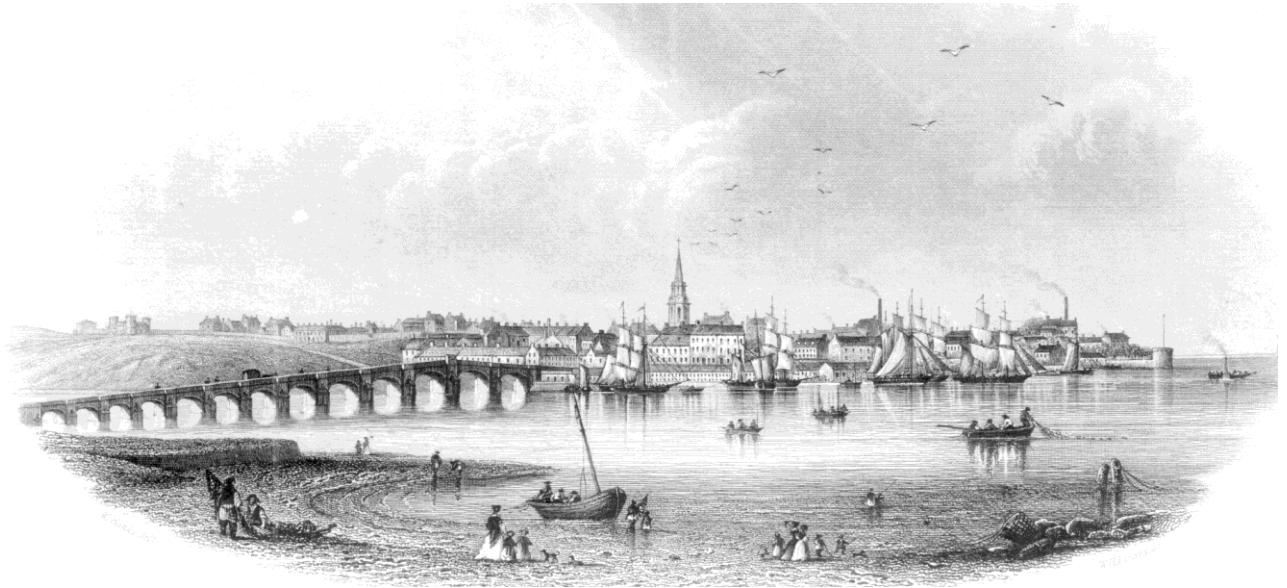


Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 89–JUNE 2016

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th
June 2016

Cocklawburn – archaeology; archive and
geology until 4pm each day – see article

Friday 18th June 2016

Private view of Flodden, an exhibition
celebrating the project, the people, the
places and the findings, from 7pm at
Berwick Museum & Art Gallery

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

As most societies do not meet in the summer months, we have only listed those who will have meetings prior to mid September.

BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY

Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 8th June Secondary Education within the UK: Mr Tim Manning, head teacher of Longridge Towers School and Mrs Alexis Widdowson head teacher of Berwick Academy

Wednesday 13th July A Vision for Berwick, question time session with a panel of invited guests.

Saturday and Sunday,
10th/11th September Heritage Open Days

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 6th June Young Archaeologists: Newcastle University's work with the next generation: Dr Jane Webster

NO LECTURES IN JULY AND AUGUST

Monday 5th September Mortuary Archaeology: Dr Myra Giesen

TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Crookham Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

July

Local history exhibition at Heatherslaw Mill

Wednesday 7th September

Medieval Highlands & Islands or Route to Flodden: Dr David Caldwell

ARCHIVE NEWS

It's newsletter time again and it just seems like yesterday since I last wrote the last one. However, it has been a very busy couple of months in the archives one way and another.

As ever, we are still involved in lots of projects. Although Berwick 900 is officially over for everyone else, it is still an ongoing project for the Record Office through the Our Families Project but coming near its end. Since our last newsletter we held a very successful Family History Day in the Town Hall in mid April. Almost 600 people attended and there was lots going on - talks; family history displays and surgeries; children's activities; the Burgon family tree; old films; displays and the Youth Theatre performing a playlet – something for everyone. Working with the Youth Theatre was great fun and threw up some interesting information – when thinking of ideas, the young people wanted to bring in the visit of a Circus. I was dubious, however, when I looked through the newspapers, Lord John Sanger's circus actually visited Berwick in 1911! As part of the Family History weekend, I also led some guided walks in Ravensdowne and the Greenses. Following on from the Family History Day we have also held some workshops on Palaeography, Freeman records and family research beyond the Internet. We have learnt so much during this Project about Berwick families and it is all starting to come together with resources which will be available for people to consult both online and in the Record Office. Our work on the Greenses has brought to light wonderful stories and family connections. We hope to

finish the project by the end of July and so I'll give you an update in the next newsletter.

