



Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 117 – SEPTEMBER 2023

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Friday 8th – Sunday 17th September | Berwick Heritage Open Days-see article and list of events |
| Friday 8th & Friday 15th September | A Cabinet of Curiosities in Berwick Archives. Drop in between 10.30 and 3pm to see some of our more unusual items |
| Friday 3rd November | Friends Autumn Lecture- Kelt Fishcakes, Mankins and Sods: Salmon Fishing on the River Tweed. Short film and talk by Jim Gibson. 7pm at Berwick Parish Centre |

OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES

AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Ayton Community Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday 26th September 2023	Jacobites, Hawksmoor and Heritage: the Barracks in Berwick: Revd Dr Stephen Platten
Tuesday 31st October	Evacuation to the Border Counties 1939-1945: Myth & Reality: Kenneth McLean
Tuesday 28th November	Politics and Corruption in the Nineteenth Century Borders: David McLean

BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Bell View Resource Centre

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 27th September 2023	A.G.M.
Wednesday 25th October	The When, Why & How of the Scottish Border: David Welsh
Wednesday 22nd November	Prehistoric Sites in North Northumberland: Allan Colman

BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY

Venue: Berwick Parish Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 13th September 2023	"Tin Tabernacles – a Victorian Story": Sandra Gann
Wednesday 11th October	Combined meeting with Berwick History Society. The Borders: the First 1000 years – Battling and Bridging the Border: James Bruce

Wednesday 8th November

“Heritage Buildings in Berwick – adapting to climate change and reducing energy bills”:
Brian Gowthorpe

BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 11th October 2023

See Civic Society entry. Joint Meeting.

Wednesday 15th November

Searches for Churches on Lindisfarne: John Woodhurst

Wednesday 20th December

Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor:
Findings from the Project so Far: Dr Beth Elliott

BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 4th September 2023

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

Monday 2nd October

An update on work in the Coquet Valley:
with evidence for the Great Viking Army:
Dr. Jane Kershaw

Monday 6th November

Deer Parks, Traps and Hays: Hunting
forests in medieval Scotland: Dr. Piers
Dixon

Monday 4th December

The Peebles Hoard: Emily Freeman and
Matthew Knight of the National Museum
of Scotland.

BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: St. Peters Church, Galashiels

Time: 2.30pm

Sunday 24th September 2023

Evacuation to the Border Countries 1939-1945: Myth and Reality: Kenny McLean

Sunday 29th October

To be confirmed

Sunday 26th November

The British Honduran Forestry Unit in Duns;
Police Raids and Moral Panic in wartime
Scotland: Dr David Smale

BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Bowsden Village Hall

Time: 7.30pm

Monday 4th September 2023

A Journey Through Life: The Art of Memoir
Writing: Andreja Bogdanovski

Monday 2nd October

Railton's Antique Roadshow. Bring your
antiques along for valuation, and hear the
story of Wooler's auction house: Jim
Railton

Monday 6th November

The Geology of North Northumberland and
how it has shaped its history: Ritchie Blake

Monday 4th December

Basket Weaving in Northumberland: Anna
Corbett

CHIRNSIDE HISTORY GROUP

Venue: Community Centre, Waterloo Arms Dining Room

Time: 7.30pm

Monday 18th September 2023

Eyemouth Fish Riots 1861: Norrie McLeish

Monday 16th October

Evacuation to the Borders: Kenneth
McLean

Monday 20th November

Commonwealth War Graves: Donna Marie Kirk Sargeant

Monday 18th December

Family Research: Diana Cook

COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Leet Room, Coldstream Community Centre.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Thursday 5th October 2023

The Voyages of the Paddle-Steamer
“Pegasus” and its wreck off Holy Island:
Jane Bowen

Thursday 2nd November

For Better or Worse-Irregular Border
Marriages: Linda Bankier

Thursday 7th December

Evacuation to the Border Counties 1939-
1945: Myth and Reality: Kenny McLean

DUNSE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 30th August 2023

Are We Nearly There Yet? Scotland’s
Milestones: Bruce Keith

Wednesday 27th September

Politics & Corruption in the Nineteenth
Century Borders: David McLean

Wednesday 25th October

Dere Street: David Jones

Wednesday 22nd November

Bodysnatching in Lauderdale : Sandy
Sutherland

GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Cheviot Centre, Padgepool Place, Wooler.

