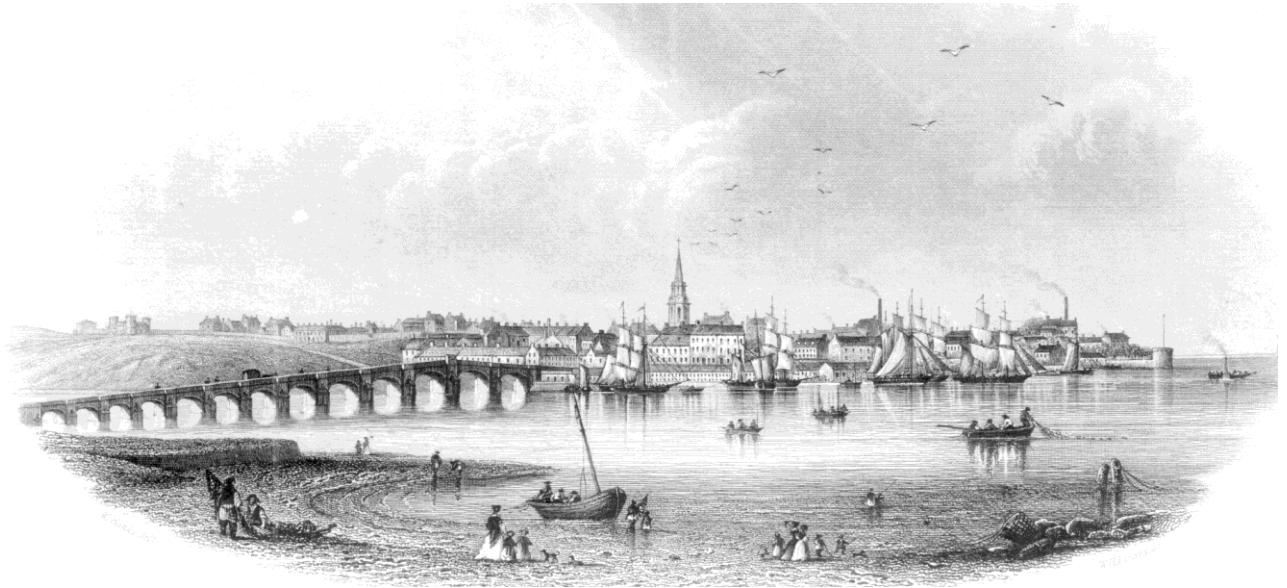


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 107–FEBRUARY 2021

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 6th March 2021

Twixt Thistle and Rose Mini Conference, 10 – 12. Can be booked via Eventbrite (see Archive News)

Friday 26th March 2021

Friends Talk: Archives Revealed – Unlocking Berwick's Borough Archives : Linda Bankier. 7pm start followed by AGM after the talk. On Zoom

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

**Most societies are not meeting at the moment. However, some are holding their talks on Zoom. Check individual websites for details. See next newsletter for further updates**

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

Talks will be held on Zoom starting at 7.30pm. Any non members wishing to attend should e-mail [lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk) for joining details.

Wednesday 21st April 2021	A Short History of Berwick Barracks: Sir Philip Mawer
Wednesday 19th May 2021	Wm Cowe & Sons and the Berwick Cockle: Cameron Robertson

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Talks will be held on Zoom and start at 7.30pm. Any non-members wishing to attend should e-mail Josie McChrystal - [josephine.mcchrystal@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:josephine.mcchrystal@hotmail.co.uk)

Monday 1st March 2021	Relics in Narrative of Bodily Integrity in Byzantine Christianity : Sophie Moore, Newcastle University
Monday 5th April 2021	"Lindisfarne Priory Museum Collections; a curator's view": Susan Harrison, English Heritage.

### **GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Talks will be held on Zoom and start at 7.30pm. Any non-members wishing to attend should e-mail the secretary - [GLHSoc@gmail.com](mailto:GLHSoc@gmail.com)

Wednesday 10th March 2021	Royal Mail Coach Routes through Northumberland and the Borders 1790-1840: Ian Rawles
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Wednesday 14th April 2021

Holiday's in the Cheviots 1910-1915:  
Pam Ratcliffe

### **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP**

Talks will be held on Zoom and start at 10.00am. Any non-members wishing to attend should e-mail – [rowan2010@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rowan2010@hotmail.co.uk)

Saturday 20th March 2021

Northumberland's Past through its Place  
Names: Diana Whaley

Saturday 17th April 2021

Our Experiences with DNA Tests:  
Member's Stories.