Over the past couple of months, the Peregrini Project has started to take shape. In March, there was a Volunteers conference at which I talked about the Community Archive Project and the work we would undertake both on Holy Island and the mainland. Since then, I have spoken at an Archaeology Conference on our strand of the project and started on some of our training. Last month, we held a Maps for Local History and Geology Workshop and started our Oral History training. This month, we are starting on the Palaeography training and visiting the Community Archive at Seahouses. On Holy Island, we have started to look at the History of the Lifeboat and will be helping with the interpretation of the Old Lifeboat Station. It's all go !

As you can see from the dates for your diary, the Flodden Project is now entering its final phase – I can't believe it is over 4 years since I went to the National Archives to look for possible documents to work on. The Exhibition will open this month in Berwick Museum and Jane Miller and I are working with the volunteers on the publication which will be produced later on in the year. From an archive perspective, the project has provided us with a lot more source based and hopefully accurate information about the Battle and its aftermath.

Much of this work has to fit around the day to day work of the archive. We still have to run a public service every week and help those who come in. There are always lots of enquiries to answer and other people to help. We work with schools, when possible, which has included a visit to Glendale Middle School to work with Year 8 pupils on the First World War and a Twilight Teachers Session at Alnwick Castle. I also continue to give talks – the Heart Support Group in Berwick and a Film Show to the Guild of Freemen.

Some of you may be wondering what is happening with our accommodation and where we are going from here. Believe it or not, it is a year since we moved out of our original building. Within the next month, we would hope to move into the refurbished Library building where we will have space at the back on the first floor. Our opening hours will not change. We will have a permanent base there for the public service but we will still have to bring original documents in from the store for consultation as there is little storage space. However, the documents are safe in their present accommodation which has been adapted to meet our needs. This will

be our home for the foreseeable future, however, we are part of the refurbished Barracks Project, if that happens.

That's all for now. Have a lovely summer.

BERWICK IN 1911

As part of the work with the Youth Theatre, I did some research on Berwick in 1911. Below is some of the information I located in the local newspapers. :

19 May 1911

SCHOOL OF ART, BERWICK ON TWEED

NOTICE – in consequence of the death of Mr James Wallace, the master and of Mr James Wallace, Junior, Assistant Master, this school will be closed as from 16th day of May 1911 until further notice.

Signed on behalf of the Managers : Thos Darling, Chairman; Jas Gray, Secretary

BUDLE BAY

On the bar at Budle Bay – the first shipment of crushed stone from the newly opened quarry at Budle Bay was attended, unfortunately by an accident. The steamer, Gangeran of Poragrund, Norway , of 198 tons register, was employed for the purpose , but on leaving the Creek she struck the bar and remained fast. This happened at 5am on Wednesday and the vessel remained fast till about 4pm when she refloated without assistance and proceeded to her destination – Felixstowe. A portion of the cargo had to be jettisoned. The vessel was presumably undamaged. She is the second vessel which has arrived at Budle Quay in connection with the new quarry and was much larger than the first arrival.

26 May 1911

SANGER'S CIRCUS – The visit of Lord John Sanger's Royal Hippodrome and Menagerie to Berwick on Wednesday attracted great attention and there was a large attendance at the evening performance. The entire "show" was a conspicuous success, but pride of place must be given to the performance of the famous troupe of sealions. This was an altogether amazing "turn" the animals showing an agility and dexterity and an intelligence that was almost human. In balancing, juggling, ball spinning and tumbling, they were equally adept and quite delighted the audience.

Pimpo, the clown was very amusing with his teddy bear, a very clever animal and a most laughable scene was contributed by the elephants, who gave a pantomime descriptive of a dental establishment. The various equestrian feats were of a high standard.

7 Nov 1911 –FIRE AT HAGGERSTON

On Sunday morning when the fire broke out Mr Leyland was absent in London. There had been a large shooting party the previous day, but the guests had left overnight; and Mrs Leyland was preparing to motor to Berwick to join the express for London. The motor was ready at the door when the alarm of fire was given. The first symptoms were noted in the dining room, large masses of blazing soot coming down the chimney. Carpets were at once rolled back and temporary measures taken as at first it was considered to be merely a chimney fire. Going outside, shortly afterwards, the butler saw that a small area of the roof, about 6 or 8 feet, was ablaze. The servants could not get at it, and running up against the wind, the flames quickly spread over the whole top storey.

