



# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 111 – FEBRUARY 2022

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 25th March 2022

Friends AGM at 7pm followed by “The Archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle”. Talk by Christopher Hunwick. **Note venue is William Elder Building, Castlegate**

Thursday 31st March

What did the Guild know? Politics and Information in late 18<sup>th</sup> century Berwick. Online talk by Dr Ian Harris starting at 7pm. Book via Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/northumberland-archives-30770439808>

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Community Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday 29th March

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

Tuesday 26th April

Visit to John Muir's Birthplace and Museum, Dunbar

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bell View Resource Centre**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 23rd March

Border Smuggling: Graeme Watson

Wednesday 27th April

Milling in Northumberland: Nick Jones

Wednesday 25th May

Famous Gardens in Northumberland: Geoff Hughes

### **BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 9th March

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

Friday 25th March

The Villas of the Lake District: Dr Adam Menuge

Wednesday 13th April

AGM and Presentation: Julian Munby of the Historic Towns Trust. A proposal to produce a historic map of Berwick focusing on a particular period which is still to be chosen

## **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 16th March	Lowick Races and Feast 1830s to 1930s: Julie Gibbs & Lowick Heritage Group
Wednesday 20th April	AGM at 6.45pm. Trajan's Mael Coluim- Interpreting Sueno's Stone: James Bruce
Wednesday 18th May	Berwick's Maritime Story: Derek Sharman

## **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 7th March	The Archaeology of the Victoria Cross: Andrew Marriott
Monday 4th April	Circular lives: Investigating later prehistoric roundhouse settlements and agricultural practices: Tanja Romankiewicz
Monday 9th May	Excavations at Bollihope Common, Co. Durham: Rob Young
Monday 6th June	Cresswell Pele Tower: from Reivers and Ruin to Restoration: Barry Mead.

## **BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bowsden Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 7th March	Berwick Barracks through three centuries: Joe Lang
Monday 4th April	Louisa Waterford and the Mystery of the Labyrinth: Jacqueline Kurio
Monday 2nd May	Gardening in Roman Britain: Lindsay Allason-Jones

## CHIRNSIDE HISTORY GROUP

**Venue: Waterloo Dining Room**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 21st March	Rise & Fall of Roxburgh: Christine Henderson
Monday 18th April	Building Berwick Town Hall: Jim Herbert
Monday 16th May	Gardening in Roman Britain: Lindsay Allason Jones
Monday 20th June	Outing TBA

## COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Leet Room, Coldstream Community Centre.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 3rd March	Votes for Women in South East Scotland 1870 – 1920: David McLean. Please note this meeting is starting at 2pm.
Thursday 7th April	AGM at 6.45pm. The Indian Mutiny: Lt Col Malcolm McVittie, TBC
Thursday 12th May	An Eyemouth Fishing Family at War: William Collin
Thursday 2nd June	Summer Field Trip-Longridge Towers: Stuart Bankier

## DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 23rd March	The Eyemouth Fish Teind Riots of 1861; Norrie McLeish
Wednesday 27th April	Four Short Talks on local historical topics: Members and Guests evening

## GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 9th March

Churches of Northumberland: Peter Regan

Wednesday 13th April

Iron Age Northumberland and the  
Excavations at Hunting Hall, Lowick (and  
AGM)

## LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP

**Venue: Lowick Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 14th March

The Prehistoric Farm at Hunting Hall, The  
Next Chapter: Paul Langdale

Monday 11th April

Playlet: Two Hundred Years of Lowick  
Lime: Julie Gibbs with Cast

## NORHAM AND LADYKIRK HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Norham Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 14th March

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

Monday 9th April

Flodden, meet at 2.30pm: Bows and Bills:  
Rusty Bodkins, Suitable for children

Monday 9th May

A Berwick Boyhood between the Wars –  
the Memoirs of Jock Wilson: Elisabeth  
Wilson

Monday 13th June

James Hutton, the Father of Geology:  
Denise Walton

## **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP**

**Meetings online. For link to zoom please email [rowan2021@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rowan2021@hotmail.co.uk) in plenty of time!**

Saturday 19th March

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

## **TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Crookham Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 2nd March

Last of our Zoom Talks, starting at 7.30pm. Transforming Bede's World: a journey in about 30 years of experimental archaeology at Jarrow Hall: Dr Marco Romeo Pitone. The registration link will be circulated a few days before the talk.

