



Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 100 – JUNE 2019

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 5th July 2019

Twixt Thistle and Rose Project Update :
Berwick Parish Centre 7pm

Saturday 6th July

Berwick Autumn Festivals Volunteer Coffee
Morning 10am – noon: Guildhall, Berwick

Friday 16th August

Friends 25th Anniversary Party 6.30 - 8.30
pm : Berwick Parish Centre. See article.

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 10th July

The Discovery of King Richard III and the
Design of the Centre Around the Graveside:
Paul East

NO LECTURES IN AUGUST

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

NO LECTURES IN JULY AND AUGUST

Monday 2nd September

Whitby Abbey: Tony Wilmott

BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Bowsden Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

Monday 2nd September

Border Justice: Margaret Fox

LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP

Venue: Lowick Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 9th September

'The Railway between Tweedmouth &
Kelso' : David Welsh, preceded by a short
AGM.

NORHAM & LADYKIRK LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 8th July

'Rocks and Landscape of the Norham Area': Elizabeth Devon

NO LECTURES IN AUGUST

Monday 9th September

'Scareships to Luxury Liner': Phil Rowet

TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Crookham Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

NO LECTURES IN JULY AND AUGUST

Wednesday 4th September 2019

The Bowl Hole Cemetery at Bamburgh:
Graeme Young

ARCHIVE NEWS

The past few months have been non-stop in the archives but that is nothing new for us. Here is a flavour of what we have been doing.

Firstly the Twixt Thistle and Rose Project is well under way. Teresa Maley, our Archivist, has started the mammoth task of recataloguing the collection which is definitely a challenge but one which will be worthwhile. She is finding some lovely little gems. We have also now started the volunteer element of the project. Martha Andrews, who already works for me one day a week is working an additional day on this part. We have had a great response to our volunteering call out and have about 30 people working with us. They have done some palaeography training and are now working on cataloguing Police Posters. If you want to find out more about what we have been doing, please come along to the Parish Centre on **Friday 5th July at 7pm** for an update. Otherwise, do have a look at our blog on <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/category/twixt-thistle-rose/>. This is a great project for the Record Office and one which will really benefit us long term.

As well as the Twixt Thistle and Rose, I have been beavering away with the Peregrini Project which will be completed shortly. Work on the Holy Island Reading Room has been completed and there is now an archive room in the building. At the moment we are equipping the archive room with furniture and resources and it should be ready by the end of June. Volunteers have worked very hard cataloguing the items we have been passed already and this will be a great resource for the Island. To support the group going forward, a publication has been produced called Time and Tide on Holy Island. This is a series of then and now photos of the Island as well as old photos from the Archives. John Bevan kindly took the modern photos which show that some things have changed whilst others have not ! Finally, work is almost completed on the Professor Sheddick database relating to people who lived on the Island. A copy of the complete database will be available in the Reading Room whilst an abridged version is being prepared for the Internet. This has been a long project – started for me back in 2012 – but it is great to see it all come to fruition and to have so many legacies for the future.

The Office continues to work with individual schools in the area on local projects. Children from Scremerston First School visited the office in March to find out about Archives in general and to view the photographs we have of Scremerston. This was part of their Arts Award Project based on Photography.

Archives wise, representatives from the National Archives visited the Record Office in March 2019 to inspect our accommodation and find out what we have been doing. This was an important visit for us as we are a Designated Place of Deposit for Local Public Records. They were happy with what they saw and how we are managing but will inspect us in another two years and expect to see more progress in housing the archives in a more suitable permanent home with everything on one site.

The Berwick Record Office continually receives deposits from various individuals and organisations. Recently we received a wonderful collection of material relating to the Scouts in Berwick from their formation around 1909. It contains photographs including some of Robert Cooper Clements, their Secretary and teacher at Spittal School whom I have done a lot of research on over the years.

Over the past few months I have given talks to various organisations. In March I spoke to North Sunderland Local History Society about the Ford Estate at the time

of the Waterfords whilst at the beginning of June I spoke at a Newcastle University Conference about the Berwick 900 Project and working with the community.

Finally, if you have visited the Record Office recently, you will have seen that we now have a new piece of equipment, thanks to the Friends. Our Reader Printer was on its last legs and the Friends have kindly purchased for us a new digital Reader Printer which means that it is now easier to view newspapers and create copies. This is going to make life easier for both us and members of the public as the newspapers can be magnified more on the screen.

Life is never dull in the Record Office. We never know what we are going to be asked from day to day !

RECORD OFFICE EVENTS

The Record Office is involved in two events coming up shortly. On **Friday 5th July**, you are invited to come along to our update on the Twixt Thistle and Rose Project. Come and meet the people involved in the project and find out what has happened so far and some of our findings. It starts at 7pm in the Parish Centre. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided.