The Castle contains something like 70 rooms and is in three storeys. At the time of the outbreak, there were about 25 people in the building; fortunately no one was injured.

The estate worker, about 100 in number were quickly on the scene....The Berwick fire engine left at 12.45 and arrived at Haggerston at 1.30pm. It was the first fire engine on the scene, but already the flames had made so much progress that there was no hope of saving the main building.

Coastguards, KOS Borderers and estate workers (about 100 in number) were fully occupied in the work of salvage under the supervision of Mr Leyland's agent, Mr Cayly. From the top floor, hardly a single thing was saved; and the indoor servants, whose bedrooms are situated there, have lost all their effects.. The beautiful entrance hall was almost completely gutted and here the loss from a monetary point of view, was especially great, as only a few of the numerous valuable pictures worth , it is stated tens of thousands of pounds were saved...

In spite of the terrific gale, there were hundreds of visitors. During the afternoon, and when the fire was at its height there must have been over 1000 people present. ...Shortly before 7 o'clock there was a slight moderation in the force of the gale, but the fire which had now blazed for seven hours, continued to rage, and the fire engine remained busily engaged until a late hour ...

PEREGRINI

As part of the Peregrini Project, the following is taking place in the next month. As part of our training, I will be running a 4 week Palaeography Course from 10 to 12 on Tuesdays, starting on 14 June. This weekend, the three Community Projects – Archaeology, Geology and Archives will be running an event at Cocklawburn. The archaeologists will be undertaking an excavation at some of the old cottages all weekend, whilst I will be there on Saturday and Sunday 1 – 4 to show people what archive evidence we have for the community there. Ian Kille will lead a geology walk on Saturday afternoon at 2.30 and 10.30 on Sunday. Do come along and find out more about this area and its past. Later on in the month, we will all be doing some work on Holy Island as part of the Peregrini Festival from 24 – 26th June. The Community Archive will have a small display about the Island in the new Village Hall on Saturday and Sunday 11 to 4 and there will be lots of other activities. If anyone would like to get involved in the project or can contribute information about Holy Island or the mainland coast, just get in touch.

Linda Bankier

MUSEUM NEWS FLODDEN EXHIBITION

The Findings of the Flodden 1513 Ecomuseum Project

As many of you will know, the Flodden 1513 Ecomuseum was set up in 2013 ahead of the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden.

Although well established on the continent, the term 'ecomuseum' was still a new concept in this country. An ecomuseum is a community driven venture that links existing and new attractions to help preserve the heritage and traditions of local communities around a central theme. The theme of the Flodden 1513 Ecomuseum is, of course, the Battle of Flodden. The Flodden 1513 Ecomuseum is the first cross-border ecomuseum in Britain. It links together over 40 sites and other aspects of heritage nationwide which have a connection to the Battle of Flodden, through history, folklore, or legend.

Following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant application, the Ecomuseum enlisted the help of volunteers from both sides of the border in a bid to uncover new evidence relating to the battle. Two key projects were set up to achieve this aim - a community archaeology project and a documentary research project.

This newly discovered information was then shared with the wider community through an extensive education programme.

As the HLF funded project draws to a close, an exhibition celebrating the project and its findings has been created. The exhibition will feature finds from the community archaeology project alongside evidence from the documentary research project... all throwing a little more light on the Flodden story.

The exhibition will also highlight the huge amount of work carried out by volunteers over the past 3 and more years.

The exhibition dates and venues are as follows:

Berwick Museum & Art Gallery 18 June - 29 August 2016

Coldstream Museum 9 September - 31 October 2016

A private view will be held on **Friday 17 June** from 7pm, at Berwick Museum and Art Gallery.

We are also planning some free evening events over the summer, giving visitors an opportunity to gain free entry to the exhibition and explore some of the exhibition themes in more detail.

The first of these events will be on Thursday 21 July, 6pm - 8pm.

The Flodden Archer

Join Flodden archer, Rusty Bodkins for living history presentations explaining the use of the bow at the time of Flodden and how the billhook was used to such devastating effect alongside the bow – presentations at 6pm and 7 pm.



We look forward to seeing you in the museum and hope that you enjoy the exhibition.

