

Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 110 – DECEMBER 2021

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 25th March 2022

Friends AGM and lecture by Chris Hunwick, Archivist to the Duke of Northumberland. To be held in Berwick Parish Centre, 7pm start. More details in next newsletter

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES



AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Ayton Community Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday 25th January 2022

Our River Stories of the Tweed: Jim Gibson

Tuesday 22nd February

Berwick Photo Centre Collection: Cameron Robertson

Tuesday 29th March

A.G.M followed by A Look at some aspects of history through women's eyes: Isabel Gordon.

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Bell View Resource Centre

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 26th January 2022

Ford Village at the Time of the Waterfords:
Linda Bankier

Wednesday 23rd February

Cragmill and the Railway Poet: Brian Rogers

Wednesday 23rd March

Border Smuggling: Graeme Watson

BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY

Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 12th January 2022

To be announced.

Wednesday 9th February

Question Time : Education and Skills

Wednesday 9th March

Geology and Industrial Archaeology of parts of the North Northumberland coast from Berwick to Holy Island: Elizabeth Devon

Wednesday 23rd March

The Villas of the Lake District: Dr Adam Menuge

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 15th December

Irregular Border marriages: Linda Bankier

Wednesday 19th January 2022

Berwick's Maritime Story: Derek Sharman

Wednesday 16th February

Railways Past – the Alnwick Circle Line:
Rt. Rev Dr Stephen Platten

Wednesday 16th March

Lowick Races and Feast 1830s to 1930s:
Julie Gibbs & Lowick Heritage Group

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick

Time: 7.30 p.m.

No Lectures in January

Monday 7th February 2022

Recent Excavations at Yeavinger Palace:
Sarah Semple

Monday 7th March

The Archaeology of the Victoria Cross:
Andrew Marriott

CHIRNSIDE HISTORY GROUP

Venue: Waterloo Dining Room

Time: 7.30pm

Monday 20th December

Berwick Boyhood between the wars:
Elisabeth Wilson

Monday 17th January 2022

Stories of our River Tweed: Martha
Andrews

Monday 21st February

Lost Churches of the Borders: Kenneth
McLean

Monday 21st March

Rise & Fall of Roxburgh: Christine
Henderson

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Leet Room, Coldstream Community Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 6th January 2022

The Indian Mutiny: Lt Col Malcolm McVittie

Thursday 3rd February

Lost Churches of the Scottish Borders:
Kenneth McLean

Thursday 3rd March

Votes for Women in South East Scotland
1870 – 1920: David McLean

DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Duns Social Club, 45 Newtown St, Duns.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 26th January 2022

Berwick Boyhood-The Memories of Jock
Richardson: Elisabeth Wilson

Wednesday 23rd February

Rediscovering St. Cuthbert: the man
behind the Saint: John Woodhurst

Wednesday 27th March

The Eyemouth Fish Teind Riots of 1861;
Norrie McLeish

GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 12th January 2022

Criminal Spirits- Gin and Whisky
Smuggling in the Borders: Graeme Watson

Wednesday 9th February

The Barony of Wooler and Feudal estates
in North Northumberland in the 13th
century: Derek Sharman

Wednesday 9th March

Churches of Northumberland: Peter Regan

LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP

Venue: Lowick Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 10th January 2022

Wm. Cowe & Sons and the Berwick
Cockle: Cameron Robertson

Monday 14th February

Irregular Border Marriages: Linda Bankier

Monday 14th March

Lowick Memories: Extracts from Down
Memory Lane Coffee Mornings: Various
members

NORHAM AND LADYKIRK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 10th January 2022

The History of Berwick Through its
Archives: Linda Bankier

Monday 14th February

The Bamburgh Bones Project: Jessica
Turner

Monday 14th March

A Fresh Look at Golden Age to Viking
Costume: Paula Constantine

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP

Meetings online. For link to zoom please email rowan2010@hotmail.co.uk in plenty of time!

Saturday 15th January 2022

Live at Bell View: Our Stories:
Discoveries made during Lockdown

Saturday 19th February

A Berwick Boyhood Between the Wars:
Elisabeth Wilson

Saturday 19th March

The Posthumous Travels of St. Aidan and
St. Oswalds: Jessica Turner. Look out
nearer the time to whether this maybe an
online talk.

TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

These webinar talks are open to members of TillVAS, Lowick Heritage Group and Coquetdale Community Archaeology. The registration link will be circulated a few days before the talks. All talks will begin at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 5th January 2022

The Battle of Carham : Dr Alex Woolf

Wednesday 2nd February

Talk by the Scottish Treasure Trove Officer, based at the National Museums of Scotland.

Wednesday 2nd March

Transforming Bede's World: a journey in about 30 years of experimental archaeology at Jarrow Hall: Dr Marco Romeo Pitone

ARCHIVE NEWS



The last couple of months have flown by in the office but I'm not sure where – definitely a sign of age and being extremely busy.

