



Friends of Berwick & District
Museum and Archives
Newsletter



NUMBER 25 – DECEMBER 1999

[Selected articles]

CHRISTMAS 1899

How was Christmas and New Year celebrated in Berwick and the surrounding district in 1899? The following are extracts from the local newspapers - Berwick Advertiser and Berwick Journal - which give some insight into what the people did although for many, the Boer War in which the KOSB were fighting hung over them like a dark cloud :

AT THE WORKHOUSE IN WOOLER

As usual, the inmates of the Workhouse were entertained to special fare on Christmas day, dinner consisting of roast beef and plum pudding, with ale or lemonade, the men getting an extra allowance of tobacco, and the others receiving oranges, apples, etc. In the afternoon tea and spice cake were partaken of, and in the evening a number of friends kindly entertained the inmates with songs, etc., while the dismantling of a large Christmas Tree was a source of delight to the youngsters.

The following contributions were received; Oranges and sweets for the children, tea and sugar for the women, tobacco and pipes for the men from the Dowager Countess of Tankerville; toys from Uncle Toby; bob boms from Mr Brand; oranges and Christmas cards from Mrs Carr; apples and oranges from Mrs Grey; while the cups and glasses were kindly lent by Mr Lillico.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Spittal: Messers Thomas Black and Sons, Sea View Works, have presented each of their employees with a substantial currant loaf as a Christmas gift.

Norham School - The children attending the parish school presented the master with an inlaid rosewood table and the assistant mistress with a writing desk as Christmas gifts. Both were handsome presents.

Baitsstrand - Mr and Mrs Ross of Baitsstrand with their customary generosity have presented each family here with a pair of chickens.

BERWICK PETTY SESSIONS - WEDNESDAY

A Big Record - William Davis, labourer, Berwick, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly. P.C. Aitchison said that about ten minutes past seven the previous night he was in Walkergate Lane when he saw the defendant jumping about, squaring up and wanting to fight....The Head Constable said that this was the defendant's 55th appearance. Fined 10s 6d or 14 days.

BERWICK CASTLE HIT BY LIGHTNING - During the early hours of yesterday morning [27 December] there was a severe storm of thunder and lightning in the Berwick District. Occurring as it did in a clear atmosphere, with a country white with snow, the fire was uncommonly alarming. A driver, from Berwick had his carriage lamps extinguished by the lightning. At the Old Castle, a peculiar sight was witnessed. The last remaining turret, "Long Tom" was hit by a fire ball, which exploded with loud force. The ball was shattered into fragments, and the light from the explosion lit up the Tweed as far as Castle Hills. Several

residents in Berwick were aroused by the storm, and state that the flashes of lightning lit up their rooms, so vivid were they.

BERWICK QUADRILLE PARTY - On Tuesday evening, the committee of the above held a late dance in the Good Templar's Hall, Berwick, when over 40 couples were present and danced with great vigour until three o'clock in the morning. The company separated after the singing of the National Anthem.

THE ICE KING - Frost has held over the Christmas Holidays, and skating and curling have been largely indulged in. At the Stanks, both ponds have been largely patronised, and at the curler's quarters there have been no end of friendly contests, but neither matches nor contests have taken place.

KOSB COLOURS - The colours of the 1st Kings Own Scottish Borderers, who have been ordered from Dublin to South Africa, have been sent to Berwick for safe-keeping until the Battalion returns from Active Service. The Flags will be placed in Berwick Parish Church.

CHRISTMASTIDE AT THE BARRACKS

At the Barracks there were no signs of festivity this year. Christmas was not observed. The stir usually associated with this merry time was taken up by the assembling of the reservists, and under, such circumstances, merry making was not in the heads of many people.

NEW YEAR 1900

Berwick's Usual Good Behaviour - At the conclusion of the business of the Police Court on Monday, at which there were only two cases, both strangers to Berwick, The Clerk asked the Head Constable as to the condition of the streets on Old Year's Night and New Year's morning. The Head Constable replied that he was out practically the whole night and he was happy to say he did not see a single person the worse for drinks. This state of things could not be beaten by any place.

