

# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 80—DECEMBER 2013

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014

Friends AGM followed by “Joseph  
Crawhall, the artist”, talk by Dr Peter  
Quinn. 7pm start in the Parish Centre,  
Berwick



## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Community Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014

....the far greatest part of them became bankrupt: John Nisbet of Gunsgreen House and the Smugglers of Berwickshire: Derek Jones

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February

A Family Life Revealed; the Stuarts at Traquair 1491-1875: Catherine Maxwell Stuart

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

AGM followed by talk: " Why we may all owe a debt of gratitude to John, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Eyemouth" : Fenton Robb

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April

Visit to Berwick Town Hall

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Meeting Room, Belford Community Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Belford Presbyterian School: Val Glass

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

History of Seahouses: Geoffrey Stewart

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March

Davison, the Alnwick Printer: Andy Griffin

### **BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014

A talk by John Lord of ARCH

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February

Speaker to be announced

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March

An update on The Cellar Survey project:  
Karen Derham, County Archaeology Section  
AGM followed by a talk : "The Wilsons:  
Tweedmouth's Monumental Masons" : Chris  
Shaw.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time:7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Wilson's Tales of the Borders': Andrew Ayre

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February

Berwick's Medieval Walls: Jim Herbert

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March

The Flodden Documentary Research

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April

Project Our Discoveries: Linda Bankier

A History of Twizell Castle: Catherine Kent

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

**No lectures in January**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

Green Treasures from the Magic  
Mountains: the amazing story of  
Nerolithic Jadeitite axeheads: Dr Alison  
Sheridan

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

The Circus comes to Town: Jeremy  
Paterson

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April

Mapping the Town; the topography of  
early-modern and medieval Berwick-  
upon-Tweed: Catherine Kent

### **BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Corn Exchange, Melrose**

**Time: 2.30pm**

**No lectures in January**

Sunday 23rd February 2014	The Veitch Archives- the Stories behind the Pictures: Chris Veitch
Sunday 30th March	The Heritage Hub and Developments in Archives: Paul Brough
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Berwick's Victorian Food Heritage: Derek Sharman

### **BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bowsden Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	Local soldiers in World War One ( joint meeting with Bowsden Women's Institute): Duncan Glen
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Berwick and its Archive: Linda Bankier
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> April	The development of Arms and Armour: Lt Col Howard Culley (rtd).

### **CHIRNSIDE HISTORY GROUP**

**Venue: Community Centre**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Shipwrecks of Scotland: Ian Whittaker
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Reverend Ninian Hume of Billie: David Welsh
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	Berwick between the Wars ( a period of time)
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	Mauchlin Ware: Jane Bowen

### **COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Eildon Centre, Coldstream.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Story of a Berwick Lifeboat: Tim Kirton
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	Local Prints: Mr J Straughan
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> March	Wartime Air Crashes in the Cheviots

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April

Part 2: Mr D Balmbro

From Teviot to Ancrum: Mr R Scott

### DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Duns Social Club, 41 Newton St, Duns.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014

A Castle in Berwickshire: The Douglas  
Hugonin Slides

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February

Roads and Travel in Berwickshire (1750-  
1900): David McLean

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March

Someone to Watch over Me-Kirk and  
Community: Margaret Fox

### GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Saxon and Viking Clothing (what we  
know from evidence) including warrior  
kit: Mrs Paula Constantine

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March

From Barrow to Bunker: a Whirlwind  
Tour of Archaeology on the MOD Estate:  
Philip Abramson

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

Pressed! History of the Press Gang in  
North East England, a talk illustrated with  
music & songs of the time: Alan Giles &  
Co.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April

Outing to the WW1 Trenches &  
archaeological sites at MOD Otterburn.

### LOWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Lowick Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January

Lowick Bastle Corner: John Daniels

Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	Creating a Village Atlas: Carol and Frank Robinson
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Berwick Town Hall: Tony Brown
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Lowick Remembers...The Community in WW1( please bring memorabilia): Duncan Glenn

**NORHAM HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Norham Village Hall**

**Time : 7.30 pm**

Meet on the second Monday in the month. No speakers finalised at present.

**NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2014	Party Night with Andrew Marjoribanks
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> February	Wartime Law: Phil Rowett
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March	Cresswell Curiosities: Barry Mead
Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	Northumbrian Poems: Noel Hodgson

**NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

**NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND BRANCH**

**Venue: Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford**

**Time: 10.00am**

Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Members' Forum
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Sir William Beveridge-the Man, the Report and the Berwick Division: Mike Fraser
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> March	A predilection for steep banks; the Morpeth

to Coldstream Turnpike Road, c1750-1850:  
Derek Cutts  
Members' Forum

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April

## **TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Crookham Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January

New Years day walk

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February

The Flodden 500 Transcript Project: Linda Bankier

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Magic Metals: Trevor Cowie

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

AGM followed by a talk on Drove Roads of Northumberland: Richard Carlton



## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

Well another year is almost over and this one seems to have gone faster than most but probably because we have packed so much in. The last couple of months have kept Carole and I on our toes for various reasons. September is always a busy month because of Heritage Open Days and other events. This year, we had the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Flodden which made it even more hectic. Over the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September, I spent most of my time in a marquee near Flodden Field. On the Saturday and Sunday, there were family activities which Jane Miller, the Education Officer organised which I helped with. Despite the weather, we had a good turn out. The Record Office's main contribution was on the Monday. That day, the Volunteer Transcription Project put on displays in the tent about some of the documents they had been working on and some of the volunteers came along and were transcribing documents. We were amazed at the number of people who turned up on the Anniversary Day from all over the world, representing both sides of the Battle. Many of them were genuinely interested in what we were doing. It was one of those magic days which I will never forget.

The weekend after Flodden was Heritage Open Days in Berwick which the Record Office supports. As usual, I did my tours of the Old Goal and prepared a small

display for the Magistrates Court. This year, I also gave a talk at the Magistrates Court on Crime and Punishment which was very successful – standing room only !

As part of our general outreach work throughout Northumberland, we have been working with Lancaster University to promote a database created as part of the Breaking of Britain Project. It is a medieval database relating to the North of England and also Scotland. I held 3 workshops – Berwick, Seahouses and Wooler – which were well attended. The database relates to the period up to 1314 and there is some interesting information on there – [www.pone.ac.uk](http://www.pone.ac.uk)

Hopefully the Peregrini Project on Holy Island will start shortly but in the meantime, I have continued to support the community archive group on the Island. We held a coffee morning at the beginning of October on a closed tide which was well attended by Islanders. Warren Maguire came down from Edinburgh University and talked about the recordings which had been made in the 1970s of Island residents – it was like listening to a foreign language !

In mid November, a national campaign was launched to raise the profile of archives and to encourage people to use them – Explore Your Archive.. The Berwick Record Office contributed to this in a couple of ways. Firstly I gave a talk in Berwick Library on “Treasures from the Berwick Archives” highlighting some of the wonderful documents that we look after. We almost ran out of chairs so many people turned up! Then as a joint Northumberland Archives initiative, we contributed some photos from the Berwick Shopfronts collection taken in 1959 for the Archives launch on Flickr. There are various sets on there including Children of Northumberland and Stereoscope views but to date, our set has been viewed the most. You can see all the images on <http://www.flickr.com/photos/99322319@N07/sets> . If you have not looked at them, they are definitely worth viewing. We will be putting more sets on over the coming months.

Although this is normally a quieter time for talks, I have given a couple of talks in the last couple of months on various topics. At the beginning of November, I gave a talk on Family History in Branxton Village Hall and later on that month, I also spoke to Lowick Heritage Group about the Ford Estate at the time of the Waterford Family. This month, I have spoken to a small group of Newcastle University Fine Arts students about the archives and what we hold.

As well as the above, all the normal day to day activities go on in the Record Office including running the public service. On the public days, the Record Office



volunteers do a lot of work in the background which does not always get reported but which is invaluable. They are all beavering away helping us to provide a better service for the public. At the moment, they are involved in the following – cataloguing the Berwick Board of Guardians minutes; transcribing the early Berwick Parish burial register (pre 1604); cataloguing a Bamburgh Manor Court book; indexing deaths and injuries during the First World War reported in the local newspapers; indexing births, marriages and deaths entries in the Berwick Advertiser . In addition, every week, volunteers are working on the Photocentre collection, entering the handwritten indexes into a spreadsheet, repackaging the colour negatives and glass plates. There is still a huge amount of work to do on this collection but we are slowly getting there and making great progress. We are continually surprised by what we find in the collection – a real treasure trove.

Finally, Carole and I would like to thank the Friends for all their support during the year and we hope you have a lovely Christmas and best wishes for 2014.

*Linda Bankier*

## **RIOT AT A BORDER MARRIAGE**

One of our members, Bob Steward kindly made me aware of this article which he found in the Berwick and Kelso Warder when looking for something else – always the way ! It relates to an Irregular Border Marriage and an ensuing fracas. This marriage is not listed in any of the extent volume of Irregular Border marriages and so it is a wonderful find for any of the couple's descendants. What I found most interesting was that the marriage took place so late at night, not what I expected. Hopefully, this will give you a flavour of what happened and the workings of such marriages which were so common in this area in the [ast

**BERWICK AND KELSO WARDER, 9 APRIL 1842**

### **RIOT AT A BORDER MARRIAGE**

For the following report of the trial of this disgraceful affair, we are indebted to the Kelso Mail.