Just after the last newsletter was produced, we ran Heritage Open Days (HODS) in Berwick. The Record Office and the Friends have played a major part in this for a number of years . This was our first proper blended event – online and in person – which we ran for the whole of the HODS period (10 – 18 September). This was a challenge keeping the momentum going for that length of time but it proved very successful. In the first week, we concentrated more on online events – local history talks with some buildings open, self guided walks in Spittal and Bridge Street and the Archaeological Dig at the Infirmary. Then from 17 – 19 September we had various buildings open. It was difficult to know if this would work under present restrictions. However, it definitely did and it was lovely to see so many local people and visitors out wandering around Berwick and visiting places they hadn't been before. The Walls proved a very popular walking circuit for visiting venues including the Magazine, Coxon's Tower, New Tower, Main Guard and the Ice House. The Barracks had great numbers over the weekend and many people came to the

Guildhall to see the exhibitions and displays we held there. Our guided walks were also very popular and overall, our final figures, adding in those who took part in our website quizzes and content amounted to about 9,500 visits which was actually about 800 higher than 2019. Thank you to all who supported us either as volunteers, running events or just attending. We hope to build on this in 2022 and to continue to run more events in Berwick than anywhere else in Northumberland.

As part of HODS, we highlighted the “Portrait of a Town” exhibition which has been supported by the Friends. This was a very successful exhibition highlighting the collection which ran until 10 October. In total, over 4,800 people visited it during its run which surpassed all our expectations. As well as the exhibition, we have now nearly completed a Photography section on the Northumberland Archives LEARN educational platform which will go live shortly. We also piloted some work using the photographs with a Dementia Group. We teamed up with the Memory Laners who run music sessions at the Maltings and attended 5 of their sessions. It was lovely to see people relate to the Photo Centre images and talk about the buildings, fashion and events. We are hoping to continue this partnership as archives have a lot to contribute in this area.

The Twixt Thistle and Rose Project is still ongoing. Over the past couple of months, we have been adding more volunteer content to the CALM electronic catalogue. This has included both 18th and 19th century material which contain many names. Although we are unable to run our Tuesday volunteer sessions, some volunteers have come in on Wednesdays and Thursdays to continue their work. It’s lovely to welcome them back and we hope more will return in 2022. To thank them for their contribution, the volunteers were invited to a Pie and Pea Supper by the Guild of Freemen. I gave a talk on the Project and it was good to have the opportunity to talk to everyone and catch up. The Project will continue to run and there is still so much for us to do with the collection.

Since 2020, Northumberland Archives has been working on creating an online Digital Educational resource. We have various topics on there now which include Berwick content – www.northumberlandarchives.com/learn/ -and over the past couple of months we have been promoting the resource. In October, Jo March and I talked about the project and what we had done at a National Archives online event and in November, I also created and delivered some sessions in schools at Ashington and Lynemouth on 18th century entertaining and the Seaside in the past. At Lynemouth, Jo and I worked with Years 1 to 6 over the course of a day and in

Ashington Megan and I worked with the Year 4s. LEARN is a wonderful online resource and so, please do look at it.

Finally, the Record Office is running a small project at Bamburgh as part of the Lottery funded Accessing Aidan project. Many years ago, back in 1994, the Friends carried out a Churchyard Survey at Bamburgh. I still remember the day – very hot. It was typed up but over 25 years on, it's time to revisit it, check what inscriptions are still legible and add in additional ones. I'm working with some volunteers in Bamburgh to do the rechecking and also do some research on those buried there. It's interesting that Storm Arwen has caused some damage in the churchyard and so it shows the value of the original work we undertook .

As ever, the Record Office gets very involved in Outreach and Training. During the past couple of months, I've given a couple of talks not already mentioned– Crime and Punishment in Berwick and the history of Berwick through its archives – and have others lined up shortly. I've also been doing some oral history training for the Northumberland Village Halls Heritage Project. That took me to Kirkwhelpington Village Hall where I had never been before!

Obviously as well as the above, all our normal work still continues. We enjoy seeing and working with everyone on our open days. It's lovely to see people using the records. Numbers are still limited but if anyone wants to come in, just get in touch. Well, 2021 has been quite a year for us all. Let's hope 2022 will be better.

Merry Christmas from Linda, Carole and Martha 

Linda Bankier

VOLUNTEERS WANTED- Maternity Project



A new Charitable Trust – Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust – has been set up to support the work of both Woodhorn and Berwick. One of its initial projects is a Healthcare Project which will involve research and an oral history project. There are two strands:

- An oral history project, interviewing Northumberland residents who recall receiving healthcare or recall their parents speaking about receiving healthcare prior to 1948.
- A study of maternity care in Northumberland focussing on Castle Hills Maternity Home in Berwick, Mona Taylor Maternity Home in Stannington and Ashington Hospital in south-east Northumberland. These Maternity Homes opened in the 1940's and were set up and originally managed by Northumberland County Council. The research will investigate what maternity provision was like prior to their establishment. What led to their establishment? How were they funded and what was the experience of their patients and staff over the years?