### **TillVAS**

Talks will be held on Zoom and start at 7.30pm. The link needed to register for each talk will be circulated a few days beforehand in the TillVAS monthly Newsletter. To join the audience, you need to be a member of TillVAS, Lowick Heritage Group, the Border Archaeological Society or Coquetdale Community Archaeology.

Wednesday 3rd March 2021

A Family life revealed, the Stuarts of  
Traquair: Margaret Fox

Wednesday 7th April 2021

AGM followed by a talk on Redesdale:  
Richard Carlton

Wednesday 5th May 2021

The Old Ancrum Bridge: Geoff Parkhouse

Wednesday 2nd June 2021

Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project  
: Greg Finch

# NORTHUMBELAND ARCHIVES ONLINE TALKS

All talks start at 7pm, are free and can be booked via Eventbrite through this link-  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/northumberland-archives-30770439808>

Thursday 25th February 2021

The Good Sharps : The Brothers and Sisters who Remade their World :Hester Grant

Thursday 11th March

Hidden Histories : Tapping the Archives for stories of Black Presence : Jo March

Thursday 18th March

Magnificent Women and their Revolutionary Machines: Henrietta Heald.

## ARCHIVE NEWS

The Record Office has been closed to the public most of the time since our last newsletter and we have all been asked to work from home as far as possible. This has meant a change of emphasis for us workwise, however, we have kept going and been catching up on various tasks. Martha has continued to look after the volunteers and to provide them with transcription work. She has also been posting on our Twitter account which now has over 400 followers, a great achievement in less than a year. Carole is working on various tasks, including preparing volunteers' work for the electronic catalogue and preparing images for a trial Twixt Thistle and Rose remote access project which we hope to start in March.

I seem to be involved in various projects which make each week fly by!

Here is a list :

**TWIXT THISTLE AND ROSE PROJECT** - A lot of my time has been spent working on the Twixt Thistle and Rose Project which is reaching a milestone. For nearly two years, Teresa Maley worked on creating a new catalogue for the collection and adding in additional material. This will go live on 26<sup>th</sup> February in the Northumberland Archives electronic catalogue section on their website. Go to -

<https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/catalogue/> . If you click on Advanced Search and enter BA\* you can find various entries for the Guild, crime and punishment and public health. There are about 9,500 entries as a starting point and over the next couple of months we will be adding in work undertaken by volunteers which will really open up the collection. Watch this space for further updates. Over the past 6 weeks, I have been editing entries and adding in additional data. This is very much the start but for us, it will mean that the Berwick Borough Archives catalogue will be available for those who can't come to the office and accessible all the time.

To celebrate this, we're holding an Online Conference on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March from 10 to noon. This will provide a background to the project, information on the records and cataloguing them, the volunteer contribution, including their research and our plans for the future. Book your free place via Eventbrite on - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/northumberland-archives-30770439808>

**PORTRAIT OF A TOWN – PHOTOCENTRE EXHIBITION** – Cameron Robertson has been working away in the Record Office when we were open digitising various images for his next exhibition which can be seen in the Granary Gallery. Originally it was to open on 2nd April but that is not to be. However, we will let you know when we can open as soon as possible. This is a joint project with Berwick Visual Arts and will highlight unseen images from the collection and help raise its profile as a major photographic source for the area. To compliment the exhibition, we are creating a PhotoCentre Berwick website and social media presence and running an education programme for schools. Much of this work is being funded by a grant awarded to the Friends by the Lough Fund (administered by the North East Community Foundation). The Education programme is being run in conjunction with Northumberland Arts Development and as a starter we have been working with an artist on a taster video to encourage children and adults to think about how to frame an image before taking a photograph. This will be available shortly and is a fun activity for all to try. Over the next 4 months we hope to work with local schools using the collection as a stimulus for art and general creativity.