Jane Millar

BERWICK BUILDING REGISTERS AND PLANS PART 2

The Registers, along with the actual plans, provide a vivid picture of the development of Berwick during a hundred years. In 1937 we have the beginnings of the building of the Meadows Estate, both by the Council and a local developer, J.H. Pierce of Dunbar. Similarly, between 1902 and 1913 we see the development of Bell Tower Place, with permissions given for not only houses, but drainage of the site, and the building of Bell Tower School in 1902, plus a ropery to be built in the same year. There is reference to the 1902 alterations of The Fishermens Arms pub in the Greenses and the building in 1913 of one of Berwick's early cinemas, the Picture House in Sandgate. The actual plans of these buildings now survive in the Archives, along with residential houses, coal houses, wash houses, and smoke houses (in the Greenses). Plans survive for existing and demolished pubs (eg the Victoria Inn, Castlegate, the Salmon Hotel and the Waterloo Hotel, both of the High Street) and those converted (the Rose and Thistle, Walkergate).

Evidence for the growth of public transport is to be found in the 1936 plans for a new Bus Station and garage in Marygate (replacing earlier plans of 1935.)

In December 1925 approval is given to the County Council (as the L.E.A.) for the building of the Girls High School in Lorraine Terrace, while there are plans for a Lifeboat Station in Sandstell Road in January 1927

The registers and plans show the development of internal sanitation, with the approval of the building of W.C.s and the coming of Post Office telegraph wires to the Greenses (in 1922). It is in 1903, that we learn that locally produced electricity came to Berwick, with the approval of the building of Berwick Electricity Works at the Quayside, followed shortly afterwards by the laying of electric cables at Castlegate, Tweedmouth and the Greenses. During the years 1913 – 1915, the relevant

Register seems to be completely taken up with approval of drainage schemes (probably linked with the growth in approvals for W.C.s). However, it is to be noted that an earth closet is still being approved as late as October 1921 for Meadow Hall House. In addition, byres and 'cow houses' are still being approved in residential areas as late as 1910.,and piggeries and a stable are being approved in the West End in 1923.

The first garage, or 'motor house', is built for Dr Fraser living in Ravensdowne in 1903, the same year that stabling is being approved (presumably for horses) in the Brown Bear Inn. There is a gradual increase in the demand for garages as the use of motor cars increase, but as late as 1924 a horse trough in Castlegate is being approved, and stabling is being approved for the railway station in 1920. However, four years later in 1924, Shell gets approval for a petrol depot at the railway station and the Grammar School is having a 'motor house' built. Change in social attitudes happens slowly. We note the arrival of new building styles – the first bungalows appear at Springhill in 1923, and soon they are appearing all over Berwick and Tweedmouth, as does the fashion for bow windows in North Terrace around 1930. One wonders why there was a rash of approvals for telephones in Berwick in September 1923.

The registers are also a good indication of the activities of particular speculators and developers, for example, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a John Cockburn was very active in developing the Greenses, especially Featherbed Lane (Brucegate) and Bell Tower Place. The nature of Berwick's business and industry is recorded in the registers, with approvals being given for wool stores,wool drying sheds, maltings and malthouses in the first decade of the last century. It is interesting to note that the name of the architect is given on approval of the plans for the War Memorial in Castlegate (1923 & 1925), which even back then was obviously considered of architectural importance..

As a note of caution, it should be remembered that not all mentions in Plan Registers, nor the existence of deposited plans, mean that the buildings or developments described actually happened.

Bob Steward

THEATRE PLAYBILL

The Record Office recently received a donation of a 19th century playbill advertising a season of plays to be performed at the "New Theatre, King's Arms Hotel Berwick". The bill was printed by "James Mills, Printer, Berwick", but it carries no date other than the performance days of Friday 28th and Saturday 29th May. The performances were presented by the Newcastle company of Courtenay and Ellerton.

A theatre had been established in buildings behind the King's Arms since 1794 when Stephen Kemble put on a season of plays in the town, followed some years afterwards by William Macready. In January 1845 however this theatre was completely destroyed in a fire. In its place the Assembly Rooms, surviving today at the King's Arms, were constructed and served for a variety of purposes including balls, lectures, and public meetings. It appears that it may not have been used as a theatre until 1858, when the *Berwick Advertiser* reported:

"We observe announcements placarded on the walls throughout the streets intimating that 'the players are coming', and for a short season the assembly-room at the King's Arms will be converted into a theatre." (*BA*, 29 May 1858, p.3)

The entertainment was put on to coincide with the Berwick Fair, and the company from the Theatre Royal in Newcastle, managed by Courtenay and Ellerton, came to Berwick for a four-week season. In the opening programme (the one in fact advertised in this playbill) three plays were announced, all of a comic nature.