The Autumn Festivals are an important part of the Berwick Cultural Calendar and the Record Office is heavily involved in organising Berwick Heritage Open Days (13 – 15 September). We all try and work together to pool our limited resources and to support each other. None of our events could run without the support of volunteers who play a vital part in ensuring that the events run smoothly. If you are interested in helping at any of the Festivals, please come along to our Volunteers Coffee Morning and sign up to help. Each Festival will be represented and you can find out what we need people to help with. The event will be held in the Guildhall on **Saturday 6th July** between 10 and 12. If you can't come along but would be interested in helping with any of the events, just let me know.

I hope to see some of you at both of these events.

100 YEARS AGO

Every fortnight Carole produces a blog based on the articles in the Berwick Advertiser of 100 years ago -

<https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/category/berwick-advertiser-100/> ,

whilst I create the weekly entries for the 100 years ago section in the Berwick Advertiser . Below is a selection of articles which appeared in the newspaper dated 13 June 1919 when the Great War was still very much in people's minds :

BERWICK – this week has seen the passing of the last of the old fashioned bow-fronted shop windows in the town, Mr Outterson, Hide Hill, having decided to go in for a modern shop front and keep abreast of the times. Within the last 25 years two other such windows have been removed from Hide Hill, when the shops occupied by the late T. Strother , and by Mr Robertson, picture dealer, were renovated.

Sanger's circus at Berwick will be a red letter day. In celebration of his 50th year on the road, Lord John Sanger is this year personally visiting as many towns as possible. Given favourable weather, Lord John is expected to visit Berwick by aeroplane on the day of visit of his circus.

What might have been a rather nasty accident, but for the presence of mind of a cyclist, occurred after one o'clock on Wednesday. A motor cyclist was taking the turn into Bridge Street from the Bridge, when a cyclist named George Rutherford, in cutting across from West Street, crossed the track of the motor bike. Rutherford, seeing a smash was certain, jumped off and let his bike go, with the result that the motor cycle passed over the front wheel buckling it badly. Neither of the riders were hurt.

TWEEDMOUTH JOTTINGS – Presentation to Miss Fell.

A very pleasant hour was spent in the Tweedmouth Girls National School on Wednesday afternoon when Miss Nellie Fell received a presentation from the managers, teachers and scholars. Miss Fell has been on the teaching staff of the school for the past five years, and has recently had to resign her post owing to the illness of her mother. A short programme of songs, given by the senior girls, added to the enjoyments of the proceedings....Miss Helyer, headmistress of the school, made a few remarks. She said that Miss Fell came to the school , a very small girl

from the Infant Department in 1898. For seven years she was an excellent pupil and passed all exams very well. In 1905 she went to the Berwick High School and after training returned to her old school as a student teacher. Later she left for Felton, Northumberland, where she acted as assistant teacher for a few years, returning again to Tweedmouth in 1914. Miss Helyer said they were all very sorry to lose her... To show the thoughtfulness of the scholars, the vicar then handed to Miss Fell on their behalf, a basket of eggs for her invalid mother. ...Before leaving Miss Fell received gifts of white iris from Joyce Hartley, roses from Jeannie McClymont, and mixed flowers from Agnes Rutherford.

NOTES FROM SPITTAL – During the war three of the teachers at Spittal School have made the supreme sacrifice. These are Capt J M Tait, 14th N.F.; Lieut R C Clements,, 7th NF and Pte R H Hunter, King's Royal Rifles. Enlarged photographs, in handsome frames, are shortly to be hung on the walls of the school as a memorial to these gallant men. A wish has also been expressed to have a memorial tablet placed in the school to record the services of all the boys serving in the war who received part or whole of their education at the Spittal School. To raise the necessary funds for these memorials the pupils of the School, under the direction of Mrs Wilkinson, are arranging to give a display next month. Weather permitting, the display will take place in the school yard, and tea will be served. A whist drive will also be held in the evening.

Mechanic James Wolfe, RAF, is home on draft leave, prior to embarking for France. He joined up when he attained the age of 18 and has been kept busy on reconstructing aeroplane engines at one of the military depots. Prior to enlisting he was employed with Messers Shiel Bros., millwrights and engineers, Tweedmouth.

Sergeant John Whitfield, RE's arrived home last week, after four years of military experience abroad. After a short training in this country he was drafted to Mesopotamia, and after a lengthy stay there, he was invalided to India, where since his recovery, he has done some good work. Prior to enlisting, he was employed by the Cooperative Society, Tweedmouth, where he hopes soon again to commence duties.

Linda Bankier

MUSEUM NEWS

Sculpture UK visited Berwick to photograph a selection of sculpted items in the collection for a new website managed by Art UK - <https://artuk.org/about/projects> We took photographs of some of our carved saints from the Burrell Collection and some of the ethnographic statues. Our first exhibition badged with our new National Portfolio Organisation status is on course for unveiling in the summer. The exhibition is linked to exhibitions using the collections of all four trust museums with common threads running through each. Matt Stokes is a recent beneficiary of the prestigious Awards for Artists scheme run by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. <https://www.phf.org.uk/artist/matt-stokes/> Matt intends to produce a soundscape, based on the natural history collections at the museum and entitled *Beyond the Field*. The finished piece of work is due for delivery in July 2019. We will be running a linked exhibition with objects from the collections.