*Wm Kidd*, pitman of Tweedmouth, *Wm Anderson*, pitman, North Durham, and *Ralph Johnston*, pitman, near Wooler, were charged with having, on the 6<sup>th</sup> March last, maliciously assaulted John White and his wife and two sons, and also with committing wilful damage on the house of the said John White. The whole of the prisoners pleaded Not Guilty, and also alleged that the prosecutor was of a very violent and easily excitable character.

**Susannah White** deponed – I am the wife of John White, tacksman of Lamberton Toll, in the parish of Mordington. On the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> March, a marriage party came to our house. I understood them to be English people come across the border. The first of them came about nine at night, and had some refreshment in our house. When they were all there, there were about 20 of them. Joseph Atkinson married them. They wanted drink till we refused to give them any more, as it was getting late, and Saturday night. About eleven o'clock I gave up giving them anymore, and they persisted in staying. The three prisoners were all there. Kidd wanted whiskey to take to Berwick, which I could not give him, only having the Scotch license. He then asked it from my eldest son, William, in the kitchen and he also refused. Kidd then knocked the boy down. My husband was in a back room with the child, which had been wakened by the noise, and he came running into the kitchen with the child in his arms, when the boy was knocked down, and told Kidd not to strike the boy, for he would get no whiskey there. Kidd immediately struck the father; and there was plenty more striking after that. He struck with his fist; and the child fell out of husband's arms. But they had the door locked, and the key among themselves, and some of them were trying to open the door with shovels. Some of them took up the candlestick to strike, and the light went out, and they were all striking in the dark. I got a light as soon as I could and when I came from the fire, John White was standing against the door, with several of them striking at him, and the blood flowing immensely. They had taken down all the quart mugs, and had them all broken before I got a light. I took my husband by the arm and assisted him into the long saddle. He was all blood, and saw none with the one eye, and very little with the other. They were all striking together, and while the candle was out they struck each other as well as us. When my husband was sat down, he asked for his watch, and Kidd asked if he thought they were pickpockets, came forward and struck him twice with his fist. The blood came off with his hand every time he struck. I said to Kidd that was an awful piece of cruelty, and with that, he took his bloody hand and knocked me down, striking me severely on the forehead. I got up and was knocked down a second time, but cannot say by whom. I have not been well since. The second boy, Alexander, aged 12, came downstairs during the disturbance with only his shorts on, and when I saw him, he was helping William up, who was lying on the

ground with Anderson above him, striking him on the head with his fist. Alexander got William relieved, and Anderson came over beside Johnston who was saying he did not know what would make him leave the house without taking my life. I said he had better not. The second boy was crying severely at that time, and Johnston struck him on the mouth and drove him back on the bed. He was getting up when Kidd knocked him back again with a blow on the face. He then got up and ran away. Kidd then took up a mug and went to seek drink but found none, and a young woman afterwards took him in her arms and put him out at the door. The window was quite broken by that time, and a great number of stones were coming in at it. The wood was all broke out as well as the glass. The others had all gone out before Kidd, and he was the last. The children and I then lifted my husband into a chair, and I tied up his head and got the neighbours and sent for a surgeon. Dr Lilly came from Berwick. It was about two o'clock when the men left. Johnston was amongst the rest striking at my husband behind the door. Some of them looked the worse for liquor. My husband was quite sober. There was a boy in the company striking with an umbrella, and he had our stone hammer in his hand.

Cross examined by Mr ARCH. SWINTON, Counsel for the panels – There was a dispute about the reckoning. They thought it was too much. My husband is of a temper like other folks, and let him alone. He had been in a lunatic asylum but recovered.

John White and his sons William and Alexander gave evidence principally in corroboration of the above.

**James Dixon** – I live opposite Lamberton Toll. I recollect the party at White's. About two o'clock on the Sabbath morning, I heard them breaking the windows. Mrs White came to me afterwards, and I went for Mr Lilly, the doctor. White was in a very bloody state.

