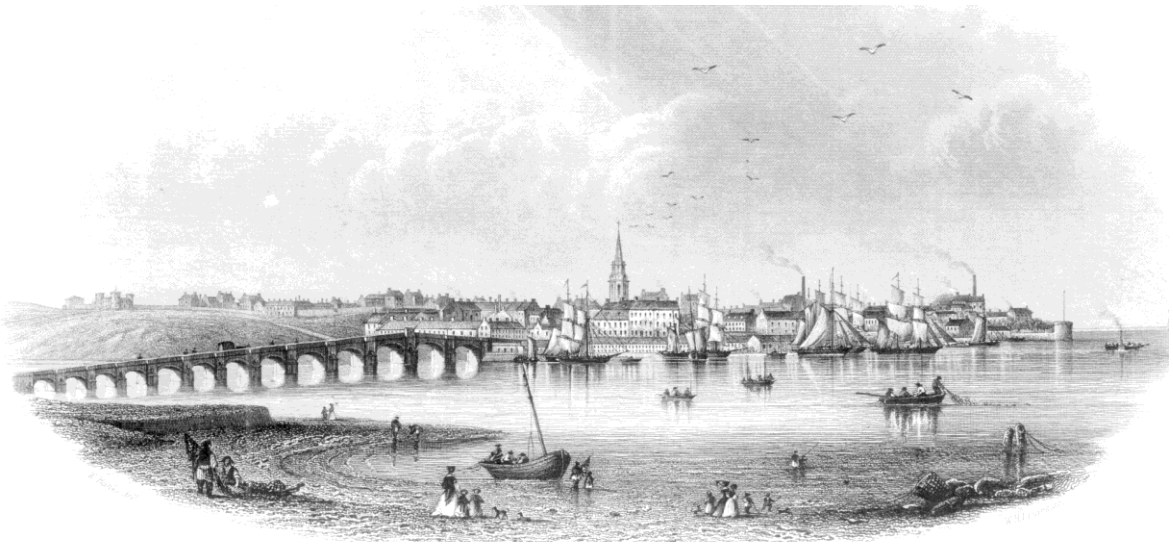
Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 24 – OCTOBER 1999

[Selected articles]

1999 October

SANITARY REPORT ON CONDITIONS IN BERWICK, 1850

We often think of the past as the "good old days" and a time that we would like to go back to. However,much as I would like to go back in time to relive the past, I think I could only cope with it for one day, afterreading about sanitary conditions in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal 150 years ago.

The following are some extracts from a report compiled by Robert Rawlinson with some additions by the town's doctors about conditions here in 1850. Reading them has made me realise how much we take for granted today:

Samson's Court, Wallace's Green - *The property of this description throughout the town is let off in room-tenements. Those in this court are crowded together. The whole district is without drainage. These rooms are small, the walls are damp, the floors are rotten and in ruins. There are no means of ventilation, and the condition of the inhabitants is wretched in extreme. They have no furniture, and dirty heaps of shavings and straw in the corners of the room serve for beds. Large middens are crowded in the yards close to the houses. I found 18 persons occupying one small room, 12 of whom belonged to one family. In another room, 6 yards by 5 yards and 6 feet 6 inches high, there were two beds; the floor rotten, and yet the rent paid was £4 a year, collected weekly. This sum would, under proper and well regulated management, pay the rent of a superior and comfortable set of apartments....a filthy surface channel stagnates before the door, and the yard behind is most foul.*

Church Street - *Behind some property here, there is a school which at times is occupied by about 60 children. In an open drain, the liquid refuse flows round the outer walls; the windows must open right over this nuisance; there are pigsties and pigs close adjoining. The poor children looked pale and sickly; they are certainly schooled into a practical knowledge of filth, whatever may be the case with legitimate subjects of education.*

Chapel Street - Spence's Yard - *A long and dark tunnel-like passage leads into a confined yard. The rooms on either side are let off as separate tenements. The doors open, or rather lead, into this dark passage, for there is nothing open about it. For two small rooms, the rent is £3 per year. ...The woman occupying them stated that she dare not open the window, as the bad smell from the yard made her sick; she would leave at once, but that better houses or rooms cannot be obtained. ....There are ten separate sets of tenements approached by the dark passage previously named; some of them are dark at noonday; the stairs are of wood and ruinous; the rooms dirty; the furniture is scanty and broken; some have beds, other rags and dirty straw on the floor....*

