

Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 116 – JUNE 2023

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 13th June

Introduction to Manorial Records Workshop @
Berwick Record Office 10 – 12.30 – see article

Tuesday 27th June

Advanced Manorial Records Workshop @
Berwick Record Office 10 – 12.30 – see article

Saturday 15th July

Salmon Queen Exhibition in Guildhall, Berwick

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

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

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 3rd July

"Play more and write less": Dr Chloe Duckworth of Newcastle University.

NO MEETINGS IN AUGUST

Monday 4th September

"Excavations at Cathcart Castle, Glasgow, 1980-81": Dr Brian Kerr

LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP

Venue: Lowick Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 12th June

To Hell with the Parish Council-the fate of faith in Lowick: Kevin Archer

NORHAM AND LADYKIRK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 12th June

The Jerninghams of Longridge Towers:
Phil Rowett

Monday 10th July

A walk around Horndean guided by David Heywood. For details contact:
07941645855

TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Crookham Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

Wednesday 6th September

Analysis of ancient DNA revealing
Neolithic kinships in 35 individuals buried
at a site in the Cotswolds: Professor Chris
Fowler of Newcastle University

ARCHIVE NEWS

As ever, the Record Office has been really busy over the last couple of months. It's lovely to see projects start up again and events happen which we can take part. Recently, we have been doing the following:

CORONATION EXHIBITION – The Friends received a grant of £400 from Northumberland County Council to run an exhibition at the Guild Hall on Sunday 7th May about Berwick between the Coronations. This was very successful with just over 600 people attending to look at our archive photos, timeline and hear a talk on Berwick's history 1952 – 2022. Cameron and I organised the day which was well worth it. If anyone has pictures of their own Coronation celebrations in North Northumberland, please do share them with us.

VILLAGE HALLS HERITAGE PROJECT - I have continued to work on this project delivering Oral History training to Village Halls throughout the county. I've also been helping individual halls with research into their buildings and activities

PHOTOCENTRE - It's now over a year since we started this project to do work on the Photo Centre collection and our other photographic collections. Cameron has achieved a lot in this period and his work shows the value of having a member of staff who can dedicate their time to an important element of our archives. See Cameron's report.

MATERNITY/HEALTHCARE PROJECT – We have continued to do work on this project run by the Northumberland Archives Trust which is focussing on Castlehills and maternity provision in the North Northumberland area. Volunteers have been concentrating on finding out more about the staff employed at the Maternity Hospital and how it was run. I have also done some Oral History training with volunteers at Berwick and Woodhorn and we will start undertaking recordings shortly at Berwick. If you have any information on Castlehills or know anyone who would be willing to be interviewed, please do get in touch.

KYLOE PARISH ORAL HISTORY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT - the Friends have been given a grant by the Community Foundation to undertake this project over the next year. The Record Office will deliver the Oral History training and provide a permanent home for the recordings made. We also intend to gather past and present images of the parish which includes Fenwick Village.

UNION CHAIN BRIDGE PROJECT - Gillian and I have been delivering some training to a small group who will be working on the Horncliffe Community Archive which is kept in the Village Hall. We have been talking about preserving archives and also cataloguing them. We're hoping to finish this by the end of June and then support them as they undertake the actual cataloguing.

ACCESSIONS - Over the past couple of months we have had some interesting deposits in the Record Office. These have included some 16th century letters relating to Sir Richard Bunny who was the Treasurer of Berwick from 1550 – 1554 and was accused of embezzlement. We have also received some additional papers relating to the Hughes/Simpson family of Middleton Hall near Wooler. This is an amazing collection of letters and hidden gems which we are keen to work on and make more available.

OUTREACH - This element of our work has really taken off again in the last couple of months. I have given a lot of talks, mainly on the Ford Estate at the time of the Waterford family which is very popular at the moment. I've given this talk to Lowick Heritage Group; Alnwick History Society and Felton and District Local History Society. I've also given my talk on Berwick 1952 – 2022 in Wallace Green Church and to the Guild of Freemen at their own Coronation celebration. Last week, Border Archaeology Group held a Conference on the Devil's Causeway and the Romans. I was asked to speak on Crossing the Tweed through the ages and the bridges which had been built.

Cameron and I also went to the Family Hub in Tweedmouth to run a drop in session on a trip down memory lane.

EDUCATION – Every year, Year 8 pupils at Tweedmouth Middle visit the Record Office to find out about the First World War and local people involved for an English project. This gives them the background information to write letters and poetry to and from the Front. Three groups have visited so far.

