

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



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[Selected articles]

1995 December

CHRISTMAS PAST

How did people celebrate Christmas in the past? The following are extracts from the Berwick Journal for 1894.

ADVERTS

H. S. Garland

Goldsmith and Jewellers

27, High Street

For tasteful and inexpensive Christmas and New Year's Presents:

Gold watches	£3-3-0 and upwards
Gold rings	7s 6d and upwards
Gold eyeglasses	16s 6d and upwards
Solid Sterling silver bangles	£0-1-6 and upwards
Solid silver tooth picks	2s 0d and upwards

T. M. Morrison and Nephew

15 & 17 High Street

Choice and Useful Christmas Gifts including:

Natural squirrel Tail boas	10s 6d to 46s
Skunk and brown bear muffs	28s 6d
Ladies dressing gowns	11s 9d to 43s
Ladies Kimberley Driving gloves	3s 3d per pair

Scott and Inglis, Berwick

Real Japanese silk Neckerchiefs	9s ½ d, 1s 2d, 1s 9d, 1s to 2s 11d
Gentlemen silk mufflers	2s, 2s 11d, 3s 11d

Paxton and Purves, High Street

Dressing cases, brush cases, handbags, purses, photo frames and screens

Jackets, cushions, cosies, Down Quilts, fur-lined cloaks, sable circlets for the neck

Boas, muffs, gloves, handkerchiefs, fancy aprons, umbrellas, etc.

Miss Strother, Hide Hill

Is showing a large assortment of goods suitable for Xmas and New Year presents comprising Muslin and Lace Pinafore, fancy aprons in Satin, silk, cashmere and muslin, wool shawls and capes, also a great variety of dolls.

SHOP WINDOWS

Paxton and Purves

By far the most handsome window in town is that of Messers Paxton and Purves, High Street where the combination of the various coloured articles have been treated most artistically. Under gaslight, we could hardly imagine anything more Oriental in appearance. The extensive window is devoted entirely to silk goods, fancy wood and leather goods, and numerous bric-a-brac in plushes and other dainty ornamentation, the whole comprising lines most suitable for gift purposes and general decoration. A lot of handpainted work cannot fail to command the admiration of onlookers.

Messers William Cowe and Sons

Are, as usual, despatching their world wide famed Berwick Cockles to all parts of the globe. They are showing a large tempting stock of goods for the festive season, including fancy fruits, crackers, and beautiful boxes of chocolates, oranges and apples in thousands. They have also a very fine tea, in pretty tins at 2s each, which will make an acceptable present. Their show is complete throughout, and like many more, ready to be distributed immediately on receipt of orders.

R. Dodds and Son, High Street

Exhibit a large display of high class Christmas goods, including chocolates in fancy boxes, from the best makers, confectionery from the celebrated Compagnie Francaise Company, finest fruits of the season, Messers Howell and Tom Smith's celebrated crackers, McVitie's and Price's, Huntley and Palmer's famous biscuits and cakes. A striking feature is the exhibit of eastern novelties, comprising Japanese gongs, trays, stamp boxes, tables, vases, handsome screens, etc. making a splendid selection from which to choose Christmas presents.

ENTERTAINMENT

Tweedmouth United Presbyterian School

On Thursday afternoon, the children attending the school presented their teachers with suitable Christmas gifts. Master William Heley, in name of the boys, presented Mr Hobbs with a beautiful and handsomely mounted inkstand; and master Thomas Ogle followed immediately after with a large currant loaf. The teachers thanked the children for their beautiful gifts, wished them compliments of the season and let them off to enjoy themselves for a time.