Tweedmouth - *The present condition of this part of the Borough is very bad; new streets remain unformed and unpaved and they are in consequence in a dirty condition; some are almost impassable. ...House cleanliness is almost impossible... There are many nuisances, such as privies and large middens on the sides of the street, in confined yards, and crowded betwixt and upon houses which would in a measure but repeat the condition of Berwick if described. There are also common lodginghouses, slaughterhouses and pigsties, with their attendant filth and disease.*

Spittal - *This portion of the Borough has recently grown into importance as a summer bathing-place, and if well regulated, and the necessary sanitary works are properly carried out and efficiently superintended afterwards, it can scarcely be doubted but that the increase would be continued, even more rapidly. Many of the roads and streets are unpaved, and all the nuisances described as existing in Tweedmouth exist here also to a degree.*

As an appendix to Robert Rawlinson's report, Dr Alexander Kirkwood, one of the town's doctors added his own observations on the town.

Samson's Yard - *... the houses are small, very dirty, crowded, and in bad repair. One room on the ground floor, about 12 feet square, and situated some inches below the level of the yard, is inhabited by a poor Irish woman and seven children; the youngest child is one year old, the eldest fourteen: the fluid matter from a midden in the adjoining yard oozes through the back wall, and runs upon their miserable bed of dirty straw, which is laid in one corner upon the floor; their only covering is the tattered rags upon their backs. There is no article of furniture in their room. The windows and door are quite insufficient to keep out the cold, or, what is more deleterious, the fumes from the abominations in the yard. Above this place, in a room of the same size, are a man, his wife, and eight children: the man states that he cannot open his window on account of the nuisances below.*

Chapel Street - *The state of this street is truly deplorable, and a great disgrace to the town. It is often not swept more than once a week, and that, if the inhabitants are to be believed, in a most careless manner. On several occasions, in answer to my advice as to ventilating their houses, the inhabitants declared that they could not keep their windows open on account of the horrid stench that emanates from the street - caring rather to endure the close and suffocating atmosphere within, than to inhale the pestilential vapours from without. One man has assured me since, that he has attempted to keep birds several times, but they always die, he believes from the filthy air....*

Not surprisingly, Robert Rawlinson made the following conclusions and recommendations in his report:

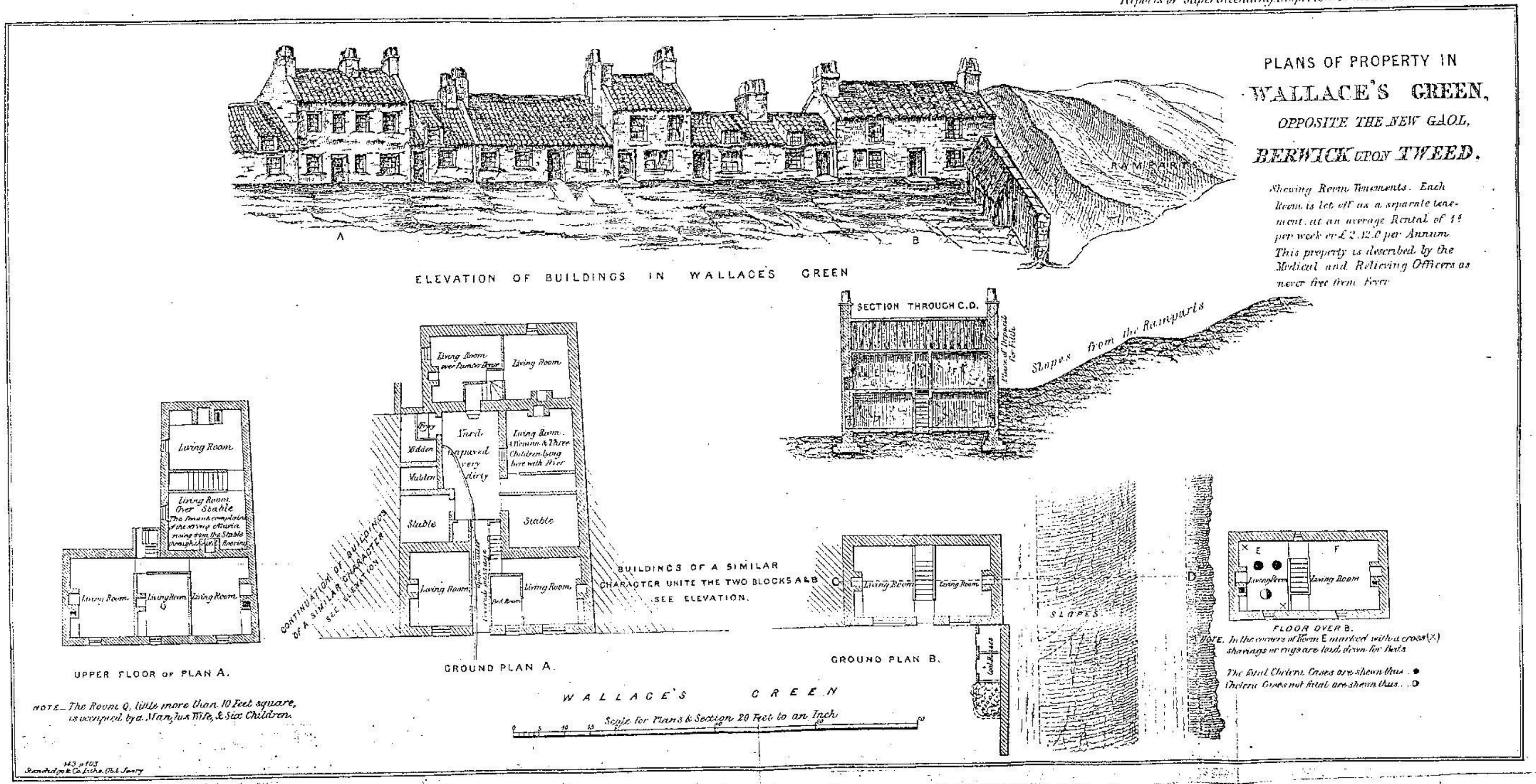
1. That the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed is not so healthy as it may be, on account of undrained streets, imperfect privy accommodation, crowded courts, houses, room-tenements, and large exposed middens and cess pools.