LIVING BARRACKS PROJECT – This project is keeping me very busy. Although you may not see much happening, there is a lot going on in the background. Beth Elliott is working part time on the project as an Historical Researcher/Project Archivist to support me. We have been undertaking research on themes for the Museum and have been considering how we can involve people in the site and promote the wonderful stories we all document. In late May, English Heritage, KOSB and the Record Office held a workshop where we showcased some of our collections to groups to get a feel for what interested people. Our ultimate aim is to create a Museum/Archive in a box which can be used anywhere when the site is closed.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS – plans are starting to take shape for this year's event which will take place between 8 and 17th September. There will be a mixture of in person and online events and more information will be provided in the next newsletter.

There is never a dull moment in the Record Office! It's a hive of non stop activity!

Linda Bankier

HOLY ISLAND, 1750 - 1850

Pre pandemic the Record Office worked on Holy Island to set up a Community Archive and helped provide it with resources. As part of that project, Karon Ives trawled through the British Newspaper Archive and typed up references she found to the Island from the mid 1700s up to the 1950s. This a great resource which is very much underused. An index has now been created to the articles which is available in the Record Office. There are over 500 pages of transcripts!. I've pulled out a selection here to give you an indication of what is available from 1750 to 1850.

Caledonian Mercury 24 Aug 1799

Trinity House, Newcastle upon Tyne

In consequence of the recent instances of misfortune which have happened at HOLY ISLAND, whereas many lives, as well as much property, have been lost, for want of proper beacons to direct ships into the harbour when the weather is so bad that pilots cannot get off – the Master and the Brethren of this House, by an application to Lord Tankerville, have obtained leave to erect Beacons on the south side of the said harbour, for the better direction of ships going in; which Beacons are now completed, and proper persons appointed to attend the same and the trade may be accommodated with directions for going into the said harbour, by applying at the Custom-house here, and at Sunderland, paying a small contribution, annually for the support of such Beacons.

By Order HEN. SHADFORTH, Secretary 20th August 1799.

Tyne Mercury 9 Dec 1817

On Sunday morning se'night, Eleanor Bryson, servant to Mr Aitchison, Windmill-hill, Isabella, her sister, and another young woman of the name of Bruce, were crossing the sands between Goswick and HOLY ISLAND, they unfortunately missed their way, and the tide flowing very fast, were surrounded. After wading a considerable time, when very near the Island, one of the Brysons, a girl of 13 years of age, was so fatigued and exhausted that she could proceed no farther. Her sister did everything in her power to assist her and drag her along, but we are sorry to say they were both drowned. Bruce was driven ashore quite insensible, but on the application of proper means the vital spark was resuscitated. – The bodies of the two sisters were found at ebb tide, the same morning, and interred in HOLY ISLAND Churchyard on Monday.

Durham County Advertiser 23 April 1825

We have the pleasure to state, that the Secretary of the “Royal National Institution for the Preservation of lives from Shipwreck,” has informed the Rev. Anthony Watson, Holy Island, that 25 sovereigns have been awarded to the twelve fishermen who so zealously exerted themselves in saving the lives of the Captain and survivors of the crew of “Thomas Jackson”, wrecked on the Ferne Islands, on the

18th March last. Also to James Allan, one of the twelve, has been awarded the silver medal of the institution.

Berwick Advertiser 24 Feb 1838 page 1

A fire took place in the dwelling of a fisherman named Cromarty, at HOLY ISLAND, on Saturday last. One of Cromarty's children had gone under the bed with a candle in search of something he wanted, when the bedding was set fire to, which spread amongst the materials in the house with such rapidity as to frustrate all attempts at saving any part of them. One article alone escaped the devastation, - a chest, - which among other things contained a quantity of gunpowder. By a strenuous effort this was secured, the dread of the consequences of its explosion being more the inducement than its value. The fire communicated from the furniture to the tenement, which was burnt to the ground, rendering its occupant and his family houseless and destitute.

Gore's Liverpool General Advertiser 4 Nov 1841 page 1

To be LET, for such a term of years as may be agreed on, and may be entered to immediately, the whole of the MINERALS, at HOLY ISLAND, in the County of North Durham, consisting of Coal, Lime-stone, and Iron-stone. The Coal is already won at a depth of eight fathoms and is found to be of a quality suitable for burning Lime. The Lime-stone is very superior, and in great abundance, and being nearly free from Red or Covering can be obtained at trifling cost. The Iron-stone has been proved to be of excellent quality, and from underlaying the greater part of the Island may be worked to any extent.

The Proprietor is willing to build Kilns and other conveniences for carrying on the Works, and to give every possible encouragement to an enterprising tenant.

