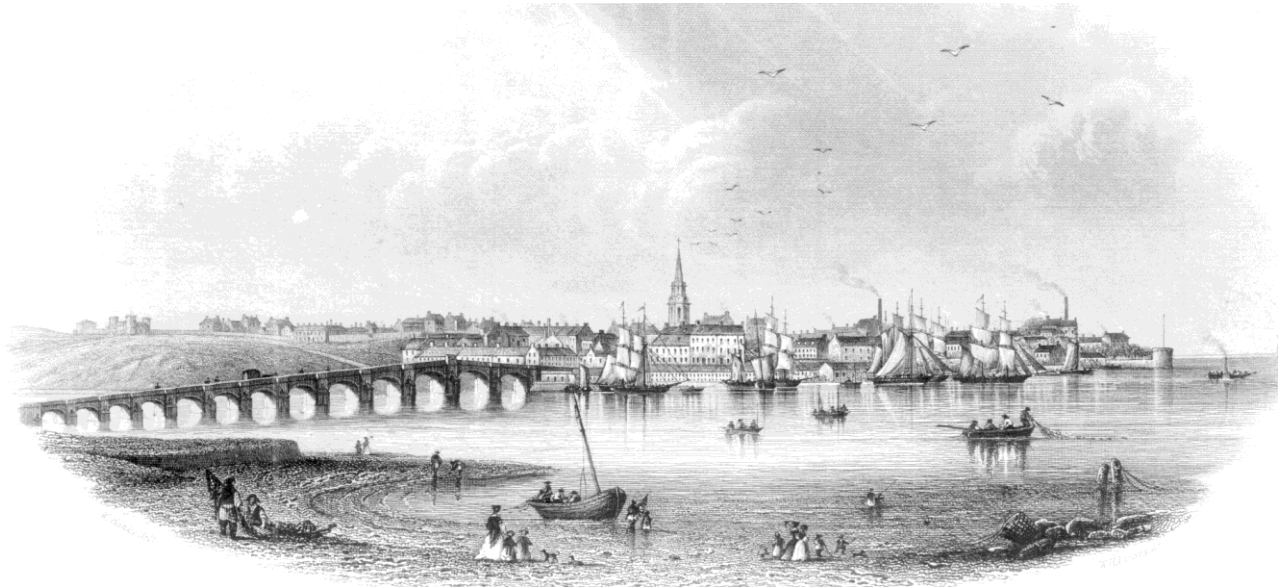


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 108–JUNE 2021

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 29th May – Sunday 10th October  
*Portrait of a Town* – Photo Centre exhibition in The Granary Gallery curated by Cameron Robertson. Open Tuesdays – Sundays 11-4. At the moment you need to book via Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/portrait-of-a-town-tickets-154797574713> .

Friday 10th – Sunday 19th September  
Berwick Heritage Open Days. See our website and next newsletter for further details – [www.berwickhods.org.uk](http://www.berwickhods.org.uk)

## **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**

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

Wednesday 16th June 2021

Our River Stories of the Tweed: Martha  
Andrews

### **GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Glendale Local History Society will have a stall at the Farmers' Market in Wooler Bus Station on 18th July 2021. Visit us and catch up on our programme for next year and look at our new publications.

### **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP**

After our summer break the next Zoom talk will take place on Saturday 11th September at 10am, topic to be decided. We expect to resume live meetings at our usual venue of Bell View in Belford early in 2022.

### **BERWICK EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION LECTURES**

All lectures are via Zoom starting at 10am and can be booked via Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/berwick-educational-association-13564670646> .

There is a charge of £4.00 per lecture.

Tuesday 15th June 2021

Crime and Punishment in the Berwick Archives:  
Linda Bankier

Tuesday 22nd June

Berwick's Guild of Freemen and  
Administration of the town prior to 1835 :  
Linda Bankier

Tuesday 29th June

Public Health and Housing in Berwick :  
Linda Bankier

## **YETHOLM HISTORY SOCIETY EXHIBITION**

Sunday 13th – Sunday 20th June 2021

Exhibition- Life on a Cheviot Farm, 1911-  
1947, The Storie diaries of Cocklawfoot.  
Open 10am - 4pm in the Old Mission  
Hall, Town Yetholm

## **ARCHIVES NEWS**

It seems a long time since I last wrote an update for the newsletter and a lot has happened in between, one way and another in the Record Office with lockdown. This is a quick synopsis of what we have been involved in.

After closing the Office at Christmas, we were finally able to reopen to the public again on Wednesday 14 April. We still have our curtailed hours (Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 to 12.30 and 2 to 4.30), our COVID secure measures in place, limited numbers, advance bookings and quarantining of documents but it has been great to welcome people back and let you do your research again. At the moment we are not sure how long we will continue to operate in this way but we will give you plenty of notice if it is going to change. We're just so pleased that you are able to come in again.

As many of you will know, our Project Archivist, Teresa Maley, completed her cataloguing work on the Twixt Thistle and Rose Project at the end of November and since then we have been doing checking work and getting ready to launch the online electronic catalogue for the project. This initial online catalogue was launched on the Northumberland Archives website at the end of February, completing the first part of our project. Over 9,500 entries have been added to CALM which can be accessed on <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/catalogue/> . To see what is there, enter BA\* into the RefNo field of the advanced search section. There is plenty to browse and we have now started to add in the Volunteers work to this as well. So far we have added in some police posters; Medical Officer of Health reports; freemen baptisms and 18<sup>th</sup> century parchment deeds. This, as well as outreach work, will be an ongoing task for us for many months to come and will help to make the Berwick Borough Archives collection more accessible. To start the ball rolling with promotion of the collection, we held an online mini conference at the beginning of March. This was very successful and over 100 people attended from all over this country as well as some from overseas. Some of the volunteers also took part, presenting their own research on cowkeepers; PC John Carr; parchment deeds; the Guild books and the Berwick Burial Grant books. Our volunteers continue to help with the project. Until recently, this has mainly been online but some have started to come back into the Record Office on our open days. We have also started an online remote volunteering project cataloguing 19<sup>th</sup> century conviction records – see later for further details. In relation to the project, I have given numerous talks over the past couple of months to a variety of groups including a Newcastle University Family History Conference; the Friends AGM and the North Northumberland Genealogy Group. I have also given talks on Irregular Border Marriages and Mrs Adams, Berwick's first woman Mayor as part of the Northumberland Archives series of online lectures and a talk on the use of Archives for Creative Writing to a Borders online Creative Writing Group. My final talk was part of our launch event for the Photo Centre exhibition. Online talks are the way to go at the moment but it will be good when I can give them in person again.