2. That excess of disease has been distinctly traced to the undrained and crowded districts, to deficient ventilation, and to the absence of a full water supply, and of sewers and drains generally.

3. That a better supply of water should therefore be provided, and that a perfect system of sewers and drains should be laid down...

Fortunately the Borough did take heed of Robert Rawlinson's report and it led to the establishment of the Urban Sanitary Authority in the town. This body was responsible for ensuring that a proper water supply and sewerage system was established for the town and that sanitary and health matters were dealt with.

Linda Bankier


PLANS OF PROPERTY IN
WALLACE'S GREEN,
OPPOSITE THE NEW GAOL,
BERWICK UPON TWEED.
Shewing Room Tenements. Each Room is let off as a separate tenement, at an average Rental of 1s per week or £2.12.0 per Annum.
This property is described by the Medical and Relieving Officers as never free from Fever.
ELEVATION OF BUILDINGS IN WALLACE'S GREEN
RAMPARTS
SECTION THROUGH C.D.
Slopes from the Ramparts
Living Room
Living Room over Stable
Living Room
Yard unpaved very dirty
Stable
Stable
UPPER FLOOR OF PLAN A.
GROUND PLAN A.
CONTINUATION OF BUILDINGS OF A SIMILAR CHARACTER SEE ELEVATION
BUILDINGS OF A SIMILAR CHARACTER UNITE THE TWO BLOCKS A&B SEE ELEVATION.
GROUND PLAN B.
SLOPES
FLOOR OVER B.
NOTE. In the corners of Room E marked with a cross (X) shavings or rags are laid down for Beds
The fatal Cholera Cases are shewn thus ●
Cholera Cases not fatal are shewn thus ◐
WALLACE'S GREEN
Scale for Plans & Section 20 Feet to an Inch
NOTE _ The Room Q, little more than 10 Feet square, is occupied by a Man, his Wife, & Six Children.

HOGARTH FAMILY

In the last newsletter, Eric Herbert wrote about the Hogarth family who had connections with Scremerston. At the time, he thought this was all the information he could find about the family, but since then, some new leads came up which have resulted in this second instalment:

The Hogarth Letters of 1810 - 1857

Since the last newsletter, I decided to follow up the information which stated that some of the Hogarths had been buried in Llanallgo churchyard, Anglesey hoping that I might find some evidence of their graves but not realising the complexity and horror of researching into the disaster that befell the "Royal Charter". The loss of this clipper, homeward bound from Melbourne to Liverpool was a major maritime calamity with the death of 467 lives out of a total of 508 on board during a force 12 storm which drove the vessel onto rocks on the coast of Anglesey.