For further particulars, apply to Mr. Wm. Lowrey, at Barmoor, near Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Newcastle Courant 5 Nov 1847 page 3

POST OFFICE – A daily post has been established between Berwick and Haggerston and HOLY ISLAND, where offices have been opened. At HOLY ISLAND Mr John Bell is appointed post-master, and at Haggerston Mr James Reid.

Linda Bankier

EGLINGHAM CHURCHYARD PROJECT- MORE THAN JUST NAMES

The Friends have received a grant from the Middlemoor Windfarm to work with residents from the parish of Eglingham and others to record and research the gravestones in the Churchyard. This will involve revising the survey undertaken by the Friends in 1999, taking photographs of the gravestones and researching some of the individuals buried there. As part of this, I will be running a Family History course in the village and Cameron will hold a photography workshop.

There are still some places on the Family History Course which will run on Tuesday nights from 13 June – 4 July. If anyone would like to get involved in the project or have information about ancestors buried in Eglingham, please do get in touch.

Linda Bankier

PHOTO CENTRE

My work continues on the Photo Centre collection at a good pace. Week in, week out I am digitising, repackaging and indexing boxes of glass plate negatives. At the moment I am working my way through 1953 and currently have October sitting on my desk. I open each of the brown Kodak boxes with great interest as at this stage there is no indication of what's inside.

It would appear that 1953 was a good year for weddings! David Smith's reputation seems to have become much more established as the number of weddings seems much higher than previous years. Stylistically, Smith and his photographers have developed a set style for covering weddings as each is approached with the same series of shots. The bride and groom close up, full length, with the best man and bridesmaid, family groups, receiving the luck horseshoe and finally the cutting of the cake.

This year I started to write a blog about my work on the collection and the post about weddings has so far been the most popular with over 1000 views! The link to the blog is at the end of this piece.

1953, like 2023 saw a Coronation. The Town celebrated in style, and we have several boxes of photographs showing the various street parties which took place. These were showcased at a recent exhibition in the town hall which we staged to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles.

I cannot stress enough how varied the Photo Centre Collection is. Each box can contain anything from a passport photo to a shot of a car dangling over a cliff! Each week (usually a Tuesday) I post a photograph on our Instagram and Facebook pages. These echo the varied nature of the collection – the most recent showing the kitchen and waiting staff at the Kings Arms in 1953. We always welcome people's comments about the images, especially when it means we are able to add names to our growing index.

If you happen to find yourself in Morpeth, take a walk up to County Hall where in the foyer you'll find a pop-up Photo Centre exhibition showing some of our most striking images. The exhibition also shows scenes from around Northumberland and stresses that the Photo Centre covered a wide area from Eyemouth in the north to roughly Craster in the south then across to Rothbury in the west.

If you're looking for photographs to accompany your research project or to celebrate a birthday or anniversary – let us know, we may be able to help you find just what you need! Instagram/facebook: @photocentreberwick;

Website/blog: www.photocentreberwick.co.uk

Enquiries: cameron.robertson@nothumberland.gov.uk

Cameron Robertson

EVERYDAY LIFE IN A NORTHUMBRIAN MANOR

We are now just over halfway through the Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project. In the last 1.5 years, we have involved 65 volunteers, who together have worked a total of 1335 hours on the project, completing transcriptions of manorial records. This work has been greatly beneficial to our understanding of Northumbrian manorial records, with findings so far ranging from unusual jobs, such as *'fish and*

flesh' lookers in Morpeth, whose job required them to check the quality of meat and fish, '*pinders*', who impounded the livestock in the pinfeld, and '*landliners*' who monitored the manor boundaries. We have also been discovering some of the ways that locals could get in trouble with the manor courts, mostly involving '*blood and affrays*' or '*loose geese*', but there have been some more unusual cases. One of these is a '*night lare*', which has appeared as an offence in both the Tweedmouth and Lowick manors. This seems to be a fine imposed on individuals for leaving their horses or cows in non-designated fields overnight, though it's not completely clear how this was enforced. It is interesting that in some of these cases, the lord of the manor himself is being fined for the offence.

This small article only highlights a small selection of the findings from our manorial records. At the end of the Project, these scanned records and transcripts will be made available online for you to look through and make your own discoveries in local history. Or perhaps you'll look to see if you can find any of your ancestors taking on manorial duties, or even being fined for wayward livestock! To help you access and read our manorial records, we will be holding some free workshops around the county in the coming months, the first two will be held in Berwick Record Office, with workshop one coming up on the 13th June at 10.00am. If you're interested in attending, email berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk for a place.