Wednesday 6th April

April AGM and Mardon : Richard Carlton

Wednesday 4th May

Belief in the North East; topic TBA

Wednesday 1st June

History of Textiles: Mike Oliver

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

February is fast disappearing and hopefully we can soon enjoy longer days. It has been as busy as ever at the Record Office for all the staff. We have continued to be open two days a week, still working under restrictions but hopefully this will start to ease for us in the next couple of months.

It's hasn't been long since the last newsletter but we have made progress on some of our projects. Work is continuing on the Bamburgh Churchyard Survey. The volunteers have checked most of the inscriptions now and are starting research on the individuals mentioned on the gravestones. This is throwing up some fascinating

stories with links all over the world. The survey has also shown how much gravestones can deteriorate in 25 years as many inscriptions we could read originally are now illegible.

Although the Twixt Thistle and Rose volunteers have not been able to meet as a group, some of them have been coming in on our open days. In addition, Carole and I have been busy editing and uploading their work into the electronic catalogue. There are now over 14,000 entries for the collection in CALM and recently we have uploaded additional parchment deed entries, convictions at Berwick Petty Sessions, petitions to the Guild and some additional police posters. These are all name rich sources.

Work on the Photo Centre collection continues. At the moment, Cameron is scanning 1970s images as we are intending to publish another book this year. If you would like to help us with the research for this, do let us know. In addition, Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust has just obtained some grant funding, with additional support from the Friends to employ someone to work on the collection 2 days a week. We are hoping to have someone in post in the next couple of months. There will be a further update in the next newsletter.

Finally, I have been giving a number of talks recently and most of them have been in person which is a welcome change. I've spoken to Berwick History Society; Norham and Ladykirk History Society, Belford History Society and Lowick Heritage Group on various topics including Irregular Border Marriages and Ford at the time of the Waterfords. I have also given two online talks about Archives and Creative Writing to a national group of U3A members. Life in the Record Office is never dull!

*Linda Bankier*

## **CAN YOU HELP US?-PLATINUM JUBILEE TIMELINE, 1952-2022**

As part of the Archives work for the Platinum Jubilee, we would like to create a timeline of events in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal from 1952 to 2022. We want to include royal visits but also events which were important for the town. For example, when did Jus Rol open and close here ; when did the Barracks close and when did it open as a Museum; when were the Baptist and Church of Scotland churches demolished. If you can provide us with any facts, please e-mail them to us at [berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk) . We would like to gather at least one

event for each year – a tall order but I’m sure it is possible. So, put on your thinking caps on and see what you can up with, even if it is something fairly recent.

*Linda Bankier*

## **ROYAL PROCLAMATION AND CORONATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

*As 2022 is the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee year, I thought I would look back through the Berwick Advertiser to see how these events were reported in Berwick :*

### **BERWICK ADVERTISER, 14 FEBRUARY 1952:**

On the stroke of noon on Friday officials mounted a Union Jack. The buzz of conversation from the hundreds of people gathered round was silenced, and in a clear voice, Mr R B Davison, the Town Clerk read the proclamation announcing Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary the new Queen....

As the Civic party walked to the dais, a detachment of the King’s Own Scottish Borderers, under the command of Lieutenant R Grant, gave the Royal salute – the present arms. The halberd carried by the Sergeant at Mace, S McKnight was draped in black and the Mayor, Sheriff and Town Clerk wore black rosettes. The fixed bayonets gleamed brightly as the Civic leaders stepped on to the dais and as the trumpeters of the Regimental Band sounded a flourish the crowds pressed close in a semi circle around the platform.

Children brought to the Town Hall by their teachers were at the front. Behind them stood women, many of them in black, some of them with their shopping bags, some with children in arms. There were many men and a few of them had paused on their homeward walk to hear the historic proclamation.

Then as Lieutenant Grant gave the command “Borderers slope arms” the crowd hushed. Many faces showed traces of emotion as the proclamation was read. Then, as the trumpeters blew a second fanfare the Union Jack fluttered proudly from the Town Hall flagstaff. As soldiers and civilians removed their headdresses the Mayor called for three cheers for Her Majesty. The tension was broken at the end of cheering as one youngster’s voice carried on long after the others. Tense faces became more relaxed for a few moments but became solemn again as the band played for the first time in 51 years “God Save the Queen”.