Firstly, I contacted the Anglesey Record Office and they were able to send me a copy of the burial register of the parish of Penrhosllugwy (Vicar - Rev Hugh Roose Hughes) which showed that Peter Purvis Hogarth and his wife Georgina were buried on the 29th February 1860 having been conveyed from another parish. This was some four months after the disaster and it would appear that perhaps they had been buried earlier. I then received confirmation from Gwynedd Family History Society that the Hogarth's small son, Robert, had been buried also in Penrhosllugwy but on the 31st October 1859 only five days after the grounding and break-up of the "Royal Charter". He had not been recorded by name but was entered as the son of Peter Hogarth.

To learn more about this event I read Charles Dickens' book "The Uncommercial Traveller". He visited the area of the shipwreck on the 30th December 1859 and was impressed with the way that the Vicar of Llanallgo, Rev Stephen Roose Hughes (brother of the Vicar of the adjoining parish) was dealing with the situation. He was paying the local villagers 10/- for each body they brought to him, then made notes of the physical features of each corpse, where possible, because many were mutilated by being cast upon the rocks by the violent storm waves. He also listed their clothing, cut off buttons and even locks of hair and then allocated each body a number. They were then being buried four coffins to a grave and if they were subsequently identified he was then arranging for them to be re-buried in their own graves. Many people wrote to the Rev Hughes seeking assistance in tracing relatives and friends and at the time of Dickens' visit, the Rector, his wife, mother-in-law and wife's two sisters had answered 1,075 letters. The majority of bodies were buried in Llanallgo churchyard but it is possible that other parishes affected by the disaster would have been carrying out the same procedures.

From the PRO at Kew I was able to obtain copies of two letters from the Marine Department of the Board of Trade to the Rev John Borrar of York Place, Edinburgh, who had possibly written on behalf of a Hogarth relative. The first letter on the 17th January 1860 in response to John Borrar's enquiry of the 22nd December states that "a body identified as that of Mrs Hogarth was recovered from the Wreck and that on the body was Five Pounds (£5) and a gold ring". In a later letter dated 25th February 1860 they state "With reference to the claim made by the relatives of Mrs Hogarth to the property found on her body ..... I inform you that a claim has since been made by the same persons to the property found on the body of Mr

Hogarth. The value of this property is on the whole considerable and letters of administration will be required".

From this it would appear that Peter Hogarth and his wife had been buried as unidentified persons but when later their identity was confirmed they had been buried with their son in the churchyard at Penrhosllugwy. I have just received evidence of this from the Gwynedd FHS who found two entries in the burial register forthe parish of Llanbedrgoch dated 14th November 1859 which read:-

Female unknown supposed to be Mrs Georgiana[sic.] Hogarth found on the shore of Redwarf Bay.

Person unknown - a male body found on the shore of Redwarf Bay.

According to my research there is no evidence to show whether the body of Peter's brother Robert was ever found. His name was on the passenger list when the "Royal Charter" left Melbourne.

Since the first article I have found that Peter had an older sister Margaret (b.1811) who had married Patrick Clay, corn merchant of Berwick, and that they had resided in Ravensdowne. Also, Robert Hogarth, Peter's father, had died on the 19th March 1860 at High Gate, Tweedmouth and not in 1857 as I had previously thought. Perhaps he had retired from the farm at Scremerston in 1857 when his other son Robert left to join Peter and his family in Australia. It is therefore possible that he could have known about the disaster and the tragic loss of his two sons, daughter-in-law and grandson.

Eric Herbert

A JOURNEY THROUGH BERWICK'S LITERARY HERITAGE

1. Legendary Origins

The origins of the intellectual pursuits of the northern peoples are highly obscure. Throughout the region are hundreds of stones, flat, standing, fallen and fragmentary carved with intricate patterns of pits, lines and spirals. We call them 'cup and ring marks' and date them to the Bronze Age or 3000 years ago or thereabouts. But their original meaning is lost. Perhaps it was that they were purely artistic, done for the sheer delight in carving, but of what we know of most traditional societies this seems unlikely. In these societies art invariably serves a symbolic and religious purpose, having a secure place in mythic systems of understanding how the world works. With the late 20th Century revival in interest in ancient mysteries, these stones have provided a potent inspiration for modern artists and writers, exemplified by the *Northern Rock Art* exhibition in Durham a couple of years ago. One writer who has created her own poetic 'explanation' of the 'cup and ring' carvings is Hexham based poet Linda France (b.1958) whose major project with painter Birtley Aris entitled *Acknowledged Land* (1993) tried to get inside the heads of the ancient carvers:-

"... We acknowledge this land,
our debt to it, a pact of clasped hands,
the maps we carry on our open palms.