XMAS & NEW YEAR

"If March comes in like a Lamb, March goes out like a Lion!" - The New Year -1900 - settled down on the Borderland like both Lamb and Lion. The last hours of 1899 were breathed in clear, bright weather, touched with sharp stroke of frost; and the bells were heard over a long distance, ringing out the Old, ringing in the New....Watch night services were again held, and had encouraging constituencies. New Year's Day ran in, and almost out, in ideal holiday weather - not a breath of wind, and as genial atmospheric conditions as many a Summer's Day can show. The many excursions by rail thus benefited, and most people got home again at night before a thick mist set in. Berwick had ice all day but no skating: Inland Places had ice, and also skating. ..Football and Golf were the chief out of doors pastimes, though at Berwick the Annual New year's Match between Married and Single did not on this occasion take place, and therefore one of the two teams lost a supper - the Reward of the Victors. As of old, bounteous treats were given to poor people: and some of the Border Soup Kitchens were also thrown open. General festivities were, however, not so abundant, by reason of the War; and both Christmas 1899 and New year 1900 will remain noteworthy for this....

NEW YEAR'S TREAT TO BERWICK SHELTER GIRLS

On New year's Night, forty little girls belonging to the Berwick Shelters were treated to a substantial tea and supper, including currant loaf, shortbread, hot pies, orange, etc. The Misses Terry, daughter of Rev. George Terry kindly presented each child with an appropriate gift which was much appreciated by the children.

WHERE TO GO ON NEW YEAR'S NIGHT. THE TWEEDSIDE CYCLING CLUB DANCE in the WATERLOO HOTEL HALL, HIGH STREET. BERWICK. Dancing at 8.30. Double Ticket 1s 6d. Music by Mr J.Shiel.

A Journey Through Berwick's Literary Heritage

2: Heirs of Saint Cuthbert

The 7th and 8th Centuries have been called 'The Golden Age of Northumbria' when, despite continued dynastic rivalries and military blood letting, art, literature and Christianity flourished, politics and religion being as inextricably intertwined as the decoration in a Saxon manuscript. This was especially true of **Lindisfarne**. The first person to mention Lindisfarne is a monk writing about politics. Nennius describes King Urien of Strathclyde's war against two Saxon kings in 595:-

"....Urien blockaded them for three days and nights in the island of Lindisfarne. But during this campaign Urien was assassinated on the instigation of Morcant...."

By the time Nennius was writing (c.769) Urien was a famous Scottish hero celebrated in epic verse while Lindisfarne was at the height of its cultural influence. This influence owed much to the patronage of the Northumbrian royal family. St. Paulinus first brought Roman Christianity to the pagan kingdom but when King Edwin was killed in 633, Paulinus fled and the Roman Church languished. Within a year King Oswald had recaptured the kingdom and invited St. Aidan (d.651) to found a monastery on Lindisfarne in 635. Aidan hailed from Iona and set up the monastery along the Irish Celtic pattern. Close links were maintained and Aidan's successors, Finan and Colman, were sent directly from the mother house. By 664 a disagreement between the Celtic and Roman Churches over the celebration of Easter had become critical. Two Easters a year were the norm at court, and although King Oswin and Bishop Colman were Celtic supporters, the king decided to settle the issue at the Synod of Whitby in 664. The dispute is the subject for the play *Lindisfarne: The Sword's Edge* by Chris Speyer, premiered at the Maltings in Easter 1997. The Synod accepted the Roman version and Colman resigned, went back to Iona and left his successors to try and maintain unity. St. Cuthbert then appeared on the scene.

Educated at Melrose, Cuthbert became an effective Prior, both there and at Lindisfarne where he healed the rifts over Easter. Preferring a hermitage on the Inner Farne, he was nevertheless persuaded to become Bishop in 685. Even before his death in 688 miracles were attributed to him, and it was a great joy to the monks that when he was dug up in 698, his body was found fresh and uncorrupted. Lindisfarne needed its own saint, Aidan was all right but most of his bones had been taken back to Iona by Colman. Tuda had hardly been around long enough to develop his sanctity and Finan, Colman and Eata had all backed the wrong