And at five minutes past twelve it was all over. The Civic Party returned to the Town Hall and the crowds dispersed – to mourn the passing of a beloved King and to offer a true deep hearted affectionate loyalty to their young Queen.



*Needless to say, it did not go as smoothly as this all sounds in Berwick. There was also this article on the same page !*

### **PROCLAMATION CROWD HAD TO MAKE WAY FOR FIRE ENGINE**

Crowds gathered in Marygate for the Proclamation ceremony, and the KOSB Regimental Band on parade outside the Town Hall had to move aside quickly only a few minutes before the ceremony was due to commence. Berwick Fire Brigade had been summoned to a fire at Dodds' grocery shop and café in High Street

And while the Proclamation was being read, firemen were using a hose reel to quell the outbreak which had started in a first floor corridor. A short circuit of an electrical cable had set a gas pipe alight. As the lead piping melted the spark ignited the escaping gas and the floor boards caught fire. The staff of the Oriental Café tackled the outbreak with an extinguisher until the Brigade arrived and only slight damage was caused.

While the firemen were at work, café services went on uninterrupted and diners entering and leaving the room were able to do so without trouble.

*The actual Coronation took place the following year and I found this rather nice report of this present to the children- does anyone remember this or have the box ?*

### **Berwick Advertiser, 4 June 1953**

#### **CHOCOLATE GIFT TO CHILDREN**

More than 600 souvenir bars of chocolate were handed over to under fives in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal in the space of five hours on Monday. At three centres – the Town Hall, the Mitchell Memorial Hall and the Old School – mothers, most of them with their kiddies by their side, formed a steady procession as they called to collect the town's Coronation gift to the infants.

Councillors - and one Alderman - were on duty to hand over the chocolate in its special Coronation box. They checked huge lists of names and marked off hundreds of green ration books during the day.

On duty at Berwick where close on 200 children received the chocolate were Councillors E D Mackay; Councillor Mrs I Cairns; Councillor J S Simpson and Councillor T Scott.

At Tweedmouth where the total of 320 under fives were easily the largest. Councillors D Storar, C Crosthwaite, H Mitchell and J Toner were on duty. At Spittal Mrs Price deputised for her husband Councillor J H Price whilst Alderman Mrs M F H Wilkinson and Councillor F Swinney were also present. There, 78 children received their gift.

Many went to the three centres to find their names were not on the official list. But it made no difference. At the end the kiddies received their chocolate and went home happy.

*Linda Bankier*

## **THE FRIENDS AGM AND THE SPRING LECTURE**

After two years in which Covid-19 restrictions impeded us from holding meetings in person, we are planning that our AGM and Spring Lecture will take place this year on Friday 25th March, at 7.00pm in the William Elder Building's Conference Room. We hope that members will feel able to join us on this occasion and appreciate in particular the opportunity to hear a live lecture. Our speaker will be the archivist Christopher Hunwick, who will speak about "The Archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle", with particular reference to material pertaining to North Northumberland. (We shall arrange chairs to allow distanced seating as much as possible. Face coverings are optional within the meeting rooms; Government advice suggests the wearing of face coverings in enclosed spaces when coming into contact with people you do not usually meet.)

In parallel with these plans, the FBDMA Committee has decided that voting on the business of the 28th AGM should be again conducted by email and by post in advance of the actual meeting. There are two reasons for this. Uncertainty about the future pattern of Covid-19 infections leaves some risk that restrictions on public meetings may be re-introduced, and it is therefore prudent to ensure that the necessary business of the AGM can be completed independently of the physical meeting if necessary. Secondly, it allows a larger number of members to participate in the voting than is customary at the conventional meetings.

Therefore a Voting Form is being distributed with the February 2022 Newsletter, and members are invited to record their wishes concerning the Minutes of the 27th AGM, the Annual Report and the Treasurer's report for 2021, and the elections to the Committee.

There is also a motion to the AGM seeking approval for an increase in subscription rates for membership from 2023. There has been no increase in subscriptions since 2011, when the Individual rate was set at £7.00 and the Family rate at £10.00. Since then the regular expenses of the Friends have increased with the establishment and maintenance of the website and the need to have public liability insurance for our activities.