The Collections Team are working with the Common Room (Mining Institute) to produce small exhibitions with an engineering theme at each site in time for Heritage Open Days 2019. We are exploring the possibilities of a small display around the Holy Island telephone exchange.

New online content: "Object in Focus" website telling Northumberland's stories from all our collections, plus heightened engagement across social media including Facebook and Instagram, averaging 60,000 online views per month since December. Two episodes of new podcast recorded and edited, due for release this year.

<https://museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/our-collections/museums-northumberland-podcasts/>

We hosted a book launch on the afternoon of 4th May with the author Patricia Finney, who writes under the name PF Chisholm. Patricia has been a published author since she was 18, and has written around 25 books, most notably the historical crime series set on the Anglo-Scottish Border in 1592 and starring the swashbuckling (and real) Sir Robert Carey. Anyone who has read any history at all about the reign of Queen Elizabeth I has heard of at least one of Sir Robert Carey's exploits - he was the man who rode 400 miles in just under three days from London to Edinburgh to tell King James VI of Scotland that Elizabeth was dead and that he was finally King of England.

Anne Moore, Museums Officer North

FBDMA SPRING LECTURE

In March, the Friends held their AGM and heard a fascinating talk about the plague. Jane has kindly written a summary of the talk for those who couldn't attend.

“Discrete and Honourable Matrons: Women and the Plague in Newcastle, ca 1570-1640”, Rachel Camp, Alnwick Castle Archives

William Grey, a miller in Newcastle, died of the plague in 1585 along with his wife and four of his five children. He left behind an inventory which gives us a remarkable insight into the maintenance and care of the family in the six weeks prior to his death. Four women are named as having stayed in the house to care for the sick, each being paid separate sums for caring duties and cleansing the house, as well as for their own sustenance. Part of the contract even provides for provision and sustenance of the carers for a period even after they left their employ – that is, after the death of the family. The document not only shows that women could inherit, it also reveals the untold story of emergency responses and care given by women at the time and their contribution.

Cleasers, also spelt ‘clenger’, ‘clensher’ and ‘klenser’ appear most frequently in contemporary wills and inventories. They were responsible for cleansing and fumigating the homes of the deceased and 47% of inventories list payments to these women alongside burial and funeral expenses. 26% of the inventories consulted included payments to a keeper or ‘kepper’, who were responsible for the wellbeing of those infected, particularly when quarantine had been enforced. The third category is searchers, who examined the diseased and dying to determine whether the household was infected. They were required to search the homes of neighbours as well and report their findings to authorities.

This begs the question of who were these women. They were usually poor, aged between 30 and 60 and often on their own – widows or spinsters. It is unlikely that these positions would have been their sole occupation, even during outbreaks of plague, and it is likely that the same women took up multiple roles simultaneously. These women may have been compelled to offer their services out of financial obligation, but it is also likely that parishes also drew upon existing structures of social obligation. A document from a parish in London shows that two women were

hired for such duties. However, in Newcastle, the hiring of such women seemed to be more private arrangements rather than parish social care.

These women had to be honest and discrete. The keepers were nurses and carers, and responsible for the patient's well-being. Some took the sick into their own homes; others went to the house of the diseased. The keepers were the connection between the ill and the outside world (as well as the medical community) and had a great deal of trust. There is speculation that some of these women had survived the plague and therefore had a degree of immunity.

The plague searchers were to monitor and prevent the spread of the disease. An anonymous plague broadsheet from London, 1665, shows searchers doing their duty. Often people fled from them, it was also not unknown that those suspected of plague would offer bribes to avoid quarantine of them and their families.

The same broadsheet shows transport and burial of the dead accompanied by bell-ringing to warn others. The cleaners were responsible for fumigating the house and possessions of the dead.

Most of the scant information we have is from London and we know even less about the women in Newcastle. We can surmise they came from poor backgrounds and were often widows or single, but we don't know how often they performed their duties, whether it was their sole occupation or whether it was their own choice. Perhaps their poor relief payments would stop if they did not take on this work. Nor do we know whether these women had any qualifications – medical or otherwise – for their duties.

There are the views of these women as honest, discrete matrons, or dirty, ugly and unwholesome hags. The image of the keepers, cleansers, and especially searchers of the late sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries which survives to this day is one of fear, ignorance and corruption. These negative stereotypes can be found in contemporary plays, pamphlets and other types of popular cheap print. One famous reference is in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet", where a messenger, who might have prevented the double suicide had his message got through, was delayed by one of these women. Other references accuse them of accepting bribes, making false medicines, hastening death, ransacking and stealing from the sick. Many of the negative descriptions were written by males whose purpose was to discredit them as well as not to elevate the women to the same level as male professionals.

However, most scholarly assumptions rely on the work done by the British statistician John Graunt, whose book *Natural and Political Observations* (1661) gave detailed information on rates, causes, etc, of death in London in the preceding century.