Beth Elliott

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

As part of Heritage Open Days, Cameron and I are planning two walks around Berwick Cemetery to highlight the stories behind some of the names there as well as how and why the Cemetery came into existence in the first place. If you would be interested in helping us to research either of these two elements, please do get in touch – berwickarchives@northumberland.gov.uk . We hope to make this an annual part of our ongoing programme for Heritage Open Days – highlighting different stones each year.

A number of our volunteers produce handwritten catalogue lists for us which need to be typed up. This work can be done at home and we provide a template for it. If you

would like to help us with this, please contact me on lbankier@northumberland.gov.uk. This work can be done as and when you want.

Linda Bankier

THE ORD GOLD CROSS

The tiny gold cross which was recently discovered at East Ord is now impressively displayed in Berwick Museum & Art Gallery. The story of how it was found and an explanation of the runic alphabet in which its inscription is written are given in a series of interpretation boards in a dedicated gallery, along with a short video introduction about the cross.

The Friends were pleased to be able to support the campaign to acquire the cross. In addition, a sum of money raised by the late Bernard Shaw was given to the Friends for the Museum's use, and this has been a major contribution towards the display and promotion of the cross, as described above.

The video introduction which is running in the gallery can also be viewed online on the Museums Northumberland website, at this address:

<https://museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/berwick-museum-art-gallery/event/the-ord-cross-exhibition/>

Robert Steward

THE SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE PARTY, MAY 1953

While it is not unusual to find interesting subject matter in the Town Council Minutes, most book marks found amongst the pages tend to be scraps of paper or old envelopes. However, in amongst the 1898 minutes, a ticket to a Scottish Country Dance Party was used to mark the spot. The dance, arranged by the Berwick upon Tweed Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, was held at the King's Arms Hotel on 1 May 1953. As can be seen below, the ticket cost 5s, allowing the

owner to dance from 8pm to 12pm and to partake of light refreshments. The ticket number suggests a good turnout.



Further research revealed that the Berwick Branch had formed earlier that year. An entry in the Society's Bulletin 31, dated October 1953, reads as follows:

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Branch was formed in February 1953 and there are 105 members to date. The Branch met fortnightly in the King's Arms Assembly Rooms, the teacher being Miss I C Price of the Central Council of Physical Recreation. Although the session was short, the members made rapid progress in a number of selected Scottish dances. The Central Council of Physical Recreation in co-operation with the Branch held a successful week-end course in the Grammar School from 13th to 15th March, designed for members desirous of taking the Teacher's Certificate of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. The session terminated with a Country Dance Party on 1st May, when 100 members and friends spent a most enjoyable evening. A demonstration team from the Newcastle Branch kindly attended and entertained the company with many dances.

In 2003 the 50th Anniversary Ball was held in the Guildhall. The then chairman, Douglas Ewart, cut the cake with two founder members Alice Lee and Peter Steel. The Branch disbanded in 2013. If anyone has any memories or photos of the dances, that they are willing to share, please contact the Archives.

Sources: BA/D1 /8 Berwick Town Council Minutes; Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society Archives: GB GB 3410 RSCDS-11-12 (<https://archive.rscds.org/index.php/berwick-upon-tweed-banch-records>)

Julie Gibbs

IRREGULAR MARRIAGES AT COLDSTREAM BRIDGE

Berwick Archives is in the process of transcribing a collection of notebooks that contain records of the Irregular Marriages that took place at Coldstream Bridge between 1844 and 1856. They were kept by William Dickson.

Dickson was born around 1812 in Smailholm, Roxbroughshire and had married Euphemia Jerdan in 1835. A respectable journeyman shoemaker by trade, Dickson was in poor health and difficult circumstances when he was persuaded to act as celebrant for irregular marriages, which he carried out in the house on the Scottish end of Coldstream Bridge.



He had several children, some of whom assisted him occasionally in the marriage room by acting as witnesses.

In 1753 Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act was introduced in order to combat an increasing number of irregular marriages in England. The government considered irregular marriages resulted in an increase in cases of bigamy and there are many reports of these in the press. This law basically stated that, apart from a few exceptions, the participants must be at least 21yrs of age, if marrying without parent's consent, and must marry in church with witnesses after Banns or licence.

Banns and licenses incurred costs - and took time. A popular alternative was to skip over the border to Scotland where the Act did not apply. In actual fact not all

marriages at Coldstream Bridge were cross-border; many came from the surrounding counties of Berwickshire and Roxburghshire and often from much further afield. Some of the couples who chose irregular marriage may have been 'runaways' or they simply wanted to marry without the fuss and cost of a church wedding and were often willing to travel a good distance to do so.