Mr Lilly, surgeon in Berwick – Was sent for to see John White. Found three large wounds, all of which denuded the bone. He was ill about a fortnight. Considered him injured by loss of blood. The wounds appeared to have been inflicted by a blunt instrument. Removed several portions of broken earthenware from the exposed bone. Should think his wounds could not have been made by the mere blow of a fist. This closed the case for the prosecution, and after the declaration of the panel had been read.,

**John Cracket** was called. He said I was at the marriage of George Gibson and Ann Mitcalf. We met in Berwick, and went to Mordington Toll. We were all sober. Joseph Atkinson performed the ceremony. He was, I believe, a waiter in Berwick, he did not belong to our part of the country, and went with us just to perform the marriage. I remember William Kidd paying the reckoning. He thought it was too much, and

asked for the bill. When the bill was brought, he laid down a sovereign and paid it. When leaving the house Kidd asked for a bottle of whiskey to take with us, and when the boy refused, Kidd laid his hand on his head and said "Haud away; what are ye feared on"? The son said "No, you made objection to the reckoning or perhaps I might maybe let you had it". As soon as he laid his hand on his head, the son took up a coal rake shank and struck Kidd over the nose. Kidd then gripped him by the coat neck, when the father came out with the child in his arms, and took up a duster and struck Kidd twice over the head. The son was then going to strike Kidd again, when Thomas Jordan got between them, and pushed the son down on his backside against the cellar door. The woman then took the mugs and threw them at Jordan and cut him down. The old man also threw a hammer, which hit Jordan on the breast. Jordan was carried away to the door; his nose end was cut off, and just hanging by a tack. Kidd said they had been using terrible weapons, and the old man came across his ribs with the coal rake shank. Kidd gripped him, and the old man gripped Kidd and shoved him to the door. Ralph Johnston came to me at the stair foot, the old man having bolted the door. We prevailed with him to open the door. I never saw either Johnston or Anderson take any part in the row. Never saw the old man struck. The candle was in all the time that I was in. It never was dark.

Cross- examined. The old man was very little out of my sight. I cannot tell how he came to be bloody. I never interfered in any way. I saw nobody assist Kidd but Jordan.

**Elizabeth Davidson** said, I live at Sandy Bank in North Durham,. I was at the wedding party. Kidd paid the reckoning in the kitchen. I was with him after it was paid, and heard him ask for another bottle of whisky, with his hand on the boy's head. He said, if he had not made an objection to the reckoning, he should have had it. The young lad struck him then with the coal rake shank upon the face. Kidd was going to defend himself, and the old man struck him with the duster. I then came away to the door, and saw Jordan come out with his nose all cut. I assisted in dressing it. Saw old White bleeding, and heard Kidd say to him "You've got a blow, my man ". The old man said he had himself to blame for it.

**Jane Carr** of Unthank Square, North Durham, one of the party, said, that besides the hammer, there was a hatchet thrown from the bar. Saw Mrs White throw mugs to where William Kidd was lying on the floor.

**Thomas Jordan**, pitman, at Morton Square, North Durham, appeared with his nose apparently much injured. A portion of it seemed to have been cut quite off and replaced. He corroborated the evidence previously given by the witnesses for the

panels. White have a mug out of the bar and cut his nose end off. The doctor sewed it on. Thought it was a pewter jug that took his nose end off. Was trailed to the door by the women folk. Was three weeks off work.

Cross examined – his wife was a sister of Kidd's. Saw the old man in the bar with the child before the riot commenced. Made no complaint to the public authorities about the injuries he had received.

**George Gibson** was next sworn. He said I was married at Mordington Toll bar at the beginning of last month. I left the place immediately after the reckoning was paid. No violence had taken place up to that time. My wife and her two sisters, and Anderson, went with me. Anderson turned back, but overtook us again in a few minutes in a desperate state, all blood. His ear was cut, and bears the mark of it still. Some witnesses were then called who gave the prisoners a good character as orderly and peaceable men.

After the Counsel on both sides had spoken, and the learned Judge summed up at great length, the Jury retired and after deliberating for about half an hour, returned with the following verdict – They unanimously find a verdict of assault as libelled against the panel Kidd, but not aggravated by malicious mischief; and with regard to the panels, Johnston and Anderson, they find by a majority that the assault against them was Not proven. Sentences – *Nine months imprisonment with hard labour.*

*Linda Bankier*



## MUSEUM NEWS

Berwick Museum is closed for the winter now. However, just before we did finish for the season we had our busiest weekends. Two of the most popular events at the Barracks moved to separate weekends for the first time. During the Food Festival – always our busiest time of the season, we saw a staggering 700 visitors, and the following Sunday attracted almost 300 visitors for Heritage Open Days, when we offered special tours of the Burrell collection.

Following on from this excellent season, we decided to open at October half term. This turned out to be well worth the extra effort involved, as we greeted an extra 650 visitors throughout that one week. We extended our exhibition of Tom Fleming's calligraphy, and put up an small temporary exhibition of Berwick townscapes, showing some of the more modern views of the town which haven't been out on display for a little while.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the museums of the Woodhorn Trust had been awarded a large Arts Council grant this year to enable them all to set up and run a series of family friendly events over the course of the year. We were able to use some of this money to purchase large supplies of craft materials. We ran some Halloween activities during half term – making Halloween lanterns and scary spiders. Soon, we will put our minds together and think of some appropriate craft activities linked more closely to the collections at Berwick, as well as begin designing some illustrated family trails sheets, which should be ready for the new season.