side in the Easter controversy. Cuthbert therefore was the only real candidate for patron saint. Reburial in richer vestments and better surroundings was the first part of an effort to elevate Cuthbert to cult status. Next an anonymous hagiography packed with miracles was rapidly completed and dedicated to Bishop Eadfrid. By 705 Bede, then 32, used this anonymous life as a basis for his own poetical life. Bishops Eadbert (d.698) and his successor Eadfrid (d.721) were consciously trying to create a cult modelled on that of St. Martin of Tours. Partly to assert their independence but also to offset the ambitions of the supporters of St. Wilfrid (634-709) of Hexham. The famous *Lindisfarne Gospels* (697-699), were added to the lustre of his name and brought prestige to the community he protected. Three other gospel books (*Durham*, *Echternach* and *Otho/Corpus*) were created in the scriptorium at about the same time, where at least nine monks seem to have been employed in the early 700s. These manuscripts spread the house's influence far and wide, the decorative scheme reappearing in gospels in monasteries throughout Europe. The new script developed at Lindisfarne, 'reformed half-uncial', had a similar widespread influence. Some years later, Bishop Eadfrid invited Bede to write yet another hagiography of Cuthbert, this time in prose. Bede was by then one of the most famous writers of his day and was gathering materials for his great History of Anglo-Saxon England. He interviewed eyewitnesses and the resulting work was declared perfect by the brothers. Bede took a great interest in the ebb and flow of the tides that make Lindisfarne an island twice a day. Taking measurements there, at Jarrow, and elsewhere, he devised a tide theory which stood for the next thousand years. But, in the century after Bede the storm clouds that would blot out the Golden Age were piling up. On 8th June 793 the Vikings staged their first raid on Britain attacking Lindisfarne and pillaging the monastery. Alcuin of York wrote to the Bishop of Durham, "...what assurance is there for the churches in Britain, if St. Cuthbert, with so great a number of saints, defends not his own?" But by then the community was rather more decadent than in the austere times of Aidan. Early in 9thC. Aethelwulf, one of the brothers at an outstation of the monastery, possibly Bywell, wrote a refined Latin poem, *De Abbatibus* in which he says that feasting, drinking and the wearing of rich clothes were normal and one monk was even married. No wonder St. Cuthbert let the Danes ransack the place. By 875 the monks had had enough, packed up their treasures including St. Cuthbert and abandoned the island. For over a century they migrated from place to place until settling in Durham in 995. The saint's move to Durham though, did not sever his spiritual, intellectual and literary links with Lindisfarne and Farne. Politics played their part in shaping the cultural heritage. The Cuthbertines developed strong links with the Anglo-Saxon kings of Wessex, which, come the Norman invasion did not fit with the new ruling elite. In 1083 the community was refounded with Benedictine monks and all but two of the Cuthbertines were out. Durham's old Saxon cathedral was demolished and a new building in the latest Romanesque style begun which, by 1104, was sufficiently complete for Cuthbert's still uncorrupted body to re-examined, put on show, and given a grand new shrine. Once more the miracle collectors were mobilised, this time to connect Durham, Lindisfarne and Farne. Brother Symeon industriously updated the miracle collection, also possibly having a hand in the anonymous *Liber de translationibus et miraculis sancti Cuthberti*. These works show how Cuthbert's new guardians distanced themselves from old Cuthbertines while legitimising their stewardship by association with the ancient foundation of Lindisfarne. Cuthbert is portrayed as intervening miraculously on behalf of his *monastic* community, rewarding friends and punishing foes (especially women), far and wide. The *Liber de translationibus* especially shows Cuthbert's miracles occurring on Lindisfarne rather than at Durham, but often with the extra help of the Durham staff, especially Prior Turgot, who becomes something of a hero of the book. Miracles on Farne also seem to increase to over a third of the records. This reflects activity on the islands themselves. Between 1122 and 1150 a new church was built on the now renamed **Holy**

Island clearly closely modelled on the new cathedral at Durham so that a traveller from one to the other would be impressed at the continuity of the tradition. It housed a cenotaph marking the original grave of Cuthbert. On **Inner Farne**, of hermits imitating Cuthbert's example, the most celebrated was St. Bartholomew. Arrived in the 1150s, he immediately fell out with the hermit-in-residence, Aelwin, who left in protest. Ten years later ex-Prior Thomas arrived to share the retreat, but Bartholomew argued with him too, over meal times. This time Bartholomew left, but eventually returned to the stormy rock where he died attended by the monks of Coldingham in 1193. By then his sanctity was legendary and was quickly written up by Geoffrey of Durham. St. Bart's exploits were also the basis for *The Miracles of Farne*, by one of the hermits a few years later. Of the Coldingham monks that attended St. Bart's deathbed one may have been Reginald of Durham, Durham's most prolific chronicler. Reginald had started work on a new life of St. Cuthbert, but broken off to be with St. Godric of Finchale in his decline, writing up Godric's hagiography. Ironically by 1172, this book had helped develop the cult of Godric, drawing pilgrims away from Durham to visit Finchale instead. Worse, the cult of the murdered Becket was rapidly becoming international. Urgent action was required; Reginald took up the pen and completed his new life of Cuthbert in 1173. The sections are very different. In the first half the miracles mostly happen on Lindisfarne or Farne to stress the solid connection between Durham and Cuthbert's old stamping grounds. Then, in around 1170, if we are to believe Reginald, though miracles still occur on the islands, the saint seems to have shifted his attention to Durham Cathedral and its precincts. More women get cured, and indeed Reginald reports that several people helped by Cuthbert had already applied to Godric and Thomas in vain. From analysis of the miracle stories we can tell that the lucky pilgrims at the shrines at Lindisfarne/Farne and Durham mostly came from within a forty mile radius of each place. To spread the word further afield the monks occasionally went on fund-raising tours with a selection of relics travelling as far as Perth and Dunfermline. Ultimately though, Cuthbert could not compete with the international glamour of the cult of St. Thomas.