Obviously our main focus in North Northumberland will be Castle Hills and healthcare provision in the north of the County. We're looking for volunteers who would like to undertake research in the Berwick Office and at Woodhorn and/or get involved in the Oral History project. We will provide you with training on both oral history and archive research skills. If you are interested in helping, please just contact me by e-mail on berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk . We are also looking for contacts of people to interview and so, if you know of anyone who can remember stories from their parents or experienced healthcare in the pre NHS period in Northumberland, do let me know.

Linda Bankier

STORM ARWEN

We've just experienced, what we hope is a once in a lifetime storm in Northumberland. I said that back in 2001 but it was more snow related then and didn't affect everyone. It's important to capture this for the archives and so, if you have any pictures of the effects of the storm or want to write a personal account of it, please do consider sending it to the archives. It's important to keep these for the future. Please send me any images (preferably in a jpeg format) or accounts to berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk

JAMES B GRAHAM

January 2022 sees the centenary of a rescue by the Holy Island lifeboat which led to the RNLI giving medals to various members of the crew and acknowledging the part

played by the Island women. The following newspaper accounts give a flavour of the terrible conditions that night on which they launched the lifeboat (it may well have felt like Storm Arwen) and also the bravery of the women on the Island. It was common for women to help launch lifeboats all along the Northumberland coast but sometimes we don't appreciate what that actually meant and how physically demanding this must have been. Dragging a heavy lifeboat across the sands into the open sea is some feat. Later on in the year, the Island hopes to commemorate this act of bravery. The following are some extracts from the newspapers outlining the series of events.

Berwick Advertiser, 20 January 1922

GALLANT RESCUE AT HOLY ISLAND

WOMEN HELP TO LAUNCH THE LIFEBOAT

A gallant rescue was effected at Holy island during the snowstorm on Sunday night. A ship was observed in distress beyond Sandam, and at once efforts were made to launch the lifeboat, the women of the Island nobly assisting in this laborious work. Many of them fearlessly dashed into the waves, in the teeth of the fierce snowstorm then blowing all along the coast, in order to help the men to get the boat into the sea. Eventually the lifeboat was launched, and with an experienced crew aboard, hastened to the rescue.

Meanwhile the rocket crew had turned out, and with difficulty, got their apparatus to the nearest safe point, but to the great disappointment of everybody the rockets failed to reach the doomed vessel.

Looking out to sea through the blinding storm, a light could be seen now and again dancing on the billows – the lifeboat was getting nearer to the vessel on the rocks, while the shipwrecked sailors were doing their utmost to indicated their whereabouts.

It was not until just after midnight that the crew of nine men were transferred to the lifeboat after three attempts to get alongside the vessel. The rescued men proved to be the crew of the trawler James B Graham of Hartlepool.

This makes a grand total of 206 lives saved by the lifeboats of Holy Island. The trawler has since become a total wreck.

The above article gives a very factual account but an entry, dated May 1922 in the RNLi Journal, The Lifeboat, provides more detail and a more evocative account :

On Sunday evening, the 15th January 1922, the trawler '**James B Graham**' of Hartlepool, with 9 men on board, went ashore on the rocks of False Emmanuel Head on the N side of Holy Island ...during a strong SE gale, heavy sea and snow storms. She burnt flares of distress, and these were seen on the other side of the island. It was then 8 o'clock. The crews of the Life-boat and of the Coastguard's Life- saving Apparatus were summoned, and the apparatus was hurried across the island. The trawler was found lying in a very perilous position , with a heavy list, and the seas breaking along her decks. The apparatus was taken as near as possible, but it was too far away by 100 yards. No rocket could reach the vessel. Meanwhile, the whole of the village, men & women, had turned out in the dark and snow to launch the No 1 Life-boat. The tide was low and the wheels of the carriage sank deep into the mud. It was only with extreme difficulty, and by the gallant efforts of 60 helpers, that the boat was launched. Undeterred by the bitter cold, the women waded out waist-deep into the sea, and just 40 minutes after the alarm had been given, the Boat was afloat. The distance round the headland to False Emmanuel Head was nearly 4 miles , and it was close on 10 o'clock before the Life-boat reached the stranded vessel. She lay surrounded by dangerous rocks and by the iron remnants of an old wreck.

