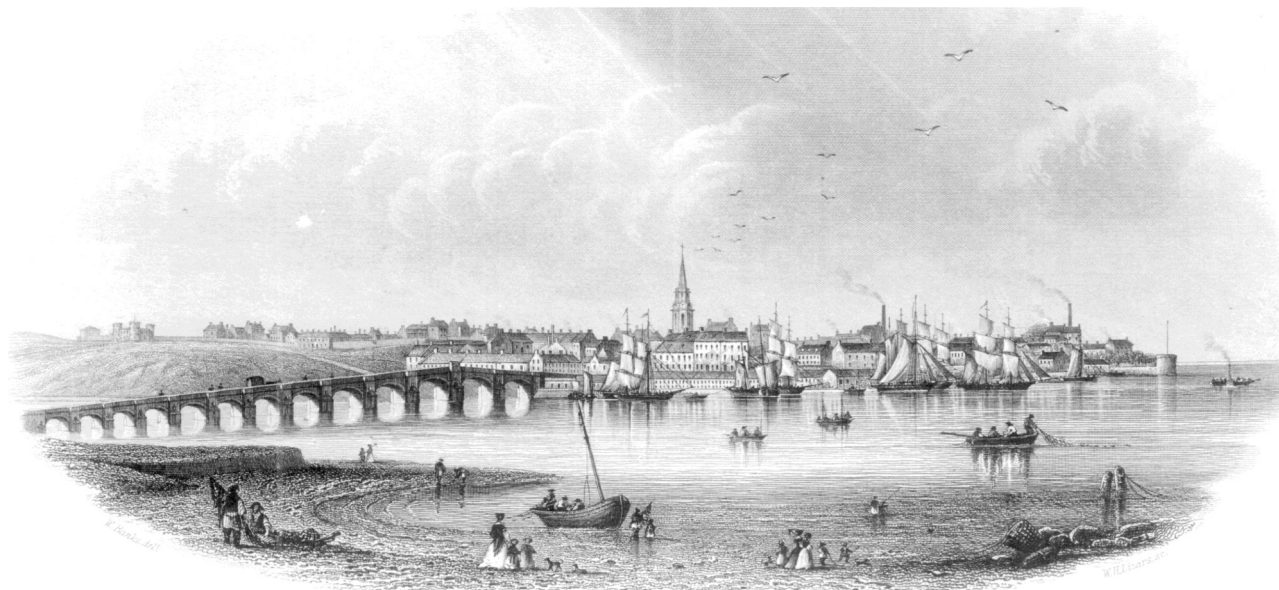


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 124 – JUNE 2025

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2025

10.30-12.30 Family Photos: Berwick Record Office – see article

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August

North Northumberland and its connections with the Far East in the Second World War – exhibition : St Andrew's Wallace Green Church. Times to be confirmed

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>  
September

Berwick Heritage Open Days – further info in next newsletter

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

As most societies do not meet in the summer months, we have only listed those who will have meetings in early September.

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 1st September 2025

"The Romans at Newstead: old and new  
archaeology at Trimontium: Stuart  
Campbell

### **BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bowsden Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 1st September 2025

History of Northumbrian Small Pipes:  
Anthony Robb

### **TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Crookham Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

KOSB memories: Peter McCutcheon

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

It has been all systems go in the Berwick Archives since the last newsletter for one reason and another. We have all been kept very busy. Here's a flavour of what we have been doing on top of our normal day to day work :

**Berwick, Holy Trinity School 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – Thanks to the help of some volunteers, we have been researching the history of the predecessor schools which

make up the present one and sharing that information with the teachers and the children. We have held 2 memory collecting mornings inviting people to bring along any school photos for scanning and also share their memories with us. All this information helped us provide the teachers with information and inspiration for their Writing Week in May when the children created their own art work and writing; experienced life in their school from the Georgian period right through to the 1990s and went on a walk to the former school sites. It all culminated with a Church service in May in the Parish Church where the children presented the school's history and work. This project will continue in the autumn term with some drama work. It has been great working on this and a big thanks to the volunteers who have helped.

**VE Day 80** - As this year marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE, it was important to commemorate this and highlight the local connection. Working with the Maltings and the KOSB we developed a couple of workshops for local schools. Peter McCutcheon (KOSB) and I visited 9 schools and ran a workshop on the Home and War Front from the local perspective – what was it like being a soldier on the front line and also what was it like for children at home with air raids and rationing? In addition, the children all did a dance workshop in the Gymnasium learning 1940s dances. They were all definitely immersed in life at the time!

To support the community and its commemoration, we provided Hillside Lodge with display panels on the War for their VE Day and collated the memories section for the Civic Church Service. Now we are starting to think about VJ and the exhibition we are producing, thanks to a Lottery grant which has been awarded to the Northumberland Archives. If you have any information about North Northumberland residents who were in the Far East during the Second World War, please do get in touch.