Time Tries All was written by the London-based playwright and actor, John Courtney (1804-1865), and it had received its first performance at London's Olympic Theatre in 1848. *Grimshaw, Bagshaw and Bradshaw* was a one-act play by John Maddison Morton (1811-1891) and was first performed in London in 1851. *A Dead Shot* was a farce written in the mid-1820s by the actor-playwright John Baldwin Buckstone (1802-1879); this play was still seen regularly on the London stage, including at the Haymarket Theatre where Buckstone became manager in 1853 (and where it is said that his ghost continues to appear to this day).

Subsequent reports in the newspapers show that there were frequent changes of programme during the Berwick season, with several different plays being staged in a

week. Even so, the novelty of the attraction did not always ensure the appreciation of the public, as the local paper pointed out: "The theatre has been very indifferently supported, owing probably to the splendid weather we have experienced during the last few weeks; ...'a beggarly account of empty boxes' must exert a very chilling influence inside a theatre, and we hope, for the credit of the town, and not less for the amusement of the public, that the house will be crowded in future". (*Berwick Journal*, 12 June 1858)

The season ended on 26 June 1858 and the company then moved on to Kelso. The manager Lindo Courtenay spent more than a decade based in Newcastle, and subsequently managed theatres in Liverpool and Wolverhampton. The closure of this theatrical event at the King's Arms Assembly Rooms happened to coincide with the opening two days later of the new Corn Exchange nearby, and in the following years that became an alternative venue for dramatic and musical performances.

John Spiers

EXCURSION FROM FELKINGTON

The Berwick Journal, Friday 14 Aug 1863, page 4, col 6.

Excursion Extraordinary. _ On the morning of the 22nd ultimo, about 3 o'clock, the whole of the agricultural population of this ancient village started for the Cheviots. We journeyed by Bowsden where the neat cottages and the gardens and the generally improved appearance of this place says much for one of the proprietors, the Dryburn and Northfield limekilns, where the sturdy hind lads from the Merse covered with dust and sweat were already going at the lime filling[?] with a will. Next we wended by Barmoor on the right, the intervening trees permitting but a partial view of the towers of the castle, where resides a gentleman acknowledged by all to be of great use in the neighbourhood. The neat little house of William Lowrey, Esq, is open to view, in the office of which there is perhaps more real business than any other in the north of England. Our road lay through Doddington Moor, whose broad acres had few charms this sombre morning, but the sheep and cattle grazing helped to enliven the scene. Berwick Edge – how changed the scene! Luxuriant fields, and smiling plants spreading westwards – the like cannot be seen every day. Doddington with its Dod well, remarkable as the greatest spring of fresh water in

these parts. Arrived at Wooler about half-past seven. Here our commissariat department halted to procure the indispensables of comfort for the day. On by Earl and Middleton Hall. These places are romantically situated and are a treat of themselves to see. Now, we had turned our way up the beautiful glen leading to Langleford, and a good rough jolting we got before we arrived at the "sylvan scene" of Sammy Donkin. Langleford is very picturesquely situated, and the surrounding scenery is altogether grand. Here, after partaking of an excellent breakfast on the green sward and returning God thanks for the same, we divided ourselves into groups and proceeded up the hill, the top of which our whole company gained about 12 o'clock. The atmosphere being clear our prospect east, west, north, and south, was indeed charming. We gazed with rapture on the scene, while our hearts beat with gratitude to the Great Giver on high. Our bird's eye view levelled the little hills of the lowlands, and the plain seemed to stretch interminably out into the German ocean. And "Oh, the rapturous height, Of that holy delight" that seized our hearts as we looked, and looked, and looked again! We ranged round the mountain top, and halted for lunch at a large crag about midway along the northern slope. Here, too, our whole company engaged enthusiastically in hymns of praise to our Great Creator. Afterwards, one of the company very appropriately addressed us, subject—"The exalted privileges of modern Englishmen, compared with those of the ancient Britons." "Here," he said, "in these very plains some eighteen hundred years ago our forefathers lived in heathen darkness, and on that hill (pointing to Yeavinger Bell) the Druid priests very probably offered human sacrifices to appease their devil gods." Then rapidly glancing at the light and liberty we now enjoy, worship was concluded with thanks-giving and prayer, and again we journeyed to Langleford, where we again partook of liberal supplies of the good things of this life, and where we had no small diversion. But time told the hour of four, and reluctantly we prepared to retire from this lovely spot of earth. Our horses were joined to the cars, we bid farewell to the kindly matrons of the vale who kindly ministered to our comfort in boiling water, etc and in a few minutes we were homeward bound, where we arrived about 10 o'clock greatly pleased with the day's excursion. And now that the day is over and gone, many of us say that we never spent a day at market, kirk, or fair, on which we could reflect with more pleasure.