**LEARN** – Northumberland Archives is creating an online digital learning platform for schools and over the past year, I have been working with staff at Woodhorn to develop content. Lockdown has had its challenges but it has allowed us to work with schools online and deliver virtual sessions – a first for us. Last term we worked with Berwick, Holy Trinity and this term we will be working with Glendale Middle School. We are nearly ready to launch the platform to schools which will contain Berwick

content on Crime and Punishment and First World War. This is a new venture for us but in the present circumstances the way to go.

**TALKS** – the Record Office has had to change how it delivers talks. No in person talks at the moment but we have been delivering some online. In January as part of the Northumberland Archives Covid Recovery funded talks, I gave a talk on Evidence of Women in the Berwick Archives which was attended by over 70 people. I also gave a talk to the Berwick History Society on the Twixt Thistle and Rose Project. Again, this is something new for us but once you get used to talking to a screen and your powerpoint, it's ok !

It doesn't sound like much but Carole, Martha and I have been extremely busy. We do miss seeing everyone who uses the Record Office and we are hoping that we can welcome you back in the not too distant future.

*Linda Bankier*

## **NURSE MACLENNAN**

As 8th March is International Women's Day, I was looking through the newspapers and found this article on Nurse MacLennan's contribution in the Far East during the Second World War. Although not a native of Berwick, she came to work here and may be known to some of our members. In a subsequent newspaper, I also found an interview with her as a District Nurse which will be published in our next issue.

### **BERWICKSHIRE NEWS 5 APRIL 1949**

#### **WITH THE ARMY IN BURMA-BERWICK NURSE TELLS OF HER EXPERIENCES**

"I have been through the jungle on the back of an elephant and have first hand impressions of what our boys had to go through" said Miss McLennan, a Berwick District Nurse, when she gave a most interesting talk on Monday to members of Berwick Business Women's Club on her five years service as an Army Nursing Sister, which included service on the North West Frontier and on the Burmese border during the Chindit Campaign.

After telling about her experiences in this country, Mss McLennan went on to tell of her voyage to the East, then about her service in India and the Far East. "From

Karachi" she said, "I was posted to the North West Frontier of India, where the tribes men could be pretty treacherous, and to crown all, one of our sisters had been shot, quite near to where I was going so I was greatly relieved then when I received posting orders to go to the Burmese border. "Surroundings on the North West Frontier were truly gorgeous I have never seen such a range of coloured blossom on tall slender trees in all my life. The boundary where we could feel reasonably safe was a three mile limit and beyond that border it was dangerous but full of interest. I had the opportunity of going onto the actual city of Peshawar, We had to go to the police station to sign the visitors' book and were warned not to stop and buy any wares, even although tempted to do so. I was taken up the Khyber Pass and overlooked the Afghanistan border. I could not possibly describe the wonderful view of the snow covered Himalaya mountains to be seen from that point. On the way up we passed the mud villages screened off from view by a very high mud built wall. All we could see was the high look-out towers from where apparently the husbands kept a look out for trespassers. The climate was cold in winter but before I left in May, the temperatures was very high, up to 120 in the shade. To see the water buffaloes lying up to the neck in water was amazing and then there were dozens of very superior looking camels looking disdainfully at all and sundry as they passed along. It took us 2 ½ days in the train to reach the Burma border.

### **IN ASSAM**

After crossing a ferry in Assam where there were thousands of refugees coming through from Burma we had two days under appalling conditions. There was no water in the compartment and I wiped my face with soda water. Then after 7 ½ days travel we had to go nine miles in a truck over treacherous roads and we had to stand in the truck most of the way being so rough. The sisters' mess was built at the corner of a tea plantation. The bashar in which we lived could not be said to be luxuriously appointed but we were moderately comfortable apart from spiders as big as your hand, flying beetles, lizards and insects of all sorts. Wonderful species and strange as though it may seem we became quite attached to them eventually. There were thousands of mosquitoes.

Our canvas bath was 36 feet square. By the time we had dried ourselves the perspiration trickled down our spines. Shoes became heavily furred in two days with high humidity in the monsoon weather. At night the jackals woke us up with their terrifying wails, very similar to sirens. Sheets on our beds always felt moist. Mosquito nets were very essential. Day in and day out tinned foods were served up in every disguise possible. Fresh fruit was in abundance.