The spaces between cold and hungry and lost
we fill with red of our blood,
our children and blessings. And so we make maps
of all our safe places, to remind us where they are,
how to find our way home in the dark. We carve
them out of the stone of our hearts, catch
the blood in crimson spirals, charting the gradient
of our country, the land where we live; know
how much geography we carry inside us, a home roaring
with rings of fire, oranges and blacks.
And all the places we know are safe, Old Bewick
and Dod Law, Yeavering Bell and Lordenshaw..."

In suggesting that the spiral carvings are spiritual maps of familiar landscapes, Linda France draws on modern understanding of the abstract patterns of existing traditional societies. The Australian aborigines for example, draw similarly seemingly incomprehensible lines, spirals and patterns in their art. These they explain as a mixture of map and mystic musical score. The patterns show the track of their 'dreamtime' ancestors across the land, as they sang the world into existence. If a similar idea inspired our Bronze Age northerners perhaps what we have in the 'cup and ring marks' are the innumerable creation ballads carved at key points in the land. The rituals enacted at the site of these carvings and at associated standing stones, stone circles and earlier henge monuments are now thought to be connected with the seasons and the progress of the farming year. The stone circles particularly being used by their creators to mark the apparent movement of the heavenly bodies.

There are not many in Northumberland, but those at Duddo and Ilderton have attracted the attention of astronomically minded theories. At the Ilderton site too, Victorian excavations revealed a spread of charcoal now thought to be part of some seasonal sun festival. The importance for a farming community of noting the changing seasons is not difficult to understand and there may be hints in folklore about stones that extend the idea of fertility of the land to the fertility of its inhabitants. Traditionally brides were expected to step or leap across so-called 'petting stones' at Holy Island, Belford, Woodhorn and Whittingham. While at Bamburgh a three-legged 'parting stool' was used. This could be related to the old Roman practice of carrying brides over thresholds of their new home, or is it that the stone itself is the important element? One custom in Aberdeenshire was that barren women passed through a hole in an ancient stone to regain their fertility. Whatever the truth the opinion of poets is as valid as that of scholars. Stan Beckensall combines both roles in his *Poems of Moorland*, giving voice to long dead ancestors enthralled by the forces of nature:-

"Gods lived, and were placated:
Men and women not enough.
Force drove through grass blades, crackled in the skies,
Hurled rainbows, hid the face of moon and sun.
Awesome. Kept us in our place."

A sense of place is a key concept in legendary history and **Bamburgh** is one of the most important locations. Originally given the Celtic name of Din Guayrdi or Din Guoaroy it was probably a Roman signal station before becoming the seat of the Saxon king Ida in 547. Little is known of Ida, apart from supposedly having more than twelve sons, but he did live at exactly the time that the historical leader who was the original for King Arthur also lived. Ida, like Arthur, was a renowned warrior and it could be this heroism, celebrated in now lost ballads, which got Bamburgh included in the Arthurian legends, becoming associated with the Castle of 'Dolorous Garde'. It was there that the 'Dolorous Stroke' was rendered, a terrible

blow that destroyed continents and created the wasteland which only the Holy Grail could restore. Who rendered the stroke to who remains a matter of dispute. The *Estoire del Sainte Graal* (13th C) has Varlan killing Lambor with King David's sword, but the more popular version recorded by Sir Thomas Malory in 1470, has a murderous knight called Balin, who had already killed one Lady of the Lake, being chased around the castle by an avenging king Pellam when Balin found Longinus' lance (last used at the Crucifixion) and delivered the dolorous stroke. Centuries later the poet Swinburne in his *Tale of Balen* (1896) linked this story with his own youthful adventures around in Northumberland.

Sometime after the land had been laid waste Lancelot, whose foster-mother was another Lady of the Lake, came into ownership of the Castle, changing the name to 'Joyous Garde' when Queen Guinevere moved in with him. After that relationship came to grief, the new owners reverted to the original name. Malory also puts those other famous adulterers Tristran and Iseult at Bamburgh for 3 years, and again Swinburne follows this in his *Tristram and Iseult*, calling the castle the "noblest hold of all the north" and:-

> "they saw the strength and help of Joyous Gard.
> Within the full deep glorious tower that stands
> Between the wild sea and the broad wild lands."