Among these the Life-boat would have to make her way, in the pitch darkness and the blinding snow-squalls, if she was to rescue the crew. The Coxswain made the attempt, but , owing to the rocks, he was compelled to pull out again. The Life-boat then lay off for 2 hours waiting while the tide rose. The Coxswain then tried to approach the wreck from the other side. Again, he had to pull out. The rocks were too dangerous. He waited another hour, and then with his anchor dropped, veered the Boat slowly and cautiously down towards the vessel, and in between 2 rocks, before he could reach her. By skilful and daring seamanship this dangerous manoeuvre succeeded, and all 9 men on the trawler were safely taken aboard the Life-boat. She was hauled out from among the perilous rocks, and reached her station again at 2 o'clock in the morning.

In recognition of their contribution, some of the crew and the women of Holy Island were invited to London and were honoured by the RNLI in London. Miss Daisy Cromarty represented the women. The following two excerpts recount their adventure from a small island to the metropolis.

Nottingham Journal, 30 March 1922

HEROISM OF LIFEBOAT CREW RECOGNISED

In recognition of splendid seamanship and courage shown in rescuing the crew of the trawler James B Graham of Hartlepool which went ashore off the island, the coxswain of the Holy Island lifeboat was yesterday presented with a bar to his silver medal and the second coxswain and bowman each received bronze medals.

The presentations were made at the annual meeting in London of the governors of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and Mr Stanley Baldwin, President of the board of Trade who presided, said that the James B Graham with its crew of nine was driven on the rocks of Holy Island off the coast of Northumberland on 15 January last during a terrible gale, a mountainous sea and an almost blinding blizzard

On behalf of the women of Holy Island, Miss Daisy Cromarty, a fisher girl, received a special letter of thanks from the governor of the Institution in acknowledgment of their fine spirit of humane and helpful service. The crew of the lifeboat are to receive an extra monetary reward.

Berwick Advertiser, 7 April 1922

HOW THE ISLANDERS WERE TREATED

On Sunday the Coxswain and party of the Holy Island Lifeboat came home, arriving at the Island at 1.15, after attending the annual general meeting of the Governors of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution held in Caxton Hall, London, Wednesday 30th March. The Islanders quite enjoyed their stay in London and were well treated by the officials of the Institution. They left Berwick by express at 11.10 , arriving London 6.30, after an interesting journey. They were met at King's Cross by a guide from the Institution and were taken to Buckingham Hotel. After a good tea they were again taken by the guide to see a grand performance at the Coliseum which was thoroughly enjoyed. They also visited the House of Commons and had tea there, after coming from the meeting. Thursday morning, the day for their return, came all too soon. The party reached Newcastle on Thursday night and stayed with friends until Sunday.

The letter presented to Miss Daisy Cromarty (for the women of Island) was framed and is to be hung in No 1 Lifeboat House, Holy Island....

Linda Bankier

MUSEUM NEWS



We are now closed for the season. The museum is looking quite forlorn and empty at the moment. It is also very cold, which is fine for the collections but not so fine for the staff – just as well the cleaning and polishing we can carry out warms us up! Next week we are looking forward to giving the temporary galleries a thorough clean and a lick of paint.

Jonny Hannah's wildly successful and very colourful exhibition "Northumberland Folk" has now been taken down and returned to the artist. There was a good sale for Jonny's artworks from the public, but we did manage to reserve a selection of his artworks for the permanent collections, including the "Herring Lassies Barrel". We retained examples of supplementary material (leaflets, newspapers, examples of take & makes etc). Several items were bought and donated to the collection by well-wishers, including the Lowry oil can. Additionally, the artist himself donated several additional items (an enormous *Northumberland Folk* print, and the pandemic diary from Berwick). Probably the best-selling items in the Berwick Museum shop was the Berwick vampire poster, so we did make a point of keeping one of those too!

The artist commissioned to produce work for 2022 is Bethan Maddocks, a very different artist to Jonny. Friends might have seen the small and charming selection of her work which was included in our 2019 exhibition alongside that of the main artist Matt Stokes. She will take animals and the natural history of Northumberland as a subject.

Now that Charlotte Barron has been made a permanent member of staff, we have interviewed for a new Project Curator for the Esmée Fairbairn "Femmer to Firmer" venture. From six excellent candidates lined up to interview, in the end we chose two successful candidates. Kelly Martin and Dominique Bell are going to work with us as a job shared partnership. The two curators have a wealth of local knowledge and have recently been working on a Tyne & Wear Museums/British Library joint project called "Unlocking our Sound Heritage". As soon as the pair are settled in we hope to get the project up and running properly again.

The LS Lowry "Beach Scene" has been an extremely popular exhibit over the summer. We have been working with Berwick Preservation Trust to produce a new

interpretation panel featuring the picture at the end of the Lowry Trail at Spittal. The Trust has sorted out planning permission with Northumberland County Council, and Fantasy Prints are working on the design now. Meanwhile, an independent Curator, Mark MacLeod, has been working with children at Prior Park School via zoom, to interpret the picture using their responses to the characters (and their dog) depicted in the painting. This will be installed at the museum over the winter, accessible by means of QR codes. Additionally, we have acquired funding to produce some loans boxes for care homes which will be put together over the winter.