There are also plenty of newspaper reports of frivolous or 'spur of the moment' marriages that took place that were later regretted.

At least two witnesses were required. Quite often witnesses were related to the bride and groom and sometimes two couples arrived to be wed and acted as witnesses for each other. Certificates were given and these marriages were accepted as legal and could be registered by the couple officially. Some did in fact follow up with a church wedding.

Although neither the wording used by Dickson nor his charges are recorded in these books, some idea might be obtained from that used at Lamberton Toll (courtesy of The Newcastle Courant of 22nd July 1842):

The usual questions were asked and the Church of England marriage ceremony was read with the husband putting a ring on the bride's finger. If they were in a hurry each party might simply be asked to say "*I plight thee my troth*". The man was then asked "*art thou willing to take this woman to be thy wedded wife?*" and the woman asked the same of the man. The charge for performing the ceremony was 7s 6d and in addition to that, two pints of whiskey and some biscuits.

It must have been a very useful income for such as the Dickson family.

An article in The Globe, Thursday 14th January 1847 stated:

Border Marriages - A brisk trade seems at present to be enjoyed by the officials who celebrate these marriages. Mr. Dickson who holds sway at Coldstream Bridge, in one week lately tied the indissoluble knot in no less than eight cases. The county of Northumberland, in general, furnishes the parties for these hasty proceedings

Although his earliest marriages were performed from about 1840, Dickson only appears to have kept regular records from 1844. These continued until the last entry of July 1857.

The Berwick Archives collection consists of five approximately A6 size books, one tiny one, about A7 and some loose sheets. The books are in a delicate state with a good number of pages missing or torn. Entries were made in pen or pencil, not always with complete information and often appear to have been written in haste. A combination of phonetic spelling and poor handwriting made transcribing them interesting.



In addition to marriage entries, the notebooks contain notes on the death of his wife in 1848 and that of two daughters in 1848 and 1849 and there were also some household accounts (including orders taken for boots) and some lines of prose.

Missing pages and illegible or incomplete entries mean that any statistics will be inaccurate but from what we have, we can say that the majority of couples were from Northumberland (44%), Berwickshire (27%) or Roxburghshire (26%). The rest came from the Lothians, Fife, Dumfriesshire, Dundee, Selkirk, Ross-shire, Inverness, Durham, London, Liverpool and one from Germany.

Number of marriages by month 1844-1857 (approximate figures)			
	Northumberland	Roxburghshire	Berwickshire
January	49	31	38
February	42	17	15
March	48	38	28

April	39	16	21
May	53	27	29
June	33	23	15
July	28	14	17
August	41	41	30
September	32	27	24
October	61	20	32
November	61	43	53
December	52	37	35

It may be that peaks in numbers are related to the agricultural hiring fairs that were often held in March and November in Coldstream and surrounding villages but without more information and considering the many illegible entries and missing pages it is difficult to come to any accurate conclusions.

It was helpful in transcribing them that he used a standard format that included the names of witnesses, for example:

1st January 1845

John Cockburn Kirk Newton
and Jean Middlemiss Shotton
P. Kirknewton County of
Northumberland

James Cockburn
Barbra Middlemiss

17th May 1847

Charles Henry Brearley from
Edinburgh and Elizabeth
Bryden Robertson McDonald
from Edinburgh CML

George Ford
J Underhill

12th September 1844

Peter Spratt London
P Westminster. C Middlesex
and Mariah Muir
Ancrum C Roxburgh

7th July 1847

Frederick Wilhelm
Janson Bremen and
Emma Amville [illeg]
Nieber Oldenburgh
County[sic] of Germany

Sergt Dempster 44
Corporal Lamb

W Nieber
Jesse Hope

One entry was particularly formal:

Contract of Marriage

*We Jacob Moffat residing in Wooler in the Parish of
Wooler and County of Northumberland
and Jane Dawson residing in Wooler
in the parish of Wooler and County
of Northumberland do hereby
accept of each other as Husband
and Wife as witness our hands at
Coldstream this 24th day of March 1850
before these witnesses and William Dickson*

Hunting down records of irregular marriages is notoriously difficult due to the fact that they may never have been registered and unfortunately, many unofficial records were lost or destroyed over time. Although some were announced in local newspapers there is often no other source for these marriages.

Transcribing the contents of these notebooks should help to fill many a gap in family history studies.