**Phipps of Barmoor Collection ( NRO 2372)** - Thanks to a grant given to the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust ( NACT) by the Barmoor Wind Farm, Beth Elliott has catalogued a small estate collection which relates to Samuel Phipps who owned Barmoor estate in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This has been a fascinating project which has led to the creation of an online catalogue ( available on [Online Catalogue - Northumberland Archives](#) ) and brought to light unknown information about the estate at the time. This included the involvement of John Bailey, a well known agricultural improver of the time, in surveying the estate. Beth also gave a talk on her findings at Lowick and there are some blogs on the Northumberland Archives website and an article in this newsletter. This has been a fascinating project which has enabled us to open up the contents of this collection to a wider audience and shown its potential for research.

**Digitally Disrupting the Archives** – throughout the past year the Northumberland Archives has been running this lottery funded project to engage young people outside school with Archives. In North Northumberland we ran a film project in Wooler with the Baden Powell Scouts and the Wooler Drop In. Although the film was made in the summer, we held its premier as part of the Berwick Media, Film and Arts Festival in Berwick at the end of March. This was in the Maltings Cinema at the Barracks – very apt for us as that will eventually become our Archive Store. It was great to see the film on the big screen. To compliment this, Martha, Cameron and I have been running an After School Film Making Club at Glendale Middle School since early March. The pupils have been making a film about the history of the school's site - POW Camp and also then a school. The first edit was shown to the school in June and we are hoping to have it ready for a public screening in September/October at Wooler. We have all learnt a lot about using Go Pros and filming in general!

**Living Barracks Project** - As well as the work on the VE Day Project, the Archives has also been supporting the artists undertaking commissions as part of the Cultural Development Fund element of the project. They are using the archives for inspiration, looking at women, traditional events in Berwick and other topics. Look out for further information in the next couple of months! In the background we are starting to prepare the archives for our eventual move to the Barracks – doing repackaging and ensuring that our electronic accessions database is up to date. This will occupy a lot more of our time in the next couple of years.

**Photographic Work** - The Office has a great photographic resource covering Berwick and beyond through the Photocentre collection and the many other photos we hold. Cameron does a great job in promoting this through our social media channels and over the past couple of months we have worked with the Memory Laners (Alzheimers Music Group) and a Border Links Group introducing them to our photographic collections. We've also put together a slide show and exhibition for Riding of the Bounds and will be preparing something for the Crowning of the Salmon Queen. At the moment Cameron is gathering information and images for his forthcoming exhibition on Photography in Berwick which will open in the Granary Gallery in late October – see his article for an event we are running in early July.

**Berwick Heritage Open Days** - Work on this is ongoing. We are getting together our programme and will have some new venues and other events for this year. Have a look on our website nearer the time but in the meantime. save the dates 12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> September. There will be more information in the next newsletter

**Staffing** - Beth Elliott who worked with us for nearly 3 years left in May to take up a post at the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. Beth ran the Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project and also worked on the Living Barracks Project and much else in the Office. We will all miss her and wish her luck with her new post.

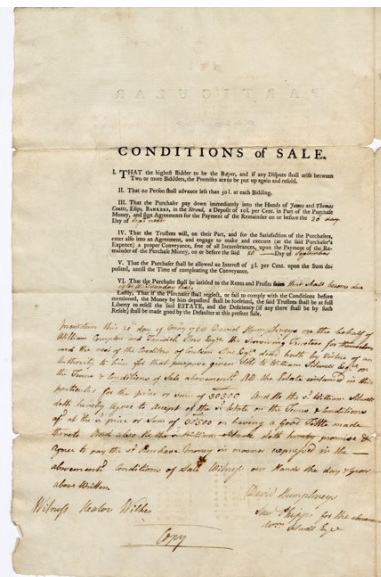
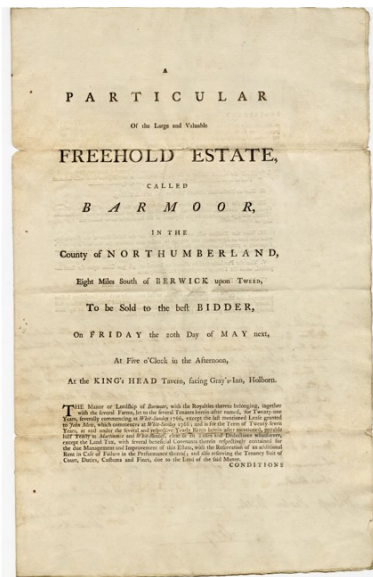
As you can see, life in the Berwick Archives is never dull. We are all always busy with one task or another.

*Linda Bankier, Berwick Archivist*

## THE PHIPPS OF BARMOOR COLLECTION – PART 1

I have now completed cataloguing the Phipps collection at Northumberland Archives, and I recently presented a talk on the findings of the cataloguing project, which gave me a real opportunity to reflect on what I'd been able to find out about Samuel Phipps from the documents in his collection, and this article will detail those findings.