At the Workhouse

The usual treat to the inmates of the Workhouse was celebrated in the customary manner. The dining room and wards were suitably decorated and made cheering by mistletoe and holly, numerous scrolls and mottos being hung round the walls. At 10 o'clock nearly 40 inmates young and old, sat down in the large room and partook of roast beef and plum pudding. Numbers of young people, and the sick and infirm were attended in their wards. The Christmas arrangements were again admirable and a peep through the institution was excellent testimony to the Master and Matron (Mr and Mrs Graham). The Mayor and Mayoress and the Sheriff, accompanied by Mrs Graham, visited each of the Wards, and the Mayoress spoke kindly words to the inmates.

Public Dance

A public dance was held on Christmas Eve in the Good Templars Hall. The attendance was a very large one, and the dance was much enjoyed. Mr William Shiell supplied the music.

Letter to the Editor

Kindly permit me a few lines in your enterprising paper for the exposure of what I term a public nuisance.

On several high days, notably Christmas and New Year, dances and social parties are held in the Good Templar Hall. These, as in past years, and particularly on Tuesday evening last, have been characterised by rowdyism and drunkenness with the usual accompaniment of disgusting language, at the hour of dispersing and very frequently in the small hours of the morning.

I would strongly and on behalf of numerous complaints, beg to draw the attention of "those in authority" to at once take steps to remedy this grievous defect by immediately putting a stop to such unseemly conduct.

A Resident 26 December

Nothing Changes!

Berwick Rangers v The Borough

The Rangers faced an eleven composed of a selection from the Borough on Christmas Day at Shielfield before a large turnout of spectators. The Borough took the advantage of the strong wind blowing and kicked over the hill. At half time there was no scoring. On the crossover, Rangers looked for their turn and the ball was no sooner off than the Borough goal was stormed.

A further 4 goals were scored by Rangers. After this further play was uninteresting and one sided, the Borough now being completely quietened and apparently quite unable to travel uphill, although the wind had much abated.

Result Rangers 5 Borough 0

The game all through was a roughly contested one and there appeared to be a lot of old scores to wipe off among the players. For some time this was ridiculous, considering the unimportant

nature of the game. The Borough made a mistake in this particular and suffered for their folly and the superior stay of the Rangers told in the long run. For a fast game, the Rangers were goals better. Some fault was found with the decisions of the referee amongst the spectators - but a Christmas dinner has many effects and possibly this was one of them. Though a neutral person is certainly the most desirable, it is difficult to get one, and the spectators should certainly have a little more toleration for those unpaid and much abused officials.