One of my main preoccupations over the past couple of months has been with the Photo Centre collection. After setting various dates but been hampered by circumstances, the *Portrait of a Town* exhibition, curated by Cameron Robertson, finally opened on 29<sup>th</sup> May and will run until 10<sup>th</sup> October. It has been wonderful to see this come to fruition and be the summer exhibition in The Granary Gallery. The exhibition is a series of framed images from the collection as well as about 60 digital images projected onto the wall. The latter will be changed every month to illustrate the extent of the collection and to encourage people to come back. A poster is

attached and it is well worth visiting if you are in Berwick. In addition to the exhibition, I have been working with Val Tobias on an education project. Jo Coates, has recorded two photography workshops for us and we are encouraging local schools to take part in a photographic competition. You can find the workshops on the Photo Centre website – [www.photocentreberwick.co.uk](http://www.photocentreberwick.co.uk) - in the Learning section and they are aimed at anyone with an interest in photography. You can also view images from the collection and a preview trailer for the exhibition on the website. We're also on social media and so, do follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A lot of this project has only been possible thanks to the Friends receiving a grant from the Lough Fund of the Community Foundation.

In late 2020, Northumberland Archives received a grant from the National Lottery Covid Recovery Fund and I have been involved in various strands of this work. I have been working on a project which we are running with the November Club. They have created a film on Hannah Glasse who had Northumbrian connections and published an 18<sup>th</sup> century cookery book. To compliment the film, I have helped create some educational family learning content for LEARN – our digital education platform. We've identified documents relating to cookery from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and created various activities for families or those generally interested in the topic. Have a look at <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/learn/hg/learn-topic-hannah-glasse/> to see what we have created.

Our initial work on LEARN has now been completed and Berwick content can be found in all the sections. To build on this, we will also be creating a photography section based on the Photo Centre collection.

Finally, work has started on planning Berwick Heritage Open Days 2021 which will be held between 10 and 19<sup>th</sup> September. This year we will be running a blended event – a mixture of online and in person. At the moment, it's still not clear what will be feasible in opening buildings but we need to plan anyway. This is a very important year for us as it will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Berwick taking part in the forerunner event – Doors Open – and we were also the first place in England to do so. One of our plans is to highlight Bridge Street and its history. See my later article about looking for volunteers. We'll include our full programme in the next newsletter.

Well I'd better stop. There is always a job to do in the Record Office and Carole, Martha and I are never short of work!

*Linda Bankier*

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

## BERWICK HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

As part of Berwick Heritage Open Days (HODS) we want to highlight Bridge Street in Berwick and its past and present history. We need help to do this and there are various ways the Friends can assist us.

- Have you any information on businesses or people who lived in Bridge Street in the past? We would like to create a timeline for the properties there but this is a huge task. If you have come across anything in your own research and would like to share it with us, please contact me on [lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk) or Catherine Kent on [ck@robinkent.co.uk](mailto:ck@robinkent.co.uk)
- Would you be interested in doing some research on the properties or people who lived there? We want to check newspapers and electoral registers. This can be done either at home or in the Record Office. Just contact me.

If anyone would like to help Berwick HODS in September, we're always looking for helpers, particularly for the weekend 17 – 19 September.

## TWIXT THISTLE AND ROSE ONLINE CONVICTIONS PROJECT

As an experiment, we are running this online project to catalogue 19<sup>th</sup> century conviction papers which relate to the Petty Sessions Court. All the work is done online and doesn't require you to visit the Office. If you would be interested in helping or finding out more, please just get in touch and I'll explain what is involved.

# BERWICK BRIDGE

Berwick Bridge or The Old Bridge as it is often known by locals has been shut for repair for a number of months now. It will reopen shortly, close to the 410<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work starting on its construction on 19 June 1611. I thought I would look in the newspapers to see what stories were connected with the Bridge in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By this time, there had been petitions to the Council for the bridge to be widened or to be replaced with a structure which could meet the demands of traffic at that time. Fortunately for us, the bridge remained in situ and the Royal

Tweed Bridge was constructed and opened in 1928 to cope with traffic passing from north to south on the main thoroughfare between England and Scotland.

## **BERWICKSHIRE NEWS 9 JUNE 1908**

### **ROUNDBABOUTS ON BERWICK BRIDGE**

Wm Harwood, traction engine driver, Newcastle was charged with obstructing the free passage of the old Bridge on 28<sup>th</sup> May. Defendant did not appear.

The Chief Constable said that the defendant had been employed as driver of the traction engine used by Messers Murphy of South Shields to convey his roundabouts from place to place. Defendant took his engine onto the Bridge, and omitted to send a flagman across to the other end, so that a serious block in the traffic ensued.

Louis Holmes, fish merchant, Berwick, said that on the day in question about one o'clock he was driving over to Tweedmouth Station with some ice, and when he had gone about 30 yards along the bridge he saw a flagman holding up his hand. He went on and others come up from the Berwick side, and some unparliamentary language was used. Witness refused to go back as he said he was in the right. Mr Murphy said he would give him a punch in the eye but did not attempt anything of the kind. He had ultimately to turn back.