It has long been held by many historians that social relations from the medieval period shifted from local cooperation in the community to a much more individualistic, capital-accumulating society in the early modern period. The plague placed great stress on social cooperation and broke down cohesion: the triumph of the plague was the triumph of egoism. However, in Newcastle, court depositions often vary dramatically from the negative images given in other sources. The poor women who attended the sick in Newcastle challenge both of these assumptions, demonstrating that the bonds of social obligations held even during outbreaks of plague. Evidence can be found in the fact that these women risked their lives to assist their neighbours, the essential role played by keepers in connecting otherwise isolated households, and in the gifts or 'tokens' plague victims bequeathed in their wills to those who cared for them. The work of these women also contributed to further social policy and care.

In conclusion, Rachel Camp argued for a revision of ideas about the women who cared for the sick and dying during plague outbreaks. The significance of these women has largely been lost, tangled in a web of negative stereotypes that often differs quite dramatically from reality. At the same time, this evidence suggests that our assumptions about the decline of neighbourliness and the rise of individualism, as well as the divisive nature of plague, are also in need of revision. The crisis created by the plague facilitated the creation of informal networks of care which ultimately strengthened social solidarity within the community.

Jane Pigney

BERWICKERS IN CANADA

Many Berwickers left for the Dominions or elsewhere in the British Empire, from the late 1920s to the 1930s, and their experiences, some good, some bad, are well documented in the Berwick Advertiser and other papers. The mechanisation of agriculture meant that far fewer farm workers were needed. Many migrated to urban areas in this country, while others looked for opportunities elsewhere. Canada especially was welcoming, as the Canadian Prairies were opened up for agriculture,

and the oilfields developed on the eastern flank of the Rockies.

The Laird of Ladykirk, Askew Robertson, was a generous benefactor and helped migrants financially. He is also remembered for his involvement in the building of homes for heroes, the returning soldiers from the First World War, at Askew Crescent and at other developments in Berwick.

In July 1929, Mr and Mrs Renton and family, of Seaton Cottages, Chirnside, and Messrs JA Virtue & George Elliott, of Wynfield, Norham, benefitted from the Askew Scheme. Their passage and landing money were provided, enabling them to sail on the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) liner 'Duchess of Atholl' for Winnipeg, Canada under the CPR Land Settlement Scheme. The booking arrangements were made through Moor's Tourist and Shipping Agency [54 Main Street, Tweedmouth]

In November, Mr Virtue and Mr Elliot, c/o Mrs Buckton, Turner Valley, Alberta, wrote to the Berwick Employment Exchange, expressing their satisfaction with their new life:

Mr Virtue stated that he was 'getting on all right and liking Canada very well...When we went to the office at Winnipeg the manager told us the agent at Pierson wanted two experienced men there. We got off next morning and our bosses met us with their cars. G Elliott and I were 6 miles apart, Elliott being three miles from town and I nine. I was very lucky as I got a comfortable home. There are two brothers in the farm, one married ... They are of Scotch descent, their father hailing from Aberdeen, but the sons have never been to Scotland.' He had arrived at hay cutting but found the crop very small, the result of an exceptionally hot summer. In Saskatchewan some farmers ploughed it up.

George Lee Elliot wrote 'We were on the farm for two months, and getting along fine, getting 40 dollars a month, and a dollar a day extra for harvest, but the farmer does not keep men in the winter, so we had to shift. We then came up Turner Valley as I had some friends here. Since then we have been making big money in the oilfields, getting four dollars a day and board, and only working eight hours a day.' Board cost a dollar and a half a day, everything being expensive in the valley.

They both felt that they were very lucky, and were grateful to Mr Askew.

A longer article will appear on the Friends website.

Nigel Sumerling

KOSB MUSIC

Cataloguing the music cards of The King's Own Scottish Borderers

'Where does the time go when you are enjoying yourself?'

At the final meeting of the Waite and Sea project, which studied traditional music in the Berwick and North Northumberland area, Linda Bankier, the Berwick Archivist, asked if anyone was interested in cataloguing the many KOSB music cards which had been deposited in the Berwick archive. The boxes of music had been given to the Berwick Concert Band in 2006, when the regiment was merged into the Royal Regiment of Scotland and they deposited them in the archive, on the understanding that the music could be taken out and used if needed. Myself and five or six others said they would like to volunteer to do the job.

At the first meeting much discussion took place about the best way to tackle the project. Fortunately, some of the small group of volunteers were musicians and they were able to give advice on how the music scores, for the different instruments, should be organised. At our first cataloguing session, in November 2015, we standardised the way the information on the cards was to be recorded – Level, Reference Number, Title, Description and Date. The Level is the collection reference number – BRO 1959; the Series is the part of the collection, the type of music e.g. Quick Marches are BRO 1959/QM; Box - identifies the number of the box e.g., BRO 1959/QM 1 and Item – gives the identification number of each piece of music in the box. For example, BRO 1959/QM 1/1 is the first piece of music in Box 1 in the Quick March series of boxes. Each piece of music (item) has a unique reference number; title, which identifies the piece and its composer/arranger; description, which lists the instruments and comments on condition and finally the date the piece was written. In November 2015 we began cataloguing the QM (Quick March) boxes. Most volunteers began with some degree of enthusiasm but over the weeks, months and years the number of volunteers gradually dwindled until I was the only one left and I can usually be found in the archive twice a week surrounded by boxes!