The proposed new rates are:

Individual membership	£10.00
Family membership	£15.00
Institutional membership	£15.00 (unchanged)

We shall be grateful if members will return their voting forms for these proposals, EITHER on paper delivered to the Record Office, OR online by email attachment, by **Friday 18 March 2022**. (The digital voting form is sent as a Word document to enable editing and resaving.)

The returned voting forms will be verified and counted by Carole Pringle, and she will submit the results to Lord Joicey, President of the Friends. Please address any queries you may have to [info@berwickfriends.org.uk](mailto:info@berwickfriends.org.uk), or by post to FBDMA c/o the Record Office. Thank you for your support.

John Spiers, Secretary

## **THE STORY OF RALPH DODDS & SON Ltd., Berwick-upon-Tweed**

*Grocer and Provision Merchant, Tea and Coffee Dealer, Italian Warehouseman and Café Proprietor*

Ralph Dodds was born in Norham on the 31st May 1812. His father George Dodds was an innkeeper in the village. Ralph obviously had ambition from a young age and left Norham to serve his apprenticeship with Mr Sanderson of West Street, Berwick. With further ambition, after 3 years he went to London to make something of himself with only 10 shillings in his pocket. He didn't stay long in London and he returned north to Newcastle. Ralph was a very determined individual, as in 1838 he established his own business. On 17th February 1838 Ralph Dodds announced in the Gateshead Observer that he was opening a Tea, Coffee, Cocoa and Spice Warehouse at 6 Grainger Street, Newcastle.

Whilst in Newcastle, he met and married Barbara Wright in July or September 1839. Barbara was born in North Shields around 1816. Although his business thrived in Newcastle, owing to poor health he moved back to Berwick in November 1841. He took premises at 49 Marygate where he continued the business he had started in Newcastle.

Together Ralph and Barbara had a large family of 4 sons and 5 daughters. His eldest son, George William Dodds (1841-1929) went to London to work as a wholesale tea dealer and was partner in the firm Tuke, Mennell and Dodds. His second son Ralph (1847-1900) also went into the same trade in London and was a partner in the firm Lowcock and Dodds. It was his youngest son Archibald Jack Dodds (1856-1935) who would play a key role in the business in Berwick.

During the 19th and into the early 20th century, Berwick, like every other town, had a large number of independent grocers' shops all vying for trade. Dodds used advertisements in the Berwick Advertiser to tempt customers to his 'Tea Warehouse'. He even harked back to his roots in Norham naming one of his tea blends 'Norham Castle'. With opposition from other grocers, the opportunity for expansion must have been difficult, but over time he grew his business and gained a good reputation within the town.

Initially, the family lived over the shop at 49 Marygate but their change of address, which can be followed through the census, supports this idea of Dodds' business prospering. From Marygate the family moved to St. Mary's Place and then St. Mary's Villa which he had built between St. Mary's Place and Scott's Place (now occupied by part of the B&M Bargains' store).

By 1887 the business was trading under the name of 'Ralph Dodds and Son', his youngest son Archibald took full control of the business in 1885. It was Archibald's hand which seems to have steered the business through its biggest period of growth. Dodds moved to larger premises which incorporated 19, 21 and 23 Marygate, making them one of, if not the largest grocers' businesses in Berwick.

On the 10th September 1891 Ralph Dodds died at his home. His obituary in the Berwick Advertiser states that he had been in poor health for the past 3 years and in the 1891 census, a sick nurse is listed as being resident at St. Mary's Villa. His obituary also gives a picture of Dodds as a very charitable man. On New Year's Eve every year he gave the inmates of the Workhouse an annual treat of tea and spiced loaf, a tradition he maintained for 30 years. He was a religious man, very involved in the Baptist Church in Castlegate and also conducted classes on the study of the bible in the Greenses Mission Hall. He also took a keen interest in the building of the village hall in Norham.

