECTION of a MATRON for the UNION WORKHOUSE.

She must be single woman, or widow without Incumbrance; salary is £15 per annum, with Board, Lodging and washing in the Workhouse; Duties, which may be seen on application, are those set forth in the General Consolidated Orders of the Poor Law Board dated 24th July 1847.

Application in the handwriting of the candidates, stating Age, Condition, present or last occupation, and accompanied with Testimonials of a recent date must be sent to me on or before Tuesday the 4th day of April next. By order of the Board

W M.WIGHTMAN, Clerk
Wooler, 13th March, 1865

Berwick Advertiser May 5th, 1865

SHARP CHILD

Recently the wife of one of the city fathers of New Bradford presented her husband with three children at a birth. The delighted father took his little daughter, four years of age, to see her relations. She looked at the diminutive little beings a few moments when, turning to her father, she inquired. "Pa, which one are you going to keep?" –
American Paper

BERWICK FOOD FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

Saturday 12th September

- 9.30am Berwick Quayside: arrival of the sailing herring drifter “Reaper”. The vessel will remain moored at the Quayside until early evening, and the public will be able to get aboard at times when the tide allows
- 10.00am - The following sites are open free of charge.
4.00pm BERWICK GUILDHALL- Berwick Food & Drink Heritage Exhibition
BERWICK BARRACKS- Display of rare Breeds Animals
ICE-HOUSE, BANKHILL- “Ice” Audio – Visual Show
SANDSTELL SHIEL, SPITTAL-“The Price of Fish Audio-Visual Show
PAVILION, PALACE GREEN - “100 years of Scout Cooking”, display
BERWICK PARISH CHURCH – Display illustrating Victorian Harvest
- 10.30 am GUILLDHALL - Berwick Youth Theatre Act 1 of a production about the 1841 Royal Highland Show
- 11.00 am OLD GOALS CELLS, GUILDHALL – “Trail of the Loaf” recreated trail of a grocer accused of adulterating bread for profit the audience provides the jury.
- 11.30am BESIDE WINDMILL BASTION – “The Mad Hatter’s Posh Party” performance by Belford players.
- 1.00 pm GYMNASIUM - Berwick Youth Theatre Act 2 of a production about the 1841 Royal Highland Show
- 3.00 pm BERWICK QUAYSIDE - Berwick Youth Theatre Act 3 of a production about the 1841 Royal Highland Show

7.30 pm THE MALTINGS THEATRE: A stage production of the Classic
“Whiskey Galore!”

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