One of the most important aspects of cataloguing an estate collection is a good understanding of the family involved. Ideally the estate owners' birth and death dates, when they owned their property, how they acquired it, who were their ancestors, and did they have any heirs? Interestingly, with this collection, some parts of that information remained hidden, indeed, it wasn't until my talk, when I met a gentleman who had also researched Phipps that I was able to establish a date of birth for Samuel Phipps – in my research, he remained elusive. Samuel Phipps was born in 1733 and died in 1781 making his age at death 48. A search through some local history books gave us the descent of one of Phipps' properties, Barmoor Estate. In the 1912-1915 Berwick Naturalist's Society Book, it states rather mysteriously that Barmoor was 'acquired directly or indirectly' from the representatives of the Bladens, by Samuel Phipps. This implies they were unsure of how Phipps came to own the property. The answer to this question came about in an unexpected place – I was reading a set of sales particulars for Barmoor estate, when I spotted a handwritten note on the second page (see below).



This inconspicuous looking bit of text tells us that Barmoor Estate was purchased by William Sitwell (Phipps' great uncle), from Fenwick Stowe, for £30,500. Today that would be about £2,626,187.25. The note mentions that the transaction was witnessed by Samuel Phipps. In Phipps' will, he notes that he inherited Barmoor from William Sitwell, though it should be noted that Sitwell's will only states that he bequeathed the sum of £10,000 to Phipps, he does not mention the estate. We can at least infer from this that Phipps inherited the estate from Sitwell, though the wills perhaps explain the woolly explanation given in our history book.

Phipps died without issue and Barmoor was inherited by his second cousin, Francis Hurt, who later took on his maternal family name of Sitwell. We also know from some family history research, that in addition to the Sitwells, Phipps was also related to the Resesby family of Ecclesfield, through his maternal line.

Phipps held extensive property, this much is clear from his records and from his will. Much of the land was in Northumberland, including Barmoor, Yeavinger and Coupland, but there was also Ferney Hall in Shropshire, and estates in Yorkshire and Derbyshire amongst others. His main base appears to have been at Lincoln's Inn, Middlesex, where he practiced his business as a barrister, though we have plenty of receipts for travel, showing that he visited his other properties. Examples include these rather lovely hotel receipts (below), for example, which tell us that ale would have cost Phipps 6 pence in North Allerton, but surprisingly only 3 pence in Harrogate!



When I first opened the boxes in this collection, nothing was in any kind of order, so all of this information was very useful to help me to identify how the material should be arranged. I could separate out the material into the various estates, and I could understand why letters from the Sitwells and Reresbys were found in the collection. I could also start to separate out records which related solely to Phipps work as a barrister, and not to his own land holdings.

One of my favourite aspects of this collection was the sheer number of purchase receipts, and the detail they provided about Samuel Phipps as a person. We do tend to focus on the running of estates when looking in these sorts of collections, and it can be easy to forget that we're looking into the history of a real person. These receipts bring Phipps to life and can also tell us about the life of a wealthy gentleman in the late 1700s.

There are documents like this perfumier receipt for 1790-1791 (below left). Phipps died in 1791, so these were his final months, but even at that time he's buying a 'swan down puff', 'powder' and multiple pots of 'pomatum' (used to slick down hair) – fashionable to the end! We also have a wine list, which includes Madeira, a popular wine at the time, but also a 1726 stock vintage wine for £3 and 15 shillings, or £241.80 in today's money, he seems to be a man of expensive tastes.

Saml Phipps Esq  
of W<sup>m</sup> Vale

1790	3 lb Powder	2-9
Oct 7	Bot 8 Potl Pomatum	1-2
	Swan Down Puff	2-6
	Powd Finke	1-2
	2 Jamshirk Wask Brath	1-2
Nov 23	3 lb Powder	2-9
	Bot Pomatum	1-2
Dec 9	3 lb Powder	2-9
20	Bot Pomatum	1-2
	Bot Pomatum	1-2
	Bot Pomatum	1-2
	Bot Pomatum	1-2
Jan 24	3 lb Powder	2-9
	Bot 8 Potl Pomatum	1-2
	2 Girding Leads	1-2
Feb 26	3 lb Powder	2-9
	Bot Pomatum	1-2
Mar 16	Bot Powder	1-2
		<hr/>
		£17 10

April 23  
Rec<sup>d</sup> of the Executors of  
Saml Phipps Esq<sup>r</sup> £17 10  
W<sup>m</sup> Vale

White Port	1784	11 1/2	Shillings
White Port		1 5	Shillings
Sherry	10 June 1784	1 7	Shillings
Port Wine		1 1	Shillings
Calcutta		1 4	Shillings
Siberia		1 4	Shillings
Port Wine		1 11 6	Shillings
Muscadell		1 11 6	Shillings
Medice		2 4	Shillings
Sherry		3 7	Shillings
Claret		2 10	Shillings
Burgundy		3 3	Shillings
Sherry	1786	3 15	Shillings
Sherry		11	Shillings
Sherry		10	Shillings
Sherry		13	Shillings
Sherry		11	Shillings

I found when writing this article that I had more than one article's worth to write on our Mr Phipps, so here ends part one. Do look out for part two in the next newsletter, where I'll build on his expensive tastes, but show a bit more of his charitable nature.