It was under Archibald's tenure that the business branched out, opening a number of cafes. In Berwick, he opened the 'Oriental Café' at 21 Marygate in 1891 and the 'Kenya Cafe' at 94 Marygate in 1926. The name 'Kenya' can still be seen on the doorstep today. Further afield he opened the 'Bingo Café' in Dunbar in 1901, the 'Green Café' in Hawick in 1907/8 and the 'Oak Café' in North Berwick in 1920. Ralph Dodds and Son became a limited company in 1912 with Adam Winlaw and

William Young being co-opted to the directorate. Young only retired in 1953 after more than 50 years with the firm.

Archibald died in 1935 aged 80 at his home 'Murton Villa' in Castle Terrace. His obituary states that he was a good and well respected businessman and also gives details of his exploits as a sportsman. Archibald was also a member of Berwick Town Council and was elected Sheriff in 1898 and Mayor in 1902.

The business was then carried on by his son Ralph Herbert Dodds. Ralph was born on 11th February 1882. He served his apprenticeship as a grocer with a firm in Edinburgh before joining the family business in 1901. During the First World War he saw action in France with the Kings Own Scottish Borderers. He held the rank of captain and was awarded the Military Cross. As well as his business acumen, like his father, Ralph was renowned for his sporting ability in the fields of cricket, tennis and angling. He lived at Avenue House, Palace Street with his wife Agnes, daughter Jill and son John who also worked in the family firm. Ralph died in Berwick Infirmary on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1951. He left an estate worth £13385. 17s 2d (about £500,000 today).

John Waitwith Grierson Dodds took over the management shortly before his father's death. The business may have been struggling at this point as his time at the helm was to be short-lived. On the 11th March 1954 the Berwick Advertiser ran an article entitled 'Old Established Berwick Firm of Grocers Closes Down'. This brought to an end a business which had lasted 116 years, started by an ambitious young man who was succeeded by four generations of his family.

The premises at 19, 21 and 23 Marygate were taken over by the Tweedside Industrial Co-Op. The Co-Op must have bought the premises lock stock and barrel as at this point adverts said that Dodds' teas and coffees were still being sold and the café at 21 Marygate was still in operation, the only difference being 'you will receive a dividend on your purchase'. The Kenya Café was closed and sold to Robert Scott early in 1954. In June 1955 the company of 'Ralph Dodds and Son Ltd.' entered voluntary liquidation. John Waitwith Grierson Dodds died in 2009. The premises occupied by the business were demolished in the 1960s, but the site is currently occupied by Sports Direct.

Sources: Berwick Advertiser 11th September 1891, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1935, 12th July 1951, 11th March 1954; Gateshead Observer, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1838; Census 1841-1911

*Cameron Robertson*

## BERWICK BY GASLIGHT

As a volunteer at Berwick Archives, I have been cataloguing the correspondence of the Berwick Board of Health which would have been set up after the 1848 Public Health Act (1) The Board was responsible for the street gas lighting in Berwick. I am not sure when the first lamps were lit but they were in place and functioning by 1853.

The Boards of Health and their remit were relatively new, and huge, new changes were taking place, leading to correspondence between towns seeking information about the installation of sewers, drains, water supply and gas lighting. The format was usually a list of questions which the Clerk to the Berwick Board, James Weddell, answered. During 1855, Berwick was contacted by Tynemouth, Reading, and in 1856, by Birmingham about street lighting. In each case the query is from the Clerk to the Local Board of Health. (LBH)

At the time, Berwick covered 66 acres and had four and a half miles of streets. The distance between the lamps varied from 25 yards to 50 yards according to the requirements of different streets. In 1855 Berwick had 145 street lamps, Tweedmouth 29 and Spittal 13. The cost of running the lamps was £1-19-10 in Berwick, £2 in Tweedmouth and £2-17-0 in Spittal. The difference in price was because there were two Gas Companies in the area. Only one had gas pipes laid throughout Tweedmouth and Spittal. Both had mains laid in Berwick itself. The Board of Health was paying 6/6 per 1000 cubic feet of gas but by 1856 this had gone up to 8/-.

The coal used to produce the gas was parrot or cannal coal (2). In 1856 the price of the coal was £2 per ton. However, James Weddell says that the usual price is 20/- per ton. The sudden jump in price is not explained.

The two gas companies paid for the pipes. However, the LBH paid if they required a lamp in a place where the gas board did not have mains in position. The lamps were maintained and repaired at the cost of the LBH. This involved lighting and extinguishing, repairing and painting.