Hospitals in India's Eastern Frontier were not like the fine buildings one sees at home. There were no lofty bright wards and only the essential equipment. The troops who were brought into hospital were in an appalling condition. They had jungle sores from head to toe and most suffered from severe attacks of malaria. The tragedy of those with typhus I could not make you believe. No one in this country could ever possibly believe that human beings could endure the appalling conditions and remain sane.

### **IN THE JUNGLE**

I have been through the jungle on the back of an elephant and have first hand impressions of what the boys had to go through. I took some of the boys who had had their legs amputated down to Calcutta by plane which took 3 ½ hours instead of 2 ½ days by train. I went on a 10 day pony trek to 14,800 feet on the way to Tibet, a most interesting travel. The yaks used to draw the water carts were docile looking animals and most attractive to look at. We went to the Haharagles temple at Gantook which has the most wonderful interior. There are dozens of jewel studded Buddhas of all sizes inside. I gently tapped the huge drum which used to call the Llamas to prayer once a year. From Assam. I was posted to a 1,000 bedded hospital where there was practically nothing apart from heat, dust and insects. We transferred the whole hospital to Rangoon but had to stay at Chitlagong for three months under appalling conditions. Bamboo bushes were falling to pieces and the rats were there in their hundreds.

Referring to the end of the hostilities and the reception of the prisoners of war, Miss McLennan said they arrived in their hundreds and soon they had 200 patients in every available space. They were in a pathetic state mentally and physically. It was with great reluctance I had to leave the Far East. Our work in Burma was a humble one but it gave us a chance of helping some of the grandest men we had ever met. The SS Empire Pride brought us home. It was a smallish trooper with 1500 on board, mostly released prisoners. Misfortune befell myself on the way home. I became a patient and was admitted to hospital at Chester", Mrs White proposed a vote of thanks to Miss McLennan...

*Linda Bankier*

## **FRIENDS AGM**

As we are not able to meet in person, the Friends will be conducting their AGM in the same way as last year. Papers have been sent out with this newsletter which



should be returned by Friday 19th March. Normally we hold a talk at this event and this will still take place this year but online. Linda Bankier will give a talk on **Friday 26th March** on “Archives Revealed – Unlocking Berwick’s Borough Archives. Please note this is not the same talk as the one given to Berwick History Society in January. It will concentrate more on the stories the project has revealed. The talk starts at 7pm and will be held on Zoom. It is open to both members and non members. If you wish to attend, e-mail [berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk) to receive the joining details. The AGM will be held at the end of the talk and will only last about 5 minutes confirming the results already submitted by post and online. We look forward to seeing members and welcoming anyone else interested in coming along.

*John Spiers, Secretary, FBDMA*

## MUSEUM NEWS

Following Lockdown #3 most of the team at all the Museums Northumberland sites have now been furloughed once again. The “working from home” situation is likely to continue in some form for some time yet, due to the necessity (for reasons of physical distancing) of having one person only within each office at any time. The Senior Management Team continues to meet twice a week via video link.

### **John Ellerman Project / Esmée Fairbairn Project**

We reached the transitional stage of the John Ellerman Foundation to the Esmée Fairbairn project in late November. Our temporary exhibition *Telling Northumberland’s Stories*, featuring county-wide collections highlights, remained in situ at Woodhorn Museum for the short period Woodhorn was able to reopen. Charlotte, our Project Curator, is currently putting the finishing touches to the final report of the John Ellerman project while laying the groundwork for the new project. We held our inaugural Collections Committee meeting for this new project, *Femmer to Firmer*, on 9th November.

### **Northumberland Folk exhibition**

The site-specific exhibition by the artist Jonny Hannah - “Northumberland Folk” - due to be opened in March, is likely to be postponed again. We hope to open the show in April, but we cannot be certain of a definite date as yet. Jonny continues to post updates on his Instagram site, and is constantly on the look out for interesting

Berwick stories to illustrate. He had worked on hanging his exhibitions at Morpeth and Hexham in November, and had planned to install at Berwick early in the New Year, but has had to cancel once again.

*Anne Moore*

## A LETTER TO KING GEORGE III

As a volunteer on the Twixt Thistle and Rose project during the lockdown, I have been working on the Guild Minute books from the 1760's which provide a fascinating insight into life in Berwick at this time and the working of the Guild.