Later Hexham born poet Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962) decided 'Joyous Garde' was at Dunstanburgh. The other celebrated Bamburgh legend is that of *The Laidley Worm of Spindelston-Heugh*, which seems to be set in the time of King Ida, the original poem is imprecise. The story relates how a typical jealous step-mother turns her beautiful step-daughter into a dragon or worm which the villagers find very expensive to maintain. A hero, the Child of Wynd, hears of the problem, takes ship to Bamburgh and is set to slay the dragon:-

> "And now he drew his berry-broad sword,
> And laid it on her head;
> And swore if she did harm to him
> That he would strike her dead.
>
> O! quit thy sword and bend thy bow,
> And give me kisses three;
> For though I am a poisonous worm,
> No hurt I'll do to thee."

Improbably he does kiss the dragon and the princess is restored to human shape and turns out to be his sister. The wicked step-mother is turned into a toad, living still under Spindelston Heugh. We learn from the last verse:-

> "This fact now Duncan Frasier,
> Of Cheviot, sings in rhime;
> Lest Bamburgh-shire-men should forget
> Some part of it in time."

A date of 1270 was assigned to this poem when it first appeared in print in Hutchinson's *View of Northumberland* (1776-8) with the words "from an ancient manuscript". Unfortunately Hutchinson was misled by his contributor, the Rev. Robert Lambe (1712-95) of Norham, who had composed the poem himself and passed it off as a Medieval composition. Hutchinson was none too pleased about this, but doing fake medieval verse was all the rage at the time. In 1770s the debate over Thomas Chatterton's "discoveries" of 15th Century poems was at its

height, and the whole of Europe was reading the poems of the 3rd Century bard Ossian supposedly found in the Highlands by James Macpherson, all of which he composed himself.

The Rev. Lambe had another go at local heritage with a verse about Flodden "written about the time of Queen Elizabeth...from a curious manuscript" to which we will return later. He was though, a fairly harmless eccentric who once proposed marriage by letter to a Durham carrier's daughter whom he had seen only once in the street several years previously. He suggested they meet on Berwick Pier and she was to carry a large tea-caddy to aid identification. On the day appointed he forgot about it and failed to turn up. Eventually he remembered and they were married for almost 20 years.

If the *Laidley Worm* story was invented at least the Reverend was tapping into a genuine store of northern dragon legends, confirmed in 1971 when a small gold plaque was dug up at Bamburgh showing "the Bamburgh beast' that is now used by the castle as a logo. But it has to be said, the *Laidley Worm* is a timid creature and as a dragon-slayer story it hardly stands up. This, is rather more robust:-

> "The temper of the twisted tangle-thing was fired
> to close now in battle. The brave warrior-king
> shook out his sword so sharp of edge,
> an ancient heirloom. Each of the pair,
> intending destruction, felt terror at the other:
> intransigent beside his towering shield
> the lord of friends, while the fleetness of the serpent
> wound itself together; he waited in his armour.
> It came flowing forward, flaming and coiling,
> rushing on its fate."

The is the beginning of Beowulf's fatal fight with the dragon which ends the first epic poem in English. Although set in Scandinavia in 6th Century and composed in the Anglo-Saxon of Wessex, *Beowulf* was almost certainly written in the Christianised kingdom of Northumbria centred on Bamburgh and the Palace of Yeavering near Wooler. The poem is a transitional work with a thin veil of Christian allusions and allegories cast over a typical pagan saga of the Northlands, akin to the great Viking sagas. It shows how the ruling elite of Northumbria were looking back with pride to their Scandinavian roots, before that is, those roots came back to haunt them in the Viking raids starting with Lindisfarne in 793. Although not as influential as the Arthurian canon, modern fantasy writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien have used the epic struggle between good and evil it represents as the basis of their work. Beowulf-like heroes are to be found on film, tv (an episode of *Star Trek*) and innumerable computer and amusement arcade games. This is appropriate as *Beowulf* was from the start intended as entertainment, it was written to be learnt by heart and recited aloud with musical accompaniment in front of an audience. The poem itself includes such a scene:-

> "It was with pain that the powerful spirit
> dwelling in darkness endured that time,
> hearing daily the hall filled
> with loud amusement; there was the music of the harp,
> the clear song of the poet, perfect in his telling
> of the remote first making of the human race."

And at the great palace at **Yeavering** we have the venue for such a performance. Not only a great hall such as features in much of *Beowulf*, but what must be the earliest publicly funded performing-arts venue in the North-East, an auditorium with rows of seats. Seating 320,

virtually the same capacity as the Maltings, the foundations were discovered during excavations in 1970s. Court cases, political speeches and the sermons of visiting Saints could have taken place in the space, but perhaps most intriguing of all, this 'Yeavering Court Theatre' could have been the venue for the world premiere of *Beowulf*.