The lamps were lit at sunset. One half of them were extinguished at 1am. The remainder were on until sunrise. For five nights each month at the time of the full moon no lamps were lit. Presumably if it was cloudy, it was pitch dark! There were also no lamps lit during the months of July and August. Perhaps, in these days of global warming there is a message here. James Weddell had not heard of any public dissatisfaction about the street lighting but the local Superintendent of Police

was “decidedly of the opinion the more and the better the lighting the better it was for the prevention of crime”.

The gas pipes were in place before the sewers and water pipes were put in. There seems to have been little cooperation between the contractors doing the sewers and the gas boards as they were constantly digging up and damaging the gas pipes. This is rather strange when the Board of Health organised both the sewer and water contractors and had contracts with the Gas Companies. Were there no plans to follow? The Gas companies were certainly long suffering. Almost every street in Berwick had leaking gas pipes caused by the laying of sewers and water pipes. In September 1853 it took four days to find and fix a two inch pipe which had been leaking gas for ninety six hours! The Gas Companies regularly put in bills to the Board of Health for damages and loss of gas – and sometimes had to wait a long time for payment!

There is more work to be done on the LBH documents and it is of great interest. I have admiration for the Berwick Board of Health and the way they tackled the huge challenge of improving public health and raising the money to do the work. Berwick must have been a progressive town. I also have great sympathy for the Gas Light Companies and their constant search for leaks caused by the laying down of sewers and water pipes.

*(1). The 1848 Public Health Act was not mandatory but it enabled towns to set up Boards of Health and carry out improvements. The job of cleaning the town up and providing clean water supplies and sewers was immense and expensive. But that is another story.*

*(2). Cannel coal was called Parrot coal in Scotland. It was a bituminous coal burning with a bright flame. It crackled when burning - like a parrot. It is not suitable for domestic fires, coke or tar. It was relatively scarce and expensive and was used for making gas. It produced 8,000 – 15,000 cubic feet per ton. I do not know where Berwick sourced this coal but there were seams in Fife. The Victorians used it for making vases and ornaments and even pieces of furniture as it was hard, compact and could be cut into large slabs.*

Sources: Berwick Archives E29/2 Berwick Board of Health Correspondence

*Heather Pentland*

# SNIPPETS FROM ENROLLED DEEDS

## BA/G/2/10/46

### FIRE INSURANCE POLICIES

Quite a few of the deeds are mortgage deeds, where a property is conveyed as security for a loan. Mortgage deeds from the mid 1760s often included the assignment of an insurance policy against loss by fire from the mortgagor to the mortgagee. The deed gives the name of the Insurance Company and the policy number. For example, the Deed of Release (Mortgage) dated 9 August 1765 from James Jaffrey of Berwick upon Tweed Burgess and cooper and his wife Elizabeth to James Burnett of Berwick upon Tweed Esq., witnesses the conveyance of a burgage or tenement on the East side of Wester Lane in consideration of £100, with a proviso for redemption on the payment by James Burnett to James Jaffrey the principal sum of £100 and interest on 9 August 1766. James Jaffrey also assigns to James Burnett an Insurance Policy of the Society of the Sun Fire Office in London, (dated 16 January 1765, Policy No.216325) whereby the premises are insured from fire for the sum of £200, to have for his own use but subject to be void on payment of the said £100 and interest.

*Deed Reference No. BA/G/2/10/46/377*

### MYSTERY SOCIETY

In a Deed of Release dated 18 January 1766, Adam Lough of Berwick, victualler and his wife Isabella, in consideration of £80, grant and release to Alexander Cowen of Berwick, mason, William Scott of Berwick, victualler, William Crow of Berwick blacksmith, William Pattison of Berwick, carpenter, Thomas Button of Berwick, plaisterer [plasterer] and Jordan Evans of Berwick, Burgess a new built messuage, burgage or tenement on the North side of Crossgate, together with all grates, stove grates, dressers, shelves, closets, conceal beds and other fixtures in or about the premises. To hold upon Trust that they, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns shall remain possessed and interested of and in the same for the use of themselves and every other person who now or after shall become members of a Society who now assemble at the said William Scott's house in the Easter Lane. And shall lease the premises and apply the rents and profits for such purposes as a majority of the Society members shall direct. I wonder what the Society was?