*Beth Elliott*

## **BERWICK FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS**

### **Could your family photos be part of a new exhibition?**

I am busy putting together an exhibition about the history of photography in Berwick which will open at the Granary Gallery in October. The exhibition will include material from Berwick Record Office, the Museum, the Kings Own Scottish Borderer's archive, plus other private collections too. The exhibition will also feature photographs taken by the late Jim Walker.

As part of the exhibition I would love to include images from YOUR own family collections relating to Berwick. I'm sure you all have photos hidden away in shoe boxes and suitcases. These could be portraits taken in studios in the town, snapshots – really I'm looking for anything relating to Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal from 1840–1980!

We're holding a drop in event at Berwick Record Office on **Saturday 5th July, 10.30–12.30**, where you can learn more about the exhibition, share some of your own photos and see some images in our collections. I'll be on hand with the scanner to digitise your photos there and then so you needn't part with them.

This could be your chance to see your family photos on the gallery wall and be part of the telling of Berwick's amazing photographic story! If you can't come along, contact me on [berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk)

*Cameron Robertson*

## **BERWICK MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY UPDATE**

A special meeting of the FBDMA committee was held on 23 June 2025 and attended by Maria Antoniou (Head of Economic Development, Northumberland County

Council) and Kevin Booth (Head of Collections, English Heritage) in order to receive an update on the preparation of the museum collections in the Barracks for inclusion in the museum displays to be created by the Living Barracks project.

Maria Antoniou outlined the background to the project and the stages of consultation which led to NCC's decision to transfer the management of its museum collections from Museums Northumberland to an 'in-house' custodianship, sharing services in a partnership arrangement with Tyne & Wear Archives Museums (now North East Museums). However, unlike the other Northumberland museums, Berwick Museum and Art gallery will be managed in a separate partnership arrangement with the Living Barracks project. This partnership comprises English Heritage (the lead partner), the King's Own Scottish Borderers, The Maltings, and NCC (through the Living Barracks project).

Before the collections of the (now closed) Berwick Museum and Art Gallery are ready to be integrated into the new displays in the redeveloped East block of the Barracks, there is much work to be done on checking the artefacts and the documentation relating to them, assessing their condition, and packaging the materials for secure storage and transport to their new location. During this period North East Museums will take overall responsibility for supervising the process while English Heritage takes care of the collections and their preparation for subsequent display.

Maria emphasised that the overriding objective of these plans is to ensure that the collections are being well cared for during the period of museum closure in Berwick. The role of North East Museums is to support the project, not to compete with it, and their professional expertise and technical resources form a valuable adjunct to the local team. An instance of this has been the temporary transfer of six items from the Clock Block to Woodhorn Museum so that they can be stored in secure conditions and satisfy the requirements of insurers. When the redevelopment of the Barracks is complete, all the items will be returned to Berwick and the local partnership will be curating the collection in the future.

Kevin Booth reported that the major funding for the project from grants and other sources has been secured, though some further fund-raising needs to be completed. He described the work which is now under way in the Clock Block to make the collections ready for their eventual move to the East Block. Since December 2024, a team has been working on a full inventory of the collection, and a

consolidated list of all existing sources has been prepared. In parallel a physical check of the collections has been carried out, and there is now an ongoing process of reconciling the artefacts with the documentation and resolving any inconsistencies which are found.

All of the materials will then need to be repackaged. A Conservator for the project is to be appointed imminently, and a Documentation Officer has been employed. Jenny Vevers continues in her role, now under the aegis of English Heritage, as supervisor of the Clock Block. The condition of items in the collection will be assessed, and remedial work will be undertaken as required. Funding has been found for specialist conservators to be engaged when necessary. One task which has been identified is the need to check certain items for the presence of asbestos and to deal with the health & safety issues which are posed.

During the 2½ year period of the museum's closure, it is envisaged that a programme of 'public engagement' with the project can be developed to maintain a sense of connection with the museum collections. An area on the ground floor of the Clock Block is designated as a conservation studio (the "storehouse"), and it is hoped that some public access to this can be arranged so that people can see the work which is being undertaken. This could take the form of opening it for free access on two or three afternoons a week, or group visits may be arranged for school parties or other interested organisations (such as the Friends...). Members of the Friends may wish to take note that there will also be opportunities for volunteers to participate in the preparation work on the collection.

Kevin also reported that funds have been obtained to include the Clock Block in the annual Heritage Open Days in Berwick.

Building work in the East Block has begun, and some of the Artists' Studios are expected to start operating soon.

The "Living Barracks" is the project name for the whole plan which is now being developed, but a name for the completed entity when it opens has yet to be decided.