Chris Green

MARITIME APPRENTICESHIP AND THE POOR LAW

The apprenticing of pauper children, at parish expense, was originally conceived by an Act of Henry VIII, subsequently re-enacted in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Such provisions for apprenticeships continued until the dissolution of the old Poor Law in 1834. The Elizabethans viewed such apprenticeships as the best method to prepare poor children with a reasonable means of earning a living thereby avoiding one source of poverty.

By the Settlement Act of 1662, serving an apprenticeship in a parish was one legalised means of obtaining a settlement; subsequently a forty-day residence by the apprentice became the accepted period. Financially, at any rate, this was an incentive to parish officers to indenture pauper children outside the parish, though policy in this respect varied widely. In the case of the sea apprentice it was the parish where the ship was registered which became the parish of settlement.

Development In the early eighteenth century provided even more incentive for apprenticing to sea, for an Act of 1704 gave powers to local overseers to bind out any pauper boy over ten years of age 'to the sea service' until twenty-one. Masters of ships were obliged to take these boys - one for the first thirty to fifty of the crew, one for the next fifty and one more for every subsequent one hundred crewmen. There was a £10 penalty for refusal.

In many coastal parishes, particularly those on the south and east coasts of England, overseers bound out children to the maritime trades such as oyster and sprat fishing. Coastal shipping also featured amongst the Essex indentures. Considerable trade was carried on between the Essex coast and the North East with barges and other vessels taking corn and bringing coal. In the early 18th century coal was one of the biggest imports into London with, in an average year, some ninety vessels bringing in coal from north-eastern ports. Overseers often bound boys to north-east coast shipowners at places such as Monkwearmouth, Scarborough, South Shields and Whitby. In some cases the apprenticeship indenture, in addition to the usual formalised wording, made additional stipulations concerning the allocation of money to the apprentices. For example one boy, bound to a Scarborough master, became entitled to payments based on years of service. In the first year he was to receive £e; in the second £3; then by progressive increments he reached £9 in the final year of the contract. All prize money was reserved for the shipmaster. In certain areas of the country the labour market proved a boon, not only to coastal parishes with easy access for shipping, but also to inland areas such as textile centres.

There were, of course, many abuses connected with this apprenticeship scheme. During war-time many watermen contrived to get their apprentices pressed so that their wages and any prize monies became the possession of their masters. Watermen also took large numbers of boys for small sums of money, the apprentices not necessarily being employed on boat but

idling their time away or becoming vagrants. Some boys apprenticed to fishermen must have lived a precarious existence, sleeping out in the boat to prevent its theft and sharing the vicissitudes of the trade itself. An eleven year-old boy died as a result of cold and hunger and of the results of being beaten with a rope and tiller by his master.

In wartime it was possible to apprentice boys to H M ships. Apprentices as young as twelve were indentured - mostly to Warrant Officers such as gunners, boatswains, carpenters and cooks. It was possible for such boys to receive promotion in such departments and, in time, come to head them.

In the mid 1750's an institution known as the Marine Society became useful to parish officers in London and more distant areas in their efforts to reduce their pauper problems. When it was learned that a Barfleur officer of the warship Barfleur had taken a number of street urchins and made them part of his ship's company, it was realised that pauper boys could be sent to the Navy and parish officers were encouraged to send them to the Society. The boys had to be thirteen years' old and at least 4ft 3in tall if they were to become officers' or warrant officers' apprentices. Shorter boys could be sent to the Merchant Service. The boys were lodged in the Society's boarding house in London prior to being sent to sea. They were given elementary training in seamanship and the three R's and provided with a cap, two hats, a jacket, waistcoat, breeches, three shirts, two pairs of hose, one pair of shoes with buckles, a pillow, a blanket, a knife, comb, needle and thread.

Whatever happened to the boys subsequently depended on the officer or warrant officer to whom they were allocated. However, there was always the chance that they became just another seaman. The unfavourable side of the picture is provided by a letter of 1760 which maintained that the results of sending boys to sea was deplorable - "The first qualifications they acquire are blasphemy, chewing tobacco and gaming, from whence they proceed to drinking and talking bawdy. They herd in the hold, the round tops or on the booms with the other boys, where they improve each other in a peculiar species of vulgar wit and insolent jaw, of which they are so ready that no man in the ship is a match for them at discourses".