*Deed Reference No. BA/G/2/10/46/380*

### CHANGES TO STREET NAMES

CHURCH STREET: The first use of Church Street rather than Churchgate or Soutergate is in a deed dated 4 September 1755 (BA/G/2/10/46/338)



WOOLMARKET: The first use of Woolmarket is in a deed dated 13 March 1761 where the property is described as fronting a street called Crossgate otherwise Woolmarket on the West. (BA/G/2/10/46/360), although Crossgate continues to be used in some deeds after this date.

*Julia Day*

## A HISTORY OF THE BERWICK-UPON-TWEED CLUB SCENE

### 'The Golden Years: 1960s & 70s'

In the early 1960's Berwick's pubs became places of entertainment for the town's youth who now had money to spend – led by the example of the Bonarsteads pub, Tweedmouth mentioned in the last Newsletter.

Indeed, the Berwick Advertiser in December 1971 best reported the change in drinking habits: *'In recent years, the country has seen a revolution in drinking habits. More and more women and young people can be seen in any public house and they are no longer satisfied with the sawdust and spittoons image which has been prevalent in the past. Increasingly higher standards are demanded from pub owners and managers, and fittings and furnishings must be tasteful and well designed'*.

This was the same year that the new tenant-managers of the Berwick Arms modernised the premises into a large lounge and bar with bench seating around the room and mock antique lighting around the walls – ideal for holding entertainments.

A few years previously, in 1965-66, the Brown Bear, was refurbished with *'modern décor and bright lights'*, while much emphasis was made on the formica for the bar top. *'The linoleum in the bar is in the 1966 style and brightens up the floor'*, as did the *'contemporary wall paper'*, The Berwick Advertiser for December 1965 finished its praises of the refurbishment by describing the pub as *'the ideal place for anyone to take their wife or girlfriend'*

The Old Angel Inn, Marygate, in 1960, was the first Berwick pub to install a juke box. Directly opposite, upstairs in the Brewers Arm's, skiffle and other live groups were performing.

In May 1966, the Red Lion Inn in Spittal was transformed from an ordinary 'local' into *'a smart, ultra-modern discotheque'* with a black décor, a large juke box and dance floor, catering *'mainly for the young people of Berwick'*. Known locally as 'The Disc', it attracted busloads of youngsters from as far away as Ashington. This was an experimental venture by the owners, Vaux Breweries.

Not to be outdone, the hitherto rather staid Corn Exchange became a popular dance hall in the 1960s, with live groups (in November 1962 it was advertising '*Rock, jive or twist to the big beat*'). Similarly, the respectable Kings Arms Hotel, eventually caught up with the times in the 1970s. In 1973 it converted the downstairs of the old Assembly Rooms at the back into the Hunting Lodge, with a long bar (and one of the first themed bars in Berwick with psychedelic lighting. At the time it was supposed to be the longest bar in Berwick.). It was said that that it was the first place in Berwick to serve wine by the glass and was reported by the Berwick Advertiser as '*one of the regular haunts of the younger people of the town in the evenings*'

Not to be outdone by this burgeoning youth culture, Berwick's Mayor, in September 1966, officially opened the Beachcomber in the Magdalene Fields Holiday Camp site (also known as the Stephenson's Campus) which was claimed to be the town's first proper night club with a discotheque dance room seating over 150 on bench and barrel seats. According to the Berwick Advertiser, the Beachcomber was '*something which had been sadly lacking in Berwick for many years*'. The Club had a resident band and used local talent as well as professional entertainers.

Later to be established on the site was the Matterhorn Ballroom, advertising itself in 1969 as '*Swing along at the Matterhorn*'. At roughly the same time the Apollo (Night) Club was set up on the site, which advertised its availability for dances and functions from November to April (ie outside the holiday season). In February 1979 the Apollo Club had a £20,000 facelift which '*transformed it into one of the most sophisticated night-clubs in the area*', according to the Berwick Advertiser. Coloured pulse lights flashed to the beat of the music on the circular dance floor, while dancers were sometimes showered with thousands of bubbles from a bubble machine installed above!

