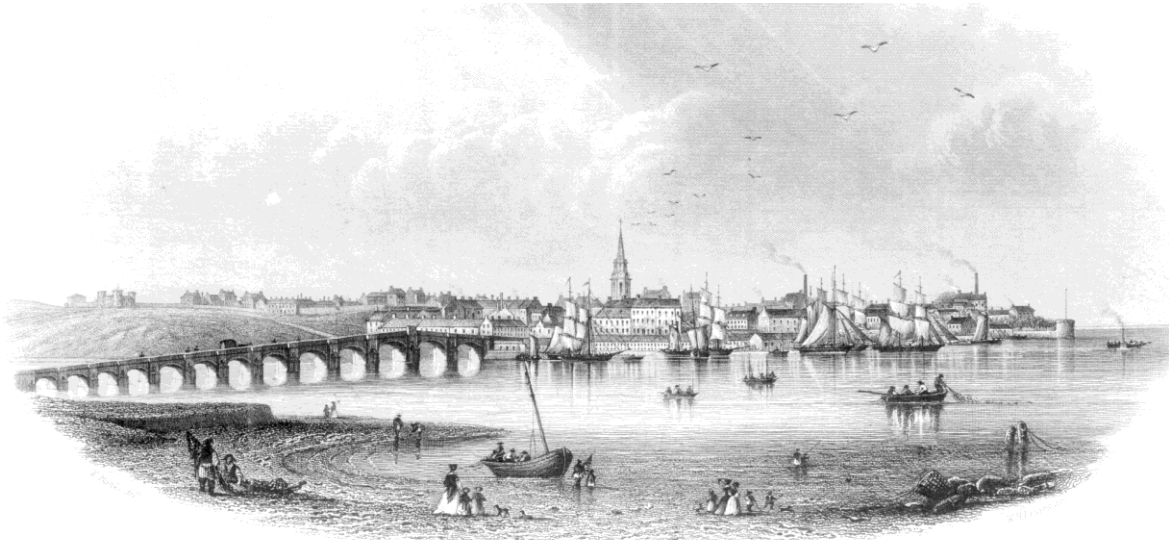


Friends of Berwick & District  
Museum and Archives  
Newsletter



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**[Selected articles]**

1995 May

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

A searcher brought me in the following extract the other day which she had found in the NFU magazine. Would anyone like to find out if George Curry actually came from Berwick?

### **SIR GEORGE CURRY, 1826-1890**

"A British soldier born in Berwick-upon-Tweed spent his entire career in the East India Company and later of the Indian Army and rose to the rank of General. He was the first officer of the British Raj to develop a taste for the highly spiced stews of the natives and in consequence dined alone for many years. His attempt to introduce mutton vindalo and chippaties into the mess of his own British Tommies resulted in one of the lesser known mutinies of the period and it was only after Queen Victoria was seen eating some at a luncheon for visiting Rajahs in 1869 that the habit of eating the food that had become known as curry began to spread among the British community in general."

*Linda Bankier*

## **"PECULIAR CUSTOMS IN FORD"**

The following is a transcript of a late eighteenth century document listing customs common in Ford village and probably many others in North Northumberland. It is interesting that the custom of holding a Shrove Tuesday football match still survives today, for example, in Alnwick, whereas most of the customs have died out. However, most people are probably relieved that "young fellows" do not put cabbages down people's chimneys anymore!

### *Peculiar Customs that prevail among the Common People at Ford on the several undermentioned Days*

- 1. On Shrove Tuesday the Schoolboys are allowed to fight each a Cock upon paying the School Master a penny. The Boy's Cock who wins the most Battles gives the Boy the Title of Victor; the Boy whose Cock is second is called the Victor's Man. On Palm Saturday the Victor has the Honour of running from the Church about a mile and back again attended by his man. The rest of the Boys run thrice about the Church with long palm Rods in their Hands and then set off in pursuit of the Victor and should they overtake him before he reaches the Church again, 'tis well if he escapes a severe flogging, tho' his man or second endeavours to ward off the Blows as much as possible.*
- 2. On Shrove Tuesday likewise in the Evening a Collection is made to purchase a Football when the Married Men play a match against the unmarried; the married Men play towards the Church and the unmarried from it - Before they begin, they oblige all that are married the preceding year to jump or wade through a wide, deep, watery Hole which they call the Gaudy Loup. Whoever refuses is not allowed that year to play at Football amongst his Companions.*
- 3. On Easter Tuesday they assemble in the Street joined by many from the neighbouring villages, where they form a Ring, and having all danced till they are satisfied, Two female Combatants are singled out to dance with each other as long as they can. A Pidgeon decorated with various kinds of Ribbands is held up by the Feet all the time they are dancing; which Ribbands are the prize divided*

between the Combatants. This they call the - Dow Dancing - The Evening they spend in merriment and Feasting.