In reply to Captain Norman, the Chief Constable said that a flagman was supposed to go right along to the end of the Bridge. Wm Speddy, lorryman gave similar evidence and said that he had to turn back with a railway lorry and a heavy load of furniture.. George Neilson, Tweedmouth said that he was standing at the door of the blacksmith's shop at the Tweedmouth Bridge End. The traction engine flagman had only gone along the Bridge as far as the second lamp when the engine went on the Bridge. The Chief Constable said that last year Murphy's were cautioned for a similar offence. Fined 15s. 6d costs.

*Note : the roundabouts were probably being taken across to Berwick for the rides on the Parade as part of the May Fair.*

## **BERWICKSHIRE NEWS, 7 JULY 1908**

A Sheep's Dive from Berwick Bridge Into the Tweed – One of a flock of sheep being driven south across Berwick Bridge, on Monday night for Mr Robt, Brown, butcher of Tweedmouth and Spittal became frightened at a passing machine and suddenly making into one of the recesses of the structure, leaped up the bridge parapet and dived right into the Tweed some 30 feet below. Salmon net fishers busy in the river

at the time made to the rescue in their boat. On their approach the sheep turned and swam away from them, ultimately seeking refuge on one of the bridge buttresses where it was captured none the worse, and proceeded on the journey.

#### **BERWICKSHIRE NEWS 4 MAY 1909**

The Perils of Berwick Bridge – The danger of traffic on The Old Border Bridge at Berwick which was built in James the First Reign was again manifested on Friday when Thomas Lockhart, a boy of twelve, residing in Tweedmouth was knocked down by a passing motor car which passed over his legs. He was taken to Berwick Infirmary.

#### **BERWICK ADVERTISER, 20 AUGUST 1909**

Furious Driving – Henry Morrison, apprentice butcher, Berwick was charged with furious driving a horse and trap on Berwick Bridge on the 10<sup>th</sup> August. PC McRobb proved the case, stating that there was considerable traffic on the Bridge and defendant drove very recklessly. The driver of a wagonette had to pull his horses up suddenly to prevent a collision. Defendant was trying to overtake another butcher's cart, it being a race between them. Defendant denied the charge. PC McRobb (recalled) said the horse was going at between twelve and fourteen miles an hour. Mr Morrison – there is not a horse in Berwick that could do that. PC McRobb in answer to the Chief Constable said he had never done anything else but drive horses before joining the Force. The animal was going at twelve miles an hour he should say. The Magistrates returned and on their return, The Mayor said that the fine would be one of 5s with costs remitted.

*Linda Bankier*

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Berwick Museum & Art Gallery opened to the public on May 17th, having installed plenty of Covid signage and sanitiser stations. Before reopening, much time was spent on devising ways of being able to do so while making sure that our staff and visitors are safe; for example, shielding the welcome desk with Perspex screening, organising one way circulation routes, and having separate entrances and exits to the building. The other Barracks attractions have not all opened as yet – we hear that the KOSB Museum will open very soon. Our opening times are Wednesday-



Saturday, 0100-1600, though we hope to be able to open for seven days for the school summer vacation.

The artist Jonny Hannah has now installed his quirky and very colourful exhibitions at all four Museums Northumberland sites. Northumberland Folk has been inspired by a host of local folklore and tales of notable residents Jonny discovered during his researches over the past year or so. One of the results of the long lockdown period has been that Jonny has come up with many more pieces of artwork, not all of which have fitted into their intended destinations! The artworks are supplemented by a display of many of the collections items which Jonny took his inspiration from; Cowes cockles, Berwick weights and measures and a model stage set of the Maltings production of Cabaret to mention a few. A dedicated part of the MN website has just gone live, showing all of the works in great detail, as well as some artist videos and an online shop. The artworks are for sale, and we have already sold quite a few. We will be retaining some of the work for the Northumberland collections.

Charlie, the Ellerman Project Curator, has been writing up some of the research into the more interesting objects she has rediscovered in the course of the project, using this for short articles in the "Object in Focus" pages on the MN website - ([www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.museumsnorthumberland.org.uk)). Interesting, unusual and diverse items from Berwick written up recently include a pair of glasses for viewing the solar eclipse, an ornate 19<sup>th</sup> century snuff box from Tweedmouth and a tiddly winks game. We have more lined up, including an 18<sup>th</sup> century medicinal recipe book with some very novel cures, a silk mandarin dragon robe and some sweet making moulds.

We recently started a new 30 month Collections project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Fund. Called "Femmer to Firmer" this will include a Trust wide collections review of what we already have in the collections and will extend an invitation to interested members of the public to take part in community panels, to help decide the direction of our future collecting practises, leading to a new Trust-wide Collecting Policy. We also welcomed our volunteers back on site last week.

We were recently presented with a beautiful wedding dress dating back to the Second World War. The original owner of the dress, Margaret Morgan, married James Routledge in 1944. James was an early member of the Parachute Regiment, so it is easy to figure out where the silk for the dress came from. Apparently, when Margaret tried the dress on for the wedding she realised that on its own it was 'see through' so had to rush around to find something she could wear

under it! It is a lovely thing, and a very welcome addition to the collections at Berwick.

We look forward to seeing you all again as soon as possible, so do call in – we would be delighted to meet you.

*Anne Moore, Keeper of Collections*

## **AMERICAN CHEESE, SHINTY & NUMEROUS DOGS, 1873 - 1874**

### **Found in the Berwick Borough Superintendent of Police's General Scroll Book**

Scroll books were used by the police officers to record complaints and crimes, some minor in nature. Like many of the police records, they provide a wealth of detail on the inhabitants of Berwick and District. Entries might include the name[s] of the complainant[s] and/or the accused, the road or area in which they lived or where the incident occurred, occupation and the nature of the complaint. Not surprisingly, items of clothing, money and jewellery were regularly lost or stolen and sometimes handed in. If recovered or claimed, this was noted in the Remarks column.