Julie Gibbs

CROOKHAM SNIPPETS

NEWCASTLE COURANT, SATURDAY 16TH JULY, 1892.

SUDDEN DEATH OF A BORDER FARMER.-

It is with great regret that we have to record the death of Mr. George Dodds, farmer of Encampment, which took place very suddenly at Crookham, on the 8th inst. It appears that Mr. Dodds left home in perfect good health, and journeyed to Crookham Post Office with the intention of getting the result of the poll for the Berwick-on-Tweed Division. On his arrival at the post office the result of the poll had not been telegraphed, so he expressed a desire to go for a short walk, but had scarcely left the premises when he was seen to stagger and fall, and on being picked up immediately after was found to be quite dead, heart disease no doubt being the cause of death. Mr. Dodds was very much respected by all who knew him, and was well-known along the Borders, and his sudden demise has caused a profound sensation in the neighbourhood. Great sympathy is expressed for Mrs. Dodds and her family, who are all young. Mr. Dodds was only in the prime of life. He was a great supporter of Mr. Askew-Robertson and was a member of the Primrose League.

THE BERWICK NEWS AND ADVERTISER, 17TH JUNE, 1902.

GARRISON GOSSIP by "MARS".

Corporal Thomas Steel, 2nd Service Company, Northumberland Fusiliers Volunteers, arrived at Coldstream Station on Friday with the 6 o'clock train from Berwick, and was accorded enthusiastic reception. Coldstream Band was in attendance, and on the train approaching the station, struck up "See the Conquering Hero Comes". Amongst those on the platform to welcome the "returning brave" were Mr. Hogarth, school master, Crookham, representing the Reception Committee; Mr. Thomas Steel, father; Mr. Knox, schoolmaster, Wark; Mr. Dodds, Crookham; Mr. R. Steel, Crookham; and other friends. Brakes were ready at the station, and conveyed the party to Crookham, where another enthusiastic reception was given to the hero. In passing the Blue Bell salutes were fired from a cannon above 100 years old in the possession of Mr. George Young. The little village of Crookham, which is

delightfully situated, was gaily decked with flags. A triumphal arch was erected at the entrance to Corpl. Steel's home, with the words "Welcome Home" inscribed over it.

Maureen Charlton

WHO WAS CAPTAIN WILKIN ?

Whilst researching the World War 1 soldiers recorded on Belford War Memorial, I came across the following statement in a report of the death on the Somme of John White which appeared in the Berwick Advertiser 20 October 1916:

Previous to enlisting, Jack, as we called him, was a gardener with Captain Wilkin R.N., D.S.O. Middleton Hall, Belford.

This presented a bit of a puzzle - one of the known facts about Middleton Hall is that from the 1860s when it was acquired by the Engineer, John Towlerton Leather, until the death of his grandson Gerard in 1941, Middleton Hall was owned by the Leathers, so how did Captain Wilkin come into the picture? Armed with a name to search for, it did not take long to establish that *Captain Henry Douglas Wilkin, R.N., D.S.O., has taken Middleton Hall for a short lease*, (Newcastle Journal 17 April 1914). Gerard Leather, who had been a regular soldier, and served with the Northumberland Fusiliers in the Boer War, perhaps anticipated, rightly as it turned out, that his services would again be required in the near future, and, rather than leave the Hall unoccupied, chose to lease it to a retired naval officer.

Captain Wilkin is recorded at Middleton Hall until the end of the First World War. During that time he fulfilled a number of the duties which might have been expected of a local squire. In September 1914, he spoke at a recruiting meeting held at the West Street Hall; in February 1915, he chaired a concert to raise funds for the Red Cross, again in the West Street Hall. In August 1916, he and his wife organised tea and sports for the children of Middleton School. Also during his time at the Hall there was a serious fire in the old East Wing of the Hall, although this seems to have been the result of an unlucky spark igniting one of the rafters, rather than any fault on the tenant's part.