*John Spiers*

## BELOW THE POTHOLES

The trusting motorist would like to believe that all potholes in Berwick would be quickly reported and repaired through Northumberland County Council's FixMyStreet procedure. Sometimes, the writer has noted long-lived potholes that seem to have defied this procedure, causing him to wonder whether they were regarded as having historic merit and therefore subject to a form of preservation order connected to the town's Conservation Area status.

Closer inspection reveals historical significance because, where the bituminous



surface has been worn away, it has revealed an underlying surface of stone paving setts. This is history revealed because, from at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Berwick's streets were surfaced with stone paving blocks. Later resurfacing had no need of foundations as the stone setts provided a solid base for the bituminous asphalt providing a welcome cost saving for the highways authority.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries iron-shod cartwheels and horseshoes demanded durable road surfaces. Rectangular stone or wooden setts provided more hard-wearing and cleaner street surfaces, profiled to shed rainwater into gutters and drains. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the introduction of tarmacadam (crushed stone coated and mixed with tar) and asphalt (where the tar is replaced by bitumen, a by-product of petroleum distillation) or wooden setts made from Australian Jarrah trees, reduced noise levels in residential streets, or nearby hospitals, schools or places of worship.

Factors such as the cost of material, durability, impermeability, and ease of maintenance, the steepness of the gradient and the assumed weight and flow of traffic, were all important considerations in deciding on the selection of hard-wearing stone. The cheapest solution is often not the most economical one and, in 1895, the civil engineer H. Percy Boulnois, published detailed charts showing costs of repair and rates of wear for different types of material in a number of locations in England. Granite or syenite setts, although more expensive, performed better than other materials, being hard-wearing and longer-lasting, provided they were 'judiciously

selected' and 'properly constructed in an impervious manner' upon a well-laid foundation.

Hard granite from north-east Scotland was well recognised and with colours ranging from light grey to dark grey to pink, was widely used for buildings, monuments and, at a mundane level, for road setts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Aberdeen granite setts, known there as 'cassies', were exported to London for surfacing streets and bridges. Elsewhere in Britain, other local granites were used on the grounds of cost and convenience. In Berwick, granite was not the chosen stone because of another readily-available igneous rock known locally as whinstone, a generic name for hard, dark-coloured rock such as basalt or dolerite.

Ideally, setts should be cut to give uniformity in depth, length and width and laid in bonded courses with overlapping joints in the same way as a brick stretcher bond pattern in house building. The depth of a sett had to be sufficient to withstand the weight of traffic, to allow for wear and to be solid enough to provide stability. The length was determined by ease of handling by the paviour and ability to conform with the contour of the road. The preferred width of setts was even influenced by the size of horses' hooves. Based on experience, a satisfactory sett size was, say, 7ins deep by 7ins long and 4in wide, and it was found that, if the length exceeded 9ins, they tended to ride up. Smaller offcuts were used as closure pieces for infilling gaps at the end of a row.

It was good practice to lay the setts as close together as possible, not only for stability, but also to reduce road noise and to reduce wear on the arrises (sharp edges) of the setts. The setts are often flanked by longer 'channel' setts laid at right angles to the horizontal setts to provide a gutter. These, in turn are flanked by even longer raised stone blocks to form a kerb. The kerb provided an attractive margin between the carriageway and the pavement, as well as containing water flowing down the gutter. The pavement would have been formed of stone paving slabs.

Good foundations were essential but methods varied between different parts of the country. Some 19<sup>th</sup> century methods were described as unsatisfactory, such as dumped foundry ashes or clinker. Boulnois described a preferred method known as a 'pinned' foundation where pieces of rock about 6ins. in depth were set on edge and overlaid with a sufficient layer of gravel to fill the interstices and which were then consolidated by steam roller. Some methods were quite complicated but by the end of the century foundations were generally formed from concrete with setts laid upon a cushion of sand and grouted with cement or, preferably, a bituminous mixture.

Stone setts are still used today in Berwick for special areas such as laybys, parking bays, traffic calming features and decorative paving, all subject to strict technical requirements set out in Northumberland County Council's *Specification for Highways Works Ver1.1*. For some peripheral areas, original setts may be left or modified, perhaps for decorative purposes such as the parking area for adjoining shops on the west side of Castlegate. Historic or modern setts are also useful for providing grip on steeply sloping streets such as West Street.

Sources:

*H. Percy Boulnois, The Construction of Carriageways & Footways, Biggs & Co, 139-140 Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, London E.C., 1895; Northumberland County Council, Specification for Highways Works Ver 1.1*

*Antony Chessell*

## **“NIN BLACK’S CANARIES”**

Linda has given me the task of indexing newspaper cuttings which came from the Berwick Advertiser's office. These pieces were, literally, snipped from newspapers to give background information which might have some future use in developing the reporters' articles. The “Google” search of bygone days.

