

Friends of Berwick & District  
Museum and Archives  
Newsletter



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**[Selected articles]**

1994 August

## TOPIC OF THE MONTH

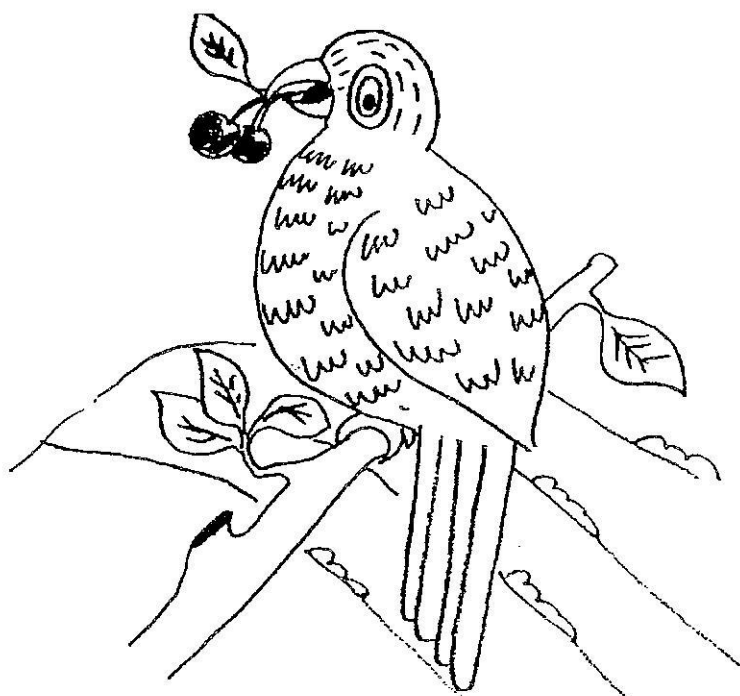
By Chris Green

## EXHIBIT OF THE MONTH

No.1 Tiled Panel with picture of Parrot

Dutch, 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Burrell Collection



Glazed earthenware floor tiles had been known in Holland in the Middle Ages, but it was only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the making of tin-enamelled tiles was introduced from Spain and Italy. An early maker Guido di Savano in Antwerp produced floor tiles and picture panels for walls and shop signs. Early tiles were painted in bright colours but as time progressed, blue and purple became the only colours used. This trend towards monochrome was influenced by imports of blue and white porcelain of the Ming dynasty. Motifs were also copied directly from Chinese ware. From the start tiles had been made with geometric patterns or scenes of nature, the Bible or everyday life. Some church panels were made up of hundreds of tiles and were original designs by leading artists. On a domestic scale, such as our panel, just six have been used, and the picture is probably copied from an engraving in a bird-book. Which particular bird-book remains unknown, but probably one compiled as a result of all the far-reaching voyages of exploration and trade that the Dutch made in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nor is the species of parrot known, of which there were 37 listed by Linnaeus (d.1778), but it is probably one of those rather than one of the 335

species that have been identified since his time. From 16<sup>th</sup> century, parrots were also a bye-word for stupidity with Thomas Nashe (d.1601) being the first writer to use 'parrot' as a verb for mindless learning and repetition. Nashe also wrote a piece called "An Almond for a Parrot" (1590) about bribery, so perhaps he had one as a pet. The great 17<sup>th</sup> century scholar Athanius Kircher also had a parrot that spoke ancient Greek. Other famous parrots include 'Captain Fling' in "Treasure Island" and the bird at the centre of the legendary 'Dead Parrot' sketch in "Monty Python's Flying Circus". Perhaps our panel was a pet shop sign. The free interpretation of this panel was by John Pinkerton.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

by Anne Cook

The current review of safety on the Ramparts of Berwick set me thinking about the deaths recorded at Coroners' Inquisitions during previous centuries. In 1765, George Skinner was said to have fallen accidentally 'from the Walls at Middle Mount'. In 1793, David Foreman 'fell from the road on the high wall leading to the old Castle of Berwick'. The next recorded incident was in 1831, followed by another in 1828. An unknown male was found bruised at the foot of the ramparts in 1880, and one Henry Horatio Hammond fell, fracturing his spine in 1883, followed by the recorded death of James Roach from a fractured neck after falling from Devils Mount in 1886. 1892 saw two fatalities, one a Jane Lavender recorded as a general labourer aged 48, who fell into the Cattle Market, and six months later a male was fatally injured from a fall whilst intoxicated.

The wording attached to all these accidental deaths was: that they died 'accidentally, casually, and by misfortune'.

## **DIRECTORIES**

by Dennis Nicholson

The first recognisable directories made their appearance in this country towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and were chiefly concerned with enumerating the numbers of traders and merchants. These early directories originated from two main sources and followed slightly different routes of development. One set of directories had a long and slow evolution, originating from the lists of traders kept by the earliest registry offices. In contrast, other directories made their appearance in a more spontaneous fashion to meet the demands of increased trading activity. However, behind both these developments lay a common motivation, the driving force of commerce. From the 17<sup>th</sup> Century onwards the increasing number of traders, the trend towards the separation of industrial skills and the geographical spread of business linkages were factors that created a demand for informative literature on aspects of trade and industry.

Although directories have been largely neglected by a majority of historical geographers in this country, they have fortunately received considerably more attention from local historians. Indeed, the street directory has been described as 'a perfect epitome of local history' opening up a vast field of interesting research.

The Berwick Record Office has copies of the Berwick, Tweedmouth, Spittal and Ord sections of the under mentioned directories, most of which also give details about the rest of North Northumberland - Belford, Wooler, etc.

In addition to residents, most of these directories also give details of Local Establishments, Institutions, postal services, places of worship, carriers, newspapers and transport conveyancing services in addition to the Traders and Professions.

Universal British Directory	-	1792
Bailey's Northern Directory	-	1792
Good's	-	1806
Pigot's	-	1822 and 1834
Parson and White	-	1827
Robson's	-	1841
White's	-	1847 which gives some coverage of Newcastle, Gateshead, Blyth, North Shields, Alnwick, etc., in addition to Berwick.
Ward's	-	1850
Whellan's	-	1855
Slater's	-	1864
Kelly's	-	1858, 1894, 1897, 1902, 1906, 1910, 1925, 1934 and 1938
Post Office	-	1873 ( <i>note: Post Office Directories were eventually succeeded by Kelly's</i> )
Bulmer's	-	1887

*Note: Most Directories also contained potted histories of the cities, towns and localities which they cover.*