4. On Midsummer Eve they used to have a great Collection of Horses Bones with which they made a Bonfire on an Eminence above the village - a Custom now almost forgot.

5. On All Saints Eve, commonly called Nutcracker Night, the Young Fellows generally meet in a Body, and after robbing all the Cabbage Yards they can, they have a Gothic Custom of throwing the Cabbages down People's Chimneys which is often attended with dangerous consequences - This Custom prevails in many Parts in Scotland and in the neighbouring villages.

Linda Bankier

## **EXHIBIT OF THE MONTH**

### **BOWL**

Porcelain, underglaze cobalt-blue decoration  
Chinese, Qing Dynasty, Reign of Kangxi  
1662-1722

*Burrell Collection: BERMG: 258*

This plate is typical of the blue-and-white porcelain produced after the end of the Ming Dynasty, and the decoration shows a mythological scene popular with the Chinese. The picture shows the eight Daoist Immortals giving thanks for their immortality to the god of Longevity, Shou-Xing, who is shown flying in on a crane. Daoism was a philosophical movement that was certainly in existence by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. in China. It takes its name from this mystical book, the *Dao de-jing (or Tao Te-Ching)*, supposedly written by the great sage Lao Tzu, who reputedly lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. The 'Eight Immortals' (ba-xian) were ordinary people who became experts in their fields, mainly magic, and thereby achieved immortal status. Even today the Chinese apply the word 'xian' to anybody who achieves great proficiency at some skill.



They are, from left to right:-

*Zhong Li-Quan*, leader of the group was both a warrior and an alchemist and appears as a character in popular plays.

*Lu Dong-Bin*, was a scholar who lived about AD 750 and overcame ten temptations to win a supernatural sword (slung across his back) with which he slayed demons and rescued another would-be Immortal HeXian-Gu.

*Li Tie-Guai*, is always shown as a beggar with a staff and pilgrim-gourd from which a spirit wafts into the air. He was a magician who often projected his soul out of his body, unfortunately on one

occasion he was gone so long his servants thought he was dead and cremated the body. The only spare body around was a lame-beggar who had just died.

*Lan Cai-He*, was a minstrel who chanted songs about the short and illusionary nature of life and pleasure. This was signified by the vase of flowers she carries. She is the Chinese 'patron-saint' of florists.

*Han Xiang-Zi*, was a real person, the nephew of a famous scholar who lived in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Han became a recluse and played a flute in the woods, so he is always shown with a flute and is the patron of musicians.

*Zhang Guo-Lao*, a reclusive magician who rode on a white mule which he could fold-up and put away in his wallet when not in use. He carries a fish-drum (yu-gu), a bamboo tube struck with sticks.

*Cau Guo-Jiu*, a court official and brother of an 8<sup>th</sup> Century empress. He carries official passes to get into the Palace, these took the form of castanets as used in the theatre. He is therefore the patron of actors.

*He Xian-Gu*, was daughter of a shopkeeper who wandered in the hills living on powdered mother-of-pearl and moonbeams which induces immortality. She was rescued from a demon by the swordsman Lu Dong-Bin and joined the Eight Immortals.

*Chris Green*

## **JAMES WALLACE ARCA (1872 - 1911)**

Today very few people have any knowledge of Wallace, even though he was brought up in the town and drew much of his artistic inspiration from Berwick and its surroundings. During his life he would be well-known locally as his father, also called James Wallace (which has caused considerable confusion) was Art Master at Berwick Art School. Wallace started his training under his father's guidance in the late 1880's and early 1890's. In 1896 he won an Exhibition to the Royal College of Art in London where he continued to live for most of the rest of his life. However, he always spent part of his holidays in Berwick sketching local scenes which he used as the basis for finished works on his return to his studio in London. Whilst he was living in London he corresponded with a group of friends, including his brother, who all had connections with Berwick and had known each other since childhood. The "Quintet" as they called themselves sent monthly letters to an "editor" who gathered them together and passed them round the group. This kept them all informed about what each was doing without the necessity of writing separate letters. Foresight on the part of surviving members of the group in 1952 caused the letters to be entrusted to the care of the local Grammar School. They would otherwise have been split between the various descendants of the group. This meant that the complete correspondence (13 volumes in all!) was transferred to the safekeeping of the Museum when it was decided that the School (which had become a Comprehensive) was no longer an appropriate place for them. Amongst the letters are a number of sketches by Wallace and photographs taken by all the group which do much to make the "Quintet" a valuable and intriguing insight into the lives of its members.