In completing his work on St. Cuthbert, Reginald seems to have left unfinished another work on the Royal Saint Oswald, Aidan's patron. The biography is closely based on Bede, but Reginald does include some of his own enthusiasm, especially an interest in medical matters. He includes a detailed forensic description of Oswald's severed head and no less than six chapters are taken up with an account of Oswald's death, dismemberment and distribution of his body parts, including his arms that were claimed by Queen Bebbha and preserved in a silver reliquary at "Bebba's town" (Bamburgh), until stolen by a monk from Peterborough. Reginald seems to have spent his last years at Coldingham where he probably wrote the *Life of St. Ebbe* in time for the translation of her relics to the church around 1188. Of course none of his writings are particularly fine literature, his modern biographer, Victoria Tudor says "These works are characterised by their length, a lack of organisation and a style which frequently lapses into verbosity." But partly because of their faults they are more revealing historically than the highly finished and crafted prose of Bede.

Further Reading (All available on request in Record Office Reading Room)

- Aird, W. M. 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection' in *North. Hist.* v. 28 (1992)
Backhouse, J. *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (1981, rpt. 1991)
Bede: *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Various editions)
Bonner, G. etc (eds) *St. Cuthbert: His Cult and his Community to AD 1200* (1989)
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Higham, N. J. *The Kingdom of Northumbria, AD 350 - 1100* (1993)
O'Sullivan, D. & Young, R. *English Heritage Book of Lindisfarne, Holy Island* (1995)

Hawkes, J. *The Golden Age of Northumbria* (1996)
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CUSTOMS, EXCISE AND SMUGGLING

Brief definitions of Duties during early days would be:-

Customs Duty	-	levied on imports from foreign countries
Excise Duty	-	levied on goods & commodities produced or sold at home

Although no records seem to exist, it is thought that an imposition of Taxes goes back to at least the Roman era in Britain. There is evidence, however, of Customs Duties collection in the Saxon period of about 742.

It was during the Medieval Period that a large increase in Tax collection took place because of the large quantities of wine brought into the country by the Norman nobility after the Conquest. Wine was imported on a large scale and ships had to be specially built to bring it in. It was usually carried in barrels, known as 'tuns', and the capacity of a vessel at that time was measured by the number of 'tuns' she could carry; hence the words 'tons' and 'tonnage' still survive in ship size measurement. The following example of a cargo shipment is given:-

On 15 October 1604 the ship "Le Charitie de Chepstow" arrived at Chepstow from Bordeaux with the following cargo:

'20 tuns of Bordeaux wine for Thos. Penne of London; 2 tuns Bordeaux wine and 2 hhd prunes for William Gittins, 8 tuns Bordeaux wine and 4 tuns Rosin for John Pinner, 2 tuns, 1 hhd Bordeaux wine and 1 tun Vinegar for Thos. Mors, 2 tuns Bordeaux wine for Thos. Strincter, 2 tuns Bordeaux wine, 1 tun Rosin, 1 tun Vinegar for Rich. Grane'.

The Excise Tax was imposed during the reign of Charles I and it has been considered that the King's differences of opinion with the Long Parliament contributed to the ensuing Civil War. The Excise Tax was intended as a temporary tax, for the duration of, and to fund that war. However, the war had involved so much expenditure that the repeal of the Tax was delayed. At first Excise duties were imposed on a few items such as beer, cider, perry, spirits, soap and salt but, as time went on many other articles were added, the tax being levied on imports as well as on goods produced at home, and in addition to any Customs duties.