There is so much of interest that selecting a few entries is quite a difficult task; a random selection follows.

In September 1873 PC Barclay reported that a blue bathing gown had been stolen from a back door in Spittal, at about 8pm, the property of Mrs Dodds, Bowden, St Boswells. Would the theft of Mrs Dodds bathing gown have spoilt her visit to Spittal or would she have had more than one with her? How easy was it to get a replacement in Spittal or Berwick? According to the 1871 Bowden census, there were two Mrs Dodds, both called Margaret: one a 68 year old widow and the other, aged 33, living in the Bowden School House with her husband John, school teacher and landowner. Was it more likely to have been the younger Mrs Dodds?

In February 1874 Mr Matherhead [Weatherhead], a grocer in Bridge Street, complained about a box containing half of an American Cheese and a quantity of sweets going missing. It had been sent to the Horndean Carrier's cart on Saturday 14 February but had never arrived at the address on the box: Mrs ROBERTSON, Horndean. Fortunately for all concerned it was found at Eyemouth.

American cheese exports to the United Kingdom jumped from 2,300 tons in 1859 to more than 22,700 tons in 1863, doubling in volume by 1874 and represented more than a quarter of the English market!

Occasionally, the police kept an eye on a property while the owner was away from home, including in April 1874, Thomas Johnston's yard while he was in prison. There was a quantity of brass there which they were worried might be stolen. This was possibly Boarding School Yard occupied by Thomas Johnston, the Brass Founder.

In the same month, complaints were made about boys playing *shintie* [shinty- a game played with sticks and a ball] in the streets and on the Parade, breaking windows in the process. Superintendent John Garden told his officers to put a stop to it by taking away their sticks. A couple of weeks later, the Town Clerk made a similar complaint about the boys playing the game in Castlegate and on the Railway Bridge during the evenings. He had seen a lady struck with a stone which was being used instead of a ball. This time the Superintendent instructed the Sergeant to assist PC Gregson, the officer on night duty in that area, to stop the boys. They managed to apprehend two or three of them and bound them over to appear before the magistrates.

Dogs feature regularly: stolen, lost or reported for biting humans or for savaging sheep. They include numerous terrier breeds and the occasional collie, setter, pointer and retriever, with names such as Kame, Prince, Sniddar, Brabb, Tartar, Tip, Bob and Spring. A sky blue Dandie Dinmont terrier, called Wasp, was owned by Dr Cahill and a yellowish one, called Dick, by Mr Alder, Spirit Dealer of Hide Hill. Usually, a detailed description was included but not always, a *large brown dog* was lost from the *Berwicks* [Barracks]. It was found, as were some of the others with a reward being offered very rarely.

In May 1874 the Superintendent instructed the officers to pay particular attention to stray dogs on the streets. Any showing signs of being dangerous were to be taken into possession and locked up, usually in the cells, as authorised by the Dog Act 1871. Shortly after, a second instruction appeared: *In future the Police when on duty will carry no sticks but their Baton!*

Continuing with the dog theme, a brown dog skin jacket was stolen from a room in Albert Place, Spittal, in July 1874. It was described as loose made, lined in the back with red flannel and knitted in the front, with silks fastened by three hoops in the breast, the property of Mrs Scott, Crookham. Mrs Ann Scott, aged about 38, lived in

the Bakers Shop with her husband, James, a baker, and two servants; one a baker and the other a baker's apprentice. She would have been able to purchase a real dog skin jacket at wholesale prices from *Harker, Junior*, at 1 Northumberland Street, Newcastle, and possibly from a shop closer to home. No doubt much to her relief, the jacket was returned to her.

This volume and the remaining Scroll Books are well worth a read for anyone interested in social history.

**Sources:**

*BRO: BA/C/PO/1/3 [M2/3] Berwick Constabulary Superintendents General Scroll Book 1873 – 1875 Morpeth Herald, 25 April 1874; 1871 Berwick Census; 1871 Bowden Census, 1871 Crookham Census*

*Blundel, Richard and Tregear, Angela (2006). From artisans to “factories”: the interpenetration of craft and industry in English cheese-making, c1650-1950. Enterprise & Society, 7(4) pp. 705–739. [http://oro.open.ac.uk/29132/1/Blundel\\_and\\_Tregear\\_2006\\_-\\_EandS\\_article.pdf](http://oro.open.ac.uk/29132/1/Blundel_and_Tregear_2006_-_EandS_article.pdf)*

*Julie Gibbs*

## THE ARMY AND BERWICK PUBS

This year will be the tercentenary of **Berwick's Barracks** which opened to receive the first troops in 1721. The large number of pubs, once existing in Berwick, is probably due to their use by soldiers as somewhere to go to relieve the boredom of barrack life. In Berwick itself (not including Tweedmouth and Spittal ) in 1799 there were supposed to be around 59 public houses and 3 or 4 principal coaching inns. In 1895 this number had been reduced to 56 and in 1915 down to 40.

It was said that, at one time, the majority of the pubs were located around the Barracks, ie along Wallace Green, the Parade and Church Street where, altogether, there were 15 or 16 such establishments – reduced to 6 in 1895. Four of the pubs in the Parade and Wallace Green area, now long gone, reflected the near- by military in their names: the Recruiting Sergeant, the Highlander/man., General Abercromby, and the Duke of York.

( In addition of course, pubs, beer houses, and taverns would be frequented by other sectors of the community e.g. the cattle and market traders, the sea faring and fishing community, mail coach passengers and carriers travelling the Great North

Road and latterly railway workers – each would have had their favourite drinking haunts.)

In the last days of the Barracks, and in particular prior to January 1964 when the last soldiers vacated the building (the K.O.S.B. and the Royal Scots), the following pubs were geared to serving the military – often segregated by different ranks.