Wallace's sketches for the "Quintet" are entirely different to his paintings, many of which were designated to be shown at venues such as the Royal Academy, the Royal Scottish Academy, the Glasgow Institute of Fine Art and numerous provincial galleries. His training enabled him to switch

between commercial art (as used for adverts etc.), illustration which was one of the mainstays of the "Quintet", and fine art as typified by the paintings in the Museum. Unfortunately his short life means that there is only a modest body of work attributed to him, in all about 60 paintings, many of which are perhaps preparatory studies rather than finished works, and of these the whereabouts of about 20 are actually known. Perhaps someone reading this might know where more might be found, they may even have one hanging on their wall!

For those who would like to learn more about Wallace and his life I shall be giving a slide talk on the **30<sup>th</sup> June 1995 at The Maltings starting at 7.30 p.m.** If anyone thinks they may have a Wallace, please let me know. There will be an exhibition of his work in the Museum from the 8<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1995.

*Liz Doley*

## **MINUTE BOOKS OF THE BERWICK BOARD OF GUARDIANS OF THE WORKHOUSE**

These show that on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1851 the Board decided to divide the Union into 5 districts to be covered by the Medical Officers for the purpose of vaccinations and for medical services to Paupers:-

- No. 1            Berwick District comprising of the entire parish of Berwick and including attendance at the Workhouse.
- No. 2            The Tweedmouth District containing the parish of Tweedmouth and the parish of Ancroft with the exception of the Township of Haggerston. The district, in statute acres, being 13,252 with a population of 6,550.
- No. 3            The Islandshire District, comprising the parishes of Holy Island and Kyloe together with the Township of Haggerston, the area of which is 12,189 statutory acres with a population of 2,038.
- No. 4            The Northhamshire District - East Division, consisting of the Townships of Loanend, Longridge, Northham Mains, Horncliffe, Duddo, Thornton, Shoreswood and Felkington. This area being 8,580 acres and the population 1,785.
- No. 5            The Northhamshire District - West Division, comprising the Townships of Northham, Grindon and Twizel together with the parish of Cornhill, the area being 10,230 acres with a population of 2,504.

The Guardians had for 10 years been receiving correspondence from the Poor Law Commissioners in London, who had great difficulty in accepting that the Public Vaccinators were unable to attend all areas on a weekly basis to give vaccinations against smallpox. In 1845 the Guardians wrote a firm letter to London in an attempt to enlighten the Commissioners about the agricultural status of the Union. In this they wrote that "The Union contains an area of 49,165 acres and is most entirely in hillage." The Minute Books held in the Record Office show that the men, mostly farmers, that gave so much time to running the Workhouse and "overseeing the Poor", spent considerable effort to assist in relieving hunger, preventing illness and educating "Children of the Poor", and the constant letters

from the Commissioners must have been most irritating. On working through these records, my sympathies are totally with the local men, who seemed to politely, but strenuously, insist that, as locals, they knew best the needs of the Borough. One is reminded of the situation now and EEC directives . . . . . once more illustrating the fact that . . . . . nothing changes.

Anne Cook

## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TRAVEL SNIPS

The following travel advertisement appeared in the Berwick Advertiser in May 1823. It would appear from the ad. that Passengers and/or Packages were transhipped at sea from small boats operating to and from the Pierhead. At times a wet, windy and uncomfortable experience.

THE LONDON & EDINBURGH STEAM PACKET CO., now intend for the accommodation of the Public that their elegant Vessels shall in future call off Berwick on their voyages to and from London and take on board Passengers and Packages. One Vessel will call off Berwick on WEDNESDAY the 4<sup>th</sup> June (and every Wednesday afterwards until further notice) from two to four o'clock, and remain off the Pierhead half an hour. As this is the utmost limit of time they can remain, it is expected that those wishing to avail themselves of this conveyance will be ready in the Boats, at the Pier, at Berwick, so the appearance of the Vessel, which will always be seen at a considerable distance. The Vessel from London will be off Berwick every FRIDAY from four to eight o'clock in the morning, and will remain the same period of time. The Steam Packet leaves Newhaven every Wednesday morning at eight o'clock.

	£.	s.	d.
Passengers from Newhaven to Berwick, including breakfast	0	12	6
From Berwick to Newhaven (the packet generally arriving about 3 o'clock afternoon)	0	12	6
Passengers to and from Berwick to London	4	4	0

A third elegant vessel will be launched in a few days for the same trade.