Here is one from 12th May 1931

### **Birth of Eyemouth Choral Union.**

Eyemouth Choral Union as now constituted has been in existence for 27 years, and the real pioneer of choral music in Eyemouth, who might also be considered the founder of the present day Choral Union, was Mr Ninian Jeffery Black, who was the first to learn the “Sol-Fa” notation and to institute classes for the same.

Mr. Black was a keen musician and was at one time leader of the Eyemouth Brass Band. He was a noted precentor, covering some 50 years in all, from the early age of 18, when he was precentor in the Old U.P. Church till well on for 70 years of age.

He also acted as precentor at Coldingham under that noted minister Dr Henderson, who was translated to Paisley. He succeeded later Jas Windram as precentor in the Free Church, Eyemouth. During this time he had trained a very efficient choir of notable singers and gave concerts in different places. The choir was locally designated “Non Black's Canaries”, and on one notable occasion on a visit to Burnmouth when so many people turned out to hear them, Mr Black said in his

characteristic way: "Canaries can sing outside as well as inside" and gave an open air concert, the audience being seated round about on the rocks.

Father's traditions were nobly carried on by his son, Mr Robert Black, painter, who also acted as precentor in the U.P. Church, and who has the unique record of having among the members of his choir at one and the same time nine male voices – eight brothers and cousin all named Black. Mr Black also became precentor in the U.F. Church and acted as such till quite recently. Mr. Black still carries on a concert party, among whom were three brothers, his son, and one or two daughters, and who are still well-known to other audiences as the "Eyemouth Glee Party". The family tradition is still being carried on by the third generation, Mr. Robert Black, Jun., being a prominent tenor singer and vice-president of the present Choral Union, in which for several years his sister, Mrs Robertson, acted as accompanist either at piano or organ. The name Black is synonymous in Eyemouth with music.

The originator of the present Choral Union as it now stands was Mr Oliver, organist of Ayton Parish Church, who was followed by Mr T. Barker, Berwick, Mr Geo. Ballantyne, Berwick; Mr Andrew Lawson, Accountant, Commercial Bank, Eyemouth; Mr Muir Lang, Registrar, etc., Dr Gauntlett, Berwick; Mrs. Euman, Auchencrow; and for the last six years, the most popular conductor, Mr David Dougal.

Mr. Dougal, though a very busy man, gives off his best to the services of the Choral Union. He is a keen musician and a splendid organist. He acted in his earlier years as organist in the U.F. Church, Berwick; U.F.Church, Burnmouth; Coldingham and Eyemouth. Since the death of his father an ever growing business engrosses most of his attention, but he is always ready to help in anything for the good of the town.

A few days ago he was presented by the Choral Union Society with a very handsome barometer as a tribute to his work among them. Two young ladies were also associated with him on that occasion and received gifts from the Society for their voluntary services for the year, Miss Yeadon as accompanist, and Miss Alice Dougal as honorary. secretary. Both these young ladies have filled these posts with great acceptance for the last three years.

**Source: BRO 1304/1/25**

*Charles Borthwick*

## ALEXANDER BELL – MAN OF PROPERTY

***We present Alex[ande]r Bell for a Dangerous Tottering old house in the Market place which may be of bad Consequences to people passing that way [if] not speedily taken Down (BA/M/2/2 Berwick upon Tweed Court Leet Book, 1733; Marygate Quarter)***

This dramatic description in the Berwick Manor Court records of a house on the verge of collapse drew my attention and prompted the question, who was this man Alexander Bell, who would let his house in a busy part of the town get into such a state. Here is just a little of what I've found out about him and his family and properties.

Alexander Bell was baptised in Berwick in 1663, the son of Patrick Bell, yeoman, and admitted as a freeman in 1686 following an apprenticeship to his older brother Robert, a burgess and cooper. He seems to have married twice, first to Eleanor who died in February 1725/6 with no surviving issue, and secondly to Jane by early 1727, when he was about 63, and they quickly had five children. Two sons and two daughters were still living at the time of Alexander's death in September 1735.

At the time he wrote his will on 25 May 1734 Alexander owned three properties in Berwick. One was in the Market Place, quite possibly a rebuild of the collapsing one he was presented for, and was on the north side of Marygate, bounded on the north by ground on which was later built the Relief Meeting House in Shaw's Lane (now Chapel Street). It was probably rented out because he was living in a house at the head of the east side of the Western lane on the corner with Marygate, which he had owned since at least February 1697 when the property next door to it on Marygate sold for £62. He also owned a burgage or tenement, horse mill, mill house and waste ground on Church Street with its west front facing Shaw's Lane, one half of a property in Alnwick and held a copyhold tenement in Tweedmouth on the north side of the churchyard. Alexander bequeathed his house on the Western Lane to his wife Jane to use for her lifetime, 'she to keep the same in good and tenantable repair' (!), and an annual sum of 50 shillings on condition that she claim no further part of his real estate, including dower. He also left her the use of all the furniture in the house, but required that she give security for it to his executors, whom he also appointed as guardians of his children. He devised all his properties and personal