From 1945 until 1985 the landlord of the **Kings Head Inn**, Church Street, was Johnny Malone, making him at the time ' *the town's longest serving publican*'. On his retirement, Johnny Malone is reported as saying that the boom years for the King's Head were the 1950s as ' *since the Barracks closed, trade has dropped off - - - Unofficially, this used to be the Corporals' Mess. Most of the N.C.O.s used to meet here, so all the other soldiers used to stay clear* '. The pub is listed in Bulmer's 1887 directory.

Interestingly Johnny Malone's father (Matthew Joseph) left the Kings Head in 1945 to run the **Old Angel Inn** in Marygate, another pub which had close connections with the military. Indeed, in November 1962, the town's magistrates were warning about ' *drunken sprees from the Old Angel*' by soldiers from the Barracks. The demands of the conscripted Army lads may have been responsible for the Old Angel Inn being the first pub in Berwick to have a juke box, in 1960. The pub, demolished in 1983, is listed in Pigot's 1822 Directory and Whellans 1855 Directory

Another pub which suffered from the decline of a military presence in the town, was the **Fishers' Arms** in Low Greens. Originally two, single storey fishermens' cottages, joined together, to form a public house, it was rebuilt in 1907 in its present form. When there had been a big army camp at Magdalene Fields, it had been a very busy pub, but since the end of World War II, it had been ' *dying slowly*' and was not economical; hence Berwick Breweries proposed its closure in 1960. It is now a private house. It is listed in Whellan's 1855 directory.

The Berwick pub which still advertises its links with Berwick's military past, is the **Brewers Arms**, Marygate (opposite the former Old Angel Inn). Keeping the landlord connections between army pubs, Alfred Kirby, who was landlord of the Brewers Arms from 1942 to 1953, previously had been landlord of the Old Angel Inn, across the road. Possibly the oldest of these pubs, it is also listed in Pigot's 1822 Directory and Whellans 1855 Directory,( and so pre-dates the present building\_). In a published 1894 Descriptive Account of Berwick, the present site, and adjoining buildings included wine and spirit stores and a blending and bottling business. A

notice on the front of the pub now declares that it is known as the **Heavy Battery** by the locals, in acknowledgement of Berwick being a garrison town. From the 1960s, perhaps in competition with the Old Angel and its juke box, the pub entertained regular sessions of live 'pop' groups, such as the Battery Twisters, in its upstairs dance floor.

One mustn't forget the two army venues in Berwick which held dances and temporary licensed bars for guests. These were the **Barracks Gymnasium** which operated in the 1960s e.g. for Berwick Young Farmers and the **Drill (Artillery) Hall**, Ravensdowne. This latter venue hosted the Territorial Ball from 1909, until, certainly, 1958. In the 1950s, through to the 1960s Berwick Police held their annual Police Balls there; these were said to be ' *the highlight of the social scene in the Borough*. In 1961, the Advertiser reported a fight over spilled drink at the bar there, so the venue was clearly licensed.

*Bob Steward*

## MEANING OF COLLOPS

**Newsletter Edition 107, February 2021**

In an article entitled *The Bowsden Curers of Madness*, one of those supposedly cured of madness was *Collops* Barber of Berwick. A rather unusual name. Following a request for more information, Sue Handoll kindly provided an explanation – a piece or slice of meat.

*Julie Gibbs*

## TILLVAS - TEN YEARS ON

One evening in early January 2011 a few interested people met in Crookham Village Hall to consider the possibility of forming a small Archaeological Group. This was partly due to local interest in the Flodden 1513 Project to be run by Dr. Chris Burgess, and several of those present had already been involved in the preliminary field walking. Encouraged by Dr. Burgess, who chaired the meeting, it was agreed that this was a feasible idea and a further meeting would be held in February to form a Committee. This was duly accomplished with Heather Pentland elected as Chair, Mike Keating as Treasurer, Maureen Charlton as Secretary also Alan Urwin and

Carol Chapman. The basic foundations of membership, aims, and activities were decided. The name of the group would be the Till Valley Archaeological Society to encompass the whole of the Till Valley catchment area and in 2016 this was extended to include the eastern Borderlands

As well as archaeology there was also a great deal of interest in local History as very little was known about the villages of Crookham and Branxton (the nearest village to the site of the Battle of Flodden) and it was resolved to collect as much information as possible, from the earliest times to the present day. As most of the area is included in the Ford and Etal Estates we anticipated finding lots of information, but unfortunately it was discovered that very little had been saved in relation to the time of the Waterfords in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so we were almost starting from scratch.

Details of TillVAS were passed on via contacts made with other groups involved in the Flodden Project and as membership began to increase - 28 by April - Alan Urwin became Membership Secretary, and numbers had increased to 53 by the end of 2011. Every opportunity was taken to publicize TillVAS by setting up exhibitions at local shows, and for four years at Heatherslaw during the summer. Monthly Newsletters were sent to all Members mostly by email but also by post and by hand and a programme of talks and outdoors visits was planned. Monthly meetings were held in Crookham Village Hall with guest speakers. At first there was some difficulty persuading speakers to come, as we were unknown and many of those approached had never heard of Crookham, but eventually we were recognised and speakers from both sides of the Border were happy to give lectures, summaries of which were submitted to the local press, thereby also promoting their own work. Outstanding lectures were by Richard Annis – The Dunbar Soldiers at Palace Green; Low Hauxley by Clive Waddington; “Medieval Medicine at Soutra Isle” by Brian Moffat and “The Vikings in the North Atlantic” by Kristian Pedersen. “Annual James IV Lectures” usually held in October began in 2015 with “The King in the Car Park” given by Richard Buckley and more recently “The Mary Rose” given by Dr. Alex Hildred in 2018.