At the moment, work is underway in smartening up the "Education Room", so we can actually use it for family learning activities, education sessions, meetings, etc next season. We spent most of November moving items which were in store there, while we took out the partition which had been put up in the 80s. This has opened out the room nicely. Friends who can remember the wardrobe will be pleased to hear we have retained it (and the Tardis), as this is a feature of the museum that locals always remember from when they visited as school children. Meanwhile, Jim has been hauling up the old carpet – not an easy task, as industrial quantities of superglue seems to have been used to hold it down!

We will be issuing an advertising brochure around about Easter time. We held a photo shoot a few months back when three local families agreed to come and act as models. The shoot was great fun and resulted in some really lovely pictures, showing youngsters enjoying the museum, running through the dragon, exploring Window on Berwick and admiring the art.

Berwick Museum has now got a Facebook page. We hope to keep it up to date with interesting pictures and facts, notice of events etc. Please do check it out, and tell us what you would like to see on there... and like us!

It only remains for us to wish all Friends a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – we hope to see as many of you as possible at the Museum & Art Gallery in 2014!

*Anne Moore - Museums Officer, North Northumberland.*



## FRIENDS WEBSITE & JAMES TRAILL TASTER

### ON THE WEBSITE

Some historical sections about Milfield and Branxton & Flodden have now been added to the Friends' website, including features which highlight some of the well-known people who have been associated with the area such as Josephine Grey, born in Milfield, and Percival Stockdale from Branxton.

In these sections we are eager to incorporate local research by Friends and items based on the resources of the Museum and the Record Office whenever possible. If anyone would be interested in contributing material about the history of a village or township in the area, then please get in touch!

Contact: [webmaster@berwickfriends.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@berwickfriends.org.uk).

*[berwickfriends.org.uk](http://berwickfriends.org.uk)*

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century North Northumberland Ramble

In 1850 James Traill Calder, a Caithness schoolteacher and writer, who was a regular contributor to the *John o'Groats Journal*, visited North Northumberland. He travelled by train firstly to Berwick, then on to Belford, where he took a coach to Wooler. After visiting various places around Wooler he returned by coach to Berwick, and back to Caithness by rail. He wrote about his journey and published it in the *John o'Groats Journal* on 8 November 1850.

To read all about his journey visit [www.berwickfriends.org.uk/history](http://www.berwickfriends.org.uk/history)

*John Spiers and Jan Ward*



## LOCAL HISTORY OF BERWICK-UPON-TWEED IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

On the Dundee University Module relating to Skills and Sources for English Local and Family History which I tutor, the students study documents about various aspects of Berwick's history, including crime and punishment. One of my students, Rajeev, was so interested in some of the documents, that he has written this article about them from a legal perspective :

### **A Brief Legal Perspective:**

To know about the social history of a community, historians have researched many records, though local legal records have often been neglected. Berwick-upon-Tweed is no exception. Berwick-upon-Tweed is a border town in Northumberland County, described as being at the most northerly tip of Northumberland, and crowns the country<sup>1</sup>. Berwick's legal system consisted of various Courts, one of which was the Quarter Sessions. This court continued operating in Berwick until 1951<sup>2</sup>.

Let's look at a few examples<sup>3</sup> from the Berwick Quarter Sessions, which was a court that tried criminal cases in the day. In one instance, the examination of one, Christian Davison of Thornton in the County of Durham, was taken on September 30, 1788, at Berwick upon Tweed, before George Forster Esquire Mayor and William Hall Esquire two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace. Christian Davison was charged before the Justices of the Peace by Eleanor McGill for feloniously stealing a printed Linen Handkerchief a white Linen Nightgown and a White Muslin Apron the property of Eleanor McGill on September 28, 1788. Christian Davison denied guilt by way of this examination and said that she received the goods from a woman who called herself Martha Allan.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from (and modernised) <http://www.visitnorthumberland.com/berwick-upon-tweed> (accessed November 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Berwick Advertiser, 27 September 1951

<sup>3</sup> Examination of Christian Davison, 30 September 1788 (ref : BA/C15/16 ); Information of James Hume, 17 August 1773 (Ref : BA/C15/3 ) ; Information of Simon Smith, 25 July 1768 (Ref : BA/C15/3). All kept at Berwick Record Office



In another case, the information of James Hume (informant) was taken. This was his statement taken under oath summarising his version of an incident. Taken on August 17, 1773, at Berwick upon Tweed, this information was sworn by James Hume before William Temple Esquire and Justice of the Peace. In modern summary, the informant swears that on August 5, 1773, between 9pm-10pm he was standing on the "Key" (Quay) in Berwick, speaking with some people, when a George Graham of Eyemouth, Mariner, asked to speak with him. He went aside with him and without provocation, George Graham made a push with a knife at his body and threatened to stab him, took him by the collar, gave him two violent blows to his face, tore his waistcoat, and while the informant was trying to get away, believing that he would be stabbed with the knife, George Grey came to his assistance.