Linda Bankier

EXHIBIT OF MONTH

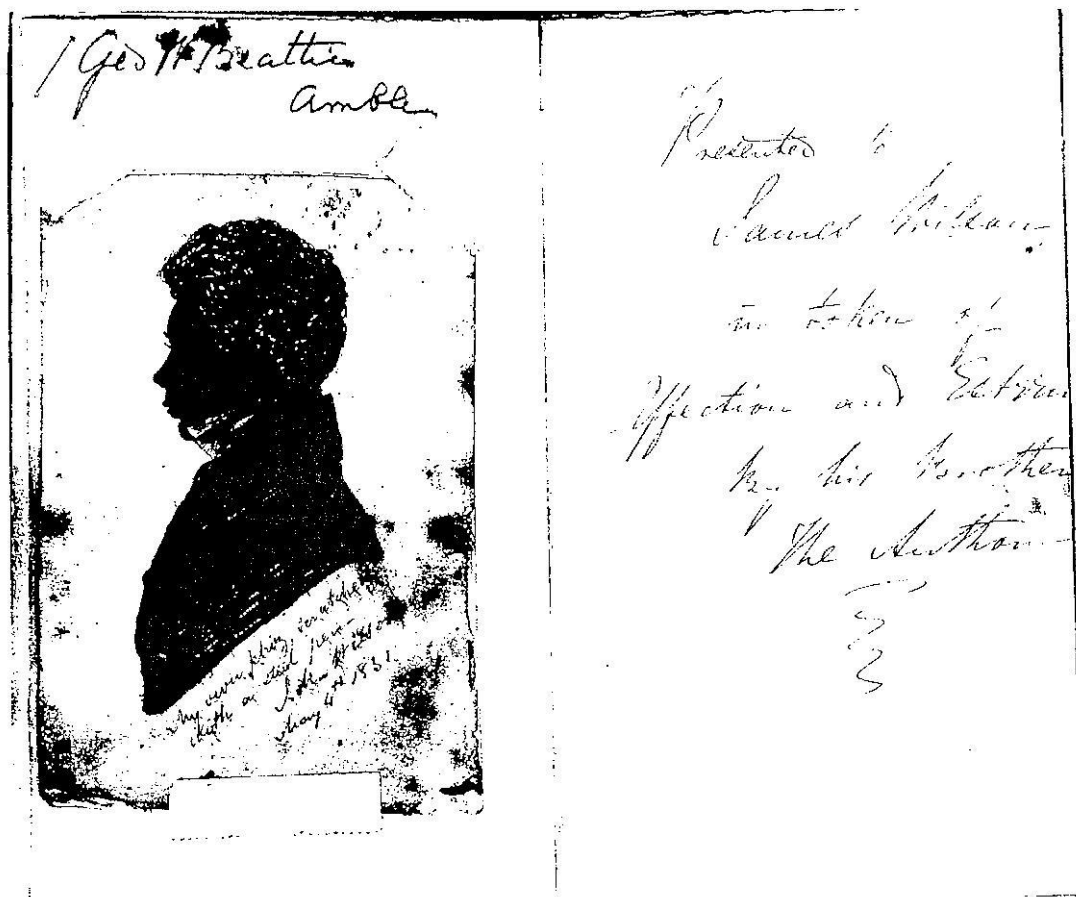
Silhouette Self Portrait

by John MacKay Wilson (1804-1835)

In a copy of his *The Enthusiast* (1834)

Presentation copy of his Brother

BERMG: 1987.20



This month's exhibit is part of a small display marking the 160th Anniversary of the death of local author and editor, John Mackay Wilson. Born in Tweedmouth, the son of a millwright, he was educated locally and soon apprenticed to a Berwick printer.

Spending some time in London he saw Mrs Siddons perform at Covent Garden and turned his hand to writing poetry, drama and lecturing on literature. His first publication was *A Glance at*

Hinduism: A Poem (Berwick, 1824) which reflected concerns in Parliament at the time about Indian infanticide and other Hindu rituals.

Moving to Edinburgh, his plays including *The Gowrie Conspiracy* (1829) and *Margaret of Anjou* met with little success and he returned to Berwick to contribute to *The Border Magazine* (1831-32), becoming editor of *The Berwick Advertiser* in the Spring of 1832. At the same time he began collecting local folk-tales and stories which he started to publish as *Historical, Traditional and Imaginative Tales of the Borders* in weekly parts on 8th November 1834.

Unfortunately, the work-load proved too much, and, previous years of poverty having undermined his health, he succumbed to a fatal illness and died less than a year later on 3rd October 1835. He was buried in Tweedmouth Churchyard, where his monument may still be seen. His brother Samuel Wilson continued to edit and publish *The Tales* which ran to 2480 pages in the first published edition of 6 volumes (Edinburgh, 1834-40). Editor Alexander Leighton (1800-1874) expanded the work to 24 volumes, adding many more tales from other sources. *The Tales* were enormously popular in the 19th Century with around a dozen editions or selections, though only one small selection has appeared (1934, reissue 1947) in this century. They remain a fascinating source of local lore and legend.

Incidentally, the craze for silhouettes reached its high point at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th Century. The name comes from Editienne de Silhouette (1709-67) who was a French finance minister renowned for his miserly policies. His hobby was making paper cutouts, which seemed to some a miserly form of art. The name was used first in Germany in 1780, in Britain they were at that time called 'shades'. They gained intellectual respectability when Dr Johann Kaspar Lavater published an account (1778) of the personalities of famous people based on their physiognomy. This theory of character types was used by later 19th Century phrenologists but modern science doubts that facial appearance has anything to say about personality. Many notable silhouettists developed the art to a point of great precision but eventually it lost out to photography.