Visits were made to excavation sites at Bamburgh Castle; Barrow Burn in the Coquet Valley, courtesy of CCA, Lindisfarne and more recently to Ancrum where the “Bishop's Palace” once more saw the light of day, and where we had previously had a guided tour of the historical aspects of the village. We were also able to assist with the conservation of the old Lennel Kirk, and TillVAS were delighted to be

able to visit Pallinsburn House and Marchmont House, and an organised visit to “Old Newcastle” with John Nolan was a great success.

Walks were also popular beginning with a New Year walk with Chris Burgess to Goats Crag in 2012 and in subsequent years in the College Valley. John Nolan guided us around Old Bewick and the abandoned farmstead of Blawearie and Breamish in 2016.

Berwick Record Office and Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn were scoured for anything relating to the area, with some quite interesting details coming to light. So much was collected that it became necessary to find suitable storage for all the documents and maps which had accumulated in the Secretary's spare bedroom, and Crookham Village Hall Committee granted permission for storage cupboards and a map chest to be placed in the main hall. This is still the location of the current TillVAS Archives. (A full list of contents can be found on the TillVAS Website.)

After the close of the Flodden Project in 2013 which culminated in a wonderful event at Branxton, commemorated by TillVAS in November 2012 with the planting of a tree by Chris Burgess near to the Flodden Car Park; it was necessary to find another project, and it was decided that all the local history we had collected should be combined into a “Village Atlas” based on the two parishes of Branxton and Crookham. Surveys of the farms and the older properties were carried out with appropriate photographs so that whatever happens in the future, there is a permanent record of the area in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We also sought information from the older residents who could recall some really interesting things and were often a mine of information. The “Atlas” is now complete and copies can be seen at Berwick and Woodhorn Archives.

As research for the Atlas came to a close, interest focussed on the east side of the River Till (also the Ford and Etal Estates), and work was done clearing out the old Barley Mill at Etal, and as far as possible make a plan of the old buildings. Work here had to cease due to the unstable gable end, but it is hoped to continue here in the near future.

Also receiving attention has been Etal Moor, where there are many old coal shafts and deserted farms and cottages. This work is ongoing.



Recently new premises for the storage of equipment has been acquired at Heatherslaw which allows space for a small permanent exhibition which will hopefully be opened in 2021.

After Heather Pentland stood down in 2014, TillVAS has been Chaired by Antony Chessell and Colin Wakeling, and currently Ray Clarke occupies this post. In 2017 Lord Joicey agreed to become our Patron and is most supportive of our work. The rest of the Committee has also changed but TillVAS is still thriving, with the monthly meetings having capacity audiences until the outbreak of Covid caused the cancellation of all indoor events.

TillVAS has come a long way in the past ten years, supported throughout by Archaeologists Chris Burgess, our President; Richard Carlton; John Nolan and Jenny Vaughan. We've learned new skills; experienced the highs of exciting finds and the disappointments of empty test pits and trenches; visited some wonderful houses and walked over some of the most beautiful countryside in England, but most important of all are the friends and contacts made, from all walks of life, but who are all fascinated by the tantalising glimpses we find of the history and archaeology of the Till Valley and the Eastern Borderlands.

*Maureen Charlton*

## **PC JOHN CARR AND HIS HEADMASTER SON**

As a volunteer with the Twixt Thistle and Rose project, I catalogued two Duty Diaries written by PC John Carr covering the period January 1862 to January 1863. In one, he recorded police work and in the other, the state of the streets and houses, identifying nuisances or health hazards. It soon became clear that John was quite a character and worthy of a bit more research. Unbeknown to me, Shincliffe Local History Society, Durham, was researching John's youngest son, also called John. Gary Stout, Chair of the Society, has kindly provided the second half of this article.

John Carr served as a Constable with the Berwick Borough Police Force from April 1850 until his death in June 1867. He lived with his wife and young family at *Sidey Quay*, Tweedmouth, near the Low Road and Fetters Lane. His widow, Mary, continued to live there after his death but had moved to Dock View by 1881.

John patrolled the streets of Spittal and Tweedmouth and helped his Berwick colleagues when necessary. Equipped with a truncheon, handcuffs and a rattle plus a lamp for after dusk, he would have been well known and easily recognisable in his police uniform which included a stove pipe hat.

The shortage of street lamps and the distance to the nearest lockup were just two of the obstacles that he had to overcome. There were 16 lamps in Spittal, with it stated that even another 20 would not be enough, 31 in Tweedmouth and 163 in Berwick where - *the illuminating power of the gas was generally so feeble that it only served to make the darkness more visible.*

The nearest lockup was the *New Gaol* in Wallace Green, erected 1849. To take a *drunken, riotous person* from Spittal, it was necessary to hire a cart costing half a crown. A lock-up for Spittal was discussed in 1859, 1860 and 1870 but the idea was dismissed as being too expensive.

John's Diaries provide a unique and intimate view of life in the area and introduce a range of characters such as: Mr Campbell, the Lamp Lighter, complaining about his lamps being *bricked* and George Bruce who was regularly late with his child maintenance payment but who always paid up when apprehended.

While John's spelling was generally good, he spelt phonetically. He added an *h* after the *s* in *search*, *such* and sometimes *servant*, resulting in *shearch*, *shuch* and *shervant*, which may have been due to a speech impediment. In accounting for his time, John made concise, unemotional but imaginative notes. On a quiet day he would write *Nothing moving in Tweedmouth; Nothing but quietness tonight.*

Some days were quiet, but he worked very long hours every day of the year taking only a few hours leave in July and in October. He signed on about 10AM signing off at 1.30AM the following morning, working even longer hours on occasions. After the Tweedmouth Feast, held on a Sunday and Monday in July, he noted that he had been on duty for 40 hours dealing with fights, a man going in the water and a good deal of dust! He was still back on duty at 10am the next morning.

