



**Friends of Berwick & District
Museum and Archives
Newsletter**



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INAUGURAL MEETING

The Inaugural Meeting of the Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives organisation, hereinafter referred to as the 'Friends', will be held at the Guildhall on Friday 25th March 1994 commencing at 7.00pm. The meeting will be followed with a lecture by Vivien Hamilton entitled:-

"A MAN AND HIS COLLECTION: WILLIAM BURRELL & THE ARTS"

Vivien Hamilton was born and brought up in Glasgow, where she studied English Literature and History of Art at the University, graduating in 1978. Studying also at Pennsylvania State University she later taught art history in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Specializing in French art of the 19th Century she worked first at Glasgow's Hunterian Gallery before becoming Assistant Keeper in Fine Art at the Burrell Collection in 1978. In 1990 she organised an exhibition on Joseph Crawhall and in 1993 a major exhibition on 'Boudin' at Trouville, which was also seen in Glasgow and London, writing highly readable books to go with each. As a break from art history she also skis and races yachts.

At this Inaugural meeting it is intended to provide wine and soft drinks at a suitable time during the proceedings. It is also intended to have a Membership Desk to enable future prospective members to enrol on the spot. Application forms will be available and payment of subscriptions, listed below, may be made.

Individual Members	-	£3.00 per annum
Family Membership	-	£5.00 per annum
Institutional Membership	-	£10.00 per annum

Note:- Institutional Membership covers Institutes, Societies and any specific interest or academic groups.

Having now covered the forthcoming Inaugural Meeting, the following discourse traces the background history leading to the formation of the 'Friends':-

PUBLIC MEETING

GUILDHALL - BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

25th November 1993

Following an initiative by the Borough Council based on their wish to promote ways of enabling users of the Berwick Record Office and the Borough Museum and Art Gallery to become more closely identified with the facilities available in these organisations, a public meeting was convened with the objective of forming a 'Friends' group to promote these purposes. The **FBDMA** was successfully launched at the above meeting, which was attended by some 70 prospective founder

members. At this meeting the Chairman, Councillor The Hon. Ian Bennet, set out the basic aims of the 'Friends' thus:-

'To further the aims and objectives of the Borough Archives and the Museum and Art Gallery services in the promoting, supporting, assisting and preservation of Archive, Museum and Art Gallery material and services, thereby providing enhanced facilities for historical recording and public educational work. In furthering the aims of the Archives, Museum and Art Gallery by support and co-ordination of the voluntary assistance by 'Friends' having related interests, it is anticipated that publicity, educational activities, fund raising and other work in furtherance of the 'Friends' objectives will be undertaken'.

At the termination of this public meeting, and in accordance with the decision to proceed with the formation of a 'Friends' organisation, a Steering Committee was formed and held, in situ, an informal meeting chaired by Councillor Bennet. This informal meeting was followed, on 7th December 1993 by the first formal meeting of the Steering Committee at which an election of Officers took place, which was as follows:-

Chairman	Lady Rose Crossman
Vice-Chairman	Mrs B. Herdman
Secretary	Mrs Anne Cook
Treasurer	Mrs M. Gacek
Membership Secretary	Mr N. Duke
Editor/Press	Mr D. Nicholson
(Borough Archivist	Mrs Linda Bankier
Ex-officio (Museum and Art Gallery Curator	Mr Chris Green
Honorary Auditor	Mr Stuart Bankier

Note:- At this meeting it was resolved that Charitable Trust status should be sought. This meeting also formulated all other aims and objectives, details and administrative requirements of the new organisation.

Having now briefly outlined the structure, aims and objectives of the 'Friends' organisation, it is time to define, in some detail, the future programmes, requirements and data and information availabilities.

For those members who have Archival research interests it is suggested they make initial contact with Mrs Bankier on either her Wednesday or Thursday public open days, or by telephone at any time on Berwick 330044, in order to discuss or further their own individual interests or to make known in what ways they can be of assistance in any Record Office work or programmes, for example:-

1. North Northumberland oral history projects aimed at preserving details of all aspects of life in the Northumbrian past. If a sufficient number of members are interested in this project, and returns of interests questionnaires sent out indicates there is, a workshop could be set up to give instruction in oral history recording techniques. Mrs M. Raper has shown a willingness to give a talk to an oral history group as and when one is formed.