In the period `756 - 1862 the Marine Society fitted out more than 10,000 youths for sea, many of whom subsequently continued their careers as seamen in the Merchant Service. Parish apprentices often ran away from their masters and, particularly in wartime, enlisted in H M ships.

The Poor Law then was often associated with the sea, and it might well have provided opportunities of which an able boy could have taken advantage.

It is not known to what extent any of the foregoing applied to pauper boys in the Berwick Port areas but, if any relevant information comes to light, the Record Office will welcome such.

Dennis Nicholson

SOCIAL SECURITY

The following Society Articles are taken from Good's 1806 - Berwick Directory. There were several Benefit Societies in being during that period including "The Gardeners", "The Old &

New Scotch", "The New Soc", "The Friendly Society" and "The Royal Mail Guards' Friendly Society".

The Seamen's Benefit Society

The Society meets at Samuel Lough's, Fishmongers Arms, High Street.

Articles

1. Every member pay Half-a-Guinea entrance and one shilling for every 20L in the fund: Likewise, one shilling every month put into the chest, and threepence spent.

2. For every brother that is shipwrecked, 3L is allowed, and twopence per month from each member.

3. For every one that is taken by the enemy, twopence per month to be allowed to his wife, all the time he is in prison.

4. For every member disabled or sick five shillings per week, for one year; and twopence per month from every member for life afterwards.

5. For every member that dies, 10L is given for the funeral out of the chest; and one shilling from each member for the funeral.

6. Every seaman is free in this fund after he is two years a member: but deaths, shipwrecks, and being taken by the enemy, are to be supported by the fund immediately.

Dennis Nicholson

BERWICK ADVERTISER GLEANINGS

DEATHS

Sept 1814
"In Grays Almshouse, Taunton, HANNAH MURTON aged 82. The deceased was a maiden lady, who with a delicate prejudice peculiar to that resolute portion of the fair sex to which she belonged, vowed several years ago, that no he fellow should ever touch her, living or dead. In pursuance of this notable resolution, about ten years ago, she purchased herself a coffin, in which whenever she felt serious illness, she immediately deposited herself, thus abridging in case of her dissolution the labours of those sable mimics the Undertakers, and ensuring a gratification of her peculiar sensibility. The old lady's coffin was not however exclusively appropriated to the reception of her mortal remains, but served also as her wardrobe, and the usual depository of her bread and cheese."

June 1813
"Yesterday at Castlegate ANN WEDDERBURN, who has received Parish Relief for several years. On examining the clothes of the deceased, there was found sewed in a petticoat, 7

guineas in gold, £16.7 shillings in silver, mostly half-crowns of the coinage of William III, and 3 cheques amounting to £70 in 3%s."

July 1813
"At Coldstream suddenly, PETER WHITLIE, better known as Dumb Pate. A very industrious character in his line, particularly attentive to travellers stopping at the Inns, to whom, for a glass of whisky (his favourite beverage), he would have gone any message and by the Landlord's direction brought any article wanted. He subsisted chiefly on raw flesh which he picked up about the butchers' stalls."

Feb 1814
"At Tweedmouth JAMES ROBINSON, commonly called Jemmy Dumps aged 94, an eccentric character, and well known on the streets of Berwick these many years. He was Drum Major at the battle of Prestonpans in 1746, and was highly offended when told that he ran away on that day. He gained his livelihood these many years by driving coals and sand, and attending to farmers' carts on the High Street while the horses were baiting and the farmers having refreshment. He slept in the same apartment as his asses, and has not lain in a bed these 22 years. He was going about in the usual way on Saturday and taken ill on Monday."

MARRIAGES

1813
"At Stafford, after a TEDIOUS courtship of TWO HOURS, the noted Pedestrian MR ROBERT CRAMER to MRS BROWN, both of that borough. The joint ages of this AMOROUS PAIR amount to nearly 160 years."

Mar 1815
"At Berwick Church, MR ROBERT THOMAS aged 85 to MRS SPENCE aged 60. This is the 5th time the charming bride has been led to the Altar of Hymen, and but a fortnight since her last husband died. The fond couple were hooted and pelted by the rabble, who though not the fittest judges of decorum and propriety yet seemed to consider the conduct of the bride as an outrage to common decency."

Oct 1813
"On Wednesday last at Shoreditch, to his 2nd wife MR GEORGE MAXWELL a respectable Tailor in his 85th year, to a blooming maiden of 23. The Bridegroom appeared to full of glee and full of spirits on the occasion, though he is father, grandfather and great-grandfather to 101 children."

Muriel Fraser

Dennis Nicholson
Hon Editor