While out and about, occasionally accompanied by another Constable, he would receive complaints about broken windows, assaults, drunkenness, missing or naughty children and the theft of goods ranging from cabbage plants to money. Sometimes he would be summoned to deal with an affray at one of the public houses, not always arriving in time to catch the culprits. At the end of October Mr Gilroy complained about boys and girls taking potatoes from his fields. To catch them, John spent most of one day in the fields, and hoping to avoid recognition went *in plain cloths* but found only six little girls without potatoes.

On a more serious note, on 1 November, he wrote – *7.30 pm Sent for to the Cow Port Gate as a man was drunk. I had to get assistince and the Buss and took him to the Lockup and he said he was Rubbed of his watch and some money [12s?] and had to take him to the Despensary about 9 PM.*

This was Mr HAMILTON who had been severely beaten-up, suffering injuries to his spine, head, and internal organs. He died in the dispensary on 25 December, the first inquest being held the following day. Full accounts of the incident appeared in numerous newspapers.

In the last entry in his Nuisances Diary, written on 13 January 1863, he stated that while going round places in the West End, Tweedmouth, he found two pigs, a horse and a quantity of manure in William McLain's back room. The following day he served notice to have them removed.

John died aged only 44 after suffering from typhus fever for 11 days, an infectious disease caught from lice or fleas and prevalent in overcrowded properties. Andrew Carr, presumably his 15 year old son, was present at his death. John's colleagues and a few friends erected a large headstone in Tweedmouth Cemetery, inscribed with the words *as a mark of respect to his memory and to express their regard for him as a straightforward and conscientious public officer.*

The Watch Committee recommended that his widow should receive a gratuity of £12 for the first year and £10 for the next three: as a very fitting tribute of respect to the memory of a very efficient officer. James Scott, a young man from Norham, replaced him on a salary of 18s per week.

John Carr junior, aged only 9 or 10 when his father died, had become a Pupil Teacher in the National School by 1871. What did he do next?

### **John Morton Carr (1857-1928)**

*The following account owes much to fate and chance. The Chair of Shincliffe Local History Society, Garry Stout, attended a conference at the University of Newcastle via Zoom on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. Linda Bankier, Berwick Archives gave a presentation on the resources that had been uncovered as the result of links with Berwick Police including "Wanted" posters and the remarkable diaries of PC John Carr written in the 1860s. By sheer coincidence, SLHS were preparing information about a Shincliffe John Carr who was born in Tweedmouth and whose father was a policeman. Surely, they could not be linked? Following checking and verification by both parties, it was indeed the case. Local history studies always throw up the most unlikely connections and serendipitous discoveries.*

John Carr was the village schoolmaster and was living in School House, on what was then known as Stockton Road, Shincliffe, in 1891 and 1901. His first recorded appearance in the village is in the 1881 Census as a teacher. He began his career in January 1877 in the Monkwearmouth Colliery School in Sunderland. The building is still there, just yards from the Stadium of Light. He was appointed the Headmaster of Houghall Colliery Board School in 1879. He was living in Prospect Terrace in Shincliffe in 1882 when his wife gave birth to twins (John Morton and Mary Wilson). Both were baptised on the day of their birth, suggesting that one or both of them might have been ill. Then, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1886, he took up his position as Headmaster of Shincliffe School and spent thirty-five years in the role. The old school and School House now exist as private houses. He died in 1928. His funeral was attended by several present and former occupants of Wood View Terrace where he had lived since at least 1911 when he is recorded in the Census of that year in Number 4.



*Fig. 1 John Carr with his staff and pupils in 1918-19*

John Carr retired from his post as Headmaster of Shincliffe School on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1921. This meant that Carr would have been the Head during the Great War of 1914-18, a period that saw some of his former pupils lose their lives in the fighting. One can only imagine the grief he must have shared with the bereaved families. The news of his retirement led to a fulsome article in the *Berwickshire News and General Advertiser* on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1922. It reported that: “Throughout those 50 years (*in the field of education*) all who have come in contact with Mr Carr readily agree that they gained much from that privilege. Duty has always been his motto, duty primarily not to himself but the children given into his charge – a charge nobly fulfilled to over three thousand children. The many boys and girls who have had the benefit and

pleasure of Mr Carr's influence are unanimous in their love and gratification for all that he meant and still means to them."

One of Carr's friends at his own school in Berwick was Peter Anderson Graham who later edited *Country Life* magazine. Anderson's son, Stephen, was a successful author in his own right who wrote about pre-revolutionary Russia.

Carr was a regular attendee at St. Mary's Church and served as both a sidesman and Churchwarden. In addition, he was honorary treasurer of the Shincliffe Reading Room which opened in 1895.

Carr's wife, Jane (or Janie as she was often known), was the daughter of Kerr Middlemiss who had been a joiner and innkeeper of the White Lion in Berwick. Her death was announced in *The Berwick Advertiser* on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1922. She had died at home on 16<sup>th</sup> May 22 and was buried on 19<sup>th</sup> May 22 in St. Mary's Churchyard. As well as losing two of their boys in infancy, the couple went on to have four daughters, three of whom followed their father into the teaching profession.

John Carr was not the first Headmaster of Shincliffe School. However, one could make a powerful argument for claiming that his industriousness and high expectations of both pupils and staff are still in the DNA of the "new" building (built in the 1960s) nearly one hundred years after his retirement. His life of public service served as a lasting tribute to his father and his work as a policeman in Berwick.