2. At the present time there are a number of volunteers doing indexing and transcription work on Record Office historical documents, registers etc. These documents cover all known aspects of Berwick and North Northumberland's ways of life, and death, as far back as the 13th Century. Further research work on all these aspects is needed. Research work is also needed in the compilation of material for the new Berwick Encyclopaedia which will form part of the "Window on Berwick" educational project.
3. Further research work is necessary in the recording, for posterity, of Monumental Inscriptions on the gravestones in various churchyards and civic cemeteries in the area. Regarding this activity Mrs Barbara Herdman has expressed a willingness to organise outings to various cemeteries for the purpose of recording memorials. Again, analysis of members' interests indicate a good degree of interest in this subject. Details of any such future excursions will be advised as and when details of interest levels are known.
4. The setting up of a computer database programme to record all aspects regarding the admission of freemen of Berwick from the start of the 'Guild' books in the early 16th century. When a computer programme is devised, volunteers could be responsible for inputting all the Freeman's admissions and personal data. A number of members have expressed interest in this subject.
5. Research is needed into all photographic - ancient and modern - aspects of Berwick and North Northumbrian life including trades, commerce, transport etc. This is a subject which can yield great knowledge which would be of great value to both the Archives and Museum. Acquisition of old photographs, postcards, posters, etc., is to be greatly encouraged, by legal means of course.
6. It is hoped that, under the guidance and with the assistance of Mrs Bankier, the subjects of records' transcription, typing, computers and desk-top publishing can be explored.
7. A lot of the work undertaken by Mrs Bankier is in the field of Family History research, a subject for which the Record Office has much to offer in the way of documentary evidence and the considerable expertise of Mrs Bankier. In furtherance of the tracing of family histories, the Record Office is conducting a one day course on Saturday, 7th May 1994, which will advise on sources, how to start and where to start. Practical sessions using Record Office documents will form part of the course as will lunch and coffee included in the £20 course fee. If interested please contact Mrs Bankier on telephone 0289 330044.

Members having interests directly connected with Museum and Art Gallery matters will need, initially, to establish contact with Mr Chris Green, the Curator, on Berwick 0289 330933 or at the Museum, in order to register their interests, lines of enquiry or research, and to find out in which ways they can be of assistance.

It should be noted that, with regard to the admission of 'Friends' to the Museum and Art Gallery complex, for whatever purpose, it is the intention of the Borough Council to utilise existing residents' passes with the word 'FRIEND' inserted instead of 'RESIDENT' where appropriate. Further details of this aspect of membership will be advised. The main aspirations and requirements of the Museum and Art Gallery component, in the context of 'Friends' interests are:-

1. Stocktaking of all Museum and Gallery artefacts, pictures and other possessions together with assessment of their relevance to Record Office data and historical associations.
2. Invigilating at those exhibitions that may be set up from time to time, to provide public information and guidance on the technicalities, histories and any other data relevant to the exhibited material. Provision of such data and information to the public may well require a certain amount of investigative work by the invigilator in the presentation of that information in an appropriate form and manner.
3. Distribution and presentation of publicity material, after any necessary research, to enhance public knowledge and awareness of existing collections, and on any new acquisitions.

For full public benefit, through both the Record Office and the Museum and Art Gallery services, the collection and acquisition of contemporary written and recorded material, artefacts and all other relevant data, by lawful means of course, must be a continuing commitment of 'Friends' in order to build up and maintain as comprehensive a picture as possible of North Northumbrian life through the ages. It must be stressed that the 'Friends' can and must fulfil a vital role in being the eyes and ears of the community in both the acquisition of knowledge as well as material things, and both the Curator and the Archivist have signified their willingness to assist in the procurement and exhibition of any acquired material. They may be contacted at any time for advice and assistance.

In furtherance of the above aims and aspirations, the Committee is intending to organise a series of lectures on topics of local interest. Meetings may be held in the Museum and it is hoped to cover such topics as the 'Bell Tower'; Ford Estate; North Northumberland Harbours; 'Thomas Sword Good'; North Northumberland photographs and postcards etc. Details of any such talks will be advised as and when arranged. Mrs Anne Cook, the Steering Committee Secretary, has now been co-opted onto the Museum Working Group and may be contacted with regard to Museum and Art Gallery activities and information, in addition to Mr Chris Green. Mrs Cook may be contacted on 0289 330459.

This first Newsletter is the forerunner of an intended quarterly issue. Subsequent issues will give details, progress reports and general information on both new and continuing projects and topics of related interests.

A desirable feature of future Newsletters would be the inclusion of letters, comments, observations, short articles etc., submitted by 'Friends', on the topics of relevance to the foregoing aims and philosophies. Subsequent to the Inaugural Meeting, the first details of future arrangements for talks, programmes, presentations etc., will be advised. However, in the meantime, there is no reason why members should not initiate their own particular needs or offers of assistance. Mrs Bankier and Mr Green are keen and ready to assist at the times, and in the locations advised in the foregoing.

Dennis Nicholson