This, however, was only the tip of the iceberg! Douglas Wilkin had enjoyed what might be described as an interesting career in the Royal Navy. Born in Umballa, India in 1862, Douglas was the son of a career soldier, Major H.J.Wilkin of the 11th and 7th Hussars. It was perhaps a measure of Douglas's independent streak, which was to be a feature of his career, that he chose to join the navy rather than the army. He attended Eastman's Preparatory School in, a school particularly noted for educating boys who wished to enter the navy, and then, at the age of 13 joined the Cadet Training Ship Britannia. By 1879, he is a midshipman on H.M.S. Duke of Wellington and described as *zealous, very good conduct, ability and professional knowledge. Smart and quick, a good officer.* At the beginning of 1883, he was engaged in action in Egypt, and received the Egypt campaign medal with the Alexandria clasp.

Later in the year, however, while serving on H.M.S.Excellent (The Navy's Gunnery Training School at Portsmouth) he was sent to H.M.S. Duke of Wellington, now the Flagship of the Port Admiral, on account of *his riotous misconduct*; then, in the summer of 1884, his conduct was considered so unsatisfactory that he was threatened with being discharged if there was no improvement. Exactly what all he did is unknown, but a later report in the *Hampshire Telegraph* refers to him going into the lions' den while the circus was in town, together with *other youthful eccentricities*. It had clearly been the talk of Portsmouth - perhaps not surprising that the President of the Royal Naval College was unimpressed. From Douglas's point of view however, having been engaged in real fighting, perhaps College life was rather too tame.

He succeeded in completing his time at the College and transferred to H.M.S. Rapid on the West Coast of Africa. There his conduct was so good that in October 1885, he was promoted Acting Lieutenant. The following year he moved to H.M.S. Raleigh stationed at the Cape of Good Hope. There he was involved in rescuing a Marine who had fallen overboard. Newspaper accounts major on the event happening in 'shark-infested' waters, although doubt has been thrown on this. Nevertheless his actions were certainly that of a brave man - not only had the Marine gone overboard, but another sailor who went in to help also got into difficulties. Wilkin dived in and supported both men until the ship's boat could pick all three of them up. Wilson received the Royal Humane Society's Bronze medal for his courage. Shortly afterwards he was promoted to Lieutenant.

In the following years reports generally record his effectiveness as an officer, and recommend him for promotion - but there are hiccups. In 1887 while serving on H.M.S. Sultan, he was suspended (cause unknown) but returned to duty after a judicial review. He was then refused leave to apply for a gunnery course. In February 1891, he obtained his first (temporary) command, H.M.S. Widgeon, when he replaced a sick officer. Later that year he joined H.M.S. Racer, on duty on the West Coast of Africa, and again distinguished himself by leading the Naval Brigade which captured Fort Toniabatu - actions for which he was awarded the D.S.O.

By the end of 1894 he was back in home waters, and received an Admiral's inspection. The Admiral's report on Wilkin possibly explains some of the earlier tensions:

very zealous, energetic, very ready to assume responsibility and be self assertive; somewhat wanting in tact.

Shortly afterwards Wilkin was again in trouble, this time for going on leave *contrary to training ship regulations*. Since entries on his record for the next 4 months refer to ill health (possibly his eyes which gave intermittent trouble throughout his naval career), it seems probable that he thought urgent action was necessary - but that was not the Navy way.

Finally, in December 1896, he was appointed to his first full command - H.M.S. Sparrow, where he remained in charge until posted to China in 1900. There he again distinguished himself. He was in command of the H.M.S. Otter at Hong Kong when a Typhoon struck. The shallow draught gunboat Sandpiper sank in the storm, but *the destroyer Otter went to the rescue. It was a dangerous undertaking, owing to the furious sea and the quantity of wreckage which was floating about, but Commander Wilkin handled his ship with the greatest pluck and skill and succeeded in saving the crew of the Sandpiper with the exception of Armourer Bedford.*

In 1904, he took command of the newly commissioned H.M.S. Clio at Sheerness, with a posting to Australian waters. With him he carried the High Commissioner of the Western Pacific to the Tongan Islands. He must, however, have been more active than the formal record shows as, on June 1 1904, he was formally thanked by the Commander in Chief for *the able manner in which he had carried out his duties in the Pacific*. In December of the following year, the Clio was at Shanghai and Wilkin commanded the Naval Brigade which suppressed riots there. These successes led to his promotion to Captain in June 1907 when he returned home.

Over the next 5 years he commanded H.M.S. Hawke and H.M.S. Antrim, largely in home waters. During that time he was involved in war training as naval rivalry with Germany escalated. In March 1913, now 51, he married Elfrida Iveson, and 5 months later he retired, as we have seen, moving up to Belford at the beginning of 1914.