Eileen Langdale

HENRY PIRNIE

December 1865: Burial of young man from Dundee in Berwick New Cemetery

In December 1865 Charlotte Pirnie, a widow living in Dundee, purchased a burial plot (A137 unconsecrated) in Berwick Cemetery. The burial registers show that Henry Pirnie, her son aged 23, had been buried there on 21 October 1865. There is a note on the entry that 'by licence from the Home Secretary the remains of the deceased were exhumed on 16 Dec 1884'.

Why was a young man from Dundee buried in Berwick, and why was he subsequently moved?

Research in the newspapers of October 1865 revealed a shipwreck off Marshall Meadows on the night of 17/18 October. The loss of the Dundee based brig, Janet Allison, was first reported in the Dundee Courier on Thursday 19 October following the receipt of a telegram by the owners Messrs Allison, sailmakers. The captain of the vessel, Robert Bailey, was the only survivor, the remaining seven crew members having drowned. At that point there were few details of the disaster.

On Friday 20 October four bodies were washed ashore at the scene of the wreck: William Taylor; James Milne; William Benyon, and Henry Pirnie, mate of the vessel. The bodies of the first three were placed in coffins and carried by cart to Mordington churchyard where they were buried on Saturday 21 October. Henry Pirnie's mother had travelled to Berwick on Friday and had made arrangements for his burial in the New Cemetery in the town. At Henry's burial on 21 October, she was accompanied by the captain of the vessel, Robert Bailey, and Matthew Allison, one of the owners, as chief mourners.

As more details of the disaster emerged the Dundee Courier noted that 'The affair has cast a deep gloom over the town, and much sympathy is felt for the bereaved'. The Janet Allison was on her first voyage, and was described as 'a fine vessel of about 176 tons register'. Her loss incited considerable interest. She had left Dundee about a week earlier and collected a cargo of coal at Tayport. She left there on Sunday 15 October headed for the Rio Grande in South America; three days later she was wrecked with the loss of seven lives. The storm of the night of 17/18 October was particularly fierce and at least a further five vessels were lost off the coast between St Abbs and Holy Island.

Perhaps it was the loss of such a new vessel and the role of the captain that created so much interest. Over the subsequent few days further details emerged: from the captain, the Coastguards, the crew of passing trains and other onlookers. Detailed reports, including an interview with the Captain, appeared in the Dundee Advertiser on 24 October

The captain recalled asking if any of the crew would volunteer to head for shore with a rope. However, they were afraid of the violence of the storm and none of them

could swim. He then attempted to get into the vessel's remaining small boat to head for shore. However, the boat was overwhelmed, he jumped into sea and was washed ashore after what he estimated as about 15 minutes. He was able, once somewhat recovered, to climb the rocks and reach the nearby farmhouse. The farmer, Mr Marshall, sent men to alert the Coastguard in Berwick. The Berwick Coastguard were already aware of the wreck having been alerted by the crew of a southbound train who had seen the vessel and heard the cries of the crew. A special engine was provided to convey the Coastguard party to the wreck.

The newspaper article noted that the first news of the vessel being on the rocks was communicated at Burnmouth by the driver of the express train from Berwick. The driver had made an unscheduled stop to alert the railway officials who then conveyed the information to the chief of the Coastguard, Mr Ralph.

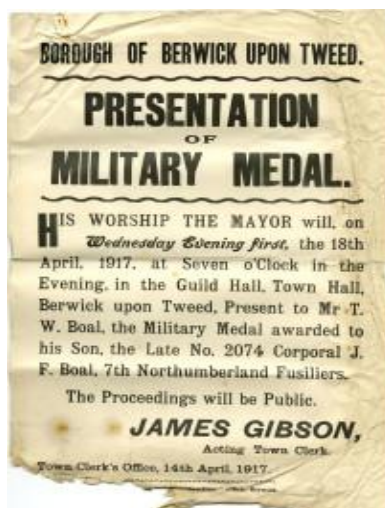
The article criticised the action of the Burnmouth coastguard as there appeared to be considerable delay in getting the necessary equipment, a Manby's rocket apparatus, to the site of the wreck. Apparently when potential rescuers first reached the shore the cries of the crew, clinging to the rigging could be clearly heard. However, as attempts were being made to fire a rope to the vessel the masts collapsed and the crew were drowned. Questions were also raised as to why the distress of the Janet Allison had not been noticed by the Burnmouth Coastguard prior to her running onto the rocks. However considerable doubt remains as to whether loss of life could have been avoided if there had been a more prompt response.

On 10 November 1865 the Illustrated Berwick Journal reported continuing concern over the response of the Coastguard and mounting pressure for an investigation.