In another matter, the information of Simon Smith was taken on July 25, 1768, at Berwick-upon- Tweed, before Matthew Forster Esquire Mayor and Justice of the Peace. This Informant on his Oath said that about 1:45am on July 17, 1768, he was standing Guard at the Shoregate (which was then being repaired) when a fisherman, John Hartley came to him and asked if he could go down to his boat which was lying on the shore. When he refused. Hartley got mad, and then proceeded to go to his boat, despite Smith trying to stop him. The informant pulled his boat back, Hartley jumped out and gave Smith a violent blow, knocking him down, and Hartley then took off. Smith then called for help from the Bridge Guard, but Hartley had escaped by then.

Although these records do not purport to represent a summary picture of Berwick and society at the time, it does give us a glimpse of the happenings and therefore, tells us a bit about Berwick and its local history in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Different aspects of the town's history can be gathered from these documents including crime and punishment (alleged theft and violence), Courts and legal system, safety and living conditions and the role of the Army as well as life in the town in general. These are described below.

Though we do not have full records to discuss punishment, we are told of alleged crimes including felony stealing, trespass, assault, battery and the like. A detailed look at the records can give us an idea of convictions and related information.

We know that there existed a Berwick Quarter Session as well as some information as to the types of cases heard, and what authority it had. For example, we can tell that the Quarter Sessions tried criminal cases. People were brought within the jurisdiction and authority of the Court, and therefore, it exercised some significant power. Statements under Oath were considered an important part of the legal

process in Berwick, and it could be said, that one was not automatically considered guilty. However, the veracity of the witness is not entirely examined within the documents summarized above. Nevertheless, there was some sort of legal process for alleged crimes at the time and persons had some form of legal rights in the day.

Further, some information about safety and living conditions can be inferred. We can at least gather alleged life conditions in Berwick through the allegations made in the Court records. We can also pinpoint the nature of the alleged crimes and get a picture, not only of the same, but also what type of crimes people would complain about. People would complain about the (alleged) criminal loss of clothing and related items, trespass and battery. Additionally, information about how crimes were said to have been performed is described and people's reactions to situations can also be gathered. We can also tell what society (or the Court) considered to be a crime in the day. Some aspects of the role of the army in the town can be inferred from the records.

From these documents, additional information can be gathered about people and the town, generally. Although, the documents cannot, by themselves, be taken as truth, they are nevertheless an important source for Berwick local history. People may have been known by aliases and their titles can be a way of working out their social status. Also, some people appeared to have owned larger assets such as boats.

From the above analysis of limited records, we have been able to gather at least some information and insight into the aspects of local life in Berwick. Further study of other Informations and records could shed much light into the social history of Berwick in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

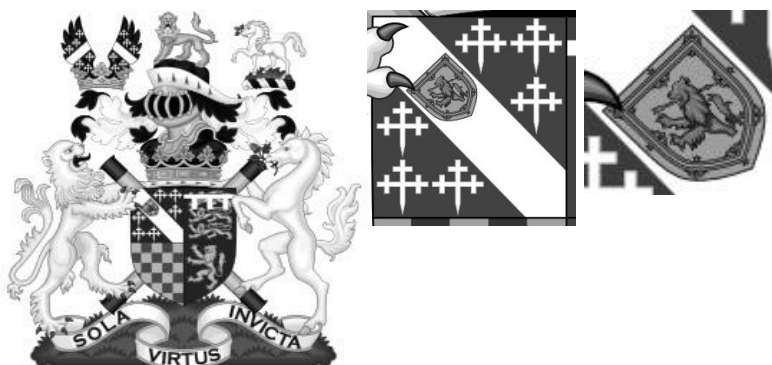
*Rajeev Sachdev, LL.M*

# A LASTING REMINDER OF THE OUTCOME OF FLODDEN



It has surely not escaped the attention of anyone visiting the Record Office that in 2013 we are commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Flodden. As a Scot, my focus on the Battle has always been the disaster which it brought to the Scots, captured in that haunting ballad 'The Flo'ors o' the Forest'. If the Scottish defeat was disastrous, however, no less remarkable was the English victory, a smaller army, one that had had a forced march to reach Flodden, and moreover led by the seventy year old Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey. To have led his army there, outwitted the Scots' King's strategy, and successfully commanded the battle tactics at the end of a long day, was no small feat of determination.