estate to his eldest son John, with rents and profits to be applied to the maintenance and education of all his children until 21 or married, whichever sooner. He left £400 to be divided equally between his other children at 21 or their marriage, and if either daughter should marry without the consent of his executors before the age of 21, then the share of the 'offending child' shall go to the other children. If all the testator's children should die before 21 or marriage without issue, then all the estate will go to the testator's right heirs and next of kin with the clause, for reasons that we can only guess at, 'that neither my niece Mary Yellowly nor my brother James Bell nor any nor either of their children, issue or descendants shall be deemed either as my right heirs or next akin within the meaning of this in my will, but that they and every of them shall be excluded and debarred from all benefit of this my will'. Mary Yellowly was the married daughter of Alexander's brother Robert.

In October 1736 Alexander's sons John and Joseph died aged 4 and 1 respectively, and under the terms of the will the estate passed to the daughters Esther and Jane, who were then 7 and 5. By September 1755 Esther had married Joseph Hume, a mariner of Berwick, and the inherited properties had been divided into two lots. The property in the Market Place was divided into two separate dwelling houses with backbuildings, and the eastmost of these, where Joseph and Esther were living, went to them along with the copyhold tenement in Tweedmouth, and the other, along with the property on Church Street went to Jane Bell, then still single. They also each inherited one half of the Western lane house, although their mother still had the use of it until her death, which was possibly in November 1767. I can find no further mention of the property in Alnwick. By 1766 Jane had married Matthew Campbell, burgess and druggist or chemist, and they had seven children, although only two sons survived beyond childhood. They seem to have continued living in their house in the Market Place, and in 1770 sold the Church street property for £165 to merchant Robert Pearson, who later mortgaged the premises to secure several loans to him. In 1775 they sold their half of the Western Lane house for £80 to George Douglass, plumber and glazier. In both deeds, Jane is described as daughter and one of the co-heiresses of Alexander Bell, deceased, recognizing that although on her marriage her property became her husband's, it was held by virtue of her inheritance, requiring her to be a party to the deeds. They are each endorsed with a memorandum that she had been examined apart from her husband by the Mayor and two Bailiffs, and had acknowledged that her being a party to the conveyance was her own voluntary act without her husband's coercion, in testimony of which the Mayor and Bailiffs signed their names and affixed the Town Seal. This was the means by which a married woman, according to the ancient and legal

custom within the borough of Berwick upon Tweed, conveyed her estate, right or interest in real property.

That's all I have room for, but I'd like to draw attention to a very useful source for my research, which is a series of enrolled parchment deeds held in the Berwick Archives (BA/G/2/10/46) dating from 1694 to 1836. Each of the 882 deeds witnessing property transactions in Berwick has been individually catalogued and can be searched online in the Northumberland Archive catalogue. Each has a description of the property, including owners of neighbouring properties, the names of the parties involved, often including wives, widows and single women, and sometimes reciting family relationships.

*Julia Day*

## **PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION FOR CHILDREN ON REMAND, CHILDREN'S ACT 1908**

The 1908 Act, which consolidated and amended the law relating to *the Protection of Children and Young Persons, Reformatory and Industrial Schools and Juvenile Offenders* came into force on 1 April 1909. Section 108 stipulated that *places of detention for children [under 14] and young persons [14 – 16] must be provided by the Authorities quite separate from the Police Station*, such accommodation to be available by 1 January 1910.

In March 1909 the Chief Constable, William Nicholson, suggested to the Watch Committee that the old portion of the Town Hall, once used as a lock-up, would suit. He believed it would be rarely used and require just a small outlay on beds and bedding.

The Committee inspected the premises but was reluctant to make a decision until the Government Inspector of Prisons, Lieutenant Colonel Eden, had visited, despite him confirming by post that there was unlikely to be an objection. Messrs Henderson Brothers of 28 Church Street were asked to quote for the necessary work. They estimated that converting two cells and fitting a water closet would cost £11 17s. Possibly due to a reluctance on the Committee's part to incur such a cost, it was again decided to postpone making a start until Colonel Eden had inspected the site, which he did not do until April 1910 when he gave his approval.

In the same month, Mr Thomas Wallace, the Probation Officer, was asked whether he would be willing to undertake the custody of any young children, who happened to be under remand, in his dwelling house – such cases being very rare, in fact there had been none since the Act came into force. It was not anticipated that there would be many in the Borough.

The 1911 census records Mr Wallace as living with his wife and two young children aged 9 and 2 at Vine Cottage, 3b Tweed Street, Berwick, a five roomed property. He was described as a Town Missionary (Presbyterian) from County Derry, Ireland. The Probation of Offenders Act 1907 gave official status to the volunteers or Court Missionaries by making them Probation Officers. A measure needed so that offenders whom the courts did not think fit to imprison on account of their age, character or antecedents might be placed on probation under the supervision of these officers whose duty was to 'advise', 'assist' and 'befriend them'.