Chris Green

SNIPPETS FROM **17TH CENTURY TWEEDMOUTH MANOR COURT ROLLS**

The Court of View of Frankepledge with the Court Baron of the Right Worshipful the Mayor & Bailiff & Burgesses of the Burrough of Berwick upon Tweed for the Manor aforesaid held before Thomas Dickenson gent. Steward there the 14th Day of Oct 1658.

Present the Towne of Tweedmouth and Spittle for that the highway at the end of the Loning called Sunnside is much broken.

They present them that boyle salmon heare as very noysome and dangerous and order that none for the future boyle any in Tweedmouth in penalty of six shillings and eight pence for every such offence.

They present Mr George Autherlony, for that the forefront of his house or garden is not in sufficient repair.

They present George Henderson for letting a house to a Stranger and not giving security to the Steward and Bayliffe according to the Order of Court to pay 00:06:08 and Mr George Acterlony for the like 00:06:08.

For the matter in plea between George Autherlony, Clerke, plaintiff & George Moody, defendant, being an action of debt of twelve shillings for three years rent of a handling coble. The Jury do finde due to the plaintiff for Nyne shillings & two pence & the Coste of Court.

They present Catherin the wife of Roger Allom for that she abuseth the Constables when they were executing their office according to Law, which tende to the great detriment of the Common-Wealth, in discouraging the office, impending justice & of Very Badd Example to Lewd Persons. Upon consideration whereof the sum of three shillings and four pence is to be Levyed on the Goods & Chattells of her husband Roger Allom for the use of the Lorde of Manor.

They present Thomas Law for keeping Geese & Ducks in Spittle which doe abuse the water, for which he is fined & the same Levyed on his Goods/one shilling & eight pence.

The Suite Rolls of the Court of Tweedmouth for 22nd Oct. 1662 record the names of 13 Freeholders & names of about 70 tenements and cottages 2 Malt Houses, a horse mill near the bridge and a list of 54 people who have not paid their "brew ferme". There were another 70 cottages in Spittle.

Ordered that Constables & Churchwardens in the several Towns and places within the Manor shall take & apprehend all such persons as they shall find begging on the Lords Day & set them in the stocks & there keep them until they engage to doe soe no more.

Mr George Ochterlonye of Tweedmouth, Clarke, comyth against Gabriell Gotterson in a plea of debt for the rent of the vicarage house possessed by him.

"we refer this to the next court.

Ordered that the Stocks be put in Good Repair

Ordered that the assessment for repairing the highways be paid into the Bayliffs hand within eight days that it may be put to the use for which it was appointed.

We find Tho. Patrick's daughter Margaret for washing her peticote in ye Common Watter Course & when the Constables reproved her she tould them she would do it again soe we fine her xxx.

Joyce Stone

"A POLICEMAN'S LOT IS NOT AN 'APPY ONE"

The parochial office of Constable dates back at least to manorial days and possibly to the days of King Alfred. The power of the manor court to appoint the Constable was usually exercised until 1842 when the powers of the Leet, or Manorial Court, were transferred to the Vestry, which was the governing body of the parish. The post of unpaid Parish Constable remained until the County

Police Act of 1839 enabled counties to establish paid police forces; some did so soon afterwards, though some did not until 1856. Northumberland did so in 1856/7. The Parish Constable, originally an unpaid officer either of the manor or of the township became, by general consent, the principal executive authority in the parish. His powers of arrest were very often exercised. He could take charge of any who had committed a felony, and intervene, when he saw a minor offence committed or apprehend a breach of the peace, to detain the offender. The culprit might be held in the stocks, the roundhouse, or the cage, or even the Constable's own house until it was possible to bring him before a magistrate.