That, one would have thought, should have been the end of the story, but not so. Despite being retired, at the beginning of 1915, he was appointed Senior Naval Officer at Belfast, where he remained in charge throughout the war, dealing with some of the aftermath of the Easter Rising. For his services there he was promoted to Rear Admiral in 1918, and awarded a CBE in 1919. The citation reads:

He carried out a great deal of work for this Department throughout the whole of the War, besides his ordinary duties as Senior Naval Officer, and there was a remarkable lack of friction, principally due to his personal touch with the people concerned.

An interesting conclusion to a career which had had more than its share of friction over the years.

Jane Bowen and Jan Ward

UPDATE FROM THE TREASURER

GIFT AID UPDATE

As previously mentioned in the newsletter at the end of last year, the Friends have been going through the process of registering with HMRC so we can claim Gift Aid on donations to us. This process is finally complete, so from now on we can claim Gift Aid on membership fees and donations made to us. Thanks to all those who ticked the box on your membership renewal forms, we can now claim back 28 pence from the government for every pound of your donations. Gift Aid claimed on this year's membership fees alone could give us at least an extra 100 pounds.

Graham Robson

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

Berwick Advertiser, 14 July 1871

INSPECTION OF THE BOROUGH POLICE

Yesterday afternoon Captain Elgee, Government Inspector of Constabulary for the Northern District of England, inspected the police force of the borough in the Town Hall. The members of the Watch Committee present were – Alderman Gilchrist (Deputy-Mayor), Alderman Smith, Dr Fluker, and Councillor Purves. After inspecting the books, the men, under Superintendent Ronaldson, were out through some evolutions, and their clothing afterwards examined. The cells were also inspected. The Inspector seemed to be satisfied with the appearance of the force, also with the condition of the cells, and the manner in which the books were kept. In the course of his enquiries Captain Elgee asked if the men apprehended or summoned persons found in a state of drunkenness on the public streets on Sunday, and on being informed that no measures of this character were adopted – they not being deemed necessary to enforce, as Berwick people, according to the testimony of one of the Aldermen present, were not in the habit of exposing themselves on the public streets when they indulged in undue libations – he hinted that the extension of police surveillance in this direction was desirable in order to preserve that sanctity of the Sunday.

Berwick Advertiser, 21 July 1871

FRACAS WITH YOUNG WOMEN IN A POTATO FIELD

Yesterday at the Petty Sessions, before the Mayor, Dr Fluker, and A. R. Lowrey, Esq., two young women, named Mary Ann Muir and Annie Johnston, were charged with having committed an assault on Mary Jane Howe, in a potato field on the farm of Brow-of-the-Hill, on Thursday morning last. The trio had been abusing each other, using most abominable language, and Howe gave Muir a “shove” in the face with a hoe she had in her hand, and Muir retaliated by striking her in the face with the sharp edge of the hoe she had been working with. The complaint against Johnston was dismissed, and Muir was fined £1 including expenses for the assault with the

hoe. In default of payment she was ordered to be imprisonment for 14 days. She went to jail.

Berwick Advertiser, 21 July 1871

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF BERWICK

The Rev. Joseph Steavenson, of the Records Office, London, a freeman of Berwick, has for some days past been engaged examining several old manuscript records connected with the old corporation in this town, for a Royal Commission appointed to ascertain what manuscripts calculated to throw light upon subjects connected with the civil, ecclesiastical, literary, and scientific history of this country; are extant in the collections of private persons and in corporations and other institutions. Mr Steavenson has taken lengthy notes of some of these records, and they will be embodied in a blue book to be issued by the Commission.

Berwick Advertiser, 21 July 1871

TWEEDSIDE KETTLES

The Berwick Shipping Company enjoyed their annual "Kettle" on Monday. The weather was pleasant, and the company which numbered upwards of twenty, partook of a plentiful supply of salmon, &c., at Haugh Shield. Alderman Gilchrist, Chairman of the Committee, occupied the chair, and the duties of vice chairman were discharged by Mr William Young. Several appropriate toasts were accordingly pledged, and the company afterwards spent some time in outdoor sports. – The directors and shareholders of Berwick and Tweedmouth Gas Company held their annual kettle on Wednesday afternoon. Fully twenty gentlemen joined in the pic-nic, which was celebrated in a marquee at Yard Ford. The Chairman of the company, Mr John Davidson, presided at the repast, and the vice-chair was occupied by Mr Buchanan. After the wants of the palate had been assuaged, the company resorted to quaiting and rowing, and notwithstanding the weather was disagreeable, rain having fallen at intervals, one and all seemed elated with their pic-nic.

Carole Pringle