In 1763 following the end of the Seven Years War, the Guild wrote to King George III to congratulate him on winning the war against the French in America. However many of Britain's American colonies were soon lost in the American War of Independence.

**The following is from the Guild Minute book dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 1763.**

“IN pursuance of an Order of last Guild, the Committee appointed to draw up an Address to his Majesty congratulating him on the happy conclusion of a safe honourable and advantageous peace having been this Day laid before the Guild the said Address, which being read and is approved of And it is ordered a Seal be affixed thereto and Recorded. AND that the Town Clerk Transmit the said Address to Mr.George Reavely the Corporation Solicitor and desire him to wait upon our Representatives in Parliament or such of them as are in London and Request them to present the same Address to his Majesty.”

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty

The humble Address of the Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough of Berwick upon Tweed in Guild Assembled.

Most Gracious Majesty

WE your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Mayor, Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough of Berwick upon Tweed in Guild Assembled, beg leave to present our most humble and sincere Acknowledgement to your Majesty, for concluding a peace so glorious to your Majesty and advantageous to your Subjects,

by securing so great an Addition to the Territories, Powers and Commerce of the British Empire.

OUR Experience of your Majesty's Royal Wisdom and Steady Regard to the true Interest of your Kingdom both in the Conduct of War and conclusion of peace, fills our Hearts with the Highest Veneration and most grateful Sentiments, and engage us to put our most earnest prayers to the King of Kings, that your Majesty May long continue to Reign in Power and Glory over a free happy and united people.

GIVEN on our Common Seal the Seventh Day of May, One thousand Seven hundred and Sixty three.

Source: *Berwick Archive ref BA-B1-18, 1760 – 1770.*

*Linda Gray, Chirnside History Group*

## PERCIVAL STOCKDALE

### **Durham County Advertiser, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1821**

*Anecdote: Percival Stockdale informs us in his memoirs that an old man, sexton of Berwick upon Tweed, possessed much of what is called native humour. One day, a Gentleman, a stranger, called to view the Church. The old man shewed it with great willingness – and the Gentleman, in order to remunerate him, pulled out his purse with the intention of giving him a shilling. Unfortunately he only had half a crown. Thinking this was too much, he put it into the old man's hand, saying at the same time, I will give you this if you will give me eighteen pence change. The old sexton slipped the money into his pocket – with "God forbid Sir, that I should do any such thing; for you know that Christ whipped the money-changers out of the Temple".*

### **Notes.**

Percival Stockdale, 1736 to 1811, was the son of Rev. Thomas Percival, Vicar of Branxton and perpetual Curacy of Cornhill. Educated at Alnwick and Berwick Grammar Schools, he was a writer, poet and reformer and after leaving Aberdeen University, joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, serving under Admiral Byng on HMS Revenge. He was ordained Deacon of the Church of England in 1759 by Thomas Sharp, Archdeacon of Northumberland. He took priests orders in 1780 and in 1783

he became Vicar of Lesbury with Longhoughton where he died in 1811. His Memoirs were published in 1809. He is buried at Cornhill.

Above information from Wikipedia.

His name also appears in the Guild Minute Book of Berwick on Tweed Corporation - in 1763 "The Mayor and Bailiffs take up on Interest under the Corporations Bond, £300 from the Rev. Mr. Percival Stockdale". However in September 1765, "This day the Town Clerk signified to the Guild that Mr. Percival Stockdale was desirous that the Three hundred Pounds belonging to him in the Corporations Hands upon Bond should be paid and the Town Clerk having acquainted the Guild that John Wilkie of Foulden Esquire was willing to lend the Corporation Three hundred Pounds it is ordered that the same be taken upon Bond and that the Corporation's Seal be affixed thereto and that the same Sum be paid over to Mr. Stockdale in discharge of his Bond" **Source** BA.B1.18 Guild Minute Book pp. 233 and 328.

It looks as though the Corporation needed to borrow money to survive!!

*Maureen Charlton*

## THE BOWSDEN CURERS OF MADNESS

Eighteenth century Bowsden was fortunate to have within its midst Elenor Bell, a long serving midwife and the owner of a recipe for curing madness! With the help of her son John, a carpenter in Bowsden, she managed to cure people with maniacal symptoms in the village and the surrounding area.