The body of the mate of the Janet Allison, Henry Pirnie remained in Berwick Cemetery until December 1884. The reason for his exhumation is a mystery. I have been unable to trace any records of the death of his mother – which could have provided an explanation. The 1851 Census records her, aged 43, living with her husband, a stone mason, and four sons, including the youngest, Henry. Her history, following Henry's death, remains to be discovered.

Trudy Gray

THE BOAL FAMILY BERWICK-UPON-TWEED



The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Members of Berwick Town Council and many of the citizens of Berwick upon Tweed were present at the Guild Hall on 18th April 1917 to honour the memory of John Edgar Boal, a Corporal in the Northumberland Fusiliers, who was awarded the Military Medal in October 1916, but died of wounds on 8th December 1916 before the Medal could be presented. The Medal was presented by the Mayor, Alderman Plenderleith to his Father, Thomas W.W. Boal, a well-known businessman in the Town.

John Edgar Boal was born in 1896 and attended Berwick Grammar School from 1908 where he was a brilliant pupil, achieving excellent results in both academics and sports, with his name appearing on the Honours Board several times. He had just left school when War broke out in 1914 and on 21 April 1915 enlisted at Alnwick in the Northumberland Fusiliers; was among the first draft to leave Berwick and subsequently sent to France, where he served with the 49th Light Trench Mortar Battery until his 'accidental' death in 1916. He is buried at Vaux-en-Amienois Communal Cemetery, Dept.a-la-Somme, Picardie.

Thomas William Wilson Boal with his wife and son, came to Berwick with his father John Boal about 1890 and set up the Leeds Clothing Stores in West Street. In

1901 both families were living at 46 Ravensdowne. At this time Thomas is aged 32 and John, his father is 60.

John was a Marine Engineer, born in Staindrop, County Durham, a member of an old Durham family, and spent some time in Antwerp where the young Thomas was educated, first at the Factory School and then a French private boarding school. Returning to England, he attended Gainford Boarding School in County Durham, a family tradition. He had a short spell at sea, then became apprenticed to a firm of Drapers in Clayton Street, Newcastle, subsequently becoming an acute businessman. In 1911 Thomas lived at 119 High Street, Berwick and his father remained in Ravensdowne. By now Thomas and his wife Elizabeth, in addition to his son John, has two daughters – Ena Mary aged 12 and Lilly Urwin aged 2.

After Elizabeth died in 1913, Thomas and his family continued to live in West Street at various premises adjacent to the Leeds Clothing Stores (The Value for Money Shop). which is always No.10/12. In 1932 he took over the adjoining premises of Dickson and Butler.

Thomas was also very involved in the community; in particular, the Berwick Cadets as C.QJ.I.B. in 1918; was promoted to Cadet Captain on June 2, 1927 and recommended for Cadet Major in 1933. During this time he made at least three visits to the Vaux-en-Amienois Cemetery in Picardie, made notes of some of the graves he found there – publishing a letter in the Berwick Advertiser, “in the hope it may be seen by relatives” and commenting on the tidiness of the graves. He was also a Town Councillor, a member of the Dramatic Society, (becoming Chairman), and a member of the Berwick Cycling Club and Secretary of the Ypres League. Having been educated in Antwerp, he was of course fluent in Flemish and in 1914, was able to help and converse with some Belgium refugees who were living near Berwick but were unable to speak English.

However, sometimes things went awry, as in 1922, when he was persuaded against his better judgement, but with promises of support, to act as Election Agent for Captain Hilton Philipson, the Candidate for the Liberal Party in the forthcoming bye-election. Unfamiliar with procedures, and with none of the promised support, he inadvertently overstepped the legal maximum on expenditure, and despite attempts to rectify the mistake, was taken to court and fined. The outcome was that Hilton Philipson, despite winning the election, had to forfeit the seat, which oddly enough

was won at the following bye-election in 1923 by his wife Mabel, as a Conservative. His two daughters, Ena Mary and Lilly were also involved in the running of the Leeds Clothing Store and it was announced in 1932, after 40 years of business, that they would take over the Ladies Department. They were listed in the 1939 Register as "Corset Agents".

Lilly was also an accomplished musician, much involved with her father in the Dramatic Society for many years, as well as being a Teacher of Music and giving solo performances. Also in December 1932 the Berwickshire News reported that Miss E.M. Boal, her sister Miss L.U. Boal and members of the Ladies Fellowship were opening the West Street Meeting Room one day each week as a Canteen for members of the Forces and on the first Friday 20 Servicemen from the KOSB Depot were entertained for the evening including a home-made supper. The West Street Meeting Room appears to have been part of the premises occupied by the family, described in 1932 as being about 300 years old, previously a stable and later as a sweet factory.