Not to be outdone, Claude Cooper and associates, in 1969, transformed the original Berwick Theatre at the top of Hide Hill into Caesar's Palace, inspired by the same-named night club in Las Vegas. It had a sunken ballroom for 400 dancers (with tables and seating around the ballroom) and various bars around the building with a Roman inspired theme throughout. It also opened with a gambling club called the Regency Club which was the first place in Berwick to serve late meals (until 1.00am). It soon became a well-known venue in the north-east and attracted major cabaret stars and served quality food. It was described as '***London in Berwick***'.

Unfortunately, within a year the club lost its gambling licence under the new 1968 Gaming Act, and the building, in effect became a 'cinema bar' with a bingo licence. In 1973 it was taken over by the Mecca organisation, who later that year were advertising '*Bingo, Beer and Buffet*' with public dancing at weekends and the

Regency Club open in the evenings as a high class lounge and bar. By 1975 Caesar's Palace was promoting its Tiffany's Starlight Rooms '*catering especially for the over 25's*' with licensed bars, music and food.

Mention has been made of the Balfour family's development of the Haggerston Castle camp site in the 1950s, but it was in 1968 that the family developed the site even more, with a new grill restaurant and an enlarged ballroom with a revolving stage in its centre '*the first of its kind to be installed in a country district*'. Dances operated through the week for the caravanners, while at the weekend their numbers were swelled '*by the hundreds of young people from all over the Borders and as far south and north as Newcastle and Edinburgh*'.

During these decades many of the town's sporting clubs expanded their clubhouses to provide social facilities for their younger and more monied members. Thus in 1972, the Rugby Union Club in Scremerston built a new clubhouse with a kitchen, dance floor and stage, plus a main bar and adjoining cocktail lounge. It was reported that these facilities were '*quite magnificent and the envy of many visiting clubs*'

*Bob Steward*

## **BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS**

### **Berwick Advertiser, 23 August 1872**

#### CRICKET- BERWICK v. KELSO

This match was played on the Pier Field on Monday, and resulted in the home club being defeated. The weather was in every way suitable for the game, and the wickets were in splendid order. Berwick went in first, but no stand was made against the good bowling of Pirie and Ross, and although a stronger batting team than usual, they all collapsed for the same score of 43. When Kelso went to the wickets it at first appeared as if they would be disposed of for an equally small score, for 3 wickets were down for 17, but when A. Pirie joined Mr Brown a different complexion was put on the game, and notwithstanding the straight bowling of W. L. Miller, these two were not separated until they had exceeded the Berwick score by 2 runs. M'Leod and Davidson also got double figures, the former carrying out his bat for a well-played 36, and the tenth man was not disposed of till 123 had appeared on the telegraph. The bowling of W. L. Miller was really splendid, indeed we never saw this gentleman bowl better, and 8 of the Kelso wickets fell to his bowling. Berwick did a little better in their second innings, but notwithstanding the good stand made by Mr

Rickett, who got the only double figure on his side, they could not get enough runs to save defeat in an innings, as the score will show Kelso won by an innings and 18 runs. Appended is the score.

### **Berwick Advertiser, 23 August 1872**

#### BERWICK PETTY SESSIONS

**Drunk and Riotous-** Anthony M'Conville, accused last week of an assault on two Roman Catholic priests, but dismissed as no prosecutor appeared, was brought up by the police charged with being drunk and riotous on the 12th inst., and sentenced to pay a fine of 10s with 11s costs, or in default 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour.

### **Berwick Advertiser, 6 September 1872**

#### NORHAM AND ISLANDSHIRE SESSION

**Juvenile Garden Plunders- More Generosity by the Bench-** Three boys respectively named James Rutherford, Oliver Warton, and Robert Warton, all residing in Norham, were charged with stealing a quantity of pears from the garden of Dr Paxton, Norham. Rutherford and Oliver Warton were also charged with vagrancy. Both charges were proved. Warton, P.C. Bell said, had twelve months ago been imprisoned for theft, and he possessed two commitments against Rutherford for 7 days' imprisonment each, for conviction of theft, a few weeks ago. The Magistrates sentenced Rutherford and Robert Warton to be privately whipped, each to receive six lashes. Rutherford was also ordered to be detained in prison for 14 days unless the fine of 15s for previous conviction was not paid. Oliver Warton was fined 5s, which was paid by one of the Magistrates.

*Carole Pringle*