A manuscript dated 26 January 1789, currently for sale for £1,500 by Michael Kemp, Bookseller, provides the details:

*The following is a List of persons cured of Maniacal Symptoms by John Bell Carpenter at Bowsden Northumberland & his late mother who was midwife in that village for thirty three years.*

1. The Parsons Son of Bamborough	14. Jane Atkinson Holburn	27. W[illia]m Ainsley Yetholm
2. Ann Selby Holy Island	15. Mary Pigdon Glangton	28. Ann Young Crook House
3. Herds Son Scrammerston	16. Robert Hill Anncroft	29. Jane Newall Tweedmouth
4. Mary Hutton	17. Robert Hill Bowsden	30. Eleanora Rutherford

Doddington		Tweedmouth
5. James Lindsay Alnwick	18. One at Hunting hall	31. Jane Allan, Spittle
6. William Sinclair	19. One at Newham	32. John Sharp Warnsford
7. Mr Dodds Sister Berwick	20. One at Melrose	33. One in Fife shire
8. Collops Barber ditto [Berwick]	21. Mrs Pringle Trowburn	34. Mrs Henderson Charlton
9. Tho[ma]s Logans daughter Wooler	22. James Dixon Bowsden	35. Miss Moscrop
10. Jane Burn, Broomridge	23. John Wake Bowsden	36. Miss Brown
11. Eleonore Pringle Fenton	24. Eliz[abeth] Laing Tweedmouth	37. Mr. McDougall
12. Ann Angus Horncliff	25. Aimy Wallace Yetholm	
13. Mary Pattison Kimmerston	26. Marg[are]t Hall Kirkyetholm	

*The above is attested by me John Bell, Berwick 26<sup>th</sup> Jan[uar]y 1789*

On the adjoining page:

*This is to certify that John Bell of Bowsden in the County of Northumberland has been employed by me for some years as a carpenter and I consider him to be a sober honest man. He holds a recipe for the curing of madness which sometime ago I understand belonged to a Lady Clinton and I know no reason to doubt of its being a very good one.*

*Bowsden Febr[uar]y 9<sup>th</sup> 1789*

*Tho[ma]s Pinkerton*

How much of the above document can be verified? It is presumed that the John Bell who signed the document is the same as the John Bell who lived in Bowsden.

John's mother, Elenor Bell, was indeed a midwife in Bowsden. She died on 20 July 1784, aged 73, having dictated her will the day before her death, in front of witnesses William Bell and William Smith. She left all her personal estate to John, her sole executor, subject to a number of monetary bequests to her daughters and grandchildren. There was no mention of the recipe. She made her mark instead of writing her name, probably due to poor health rather than a lack of education. Despite the bequests to her daughters being due within twelve months of her death, the will was not proved until 15 January 1790. Elenor was buried at Lowick and John erected a headstone in memory of her.



This stone was erected by JOHN BELL in Bowsdon in memory of his mother ELENOR BELL a midwife in Bowsdon who died July 20<sup>th</sup> 178?4 aged 73 years.

December 2020

John's death is not recorded on this headstone but he may be the John Bell, a Joiner in Bowsden, who died in 1807, aged 66, and was buried at Lowick according to the Bishops Transcripts. On the rear of the stone, facing the church, is written *In memory of JOSEPH BELL who died at Bowsdon 9<sup>th</sup> March 1852 aged 79 years. JANE BELL his wife died at Yeavinger 29<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1872 aged 88 years.* Joseph was possibly John's son.

Despite Bell being a common surname in Bowsden and Barmoor, by the early 1700s, it has not been possible to find Elenor's marriage nor establish how she was related to the other Bell families.

Thomas Pinkerton of Bowsden, who gave the character reference, was a member of the Pinkerton family of Reedsford, Kirknewton. He leased Bowsden Hall and Bowsden Moor Farms from Mr Carr of Elyhaugh, near Felton and Hunting Hall Farm from the Haggerston family at Ellingham. In his will dated 1797 and proved in 1802, Thomas left the leases to his sons, James and William. One of his witnesses and executors was James Bell of Woodside.