Mr Wallace agreed to take such children at £1 per week for each child, on the proviso that a child in a filthy condition would be dealt with before being handed over to his care. He also wanted to know the extent of his responsibility with regard to such children. [No further details are provided]

The Watch Committee accounts include payments made to him:

January 1911 - for repairing broken window and for a pair of slippers for the boy Andrew Drummond whilst under detention, 5s 6d;

5 – 21 January 1911 - board and lodging of boy Andrew Drummond for two weeks and two days, £2 6s;

June 1911 - maintenance of the boy Alexander Brodie, 3 days at 3s per day, 9s.

How they were detained and how Wallace's family felt about the situation is not known.

It was agreed to allow the arrangement with the Probation Office to continue until 1913. In June Mr Wallace received £1 16s for the maintenance of the girl Wilhelmina Pringle for 21 April to 2 May 1913, while she was under detention on a charge of larceny before being conveyed to Whitley Village Homes by the Chief Constable.

On 6 July Mr Wallace wrote to the Committee stating *that he cannot continue to put at your disposal, as a place of detention my house. It is too small for that purpose.*

On being told by the Town Clerk that it would go before the Committee in due course, Mr Wallace wrote again on the 13<sup>th</sup> stating *I suppose that means if the place*

*of detention should be required meantime, my house will be used for that purpose. Well, that is an impossibility. My wife is ill, and my boy is also unwell: so under the circumstances, I must ask you to inform the Watch Committee, that other arrangements must be made at once.*

His letter was not considered until 27 August. In the meantime Mr Wallace placed a boy, W Maven, under detention in the house of Mrs Allan of East Street for 10 – 24 July, for which he received £2 5s presumably for Mrs Allan. [A Mr and Mrs Allan lived with their grown-up son at 3 East Street in 1921. The wife was shown as housewife in the census and her husband as a Yard man at the Kings Arms Hotel.]

The Committee obtained a new quote of £12 17s from Messrs Henderson Brothers for adapting the old cells. It was agreed that as well as a new water closet, a hand or lavatory basin should be fitted by Mr DA Lamb, plumber, at a cost of £6 and a further payment of £1 14s 6d to Henderson Brothers. The building work started in February and was complete by the end of April 1914.

In December 1913 Mr Payne, Caretaker of the Town Hall, agreed to look after the place of detention when unoccupied for the sum of £2 per annum and to take charge of any children placed there for the sum of 3s per head per day – to include food and the washing of bedding and clothing etc. In 1911 James Payne, Hall Keeper, was living with his wife and family in a 2 roomed property, 26 Foul Ford. Did he live in the Town Hall when children were detained there?

In February 1914 Mr Wallace's appointment as Probation Officer was renewed for another year. The Justices were of the opinion, due to the amount of work done by the Officer, that his salary should be increased. It was agreed to defer consideration for six months until the Committee had an opportunity of judging of the work entailed after the "place of detention" had been completed. It is not as yet known how many children on remand, if any, were accommodated in the Town Hall.

Sources: BA/C/PO/13/12 [M18/12 ] part 1 and 2: Bundle of correspondence 1909 – 1916; BA/D1/12: Town Council Minutes; BA/D4/13 & 15: Watch Committee Minutes; Children's Act, 1908 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1908/67/pdfs/ukpga>; A short history of the probation service by Charles Hanson <https://insidetime.org/newsround/a-short-history-of-the-probation-service/>

*Julie Gibbs*

**Berwick Advertiser, 11 April 1873**

PRISON STATISTICS

During the quarter just ended twenty-one persons have been committed to Berwick prison. Six of them could read and write well, eight read and write imperfectly, four read only, and three neither read nor write. The greatest number in prison at one time during the quarter has been nine, and the least two. There are at present in prison eight males and one female.

**Berwick Advertiser, 11 April 1873**

THE GREENWICH SIXPENCE

On Saturday, the first payment of the "Greenwich Sixpence," as it is called, was made at the Custom House, to such old sailors in Berwick as had contributed to the original fund. It is to be hoped that before long the widows of sailors who had contributed to this fund will also be permitted to participate in the grant- not as a favour or a pension, but as a right- the money from which the allowances are paid being the accumulations of the "sixpences" paid monthly, years ago, by our mercantile marine.

**Berwick Advertiser, 18 April 1873**

WOOLER

West Chapel Seminary. This school was examined 9<sup>th</sup> April. It still maintains the influential position of highly efficient educational institute. The results of the recent session reflect the highest credit on Mr Duncan and his assistants. The pupils are trained from the very alphabet up to the higher literature of our language. Many made a very respectable appearance in French reading, in the elements of the classics as far as Virgil and Horace, in Greek reading, and in mathematics. Singing sacred and secular songs, map drawing, sketching, and sewing, afford a pleasing and profitable variety in the department of the fine arts, also respected here. All the pupils are well grounded in Bible knowledge and catechetical instruction.

*Carole Pringle*