So far the following have been catalogued - Quick Marches (well over 100 boxes), Slow Marches, Miscellaneous Marches, Regimental Quick Marches, Regimental

Slow Marches, Death Marches, Pipe and Drum music; Fanfares; Christmas Hymns and Carols, National Anthems and Miscellaneous Anthems. The list seems to be endless and I am assured that there are plenty more boxes still to go. The music was played by the KOSB Regimental Band on different occasions. It is mainly from the 20th Century but some dates back to the 1800's and consists of traditional tunes, classical music, modern TV and Film theme tunes and traditional Christmas Carols. It is no surprise that the KOSB regimental march 'Blue Bonnets O'er the Border', a traditional Scottish jig and marching tune, appears in many of the March boxes.

Most of the music is on A5 single or double sided cards. Most are original scores but a number are hand written. Considering the varied weather and service conditions the band would have played in over the years, much of the music is in a reasonable condition, although many of the paper scores are crumpled and creased after being stuffed into envelopes which are far too small and many of the older cards have faded. Some of the card used has been recycled from boxes or cigarette cartons; 'Camel' cigarettes seem to have been a popular brand. Some boxes are crammed full with two main pieces of music glued or stapled onto either side of a piece of card but hidden among them will be cards with different pieces of music on the reverse. Other boxes contain only one piece of music, up to 120 scores in some cases. Some music scores are annotated with musical directions; some have names or comments written on them, 'Bl---y Rubbish' appears a few times. One even had a score card for a card game roughly drawn on the back, suggesting that they had a certain amount of free time on their hands. One never knows what to expect. Even a rough 'weighing in the hand' is no indication of what to expect when the box is opened.

When opening a box, the first task is to sort and identify the different pieces of music contained within it. Next, each piece of music is sorted so that all the scores for the different instruments are together, then the information is recorded on the computer. Crumpled scores are straightened; steel paper clips replaced with brass clips, any peeling sticky tape removed if possible and the unique reference number for each item is written, in pencil, in the top right hand corner. Once all this is complete each piece of music is enclosed in a specially made folder made from acid free card and the folders are placed into a new box which is labeled with the series number. It is very satisfying to see the jumble of music scores, neatly organised at the end of the process. Who knows what future boxes will reveal.

Searches on the internet reveal just some of the occasions when the music was played – Malaya (1957); Enniskillen (1976); marching through the city of Colchester to present their colours to the Mayor when moving into the barracks (1984); the Edinburgh Tattoo (1989 & 1993); performing at the Scottish Festival in Estes Park, Colorado (2004); Marching in Berwick for the laying up-ceremony at the Berwick Barracks (2006); Minden Day Parade, Berwick (2013). This list is just a small selection of the occasions the marching band performed.

The KOSB regimental band was disbanded in 1993 when it was decided that only two regimental bands were needed in Scotland. A number of former band members organised a reunion in Berwick in 1995 and have continued to meet every two years, the last reunion being in 2018.

The KOSB Regiment - A Brief History

The regiment was raised in Edinburgh in March 1689 by Leslie, 3rd Earl of Leven. It first saw action at the Battle of Killecrankie in July 1689, acquitting itself well, and earning the right to recruit by 'beat of the drum' within the city of Edinburgh without the permission of the Lord Provost. In 1691 the regiment saw action in Ireland during the assault on Ballymore, the siege of Athlone, the Battle of Aughrim and the sieges of Galway and Limerick and in 1692 and 1697 it fought the French in the Low Countries.

Renewed Jacobite activity in the 18th Century resulted in the regiment seeing action in the Battles of Sheriffmuir (1715) and Culloden (1746). The regiment was stationed in Gibraltar between 1726 and 1736; the West Indies between 1740 and 1743 and Flanders in 1744. In 1745 the regiment took part in the Battle of Fontenoy and in 1751, it became the 25th Regiment of Foot. In 1759 it was one of the six British Infantry regiments that fought in the Battle of Minden. After a period of service in Minorca between 1768 and 1780, it returned to Gibraltar in 1782, at this time the regiment was reformed as the 25th (Sussex) Regiment of Foot. In 1799 the regiment saw action in Holland at Battle of Egmont-op-Zee.

In the 19th Century the regiment saw action in Egypt (1801) and The West Indies and in 1805 it became the 25th (King's Own Borders) Regiment of Foot. Under this name the regiment saw action in various parts of the British Empire – Ireland (1837-39), South Africa (1840-42 and 1900-02), India (1875-81), and Afghanistan (1878-80) to name but a few. In 1859 a second Battalion was raised which saw service in Ceylon (1863-68), India (1869-75), Sudan (1888) and India (1890-1903). In 1881 the

regiment moved to a new Depot at Berwick-upon-Tweed Barracks and in 1887 it acquired the title The King's Own Scottish Borderers.