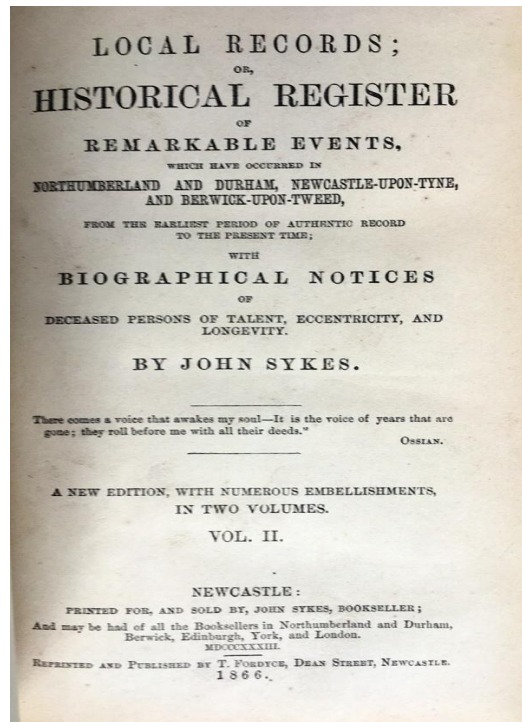
**Sources for PC John Carr:**

BRO: BA/C/P0/3/18 [BA/M3/17], BA/C/P0/3/19 [BA/M3/18] Police Duty Diaries; Tweedmouth Census 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881; BJ 18 Jan 1862; BJ 22 Feb 1862; BA 23 July 1862, *Illustrated Berwick Journal* 05 July 1867; Death certificate  
<https://www.oldpolicecellsmuseum.org.uk/>; <http://www.britishpolicehelmet.co.uk>  
<https://heritagearmssa.com/2018/06/26/victorian-police-lanterns/>

*Julie Gibbs and Gary Stout*

## SOME INTERESTING SNIPPETS

Taken from volumes 1 and 2 of a book dated 1866, "Historical Register of Remarkable Events" by John Sykes of Newcastle.



**1770 (January 1).**—A pie was brought from Howick to Berwick to be shipped for London, for Sir Henry Grey, bart., the contents of which were as follows :—two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two wood-cocks, six snipes, and four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlious, seven blackbirds, and six pigeons. It was supposed to be a very great curiosity, was made by Mrs. Dorothy Patterson, housekeeper at Howick. It was near nine feet in circumference at the bottom, weighed about twelve stones, and would require two men to present it at the table; it was neatly fitted with a case and four small wheels to facilitate its use to every guest.

**1757 (September).**—A green shark, six feet long, was taken in the river Tweed, a little above the bridge at Berwick. The fishermen, before they saw it, imagined they had got a great haul of salmon, the net being so difficult to draw. As soon as it came near the shore, it made the water fly to a prodigious height, and after they had disabled it a little, and got it into shoal water, it made a hole in the sand with its tail which would have held a coach. Some gentlemen who had seen the sharks of both the Indies said this was an East Indian one, and it was thought it had followed the

East India fleet to the Firth, and taken off after the salmon up the river in passing by. A clasped knife was found in its belly.

**1821 (Jan. 5).**—When some workmen were removing rubbish on the premises of Mr. Fair, of Hide-hill, Berwick, cabinet maker, they found a small wooden box, containing 18 gold pieces of Henry VIII., Mary, and Elizabeth ; and also 20 silver coins of Elizabeth. The whole in good preservation. The gold coins weighed two and a-half ounces, and the silver coins two ounces. The workmen immediately sold their prize to a jeweller, and regaled themselves-with the proceeds.

*Ian Fair*

## **BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS**

**Berwick Advertiser, 26 July 1872**

### SLEEPY PRECENTOR

This warm weather has the effect on a great many congregations of making an increase in the number of those present who like to indulge in a “nap” The precentor in a church in the north of Northumberland on Sunday thought he might take “forty winks,” and did so, and no one wondered at the circumstances, even many did not know, and it only became known to a few when the minister finished his sermon, and requested those not sleeping to engage in prayer. The precentor, sound in the arms of Morpheus, did not hear the request, and did not comply with it, but kept snoozing on. The prayer ended, he kept on sleeping. The psalm was given out, but no notes of melody responding, his reverence looked over his desk and discovered that his clerk was “off duty.” Tapping him on the head as a hint to get ready, he commenced another prayer, and by the time it was concluded, the precentor had opened his eyes, and when called on again, replied in tones not to be mistaken that he was awake.

**Berwick Advertiser, 26 July 1872**

### THE POLICE FORCE

When the steed is stolen there is little use in locking the stable door. The robbery at Mr Davidson’s shop during Wednesday night has aroused the Watch Committee to

the necessity of having the streets patrolled all night through by the police. At present the lieges and their property are unprotected between the hours of 2 and 8 a.m.; but yesterday the mayor, we understand, gave orders for two police officers being placed on duty all night in future. There are only four constables on the police staff at present, and two of these are stationed respectively in Tweedmouth and Spittal; the other two guard Berwick! If day and night shifts were provided – and this is indispensably necessary for the safety of the public and their property – the present force would require to be doubled. The Government grant might then be allowed, and little additional expense would be incurred by the taxpaying community in maintaining what would be considered an efficient police force.

**Berwick Advertiser, 26 July 1872**

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

Yesterday the schoolers at Wallace Green Church Sunday Schools were treated to their annual excursions, Horncliffe being the rendezvous this year. About 300 children, and close upon 150 adults left by special train to Velvet Hall, when they got out and walked in the direction of Horncliffe dean, but a drizzling rain began to fall, and it was thought desirable to retrace their steps, and proceed to the village of Horncliffe. On arrival the Rev. Mr Vallence kindly granted to the excursionists the use of his church, where a plentiful supply of pies were served. Games were afterwards indulged in on the highway in front of the Church, and after the lapse of some time, tea and its etcetera's were partaken of. Short addresses were delivered by the Rev. Dr Cairns and the Rev. Mr Vallence, and some hymns sung. Recreation was resumed and heartily kept up until it was time for the company to take their departure for the train. Velvet hall station having been safely reached, and all comfortable seated, Berwick was reached about half past eight o'clock, the whole company full of happiness – The children in attendance at the E.P. School, Tweedmouth, with their teachers, a number of friends, and the Rev. Mr Cant, had their annual trip yesterday, West Ord being the destination. The weather proved disagreeable, but the excursionists made the best of a bad day.

*Carole Pringle*