The primary duty of the Constable was to take charge of the system for keeping 'Watch and Ward' in the parish; this system, introduced in 1285, obliged a locality to keep its own law and order. 'Watch' was the term for night guard of constables, and 'Ward' referred to their daytime duties. Up to sixteen men were to guard the walls throughout the night and place any wrongdoers in the hands of the parish constable the next day. The Statute of 1825 also introduced the system of 'Hue and Cry' in which a person wishing to make an arrest could call on the rest of the parish to join him in pursuit. A third requirement of the Statute laid down that each man aged between 15 and 60 had to keep weapons or effects with which to help keep the peace. Further constabulary duties were in maintaining the parish butts and taking charge of the parish arms and armour. In furtherance of the 'Militias' the Constable was also empowered to collect the appointed men, take them to the musters together with the parish arms and armour, and provide stipulated amounts of money for the maintenance of the men at the muster. The management of the parish's contribution to the Militia in both men and money was also part of the Constable's duties.

Prior to the establishment of paid County police forces, and after the old system of 'Watch and Ward' was outgrown, there came into being what were generally called 'Associations for the Prosecution of Felons'. In these associations, property owners, tradesmen and others of influence in local communities clubbed together and paid subscriptions which were used to fund the payment of rewards to informers. In the early 1800's these associations were active in many local areas such as Berwick, Tweedmouth, Ancroft Lowick, Belford and Bamburgh. Upon perception of any felonies the duty of such Associations was to report any of the said felonious acts to the Parish Constable for judicial action. Some examples of Associations' actions are given below:-

"AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION IN BERWICK FOR PROSECUTING FELONIES AND MISDEMEANORS HELD AT THE RED LION ON WEDNESDAY THE 1ST DAY OF JUNE inst. (1808) TO AUDIT THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PRECEDING YEAR. IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT THE SAID ASSOCIATION IS AN USEFUL AND NECESSARY INSTITUTION AND SHOULD BE CONTINUED. 7 MEMBERS ELECTED AS A COMMITTEE. AROUND 120 OTHER NAMES AS MEMBERS. PERSONS RESIDING IN BERWICK OR WITHIN THE LIBERTIES THEREOF MAY BE ADMITTED MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION UPON PAYMENT OF FIVE SHILLINGS ADMISSION MONEY."

28 Jan 1809

"PROPOSAL TO FORM BELFORD ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF FELONS MEETING HELD AT THE BLUE BELL INN. ASSOCIATION FOR PROSECUTING TO CONVICTION ANY PERSON OR PERSONS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING MURDERS, ROBBERIES, AND EVERY OTHER SPECIFIES OF FELONY, PETTY THEFTS, MISDEMEANORS AND TRESPASSES AGAINST THE PERSONS, FAMILIES AND PROPERTIES OF EACH AND EVERY MEMBER (26 MEMBERS)."

"BELFORD ASSOC. PROMISES TO REWARD ANY PERSON(S) GIVING INFORMATION AGAINST FARMERS', SERVANTS AND OTHERS DRIVING CARTS & FURIOUSLY OR IMPROPERLY ALONG THE PUBLIC ROADS."

Dennis Nicholson

BERWICK ENTERTAINMENT

Some 1816/1817 Berwick Advertiser public performance adverts:-

THEATRE BERWICKON TWEED

Mr M'Cready has the honor of acquainting the Ladies and Gentlemen of Berwick and its vicinity, that he purposes OPENING the THEATRE for a VERY SHORT SEASON on WEDNESDAY the 29th day of May, 1816, when their Majesties' Servants from the Theatre Royal, Newcastle upon Tyne will perform the Comic Opera of

LOVE IN A VILLAGE

To which will be added a Favourite FARCE

ON MONDAY EVENING July 21st, 1817 will be presented (for the only time this season) the celebrated Tragedy of

ADELGITHA

or

THE FRUITS OF A SINGLE ERROR

To conclude with (for the second and last time in this Season) the Musical Drama of