It is not known how and when Elenor acquired the recipe nor who Lady Clinton was. What did it consist of and what were the symptoms that it aimed to cure? Did the Bells travel to the patients or did the latter send for the remedy? The range of parishes covered is quite striking. Three people were cured in Bowsden but no-one

in Lowick, other than one case at Hunting Hall. Did the residents of Lowick have no use for such a cure or did they consult someone else?

Dating the cures is problematic as the surnames in the list are either too common or the entry not detailed enough, but a John Wake of Bowsden was buried at Kylee in October 1780 and a James Dixon of Bowsden was buried at Ford in August 1786. A Dispensary at Bamburgh Castle opened in 1772, as a charitable institution set up to treat the poor. In 1778, 29 cases of psychological or mental disorders were treated there. Would Elenor have been consulted by the Parson's son, number one on the list, after 1772? We may never know! The strangest name is *Collops Barber* of Berwick. Does anyone have any idea of who this could be or if a nickname what it might mean?

### Sources

<https://www.michaelkemp.co.uk/products/author/BELL;>

<http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/> northeastern inheritance database Elenor Bell, 1784; Thomas Pinkerton, 1792

*Newcastle Courant* 3 May 1800; Lowick, Ford and Kylee Burial Bishop's Transcripts; <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

Vickers, Kenneth, *A History of Northumberland v11*, (1922) pp 203 – 204, Pinkerton family tree.

The Bell headstone inscription, survey carried out by Volunteers of the Archives in 2016

Withey, Alun, *Social History of Medicine* Vol. 29, No. 3 pp. 467–489 *Medicine and Charity in Eighteenth-century, Northumberland: The Early Years of the Bamburgh Castle Dispensary and Surgery, c. 1772–1802*

*Julie Gibbs*

## BERWICK STATION REFRESHMENT ROOMS

An interesting account of Berwick's Station Refreshment Rooms has been brought to my attention by Ralph Holmes, for which I am grateful.

The account is to be found in the July edition of the 1904 *Berwickshire News*. It relates to the death of Christopher Hopper, for a number of years proprietor of Berwick Station Refreshment Rooms who served 'Hoppers Pies' – '*a monster four-pen'orth of appetising flavour*', Tweed salmon ( which he also despatched around the country and abroad ) , his own blended Scotch whisky and his quality cigars which he supplied to a number of households in the Borders.

During his long regime at the Refreshment Rooms, '*a well known coterie used to meet every Saturday night*', known as the 'House of Lords' and was chiefly composed of members of the Corporation. ( Hopper, himself, was a former Town Councillor and was, apparently, one of the oldest Freemasons 'on the Borderland' ).'  
*In appearance deceased was a man of fine physique, well groomed, and in dress careful to a nicety*'.

Hopper's reign in the Refreshment Rooms at Berwick Station had come to an end, prior to his death, with the advent of '*dining-car trains of the East Coast Route – trains which, in great measure, told severely on the most remunerative department of the Railway Refreshment Rooms trade*'.

Indeed in June 1906, the management of the Refreshment Rooms were taken over by the North British Railway Company ( later the L.N.E.R. ) and in April 1956 the Rooms were let out by tender by the then British Railways.

Incidentally, Christopher Hopper's son, also a Christopher Hopper ( who had been wounded in the South African Wars ) became landlord of the Hen and Chickens in Sandgate.

*The Refreshment Rooms are listed in Berwick's Register of Licenses, 1903 -1946, authorising the trade in alcohol. It would be interesting to know when the refreshment rooms closed, and stopped serving alcohol, and indeed where they were on the station.*

*Bob Steward*

## **MIDCALF THE TROMPETTER**

Berwick's early Guild minutes can be rather repetitive. However, every now and then an entry stands out. In B1/1 f.32v, among the regular records of shop rents and payments for sergeants' gowns, I came across this from May 1551.

Item, for money geven to midcalf my lord marques trompetter at mr maiors comandemente -- vj s viij d.

Mentions of music are so rare at this date that I thought I would explore a little further.

'My Lord Marques' was Henry Grey, Marquess of Dorset, who for a few months in 1551 was Lord Warden of the Marches. He hated being in the north and was not impressed by his only visit to Berwick, reporting to William Cecil 'I have written for



money to relieve the poor garrisons here on their lamentable complaints. I long to hear from you, as they that inhabit hell would gladly hear how they do that be in heaven' (Green 1870, 73). By October he had been created Duke of Suffolk and immediately relinquished his post as Lord Warden.