The three vessels ultimately involved in this service were:-

THE TOURIST	-	Captain Wilkie
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH	-	Captain Bain
THE JAMES WATT	-	Captain Dall

As a comparison with the above Steam Packet charges on the Berwick - London route, the following scale of charges for the same route by the famous Berwick Smacks in about the same years, are of interest:-

	£.	s.	d.
"Cabin"			
Adults	1	0	0
Children (below 7)		10	0
Children (7 - 14)		14	0
Dogs		5	0

In 1809 the following advert. appeared in the Berwick Advertiser:-

## NEW ROYAL CHARLOTTE COACH

The proprietors beg leave to inform their friends and the Public in general that, for their better accommodation, the Royal Charlotte Coach will commence running from the King's Arms Inn, Berwick, on Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup> instant at seven o'clock in the morning, and will continue to do so every Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and will arrive at Loftus's, Newcastle, at half-past four the same afternoon; and leave the same place on the same days at Nine o'clock in the morning, and arrive at Berwick at seven in the evening. - She will also set off from the Hen & Chickens, Berwick, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at seven o'clock in the morning, and arrive at the Mail Coach Office, Edinburgh at half-past three the same afternoon, so that Travellers will have an opportunity of going forward in the Glasgow Coaches. - Parcels may be conveyed to all parts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, by their Mails and other Coaches. She will set off from the Mail Coach Office, Edinburgh, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at Ten o'clock in the morning, and arrive at Berwick at half-past six o'clock the same evening. At Newcastle the above coach meets the Royal Charlotte Coach, which sets out every morning to London; as also the Highflyer, Mails and other Coaches to all parts of the kingdom.

The Proprietors of the above Coach trust that it will meet the approbation of a generous public, and particularly Gentlemen in the mercantile concerns, as they will now have an advantage of stopping at all the principal Towns from Edinburgh to Newcastle, and proceeding by the Mail and Highflyer Coaches, which pass through the same towns, at different hours of the day and night.

The Highflyer Light Post Coach leaves the Red Lion Inn, Berwick, at half-past one o'clock for London every day as usual.

	£.	s.	d.
Inside Passengers from Berwick to London	6	6	0
Outside Passengers from Berwick to London	4	4	0

*N.B. The Public are requested to take notice, that the Proprietors will not be accountable for losses or damage of any description on boxes, parcels, trusses, passengers' luggage or any kind of goods, cash, bank-notes, bills, bonds &c., above five pounds Sterling, unless entered, and insurance paid accordingly; and boxes, parcels, trusses &c., must be packed so as to undergo the friction of the carriage.*

In the 1820's a large number of coach services were available to the travelling public of Berwick, and some of those, together with frequencies and destinations are given below:-

<u>To LONDON</u>	The ROYAL MAIL (from Edinburgh) calls at the Red Lion Inn every afternoon at a quarter before two; goes thro' Belford, Alnwick, Morpeth, Newcastle, Durham, Darlington, Northallerton, Ferrybridge, Doncaster, Thirsk, York, Grantham, Stamford, Huntington and Ware.
<u>To ALNWICK</u>	The DEFENCE from the Hen & Chickens, and the DISPATCH from the Salmon Inn, every morning (Sundays excepted) at six; both go thro' Belford.
<u>To KELSO</u>	The BORDER UNION from the King's Arms, every Tuesday & Friday (in winter) and Monday, Wednesday & Friday (in summer) at 8 in the morning.

To EDINBURGH The ROYAL MAIL (from London) calls at the King's Arms every morning at half-past ten; goes thro' Dunbar & Haddington.

The DART, from the Red Lion and King's Arms, each alternate week, every morning (Sundays excepted) at six - and the UNION (from Newcastle) calls at the Red Lion, King's Arms and Hen & Chickens, each alternate three months, every afternoon (Sundays excepted) at a quarter before 3: both do the same route as the MAIL.

To NEWCASTLE The UNION (from Edinburgh) calls at the Red Lion, King's Arms and Hen & Chickens, each alternate 3 months, every afternoon (Sundays excepted) at a quarter before two: goes thro' Belford, Alnwick and Morpeth.

The ROYAL WILLIAM from the Hen & Chickens, and the WONDER from the Salmon Inn, every morning at six and eight, alternatively - and the UNION (from Edinburgh) calls at the Hen & Chickens, every afternoon at one.

To WOOLER The CHEVIOT, from the Nag's Head, every Saturday afternoon at 4, arrives from Wooler 11 morning.

In addition to these services were a number of Carrier services operating locally to and from Allanton; Ayton; Bambro'; Belford; Coldstream; Dunse; Easington; Edinburgh; Felkington; Fenwick; Greenlaw; Hawick; Holy Island; Horndean; Hutton; Jedburgh; Kelso; Ladykirk; Lowick &c.

*Dennis Nicholson*