We have some very exciting news in that we are looking to acquire an item of Treasure Trove found locally in 2019. The process of acquiring the item has been held up by the pandemic and all that has entailed, but is on track again now. Tantalisingly, I cannot give you any more specific information, but hope to bring news of this item in our next newsletter. We have almost, but not quite, managed to put together the funding needed for its purchase. You will be pleased to hear that the Friends Committee have very generously agreed to contribute to the acquisition of this small but very significant and extremely rare archaeological artefact.

It only remains for me to wish you season's greetings and assure you that all the museum staff are looking forward to seeing you all again in the New Year.

Anne Moore, Museum Officer North, Berwick Museum & Art Gallery

A HISTORY OF THE BERWICK-UPON-TWEED CLUB SCENE



“THE EARLY DAYS”

While private, exclusive clubs have existed for centuries in Berwick-upon-Tweed, (e.g. the Berwick Salmon Club, founded in the 1740s), the arrival of social drinking clubs with a wide membership of all classes only started properly in Berwick in the 1950s, their heydays being in the 1960s and 70s. The first such recognisable club was the Tweedside Villa, and was called either the Berwick or Tweedmouth Working Men's Club. The Club opened in 1955 and seems to have been an unofficial, though licensed, club for the town's working class. A newspaper report of a police raid in

October 1956, (due to after-hours drinking) provides a lively picture of early club life in the area. There was singing and dancing '*to the music of a gramophone*' in the downstairs billiard room, and a TV room upstairs. According to the police, '*Apart from the provision of a darts board in one room, the only social activity seemed to be drinking*'. Club membership stood at 300, and included women. The club continued until at least 1958, but it's uncertain when it closed.

Probably encouraged by the popularity of this unofficial working men's club, in November 1955, the town saw the opening of an official Social and Labour Club at the top of Ravensdowne, Berwick. As a sign of its respectability, the club was opened by the Mayor, Mrs Adams who said it represented a '*great social step forward*' for the town, now that the working man had more leisure time, and that '*it was a new venture for the town.*' It was run by the Federation Brewery, and was C.I.U. affiliated. Originally it had two bars (a members' bar and a lounge bar – the lounge was for the use of member' wives), with separate recreation, pool, music and concert rooms. In 1979 there were improvements to the Club with a more spacious concert room (including a dance floor) seating up to 200 people. Interestingly, it was not until this date that women could apply for membership in their own right.

In 1984 the Berwick Advertiser reported the Social and Labour Club's concert room '*as the best in town,*' though by this time, there were many alternative popular venues for socialising (with alcohol) in the area; especially the pubs which were offering better more modern facilities (including entertainments) for their customers e.g. the Bonarsteads, Tweedmouth, which opened in 1957 under Vaux Breweries ownership. Indeed, possibly following the example of the clubs, Vaux Breweries reported in 1955, regarding Bonarsteads, that it planned '*to build modern premises with modern conveniences and ideas, a place to which a man could take his wife and his friends and sit in comfort*' — its main attraction, copying the existing clubs, was a large lounge at the back, which could hold up to 100 people for functions; '*one of the most modern and possibly the biggest of its type in the Borough.*'

In 1979, Federation beer at 30p a pint, compared to many pubs in the town, where it was 40p a pint, was the Labour Club's main attraction. The Club closed in 1991.

In the context of 1950s clubs, mention must be made of the Black and Gold, Tweedmouth. The Club was set up in 1954 by Berwick Rangers Supporters Club to support the Football Club financially, with dances and raffles. A new clubhouse was built and opened in 1978 adjacent the main stand at Shielfield Park (with Federation

Brewery money), it included, pool, darts and a bar, providing a social life for members and their families, who were supporters of the Football Club. The Black and Gold continues today, providing a venue for social functions, but is no longer directly linked to the Football Club.

Also, as a sign of things to come, was the first annual dance at Haggerston Castle Country Club which occurred in December 1955, with 120 dancers made up of caravan club members. The owners, the Balfour family, later offered regular Saturday night dances to a wider audience with buffet style meals to sports clubs and charitable organisations etc.

However, it was in the 1960s that Berwick's club life really boomed with a vibrant youth culture and a lively social scene in town with new ventures such as at Caesar's Palace, Hide Hill (described, in 1969, as '*London in Berwick*') and the Beachcomber (and later the Matterhorn Ballroom) at Berwick's Holiday Camp.

These ventures will be described in detail in the next newsletter.

