

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



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[Selected articles]

1997 February

WOOLER GYMNASTIC GAMES

Some months ago, I was asked to find out about the Wooler Games. I had never heard of them but a lady in Wooler had some medals for them dated 1840. Kevin, my Tweed Training volunteer, worked his way through the Berwick Advertiser for 1840 and found the following report.

BERWICK ADVERTISER 18 APRIL 1840

WOOLER GYMNASTIC GAMES

These Games came off on Friday last, and were as formerly well attended, though we are convinced that if they were held nearer the town the attendance would be much greater. The distance is about three miles towards the Cheviots, and the road - if such a name can be given to it, is anything but a good one. We remarked that a number of the people had taken care to "mend the road" in the Highland manner before the sports were completed - there is therefore good reason to suppose that the Rochabite or tee-total system, has not progressed much amongst the hills. Yet from the manly appearance and muscular energy displayed by the competitors, principally inhabitants of these hills, most of them seem to understand perfectly the great difference between the use and the abuse of the good things in life.

The Sports commenced with a steeple Race of one mile "for a New Hat," over bog, moor, dyke and whin, directly up the face of a hill. Three shepherds started - Hugh Wood, William Davison, and John Mathewson. Their appearance was rather singular, stripped to the shirt and drawers and barefooted, they commenced each with a staff in his hand to a task that would have done-up any Lowlander in a few seconds; in fact, it was considered generally that no horse could have done the same task in the same time, or perhaps at all. The race was well contested, until one of the competitors got stuck in a bog - when the winner, W. Davison, got to the post easily.

2. The best Running Single Leap - Prize, a beautiful Silver Medal. Seven entered - James Mills, Anthony Dag, William Davison, Robert Shiel, Andrew Gilholm, George Davison, and E. Johnston. This leap was well contested and latterly won by Anthony Dag. Best leap, 16 feet 3 inches.

3. Putting the Ball, weight 22lb - Prize, a Silver Medal. Nine entered - Anthony Dag, A. Gilholm, W. Davison, George Davison, Robert Shiel, John Stephenson, W. Dixon, George Buck, and James Hall. The prize was easily won by William Dixon, who threw 27 feet 4 inches clean and tight.

4. A Running Hop, Step and Leap - Prize, a valuable Silver Medal. Six entered - Robert Shield, A. Gilholm, A. Dag, William Davison, George Davison, and George Buck. This prize was won by Anthony Dag - distance 40 feet.

5. The High Leap - Prize, a Valuable Silver Medal. Eleven entered - George Brown, George Buck, Joseph Mills, John Eliot, Thomas Steel, A. Gilholm, Richard Curl, William Davison, A. Curry, Ralph Scott, and William Muckle. This prize was well contested; latterly by William Davison and George Buck - Buck winning by a clean upright leap of 4 feet 8 inches.

6. Throwing the Hammer, weight 18lbs - Prize a very large Silver Medal. Six entered - George Brown, William Dixon, George Buck, John Stephenson, A. Gilholm, and Thomas Davison, after a severe contest between Stephenson and Dixon, the latter won a throw of 105 feet.
7. The Single Standing Leap - Prize, a silver Medal. Nine entered - Richard Curle, A. Gilholm, Anthony Dag, R. Shield, George Buck, William Davison, A. Curry, William Jobson, and John Stephenson. This prize was won by Anthony Dag, who leaped upwards of 10 feet clean and easily.
8. Wrestling for a splendid Belt. 17 entered, and were paired off in the following manner.

Anthony Dag and Robert Percey - Percey thrown.
 William Davison and Thomas Renick - Renick down.
 R. Shield and A. Gilholm - Gilholm down.
 Walter Davison and R. Curle - Curle down.
 Isaac Ramsay and George Davison - Davison down.
 George Murray and W. Curry - Curry down.
 Peter Hornsby and A. Riddell - Riddell down.
 John Elliott and Hugh Wood - Wood down.
 James Hall.

SECOND ROUND

A. Dag and Jas. Hall - Hall down.
 John Elliott and William Davison - Davison down.
 Peter Hornsby and R. Sheil - Sheil down.
 Isaac Ramsay.

THIRD ROUND

Anthony Dag and Isaac Ramsay - Ramsay down.
 Peter Hornsby and John Elliot - Elliot down.
 Anthony Dag and William Davison - Davison down.
 Anthony Dag and Peter Hornsby - Hornsby down.
 Won easily by Dag.