The development of the revenue services followed upon definite lines; Collectors, Controllers and Searchers of Customs were appointed in the main ports, and Patent Officers appointed deputies to act for them in the many rising ports. Thus we find Tide Waiters who boarded vessels, dealt with Health, searched and guarded vessels to their discharging berths; Land Waiters who checked cargoes against entries and Searchers who checked export cargoes and ensured that all duty had been paid.

Large ports, such as London, had enormous staffs of both permanent and temporary officers with all sorts of titles viz:- Land Surveyors; Tide Surveyors; Land Carriage Waiter; King's Waiters; Preferential Tide Waiter; Glutmen; Piazza men and many others. Many of these

officers received only a nominal salary and were expected to gain a livelihood by receiving fees for various jobs carried out.

Good's Directory of 1806 gives the details of the Berwick/Tweedmouth Customs & Excise Staff:

1 Supervisor	1 Collector
2 Excise Officers	1 Comptroller
3 Riding Officers	1 Searcher
6 Tide Waiters	1 Surveyor
1 Tide Waiter (at Spittle)	1 Weighing Porter
2 Land Waiters	

In 1688, and in order to finance large scale warfare involving the Dutch, extra revenue was raised by increasing Customs Duties on spirits and tea. Duties until then had been relatively low and smuggling, apart from the export smuggling of wool, had not been a serious problem. Would-be smugglers in square-rigged ships were hampered also by the difficulties of arriving at spaces, with a cargo of contraband, and being unable to leave because of the lack of favourable winds, leaving them liable to capture by revenue officials.

The great increase in duties meant that there were substantial profits to be made from the smuggling trade, and the development of the fore-and-aft rigged vessels facilitated the rapid turn-round of smuggling vessels. This 'heyday of smuggling' was known as the 'Free Trade Era' with the smugglers being called 'free traders'. Many engaged in this traffic did not consider that any moral offence was being committed and local business magnates, magistrates and trades people surreptitiously assisted the smuggling gangs. The Customs service ultimately built up a fleet of well armed and manned vessels to cope with the smugglers, whilst on land hundreds of country folk, armed with cudgels and firearms, would come to the coast at prearranged times to collect contraband and carry it away whilst the tide-waiters looked on helplessly. There were often pitched battles on land and on sea which resulted in casualties to the Customs Officers, and often to the supporting navy ships.

Eventually the revenue services gained the mastery, being helped by a public change of attitude towards smuggling for, in a number of areas, local people banded together to help the revenue officers fight the smuggling gangs, most of which were eventually broken.

The work of revenue officials in those days was greatly complicated by the fact that both Customs and Excise duties were levied on many imports and the services operated independently regarding the collection of duties, resulting in frequent conflicts of interest.

The following Petition, dated 16 February 1825, appears in the Berwick Guild Book B1/27:-

"That your Petitioners have long witnessed the evils occasioned in this town and its neighbourhood by the operation of the Revenue Laws as they effect the use of Spirituous Liquors made from the grain of this country. According to the present state of those Laws, as they are informed, the spirit called in Scotland Whiskey cannot be made and used in England, or perмитor or in any legal manner, either by sea or land to be used for private consumption in England.

This prohibition to the People of England is considered on the Border as so unfair that persons in very rank of life make no scruple to use Scotch Whiskey when they can do it without danger. A great temptation to smuggling is thus afforded, and the Boundary between England and Scotland being in many places only a low Ditch or Wall, the transportation of it is a matter easily accomplished and, notwithstanding the severity of the punishment, smuggling is carried on to an enormous extent and is daily increasing and your petitioners believe no exertions or vigilance of the Revenue Officers can ever in any Material degree check it. Besides the expense thus brought upon the Country by the employment of a large establishment of Officers otherwise unnecessary, the practice is attended with the most demoralizing consequences to the very many persons and leads them to commission of more heinous offences.

Your Petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable House will take this subject in your serious consideration as one materially affecting the interest and welfare of a large portion of His Majesty's subjects and will adopt such measures as will put a stop to the evils complained of and allow your Petitioners and the People of England the same Privileges as their neighbours in Scotland enjoy."

Dennis Nicholson

BERWICK ADVERTISER GLEANINGS

BIRTHS

December 1817

On Sunday s'nnight, Mr James Ward of Bouden, near Skipton, one of the tenants of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, had his TWENTY FOURTH CHILD christened at the chapel of that place.