Surrey's reward was to be given the title of Duke of Norfolk but also to have an augmentation to his Coat of Arms, one still borne by the Norfolk Dukes today. Across the upper left quarter is a diagonal white band on which is shown the lion rampant of Scotland with an arrow through its throat - an apt summary of the Howard achievements at Flodden.



*Jane Bowen*

## GENERAL SURVEY OF BERWICK

### The making of the '*Generall Survey of Her Majesties Town of Barwicke uppon Twede*' (BRO/B6/1)

*Greenes: Elizabeth Storye holdeth at will one tenement there containing in length xxx yards and in breadth xv yards. Her husband Adam Storye builded it and was slaine in the queens maiesties warres leving viii childer whereof the eldest is Jerrarde Storye. She paieth the preferment for herself and the same Jerrarde, yet an imphant, and paieth to the Quene of rent per annum vi d.*

Elizabeth Storye's predicament is recorded in the 'Generall Survey' in the Berwick Archives, alongside glimpses of many other households in Elizabethan Berwick. But the machinations involved in the Survey's production, and the reason for its presence in Berwick (rather than the National Archives where such rentals are normally found), are also of interest. Information on both occurs in two letters to the Privy Council, one from Berwick's Mayor and Aldermen (TNA SP 59/6 f.191) and one from a London lawyer, Thomas Romney (TNA SP 59/7 f.10).

During the late 1550s housing in Berwick became problematic. The garrison was enlarged in response to French military activity in Scotland and in addition up to a thousand builders and labourers swelled the population as the town's fortifications were drastically remodelled. The building works involved considerable disruption, and compensation payments for houses demolished to make way for the walls eventually totalled over £500. Many new houses were built over a short period of time, both to replace those demolished and also to accommodate those builders and soldiers who arrived with their families.

At this period Berwick was led by a military council, which represented the Crown and could overrule the Mayor and burgesses. Since all land in the town belonged ultimately to the Queen, only the military council had authority to set the official 'Chamberlain's seal' on documents confirming grants or leases of land. However by 1561 it had become obvious that the council could not cope with the upheaval in the housing situation. It had effectively lost track of property ownership and was in

confusion over who should receive compensation or pay 'burghmail' rent to the Crown. The only solution seemed to be a survey of the whole town, and in 1562 they received a royal commission to undertake this.

The council was probably worried about what the survey might bring to light. It was certainly reluctant to foot the bill for it, but by persuading the Mayor and burgesses that a survey would help avoid 'all contraversyes or plees towching the rightes of their severell titles' it gained an agreement that each burgess would contribute four shillings. To oversee the work the council employed a London lawyer Thomas Romney, 'a man unknown to th'inhabitanes of the towne' and therefore presumably impartial. (Unfortunately he seems to be equally unknown to historians, and I can find no other record of him.)

At 8.00 in the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1562 twenty-four 'upright and honest' men of Berwick met at the Tolbooth and spread out through the town to record the measurements of each tenement plot. Romney held a court at which everyone presented their title deeds and the burgesses paid the agreed fee, which totalled over a hundred pounds. However Romney then 'craftyly and subtylly' disappeared back to London, leaving the survey unfinished and a question mark over who had the money.

In February 1563 the Mayor and aldermen wrote to the Privy Council complaining that the Berwick council had not yet produced their 'booke' and asking for their money to be returned. In response Romney completed his survey and sent a copy to the Privy Council, together with a defensive letter pointing out the council's shortcomings. There was evidence that favouritism had been shown to some individuals, while others had been charged unnecessarily for sealing documents and many properties had 'suspicious' deeds or none at all. Most tellingly, Romney revealed that the genuine Chamberlain's seal had in fact been missing for some time and at least one counterfeit was in circulation. Clearly he felt that his departure from Berwick had been justified, since the Berwick council would not have been happy with his findings.

The council must have known about the missing seal, and its negligence could have been construed as treason, but we do not hear of any reprimand. A new seal was duly sent up from London and the town received the copy of the survey now in the archives. The Bailiff's Court book implies that it was referred to when settling boundary disputes, and at some point it was bound into the town's Book of Inrollments.

No more is known about Elizabeth Storye but her oldest son Jerrard survived to follow his father into the army as a horseman; in 1577 he is recorded as living in the same house in the Greens (Berwick Rental, TNA SC/12/32/14) and in 1598, aged 48, he was on the payroll of the Berwick garrison (Berwick Muster, TNA SP 59/37 f.79). Each entry in the 'Generall Survey' contains the seeds of a story; but the tale of its creation is a story in its own right.