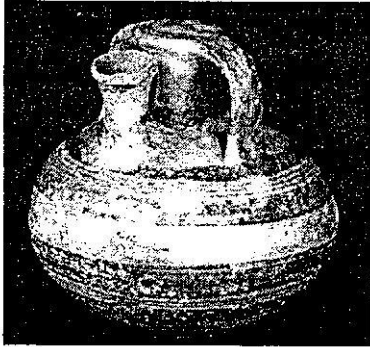
We are sorry to say the Wrestling was very indifferent, the parties all seeming afraid of Dag, who is a stout man. The spirit shown was anything but creditable to the competitors, and we hope that next meeting the want of true game spirit may not be so apparent in this manly old English exercise.

The Games were finished by a Sack Race for a purse of silver, which was a source of much fun and merriment.

Linda Bankier

EXHIBITS OF THE MONTH

Stirrup Jar & Tripod Jug
Cream Earthenware with painted decoration
Cyprus, Mycenaean Style, c.1600 - 1200 B.C.
BERMG: 1592 & 1597



Stirrup Jar & Tripod Jug
Cream Earthenware with painted decoration
Cyprus, Mycenaean Style, c.1600-1200 B.C.
BERMG: 1592 & 1597

This month's objects are part of a group of 19 similar pieces that were presented to the Borough Museum in the Victorian period and, before the arrival of the Burrell treasures, were regarded as one of the most important parts of the collection. The pots are almost identical with other examples from the same period, found throughout the Mediterranean area from Spain to the Middle East. The larger, stirrup jar, would probably have been used for oil or wine; while the smaller tripod jug might have contained perfume, or possibly, with its flamboyant decoration of unnecessary loops, was purely ornamental. They are products of the highly developed Mycenaean civilization that ruled Greece for nearly a thousand years in the 2nd millennium B.C. Their golden age, when massive walls and rich tombs were constructed at Mycenae was in the 16 - 13th Centuries. This was the age of Agamemnon and other heroes known through Greek Tragedy or the writings of Homer. The Mycenaeans enjoyed a very high standard of living which they took with them when they founded settlements throughout Cyprus in the 13th Century B.C.

It had been the works of Homer that had inspired the 19th Century German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann to uncover the riches of Mycenae for the first time. Victorian British residents in Cyprus were similarly inspired to collect antiquities from the pre-classical past because of their link with Homeric times. A report on the Museum collection compiled in 1925 identifies a "Captain Rutherford" as responsible for presenting the pots, sometime before 1897. Prior to the British take over of the administration of Cyprus in 1878, the export of antiquities from the Turkish controlled island was difficult; even for the British Consul Sir Robert Hamilton Lang, who in 1870 smuggled out valuable sculpture on an English steamer. Perhaps Capt. Rutherford acquired his pots as part of a smuggled horde or in payment for such an undercover deal. However the items left the island, the 1925 report goes on to say that once in Berwick they were admired by no less a person than William Gladstone, four times Prime Minister between 1868 and 1892. Gladstone was much occupied with Turkish atrocities and the problems of Cyprus featured as part of his electioneering in the famous Midlothian Campaign of 1879. But, unlike today's Parliamentarians, absorbed only in politics, Gladstone was simultaneously producing books and articles on Homer and Ancient Greece, and giving lectures on a vast range of subjects including archaeology, the Reformation, cottage gardening and, in May 1877, on ceramics. It may be that en route to Midlothian, he stopped off in

Berwick and viewed these pots which combined his current interests, ancient and modern. Further research into Gladstone's voluminous diary, published in full only in the last 20 years, may reveal precisely what one of the greatest of Victorians thought about Berwick's Cypriot pots.