MARRIAGES

Sept 1813

At St Mary's Chester, Mr Humphreys of Denbigh, the celebrated blind Harper, to Mrs Williams widow of Mr Williams whose lamented remains she 14 days before had consigned to the silent grave. For 7 days she remained quite inconsolable, but on the 8th being accidentally in company of the Harper, the tones which he drew from the melodious instrument had the effect of soothing her grief, and after 6 days loving courtship this modern Orpheus had the felicity of conducting her to the Altar.

Sept 1816

At Knaresborough, MR JOHN TEMPLE, who though hoary with the flight of 70 winters, was still susceptible of Cupid's dart, and repaired to the Altar to be made happy during the remainder of his days with MISS HART, of the same place, a blooming nymph in the 19th year of her age.

DEATHS

Nov 1813

At Dryferdale, MARY BLACKLOCK aged 81 years, wife of Thos Stephenson, to whom she had been married for 60 years, mother of 11, grandmother of 47, great grandmother of 20 children. The venerable couple had lived 66 years in the same cottage, and the deceased had not been more than 9 miles from her home in that period. As proof of her industry and activity, she was once known to have purchased wool in the morning, which she carded, spun, carried to the weaver and made into breeches for her husband so expeditiously, that he went and paid the landlord his rent in them before night.

Oct 1815

At Boston the well known Lincs musician DR MOODY, to the great regret of all his living patients. This eccentric son of Aesculapius, professed to cure every disorder incidental to the human frame, by three sovereign remedies. The first of which he called GENTLE JOHN (Sulphuric acid), the second NO.1. (Nitric acid) and the third GOLDEN TINCTURE (gin & aloes).

6th Jan 1816

At Warsaw at the age of 125, Francis Narodsky, a Polish gentleman. He married his second wife at the age of 92. A daughter now alive was the fruit of his marriage. In 1806 the Polish Government granted him a Pension of 3000 Florins, which the Emperor Alexander continued until his death.

Oct 1816

An odd character....."A short time before his death, he requested the grave digger to bury him just at the gate of the Churchyard, that when he rose at the last day, he might get a little before the crowd".

July 1817

On 14th at Woolviston Co of Durham, aged 104 Mrs Mary Stephenson widow of Bartholomew St. The mother of above died aged 108, a sister at 107, another sister 105 and a brother 97, making the whole 521 years as united ages of above 5 persons. No other family perhaps ever produced so many remarkable instances of longevity.

Nov 1817

At Sandbed poor house Dumfriesshire, ANN SIM aged 70, she was remarkable for her pedestrian powers as she was often known to walk to Dumfries and back again, a distance of 50 miles, by mid-day of the day she set out - as also to Edinburgh and return hence in the space of 40 hours, though the distance travelled is 170 miles.

Berwick Advertiser January 1817

SAGACITY OF RATS

In the year 1744 the Surgeon of a Man-of-War observed the eggs rapidly disappearing for the sick sea-store and intimated to his mates that he suspected they took some unwarrantable liberties. The young gents, conscious of innocence were highly offended; but the eggs were gone, they alone had access to where they lay, and they could only deny the charge. One of them said to the others it might be possible that some of the sailors had a false key, and they ought to watch for their detection.

They provided themselves with a dark lanthorn, and well armed, awaited the predators. Soon after midnight, a great movement near the cask where the eggs were packed induced them cautiously to turn the lanthorn. They beheld a vast number of RATS climbing up, and kept very still to observe the issue. In a short time they saw the rats return, each with an egg under his chin. They next day informed the Surgeon. He had the remaining eggs taken from the cask and placed in a smaller dish, supported by a table, the feet of which receded so far, that the rats could not get up. He attended with the dark lanthorn, saw the invaders ascended the barrel, and come away disappointed; they prowled about a few minutes before they discovered the eggs. One of the men had left a spar leaning the table, which was soon perceived by the rats, and some got up with alacrity. He then by a stealth movement took away the spar before the whole party affected a lodgement; but they that had obtained possession clinging together made a pathway to the ground and their comrades passed over their backs to the table; nor were they long till each retreated in the same way with an egg under his chin, which he would have carried off had not the gentleman intervened.

In 1776 a sagacious countryman whose veracity was well known, saw very early in the morning, a rat led by another to a well. He informed some acquaintance who went with him to that spot the same hour each day. They saw the rats had in their mouths a straw, by which the blind animal was conducted by one with vision and after quenching his thirst he was brought back to his hole.

Such instances of intelligence pertaining to the lower orders of Creation ought to inculcate humanity in their lords.

Muriel Fraser

Dennis Nicholson
Hon Editor