The Canteen Night was run in conjunction with the Young Lads Fellowship of Lamplighters, a movement involving young people in the cause of the Leper. The Berwick Lamplighters Movement was set up by Ena Boal and became very popular with the young people of the Town, they held demonstrations and displays and helped to raise money for a number of Christian Charities. An old photograph from the Berwick Advertiser in 1948 shows a group with the Boal sisters at an event in the Salvation Hall on the Quay Walls and in 1959 the 17th Lamplighters Rally was held in the Youth Centre. A reprint of a photo from some years previously, appeared in the Berwick Advertiser in 1989 - "Looking Back", showed over 60 young people at an event.

However in 1941 it may be that a decision was made to close the Leeds Clothing Store, when various display items were advertised for sale, although in 1959 when Ena retired as Secretary to the Lamplighters there was a reference to "pressure of business". The family continued to live at 10 West Street for some years.

Thomas died on 8 March 1944 and was buried with others of his family at Berwick Cemetery. Ena Mary died on 4 December 1973, aged 84 and Lilly died on 28 January 1997, aged 92.

It is understood that the Lamplighters Movement still exists in the United States but is now involved with the recovery of abused children.

Sources: Berwick Archives – BRO D13/83-41; Berwick Advertiser; Julie Gibbs; Fred Kennington; Ancestry; Find a Grave.

Maureen Charlton

BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS

Berwick Advertiser, 7th February 1873

SLEEPING CARRIAGES ON RAILWAYS

We understand that a new sleeping carriage has just been constructed for the North British Railway Company, to run between Glasgow and Edinburgh and London by the east Coast route. It is constructed on a principle(sic) patent by the Ashbury railway Carriage and iron Company of Manchester and contains accommodation for six first-class and ten second-class passengers, together with a luggage compartment. A trial is to be made on Friday (to-day) between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The carriage, we may add, is something in the style of the famous sleeping cars of America and is luxuriously fitted up with every convenience calculated to make a night journey comfortable. It should also be stated that the North British in this matter takes the lead of the other companies; but the example no doubt will be speedily followed- *Glasgow Citizen*.

Berwick Advertiser, 7th February 1873

NEW COAST GUARD QUARTERS

We understand that the Admiralty propose to erect quarters for the men of the Coast Guard near the Flagstaff and drill shed on King's Bastion. If such is the case, it is to be hoped, that as the buildings are in such a conspicuous position, they may be of a somewhat ornamental character, and designed so as to harmonise with the fortifications. It would be a great pity to see stuck up on that elevated point whitewashed cottages similar to those which dazzle but offend the eye at so many places along the coast.

Berwick Advertiser, 7th February 1873

THE FATAL POACHING AFFRAY AT EGLINGHAM

As Saturday last was the day appointed for the examination of the prisoners Scholefield and Richardson, who were charged with the murder of Gray, considerable interest was felt by the public in general, and a great number of persons had assembled in front of the Court-house before the hour of meeting. The investigation, however, was a private one, even to the exclusion of reporters. Eglingham is within the jurisdiction of the justices at Whittingham; but, the latter place being eight miles away, it was deemed most convenient for all parties to hold the court at Alnwick. Richardson was again remanded; but the case against Scholefield could not be sustained, as he could clearly prove an alibi. He was however, detained on a charge of felony alleged to have been committed in November. The magistrates upon the bench were John Craster, Esq., Major Browne, J.G. Riddle, Esq., and E. J. Collingwood, Esq. The Chief Constable, Major-General Allgood, and Lieut. Wookey, Deputy-Chief Constable, were present during proceedings. The reward of 10£. Offered by Her Majesty's

Berwick Advertiser, 7th February 1873

MR BEVERIDGE AND THE LOSS OF THE NORTHFLEET

We understand that the John Beveridge, late on board the Northfleet, which was lost off Dungeness, is a nephew of Mr John Beveridge, fish curer, Berwick, who, as has been reported in the Advertiser, was wrongly summoned to give evidence at the Coroner's inquest regarding the loss of that vessel. The relationship between the two Beveridges was doubtless unknown to either of them at the inquiry. The junior John Beveridge was the eldest son of Alder Beveridge, and was born in Berwick-upon-Tweed, and this was probably entered in the passenger list of the Northfleet. He has for some time been a member of the Metropolitan Police Force and is well known to several Berwick police. His mother and several members of his family are at present living at Middlesbro'. In another column will be found a report of the evidence given by Mr Beveridge, jun., of the loss of the Northfleet.

Carole Pringle