Source: *Berwick Advertiser*

Bob Steward

DR GEORGE HENDERSON

1800-1864



George Henderson was born on the 5th May 1800 in the farmhouse of Little Billie in the parish of Bunkle approximately two miles from Chirnside. After being educated in the local schools of Bunkle and Lintlaw, George matriculated at the University of Edinburgh in the session of 1825-26, but he only attended one class, that of chemistry, before he transferred to the Royal College of Surgeons, whose license he obtained in 1829.

He returned to practice in Chirnside where he remained for 35 years until his death in 1864. He married Margaret Hood who was 20 years his junior. They had six children but only one survived infancy: he was Robert Hood who became a Chemist and Registrar in Chirnside and who died in 1915. (The chemist was in the main street in Hollybush House opposite Bow Windows).

Dr Henderson is remembered for his collection "The Popular Rhymes, Sayings and Proverbs of the of the County of Berwick". He also published two volumes of poems "Scenes of Boyhood and Other Poems." His poetry was not first class, but he appreciated the beauties of nature and was a founding member of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club to which he contributed several articles. His journals are a reflection on life in general. He worked long hours, riding in all weathers over many miles to visit his patients. He collected old folk remedies, such as this one for the cure of whooping Cough "when a boy, ill with Hooping -cough, at the recommendation of an old wise woman, his mother, for the cure of the disease, tied round his neck a number of 'hairy oubets' (the lava of the tiger moth) sewed up in a piece of cloth and with evident success."

His fads and fancies were many. He abhorred alcohol, tea, and tobacco, he hated draughts most of all and walked out of a church service due to one. He would have preferred to be a vegetarian but was thwarted in this by his wife. He wrote "I have no doubt... without flesh as a food, we would be much stronger, healthier, and livelier than we are.... I am.. inclined to be vegetarian.. but the women folks are so atrociously most opposed to it, that I shrink from their reproaches".

Dr Henderson devoted thirty-five years to serving his patients in Chirnside and district. One of his many worries was how to obtain payment from his patients without bullying them. He was widely read and quoted Latin, Greek, French, German and Scottish authors. When riding to and from his patients he would recite pieces of poetry such as 'Tam o' Shanter'. He said such exercise kept you warm and comfortable on a rough tempestuous night. In a moment of discontent, he wrote "perhaps there are worst situations that a man can be in, they are to be at the head of government, to be in jail, or to be a poor country surgeon. It requires many qualities to be any way comfortable." But later on, he also wrote "true I have had my cares" anxieties "and griefs as who has not, yet I do not think I could change my condition with anybody".

Dr Henderson was buried as he had wished in Chirnside Parish Church graveyard beside his parents and other family members. The prominent memorial bears the inscription "Erected in beloved remembrance of Geo Henderson Surgeon for 35 years in Chirnside who died 4th July 1864 aged 64 years." Well remembered "for his universal kindness and benevolence".

It is not known who paid for the memorial which is much grander than the family could afford. It would be nice to think the local community had a hand in it. His wife Margaret lived on for another 30 years, she died aged 74 on the 26th December 1894.

Sources: *Merse Local Rhymes and other poems* by W.G. Henderson 2009

Dr George Henderson of Chirnside (1800-1864) by Wm S Mitchell, *Medical History* vol 5, July 1961

Linda Gray, Chirnside History Group

FENIAN ALARMS



THE PROPOSED ATTACK ON BERWICK ARMOURY BY THE FENIANS, OCTOBER 1867

The Fenian movement included a number of Irish Republican organisations in Ireland and America who were prepared to use force if necessary to obtain Irish independence from Britain. Their stated aim was an Irish democratic Republic based on universal male suffrage. In 1867, they planned to launch an uprising in Ireland with isolated outbreaks of violence in England. The British authorities were concerned but the rising fizzled out. A history of the Fenian Movement can be found at <https://www.theirishstory.com/2017/03/07/the-fenians-an-overview/> . In October 1867 a plot to attack the Berwick Armoury was uncovered and reported in numerous newspapers including the Morpeth Herald, as reproduced below:

Fenian Alarms

It seems that our own county has been destined by the Fenians as the scene of one of their exploits, the ancient border town of Berwick being the place chosen by them for the accomplishment of their purpose. It appears that last week a letter which bears the post-office mark of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and which was addressed to a certain person at Manchester, accidentally fell into the hands of the officers connected with the detective police force in London, and which minutely detailed a plot for the purpose of seizing the armoury at Berwick-upon-Tweed. The letter, with the omission of names and initials, is as follows:

“Dear -, - “Received yours; can make short work of them; no guard kept at night; barrack walls easily scaled; there are 300 or 400 carbines and about 80 rifles kept in the armoury, also six field pieces and seven 32-pounders, besides ammunition for

the volunteers. No one in barracks but the militia staff and families, about 18 soldiers in all, and a number of them generally out at night. We will easily manage it in one night and – [Here follow particulars as to the movements of certain members of the Fenian body, which are suppressed for obvious reasons] We can number 33 with – and -, all true. Be here as soon as possible. Just one gun-boat here. I am making arrangements with – [several persons and towns mentioned] to bring the bags which will come during the week. We can muster 150 to 200. We will settle and be at peace in about a month. We are sure of success. Don't expect assistance from the soldiers and the barracks, but if they do we will do as the usual. We hope to have it settled by this time next month.”