During World War I, several new Battalions were raised and the regiment saw action in most of the major battles of the war - Gallipoli, the Somme, Ypres, Lys, Cambrai, Vimy Ridge, Loos, Arras and the Marne. The regiment raised 14 Territorial, New Army and Garrison Battalions. These were awarded 66 battle honours and four Victoria Crosses. The regiment lost over 7,700 men during the World War I.

Between the wars the 1st Battalion served in India and Chanak (1922) and in Malta and Palestine (1936) while the 2nd Battalion served in Ireland, Egypt, Hong Kong and India. In 1922 the 2nd Battalion became one of the last British units to be stationed in southern Ireland before independence.

At the onset of World War 2 in 1939, the 1st Battalion embarked for France. It crossed the border into Belgium in May 1940 but was forced to withdraw to the beaches at Dunkirk where the battalion was evacuated. It returned to France on D-Day in 1944, it fought around Caen then advanced through Belgium and Holland to the Rhine and Bremen. The 4th and 5th (Territorial) Battalions also served in France in 1940 at St Malo before being evacuated from Cherbourg. These Battalions subsequently trained as mountain troops and as air-transportable troops, before fighting on Walcheren Island at the mouth of the River Scheldt and then moving into Germany to take part in the capture of Bremen. The 6th Battalion was involved in fierce battles in Caen and the River Odon in 1944 before advancing into Germany ending the War beyond Hamburg. The 7th Battalion became glider-borne troops with the 1st Airborne Division, serving at Arnhem in 1944. The 2nd KOSB battalion received jungle training and was posted to Burma in 1943.

Following World War 2, the 2nd, 6th and 7th Battalions were disbanded. The 1st Battalion served on security duties in Palestine between 1945 and 1947 before being posted to Korea for active service in 1951. Between 1955 and 1959 it was engaged in the jungle against Communist terrorists. Between 1962 and 1964 it was on internal security operations in Aden and in 1965 it was in Borneo, patrolling the Malaysia/Indonesia border. From 1970 onwards the Battalion spent a great deal of time in Northern Ireland, the last tour being between 2004 and 2006. In 1991 the Battalion was deployed to the Gulf as part of Operation Granby/Desert Storm. They also saw service in Belize (1978) and Cyprus (1999-2001). In 2003 the Battalion was deployed to southern Iraq to help maintain law and order in the aftermath of the

overthrow of Saddam Hussein. In 2006, it was merged with five other Scottish regiments to form The Royal Regiment of Scotland, becoming part of its 1st Battalion.

Julie Gregory

POLICE WANTED POSTERS

In 1882, a letter was sent from Middlesbrough Police to Berwick Constabulary containing details of two Irish women who were held in custody on charges of larceny, and asking for any information about them. The first woman was named as Hannah Duffy aged 39 years and she was described as having a fresh complexion, blue eyes and a long face. Then it continued to say that she had indistinct letters tattooed on each arm, large scars on her forehead, a scar on her upper lip, several front teeth missing and her left ear torn at the bottom where an earring had been torn out. Her friend Mary Kelly aged 38 also had a fresh complexion with light ginger hair and brown eyes. She had faint tattoo marks on her left arm with old scars on both arms, several scars on her face, a blue dot on her left cheek and blue marks on the right side of her forehead.

The first impression is the amount of detail given in each description followed by a vivid mental picture of what sort of lives these women must have led. Most of the wanted posters sent at this time contain the same amount of detail and information and are usually hand written, giving a clear insight into life, customs and fashions of that time. Many of the letters came from all over the country, including from London, Sheffield, Birmingham and Inverness. They were all sent through the post which must have been really effective, to send this important information country wide.

Berwick-on-Tweed has a unique resource of police records as it was independent from Northumberland Constabulary until 1920. This meant that all the records are held together in Berwick Archives and are now being catalogued by volunteers who are part of the Twixt Thistle and Rose project. The records from 1859 to 1864 were already collated in a book in the archives, so it is the later ones that are being recorded now. There are about two thousand posters and letters in seventeen assorted bundles, all in various states of repair and legibility, and the information in them is unique.

The Berwick Police records at this time do not only refer to wanted persons but cover a wide range of other concerns, including missing children, thefts, murders, stolen horses and tackle, bodies found on railway tracks, lost dogs the list goes on! On 19 July 1890, a letter was received from Gosforth Police concerning the theft of some clothing by a tramp. He had left his own ragged clothes behind and was last seen in Seaton Burn carrying a bundle wrapped in a red spotty bundle! So the stories about the spotty hanky are true but seem to be a bit of a giveaway in terms of being recognised!

Another poster was received from South Shields in January 1890, concerning the training ship Wellesley. Five youths had absconded from the ship and were named as Richard Price age 14, John Sanderson age 15, William Martin age 15, William James Carr age 14 and John Downey age 16. Their uniforms were found nearby and it was requested that the police looked out for them. These boys would have been apprenticed to the ship for several years and their escape suggests that life was not good. Later letters state that the boys were caught and returned to the ship to await their punishment.