*Catherine Kent  
University of Durham*

## THE VALUE OF MARRIAGE

In contrast with the political debates of today about the provision of financial benefits for married couples, the staff of Berwick Workhouse in the mid-19th century met with no such inducement, as the experience of Jane Purdie, Workhouse Matron, demonstrated.

The Board of Guardians had a strong preference for appointing a married couple to serve as Master and Matron in the Workhouse, and in December 1842 they were pleased to secure the services of John and Jane Purdie, at a joint salary of £65 per annum (plus rations). When John Purdie died in 1845, his widow, with her two young children, was retained in her post and she was given a salary of her own, initially proposed at £25 but then settled at £20 p.a. So it continued for the next decade, with no matrimonial link between Master and Matron.

In 1856 Jane Purdie requested a salary increase, observing that £20 was "very small"; she was refused. By this time the Master himself was earning £70 p.a. In 1857, a new Master, Thomas Mitchell, arrived, and in the following year he and Jane Purdie got married. The Guardians now sought to re-establish the joint appointment of the married couple - with a new joint salary which they set at £80 p.a., and which they argued it was desirable to pay "in one sum to the Master for the services of himself and his wife". In the process the Guardians were of course reducing their total outlay from £90 to £80 (though they did at least vote down a proposed amendment to shrink the combined salary to £75).

When the Poor Law Board insisted that separate salaries must be allocated for the two posts, the Guardians decided that Thomas Mitchell should receive £65 and

Jane Mitchell should get £15 p.a. One trusts that the couple found greater consolation in each other than in the financial consequence of their union.

Source: *Minutes of the Board of Guardians of Berwick-upon-Tweed Union*

*John Spiers*

## SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

### **Berwick Advertiser, 21st October 1870**

#### BLACK FRENCH SILKS

E & W. Paxton-have taken advantage of the very exceptional state of the Markets for French Silks, and now hold the Largest and Richest Stock they have ever shown at prices considerably under recent rates-from 2/4 to 13/9 per Yard.

### **Berwick Advertiser, 21st October 1870**

#### EDINBURGH INFIRMARY, THE PRINCE OF WALES LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the New Royal Infirmary, in Edinburgh, took place on Thursday, last week and passed off with great success, the day being observed as a general holiday. There was a tremendous influx of visitors from places within easy reach of the city, and of freemasons alone there were present upwards of four thousand. At half past twelve the Prince of Wales, in his Masonic uniform, and accompanied by Lord Dalhousie, the Grand Master Mason of Scotland and Lord Rosslyn, the Deputy Grand Master, joined the rear of the procession at Masons' Hall., in George Street.

The usual formalities having been observed the stone was lowered, and the Prince of Wales, giving it three taps with the mallet, declared the ceremony completed. The contents of the cornucopia were then distributed over the stone, followed by the pouring upon it of oil and wine. On the call of the Lord Provost, cheers were then given for the Queen, and for the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the proceedings terminated.

**Berwick Advertiser, 18th November 1870**

SALE OF GOSWICK ESTATE

We UNDERSTAND THAT THE ESTATE OF Goswick, near Berwick, extending to about 1,200 acres, with the salmon fisheries from Cheswick to Holy Island, and belonging to Watson Askew, Esq., of Pallinsburn, has been bought by Robert Crossman, Esq., of Cheswick, for £60,000. This property adjoins Mr Crossman's estate of Cheswick.

**Berwick Advertiser, 2nd December 1870**

JAPANESE ENTERTAINMENT

The "Tycoon's Private Great dragon troupe of Japanese performers," thirteen in number, gave three performances in the Corn Exchange this week- the one on Monday night, and the others on Tuesday. The attendance on all occasions was comparatively small, but certainly the execution of the various feats by the company showed that they deserved a more extended patronage. Those who were present testified their appreciation by frequent and hearty applause. The principal parts of the entertainment were:- The boy Tommy, who balances on a large tub, supported by seven smaller ones, these again being supported on Hansktchi's feet; feats of posturing at the top of a long pole on the shoulder of Godia; dexterous performance on a single wire by Japanese lady; the famous ladder balancing feat, never yet achieved by any other than the Japanese. It seems very negligent on the part of those who are responsible for the management of the Corn Exchange, that the gas should have been almost endurable during the exhibitions. Owing, it would appear, to the defective nature of the burners, the gas was blazing up in an unusual manner, and was escaping in large quantities, to the great danger of those present. Surely it would not have been difficult to remedy so simple a defect.

*Carole Pringle*



***MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL THE FRIENDS  
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR !!***