After this sentence followed some writing in cypher, which of course is unreadable. On this letter being received by the police authorities in London, Sergt. Langley was despatched to Berwick-upon-Tweed. On his arrival he found that the statement relative to the armoury was minutely and particularly correct, and that the formidable garrison of 13 was the number of soldiers who guarded it. After receiving his communication from London, the Mayor, Mr. James Purves, immediately convened a meeting of the magistrates to take steps to protect the armoury This meeting was attended by the commander of the armoury and also the commander of the gunboat, and measures were promptly carried out which entirely removed any apprehension that might arise as to any Fenian attack. The matter, of course, although for reasons of public safety it was kept as quiet as possible, eventually oozed out and created a great excitement in the old town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. The arms have now been all sent from Berwick to a place of safety.

A longer account appeared in the Berwick Journal 11 October 1867 which included an update on the location of the arms. The War Office had ordered them to be taken to Tynemouth Castle for security but this order was countermanded when it was discovered that the arms had already been served to the Volunteers and were now in their homes.

One outcome of the attacks, proposed or otherwise, was that permission was granted by the Secretary of State, for the Berwick Borough Police Force to be supplied with firearms, as in other towns. The arms were to be kept in the Lock Up, in the safe reserved for stolen property, and that no person was to have access to the safe save the Superintendent. It is not stated what the firearms consisted of or how many were provided.

The Superintendent also asked for one additional Police Officer to enable him to make adequate arrangements for safety. After serious consideration the Watch Committee recommended that an additional man be appointed and asked the Mayor to call a Special Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 22 October to sanction the appointment. From the Watch Committee minutes of 24 October 1867, it would seem that the Council agreed to the appointment of a policeman for a three month contract only.

Francis Burnett was appointed 4 November 1867 and left the service 11 February 1868. No explanation was given for him leaving but that was not unusual prior to 1870; his contract may have only been for three months.

In December the Committee and Justices considered a Home Office circular concerning the desirability of enrolling Special Constables in preparation for any disturbances that might arise during the winter. The Superintendent of Police stated that although he believed that there existed in the Town a number of Fenian sympathisers, he did not expect any trouble. It was agreed therefore, that no further steps should be taken but the Superintendent was to remain vigilant and to convey any concerns to the Mayor. No further mention of the Fenians appears in the Watch Committee minutes in the following months. It would be interesting to know how often the Police firearms were made use of.

Sources:

BA: NC2-3 Berwick Police Service Index 1845 - 1920; BA/P/1/3 Berwick Borough Works and Watch Committees Meetings Minutes 1866 – 1877

Morpeth Herald 12 October 1867; Berwick Journal 11 October 1867

The Irish Story, the Fenians <https://www.theirishstory.com/2017/03/07/the-fenians-an-overview/>

Julie Gibbs

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK, PRINCESS OF WALES



Having come across correspondence in the Archive regarding Caroline of Brunswick, Princess of Wales and the Guild, and knowing that there was an acrimonious relationship between herself and her husband, the Prince Regent (the future George IV), I looked in the relevant Guild book and found this letter which

seems to confirm that the borough supported her. This was not the case throughout the entire population.

Guild Minute Book, 20 April 1813

May it please your Royal Highness We his Majesty's loyal Subjects the Mayor, Bailiffs and Burgesses of the Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed beg leave to assure your Royal Highness that we have beheld with the deepest regret the Retirement in which your Royal Highness has for so long a time lived while the most malicious insinuations were levelled against your Royal Highness's Virtue Life and Honour and to add to the measure of your sufferings all Intercourse with your Royal Daughter was nearly prohibited this of itself would have been sufficient to have filled our hearts with the most painful Anguish because it was tearing asunder all those ties of natural Affection which for the wisest and best of purposes our merciful Creator has impressed on the hearts of his Creatures.

All these accumulated Distresses you long supported with the Fortitude of a Christian and a Magnanimity worthy of your exalted station until repeated Insults rendered silent Resignation no longer a Virtue and with that commanding Dignity which conscious Innocence can alone inspire you demanded a Trial according to the Laws of your Country so that your base Accusers might have a full and fair Opportunity to prove what they had so long and so often promulgated.

This has if possible raised you in our Estimation To have done less would have been unworthy of your exalted character and more you could not do it is with Inexpressible pressure and satisfaction that we now join our Congratulations with those of our fellow Subjects on your Escape from so dangerous a Conspiracy. The United Voice of the Nation proclaims your Innocence and the envenomed tongue of Calumny is made to retire to its dark abode.