It wasn't just youths who ran away either. On 23 April 1882 there was a poster sent to Berwick Police concerning a deserter from the Kings Own Scottish Borderers. Private Henry Dawson had been on furlough in Newcastle but had not returned to his regiment. Another absentee was John Smith on 19th May 1890 who had enlisted in Berwick in the North Artillery aged 26 and his uniform had been found but no sign of him.

Another major crime was that of theft, usually for watches and jewellery. Many were taken from houses and shops, but others seem to be due to lack of basic safety. On 2 January 1890, a letter was sent from Roxburgh Police concerning the theft of a gold watch. The owner had been contacted by a man posing as a travelling watch and clock cleaner and was asked if his watch needed to be cleaned. The gold watch was handed over and neither the man nor the watch had been seen again, surprisingly enough! Many other handwritten posters were received from Newcastle where jewellery and silver watch thefts were a regular occurrence and searches or information requested from pawnshops and jewellery shops in Berwick.

Some of the letters received were from individuals telling of more personal losses. On 12 January 1890, a personal letter was sent from Glasgow by John Grieg

concerning his son James Grieg age 14 years whom he suspected had gone away with the hobby horse people to Roxburgh or Berwick. It did not say whether son John had gone willingly or had been taken by the gypsies. Other letters told of lost wallets, money, dogs and even a bible from a church.

There are some characters that really attract attention and in February 1882, there was a telegram that told of a man called Shadrach Nelson, who had been arrested in the town of Hawick in Roxburghshire, for pony stealing.

Blyth 8th Feb 1882

I have received two telegrams this afternoon one informing me that Shadrach Nelson was in custody at Hawick for the pony stealing here and the other one that Nelson has made his escape from the cells at Hawick.

Please send me a look out for him

I am Sir
John H. Smith
Andrew Nelson

The (my) Constable
Berwick

Ref : BA/P/15/11/38

Further research found a newspaper article from the following week (14th February, 1882) in the *Southern Reporter* describing how he was left alone with a Mrs. Chapman, the wife of the Constable left in charge of his detention. He managed to persuade Mrs. Chapman to release him for a few moments respite, then he bolted

out the door and made his way up the Loan (a street in Hawick), after which he managed to evade recapture despite the attempts to apprehend him from several constables and a very large crowd. This larger than life character continued his life of horse stealing around the Borders and died on 10 February 1926. He is buried in Kelso Rosebank cemetery along with his wife Charlotte.

If you want to find out more about Shadrach Nelson, have a look at our blog : <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/about/>

Helen Craggs

A PROVIDENTIAL ESCAPE

Kelso Chronicle 7th February 1851

The members of a certain officious fraternity which nestles on the borders, encountered the other day in the prosecution of their vocation at the railway station in the southern district of this borough a rather formidable foe, and by a mere accident escaped the full penalty of rousing him in his lair. The circumstances are these:- A box of questionable shape arrived at Tweedmouth station from a Scottish town in the west, with an address directing its further conveyance southwards. It was raised from its stance by the officers of excise, and found heavy; it was shaken, but gave no satisfactory reply. The outer covering, which was of wood, was removed, but the inner case only excited greater curiosity. It was composed of lead securely soldered round the edges. It was evidently a prize! But how to get at it was the question. One of the searchers suggested that it should have the railway office poker heated, and with it melt the soldering. All agreed to this, but during the heating process one of the officers, wiser than his fellows, suggested that as they must ultimately have a plumber to renew the fastening they had better have him at once to undo it. This proceeding, though delaying their gratification, was acceded to. The plumber was procured, and he decided that it would be wiser to cut than to melt the solder, which he presently did: when an opening was made the contents were discovered to be – gunpowder! Had the heated iron but come in contact with this, what would have been the consequence? With “bated breath” the spectators

congratulated each other on their escape, and heartily wished the suspected package a safe and speedy conveyance to its destination.

Ralph Holmes

BERWICK AND DRINK

In recently searching Berwick's newspapers, I came across an article in the November 1979 issue of the Berwick Advertiser, which estimated that 3% of Berwick's population had a drink problem. As a result, the Rev Graham Monteith, Minister of Wallace Green Church, had set up a body called Alcoholics Aid which met weekly, in conjunction with the North East Council on Alcoholism. The area taken in by Alcoholics Aid consisted of the area between Eyemouth, Chirnside and Alnwick. The problem facing this group was illustrated by the Berwick motto ; '*One drink is too many, twenty is not enough*'

I would be interested if readers had information on this body, Alcoholics Aid, such as who administered it, where they met and how long it lasted.

Contact can be made via Berwick Record Office.