THE INDENTURE OF APPRENTICESHIP
OF THOMAS WILSON
INROLLED THE 14TH OF MAY 1614

This Indenture Wittnesseth that Thomas Wilson the sone of John Willson of the Burrow of Barwick upon Twede late soldier deceased hath putt himself apprentice unto Edward Willson of the Burrow of Barwick upon Twede Burgesse The arte and Science which the said Edward now useth to learne and with him after the manor of an apprentice to dwell and serve from the ffest day of St Michael the Archangell last past before the date hereof untill the ende and terme of seaven yeares from thence next ensewinge and fully to be complete and ended during all which said terme the said Thomas the Apprentice the said Edward as his Master will and faithfully he shall serve his secrets, kepe his comandments lawfully and honest willingly, only to here he shall doo hurt to his said master he shall none doo nor of others suffer to be done to the valew of 22d by the yeare or more but that so farr as he cann or may shall hinder the steme or else give his said master whronedy?? thereof the goods of his said master he shall neyther wast nor spend nor them to any person unlawfully lend. Fornication he shall not committ, mattrymony he shall not contract, alehouses h shall not haunte, at the Dice cardes or any other unlawfull games he shall not play with his owne property, goodes or other mens during the said Terme without the licence of his said master he shall neyther wast nor spend from his said service he shall not departe nor absent himself but in all thyme as a good true faithfull and diligent apprentice he shall beare use and behave himself toward his said master and serve durine all the said terme of seaven years. The said Edward Willson the master the aforesaid unto Thomas Willson his apprentice in the arte and scyence which he now useth after the best mannor he can shall teach and instruct or cause to be taught and instructed as much as he can and giveing and findinge unto his said apprentice competent and sufficient drinke lynen wollen hose shoes washinge and bedding during the terme of seven years for the true performance of all which () eyther of the said parties binde themselves th'one to thother parties pute in Witness wherof to th'one parties thother present remaining with Edward Willson the said Thomas Willson the apprentice hath putt hand and seale and to thother therof remayninge the said master hath sett his hand and seale given the 10th day of May in the seaventh yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lord James by the grace of God King of England, ffrance and Ireland Defender of the Faith, etc., and of Scotland the xliiith (43rd) 1609

Lindy Tindley

FERRY BOATS

REGULATIONS applicable to the MOTOR FERRY BOATS of Messrs. Spowart Brothers, plying between Berwick and Spittal:-

1. The number of its License shall be painted on the bow of each boat, and the name of the Owner, and the number of passengers specified in the Licence, shall be painted conspicuously in the inside of each boat.

2. A boat shall not at any one time carry more than the number of passengers specified in the License.
3. From the 1st May to 30th September, the charge shall not exceed one penny each way, and from the 1st October to the 30th April, the charge shall not exceed 2d each way.
4. The small Motor Boat shall, weather permitting, be on the Ferry sufficiently manned every week day, from 8.30 a.m. until Sunset, between the 1st October and the 30th April, and shall leave each Ferry landing at intervals of one hour exactly, but the boat shall be allowed to make additional trips as frequently as the licensees may desire, provided that the hourly departures from each Ferry landing are strictly carried out. The Commissioners shall be at liberty at any time to withdraw the liberty to run additional trips if for any purpose they think it desirable to do so.
5. Both Boats shall, weather permitting, be on the ferry sufficiently manned every week day from 8.30 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. between the 1st May and the 30th September. A boat shall leave each Ferry landing at intervals of a quarter of an hour and the Boats shall leave opposite Landings as nearly as possible at the same moment, so that both boats shall be making the passage, in contrary directions, at the same time.
6. From the 1st October to the 30th April, it shall not be compulsory to run any service on Sundays, but from the 1st May to the 30th September the large Motor Boat shall run on each Sunday, but the service provided shall be at the discretion of the Licensees. The Licensees shall be at liberty, if so desired, to run the small Motor Boat on Sundays in addition to the large boat.
7. Except when both boats are on the Ferry, the boat on service shall be worked by the Licensees, and when both boats are on service one of the boats shall be worked by the Licensees and the other by some person to be previously approved of in writing by the Harbour Master. In the case of sickness, or for other sufficient cause, a temporary substitute may work either of the boats, permission from the Harbour Master having been previously obtained. Any person working or in charge of either of the boats shall observe all regulations and be subject to the penalties herein provided in respect of any breach thereof in the same way as if he had been the Owner or Master of such boat.
8. The commissioners shall have power to revoke the License of any Boat in respect of which these regulations shall not be observed or which shall not be kept in a good and clean condition, or the Master or Owner of which shall be found intoxicated while on duty, or shall be insolent to any Passenger, or shall not obey the lawful orders of the Harbour Master.
9. The Owner or Master of a Licensed boat shall be liable to a Penalty not exceeding Two Pounds, at the discretion of the Commissioners, for any neglect of, or disobedience to, those Regulations.

Dennis Nicholson