GUY MANNERING

or

THE GYPSEY'S PROPHECY

ON TUESDAY EVENING will be presented (for the only time this Season) the Grand Historical Tragedy of

PIZZARO

or

THE SPANIARDS IN PERU

To which will be added, the Serio Comic Pantomime

DON JUAN

or

THE LIBERTINE DESTROYED

June 8, 1816 advert for Firework display:-

GRAND DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS

SIGNOR NEVONI
of Vauxhall Gardens, London

Engineer and Artist in Fire-Works to the Royal Family, the Honourable East India Company and Principal Director at the late grand Fetes given in the Parks, WHOSE Pyrotechnical Talents have been so long admired in London, Dublin, Bath and all the most respectable Vauxhalls of Great Britain, &c. &c. has the honor of informing the Ladies and Gentlemen of Berwick and its Vicinity, that he will give a **SPLENDID EXHIBITION** on **WEDNESDAY EVENING**, the 12th instant, in a **LARGE YARD** at the end of **SILVER STREET**, upon a scale of magnificent far superior to any ever exhibited in the country, and equal to any ever exhibited at Vauxhall, for which occasion he has spared neither labour nor expenses to prepare his beautiful and surprising Fire-Works.

Dennis Nicholson

NORHAM LOCAL HISTORY

FBDMA member Neil Robertson, who is also Secretary of the Norham Local History Society, has informed us that two members of their Society have now completed a survey of Norham Churchyard. The inscription on every headstone has been recorded and an index and map of the churchyard have been lodged in the Berwick Record Office. The following details of an ancient Norham Village custom is submitted by Neil Robertson, and is accepted and used by kind permission of the Norham Society:-

BIDDING THE VILLAGE

The practice of 'bidding the village' was traditionally done by the apprentice at Thomas Simpson, Joiner and Boatbuilder who was also the village Undertaker. When a death occurred, the church bell was tolled and the apprentice was instructed to 'bid the village' to the funeral. This was usually done the night before the funeral. The village was bid by knocking on every door, opening each in turn and calling into the house "you are desired to attend the funeral of x at such and such a time tomorrow". Payment for 'bidding the village' was entered along with other expenses associated with the funeral, in the firm's Funeral Book. *This book records all funerals undertaken by Thomas Simpson in the period 1902 to 1970. 'Bidding the village' was referred to in later entries as 'bidding the funeral' and latterly, as education took its toll, as 'intimating funeral in the village'!

In 1902 the charge for this service, and the amount paid to the apprentice for doing it, was 1/6d (7p). It remained at 1/6d until 1919, a period of 17 years when it went up to 2/- (10p), and then to

2/6d (12p) at which level it remained until 1948, a period of 28 years. It was then put up to 3/6d (17p) and stayed at that until 1954, a period of 6 years. The charge went up to 4/6d (22p) in 1954, the first funeral to be bid at that price being that of the late Mr Harry Foreman aged 90 years, buried on 9th Marcy, 1960. The fee then rose to 5/- (25p) and to 6/- (30p), all in 1963, and this was the fee charged for bidding the funeral of Mr Ralph Swan aged 81 years. The last recorded instance of a funeral being bid in the old way was for Mr Oliver who died aged 89 years on 3rd March, 1964. A number of reasons come to mind for the discontinuation of the old practice: deaths and funerals were increasingly advertised in newspapers; village houses were now often occupied by people who had not known, or who hardly knew the deceased; many houses were now occupied by people who objected to their door being flung open so that a funeral could be announced uninvited and, in any case, many doors in the village were now kept locked.

Another item of interest in the Funeral Book accounts was 'hire of bier'. This was a four-wheeled push carriage on which the coffin was conveyed. This is still in occasional use. It was acquired in 1929 and throughout the period 1929-1963, cost of hire remained at 2/- (10p).

Neil Robertson