Bob Steward

DEATH OF "BLIND WILLIE"

At West Street, Belford, suddenly, yesterday morning there passed away one whose name for nearly fifty years has been a household word between Berwick and Alnwick, William Aitchison, better known as "Blind Willie," was born at Berryburn, near Ancroft, 64 years ago. His parents soon after his birth removed to Detchant, where the dregs of the measles destroyed the sight of their promising boy. Notwithstanding this foul misfortune, Willie in an almost incredible degree took a share in the games of his playmates. He was able to play at marbles, and even went bird-nesting. While engaged in the latter by himself he once lost himself in Detchant Wood. His shouts being unheeded, he crawled about for hours, hoping that he could

feel something that would guide him out of the maze. At last he felt what seemed to him like the impression of a horse's foot; his idea was fortunately right, and knowing that the fore part sticks deeply into the ground, he was able with patience to pilot himself home. At Haggerstone, where the next part of his boyhood was spent, he acquired the love of literature and desire to be posted up in all political and social news that remained with him to the end. When he was about 14 years of age he got his first lesson on the violin from the late Mr George Young. The blind pupil proved himself an adept at the instrument, and was quickly able to accompany his master to the balls and "kirns", where their services were in great request. A strange coincidence may here be stated. The first time that Willie played in public was at Belford Hall, fifty years ago; the last time was on Wednesday last. Indeed, the old man on Wednesday evening was playfully stating that he was celebrating his jubilee. Willie was a staunch Conservative, and an intelligent one, as many found to their cost, who thought they would get the better of him in argument because the blind man's knowledge would not be up to date. Within a radius of 10 or 12 miles from Belford Willie knew every road and footpath as well as anyone blessed with sight, and, indeed, habitually walked long distances without the guidance of his trusty dog. Many stories could be told of his marvellous powers of hearing, which will be related in North Northumberland for many years to come. The cause of death was an attack of pleurisy and inflammation combined. The funeral will take place in Belford churchyard tomorrow afternoon, when there is sure to be a large gathering.

Newcastle Journal 10 Jan 1893 page 6

Karon Ives

SNIPPETS FROM THE BERWICK ADVERTISER

Berwick Advertiser, 29 February 1872

BRITISH MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN 1871

Another lecture was given in the E.P. School, Tweedmouth, on Tuesday night, by Mr Mitchell, teacher. Mr Lillie, of the Tweedside Agricultural Implement Works, was elected to the chair, and introduced the lecturer in a neat and graceful speech. Mr Mitchell stated that he had been urgently requested to give another lecture early,

and had consequently slightly amended an old one, and entitled it "British manners and Customs in 1871." He first took up the fashion of dress, and showed what was required, giving a rather humorous and well received sketch of the "Boy and Girl of the Period." At this stage he read an original poem entitled "My Auld Claes," which was loudly applauded. The lecturer then took up the reading and amusement fashions, depicting scenes from real life, then strikes and look-outs, etc. From this he went on to the "speaking fashions," and burst into a glowing eulogy on the Scotch language, illustrating its peculiarities by humorous and well told anecdotes. Touching slightly on the fashion of keeping centenaries, etc, he concluded by expatiating on the "religious fashions" of the day. There was a good attendance of adults, and the lecture was attentively listened to and loudly applauded, being both highly humorous and instructive. Votes of thanks having been proposed to both lecturer and chairman, and heartily responded to, the meeting was closed with prayer.

Berwick Advertiser, 29 February 1872

TWEEDMOUTH- THE LATE MR THOS. WOOD, TEACHER

On Monday evening a meeting of the old pupils and friends of this deceased gentleman was held in the Schoolroom, Kiln Hill, "to consider the advisability of erecting a tombstone to his memory." There was a fair attendance, and Mr Walter Dougals, occupied the chair. The meeting opened a subscription list with the view of providing funds to erecting a tombstone over the grave of the deceased whose remains are interred in Tweedmouth Church Cemetery. Mr Wood, who died on the 22nd September last, at the age of 68 years, came to Tweedmouth as a teacher when he was only 15 years of age, and had therefore been resident here for the long period of 53 years. He was a faithful and painstaking teacher and a kind friend to the poor and afflicted, amongst whom he continually went about doing good. We shall be glad to learn that a handsome sum has been raised to provide a suitable tombstone to perpetuate the memory of the good old man.

Carole Pringle

FRIENDS 25TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

This year will be the 25th anniversary year of the first meeting of the Friends held in March 1994.

To commemorate this occasion, it is intended to hold a celebratory party in the Parish Centre, on the evening of Friday 16th August, with a buffet and 25th anniversary cake. The evening will run from 6.30pm to 8.30 pm.

All Friends and their partners are invited to attend, the cost being £6 a head to cover the food and other expenses. A form is included in this Newsletter which Friends can return with payment to the Berwick Record Office. .

I look forward to seeing you at this evening to celebrate our milestone.

Robert Steward
Chairman FBDMA

100TH NEWSLETTER

The newsletter has now reached its 100th issue which is also something to celebrate. Over the years the Newsletters have covered many different topics and also events/activities supported by the Friends; Record Office and the Museum. It is now a huge resource of information about the North Northumberland area. I must hold the unique record of having contributed something to each issue as well as proof read each one !

Thank you to all who have contributed over the years and I hope you will continue to do so.

Linda Bankier