Lord Wardens were entitled, as representatives of the Crown, to have a trumpeter or 'trumpet' alongside the soldiers in their retinue. They would, for example, play a fanfare when entering a town or city. Besides this, however, trumpeters were important as trusted messengers or envoys who could expect safe passage in enemy territory. Midcalf continued in his post under the next Lord Warden and in 1552 his name appears in the State Papers when Queen Mary of Guise acknowledged letters delivered to her by the English trumpet "namyt Midcalf" (Bain 1898, 700)

Although the Berwick garrison should have included a trumpeter this was not always the case; in 1560, for example, the Governor 'was astonished that such a town as Berwick should be without a trumpet to sound for proclamations, for horsemen and to send messages in time of war' (Stevenson 1865, 735).

Going back to the original Guild Book entry, the Mayor paid Midcalf 6s. 8d., equivalent to the weekly wage of a skilled tradesman. What was this for? It seems unlikely that the town would need him as a messenger. I like to imagine him playing a fanfare as the Marquess arrived for a Mayoral banquet, with possibly a short voluntary while the tables were cleared. We could speculate that the garrison had no trumpeter at the time, or maybe the Mayor just wanted to hear the instrument played really well for a change. Whatever the reason, Midcalf the trompetter's visit is one of the many little entries which suddenly bring our Guild books to life.

BAIN, J. (ed.) 1898. *Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547-1603 Vol. 1: 1547-1563*, Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House.

GREEN, M. A. E. (ed.) 1870. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1601-1603 with Addenda 1547-1565*, London: Longman & Co.

STEVENSON, J. (ed.) 1865. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth, 1560-1561, Volume 3*, London: Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer.

*Catherine Kent*

# BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS

**Berwick Advertiser, 5 July 1872**

## NEW MASONIC BUILDINGS

We are informed that with the object of giving *eclat* to the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of their new buildings the brethren of St, David's Lodge of Freemasons have resolved to ask the Prince of Wales, Past Master of the Grand Lodge of England, to lay the stone either when en route to the shooting next month, or when returning afterwards in the month following. Should His Royal Highness accede to the request the occasion will doubtless be one of great public festivity in Berwick. The lodge is at present in a most flourishing position, and the membership is being greatly increased.

**Berwick Advertiser, 12 July 1872**

## SEVERAL COMPLAINTS

Several complaints have been made respecting the furious driving in the evenings of the fishmonger's carts with fish to the station, and we learn that one or two narrow escapes of children being run over have occurred. Those in charge of these carts might be the better of a warning from the police.

**Berwick Advertiser, 19 July 1872**

## TWEEDMOUTH SERIOUS FIRE

About one o'clock on Monday morning a fire was discovered to be raging in the shop of Mr McIntyre, chemist, Bridge End, Tweedmouth, and an alarm having been raised the conflagration was subdued before any serious damage was done to the property. As it is, however, considerable havoc has been made among the goods in the shop. The origin of the fire is, as usual, shrouded in mystery. Mr McIntyre declares that at ten o'clock on Sunday evening, at which hour he left the shop, everything was all right. Shortly after he retired to bed, and about one o'clock Mrs McIntyre was awakened by hearing a crackling sound in the shop. An inspection was immediately made by Mr and Mrs McIntyre when the fire was discovered. The

borough fire engines were sent for, and soon on the spot, but in the interval the fire had been got under. It is fortunate that the fire was noticed in its earliest stage, otherwise the consequences might have been far more serious than they have proved to be. In the vicinity where the flames raged (the shop window) were a large quantity of inflammable materials, consisting of varnish, oils, and Lucifer matches, but fortunately the fire did not reach them. The loss is covered by the Sun and Scottish Provincial Fire Insurance Office.

**Berwick Advertiser, 19 July 1872**

YESTERDAY

Yesterday the children attending the Mission School in the Greenses were treated to an excursion to Twizel. They marched to the Berwick station in procession, carrying in front a beautiful blue silk banner, while in the rear several other very fine flags were borne. Proceeding by train to Twizel station they alighted, and spent a very happy afternoon- the weather being lovely- in amusing themselves at will in that romantic quarter. In the evening they returned home full of mirth.

*Carole Pringle*