Our united prayers shall be that you may long continue to fill the exalted Station in which you are placed that you may long enjoy the Affectionate Attachment to your Royal Daughter and practise all those Virtues which do so conspicuously shine forth in the conduct of your Royal Highness and which can alone give a never failing Lustre to Royalty with that benign and condescending Affability which will cause you long to live in the hearts and affections of a free and loyal People.

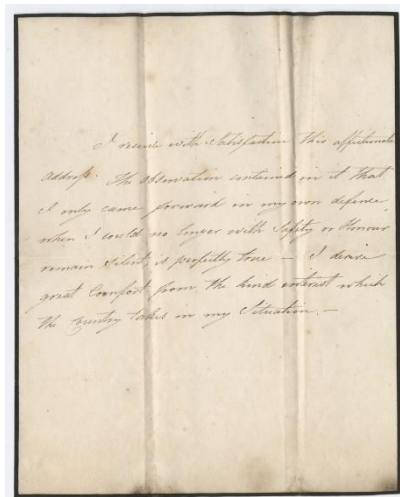
Given under our Common Seal the 22nd day of April in the 53^d. year of His Majesty's Reign.

Ordered that the said Address be fairly copied on Vellum by the Town Clerk and that the Corporation's Seal be affixed thereto.

Resolved that Colonel Allan and Lieut. Colonel St. Paul our present Representatives in Parliament be requested to present the Address of the Guild to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales at such time and in such manner as Her Royal Highness may order.

In reply, the Guild received this card which was found amongst the miscellaneous correspondence. It is an undated card of thanks (edged in black) and although not signed is believed to be from the Princess, possibly in her hand :

I receive with Satisfaction this affectionate Address. The Observation contained in it that I only came forward in my own defence when I could no longer with Safety or Honour remain Silent is perfectly true. I derive great Comfort from the kind interest which the Country takes in my Situation.



A card of thanks edged in black Ref: BA/B10/12/38

It would be fascinating to know if this card was actually signed by the Princess of Wales.

Irene Budworth

THATCH INN BERWICK'S OLDEST PUB?



The Thatch in Tweedmouth's West End is reputed to be over 300 year old and indeed workmen building the Old Bridge of the 1620's are supposed to have drank there and had their wages paid there. While no archival evidence, so far, has been found to prove this, yet it was used by the labourers and craftsmen building the Royal Border Bridge of the early 1850s, and later the New Bridge of the 1920s.

It was the last thatched house in town, when, in October 1886, it suffered an extensive fire. It's description after the fire indicates the Inn's antiquity: *'the Thatch with its kitchen fireplace similar to those of baronial strongholds and with its low ceilings and beams running the length of the room, was a wreck'*. According to the 1850s Directories, the Inn was called either The Thatch House or Thatched House. The Inn's present appearance followed the fire, when it was rebuilt without its thatch. The only evidence remaining of its antiquity is the surviving mounting block outside the pub –surviving from the days when it catered for travellers on horseback.

Another interesting side of the Thatch's history is that for over 100 years, the landlords of the Inn were the Heslop family, the last member of that family (Mary Eleanor Heslop) retiring in 1940. Immediately before her, Rachel Agnes Heslop had been the licensee from 1903 to 1939.

See Rev Henderson's History of Tweedmouth for a description of the pub's history.

Bob Steward

BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS



Berwick Advertiser, 23 August 1872

THE ANTI-GAME-LAW CIRCULAR

We have to hand No.1 of the Organ of the Anti-Game-Law league, full of literary powder and shot, the leaguers having resolutely made up their mind to make a “bag” of the perplexing Game-Laws. The repeal of these laws is looked upon as a dead certainty; for we are expressly told in the prefatory notice that this is to be the “final assault.” A “great national movement” is to be organised, and on the forthcoming long nights the people are to be educated in the pros and contras of the game question. Regarding the articles contained in the first number of the Circular we may state that they are well written, pointed in argument, and logical in their conclusion.

Berwick Advertiser, 23 August 1872

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE IN BERWICKSHIRE

A few months ago it was our very pleasing duty to report that this grievous malady had all but disappeared from among the flocks and herds in Berwickshire. Of late, however, the disease has been considerably on the increase, and now it has assumed rather alarming proportions, there being no fewer than 110 places in the county where stock are reported to be suffering from the disorder. The returns show that during the week ending the 10th inst., 1949 fresh attacks were reported, which, with 1731 cases left over from the preceding week made a total of 3680 animals affected. Of these 842 had recovered before the close of the week, 2 had died, and 2636 were left ill, 2364 of which were sheep, 451 cattle, and 10 swine. The disease had appeared in 40 new places during the week.

Carole Pringle



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!