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 13th September 2023	Plants through geological time – how the underlying geology influenced flora in Glendale: Elizabeth Devon
Wednesday 11th October	The history, mystery, meaning and beauty of Northumberland's 18 th century gravestones: Mark Halton
Wednesday 8th November	Ford Estate at the time of the Waterford family: Linda Bankier
Wednesday 13th December	Petticoat tales – a musical interpretation of Border Tales by the Borders Trio: Roddy Johnston, Nancy Marshall and Seonaid Lynn

NORHAM & LADYKIRK LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: Norham Village Hall

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Monday 9th October	TBC
Monday 13th November	Flying the Victor K2 Tanker:- the Falklands and beyond. Steve Biglands
Monday 11th December	Robbie Burns' Tour of the Borders: Ian Landles

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP

Venue: Bell View Resource Centre, 33 West Street, Belford

Time: 10.00am

Saturday 16th September 2023	Missing Roots: The History of the Foundling Hospital, and the lives of the foundlings : Madeleine Ravetta
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Saturday 21st October	Members' Stories: A Piece of Paper
Saturday 18th November	A Journey in Family History "Where did all the money go? : Anthea Lang

NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Venue: St Paul's Church Hall, North Sunderland **Time: 7.00 p.m.**

Wednesday 25th October 2023	20 years in the Brewery Trade: Richard Sanderson
Wednesday 22nd November	Holidays in the Cheviots 1910-1915: Pam Radcliffe

TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Venue: Crookham Village Hall **Time: various**

Wednesday 6th September 2023 (7.30 pm)	The David Moor Collection: Berwick-upon-Tweed 1870-1970: Cameron Robertson
Sunday 1st October (2.30 pm)	James IV Memorial Lecture. Diving under Elvet Bridge, Durham : Dr Gary Bankhead. In Etal Village Hall. Refreshments beforehand. Entry charge
Sunday 5th November (noon)	Restoration of Cresswell Pele Tower, archaeological investigation of the gardens: Barry Mead. Refreshments beforehand.
Sunday 3rd December (noon)	Barmoor Castle, archaeological investigation dig: John Nolan. Refreshments beforehand.

ARCHIVE NEWS

The summer is disappearing fast and it has been a busy time for the archives one way and another on top of running our public service. Everyone has been working very hard on different projects and initiatives.

Cameron has been working away on our photographic collections uncovering new images we didn't know we had which is the value of the project. Within the Photo Centre collection he has recently uncovered some wonderful portraits of members of the former Home Guard taken in the early 1950s. They are not named and so if anyone can help us identify the individuals, do get in touch. It would be lovely to put names to the faces. As part of Heritage Open Days, Cameron is mounting an exhibition of 1990s images of the town and so he has been busy scanning a set of images taken in 1991- even I was in Berwick then and it's amazing how much you forget. Come along for a trip down memory lane ! From April to mid July, we had an exhibition of Photo Centre images on display in County Hall and Cameron also gave a talk there for the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust. You can view some of these images in the Visitor Centre during HODS. The Crowning of the Salmon Queen is an annual event going back to the late 1940s. This year, we supported the Committee by mounting an exhibition in the Guildhall on the Saturday before the ceremony. This was very well attended and we're hoping to make it an annual event. Cameron packs a lot into his two days a week in the Archives.

Beth has continued to develop the Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project which covers the whole county. The Berwick group has been working away producing transcripts of North Northumberland documents and we have been investigating how to mount these on the Internet for all to view. Watch this space for further information ! In June we also held a couple of workshops relating to manorial records. Our plan is to roll these out throughout the county over the next year. Beth is kept very busy checking all the transcripts. This will be a wonderful resource for researchers in the future.

Gillian has been working away in the background getting to know our collections and running the public service. Recently she has been looking at our early records relating to Berwick Scouts for a display at Palace Green Pavilion as part of Berwick HODS. She has also been working with Beth to create the event "A Cabinet of Curiosities in Berwick Archives". Come along and see some of our more unusual and creative archives in person and find out more about them from the Archivists.

Martha and Carole have been keeping everything running smoothly in the background -Carole undertaking the general digitisation and all our administration and Martha getting out all the documents and looking after the volunteers.

I have been busy with various projects. The Eglington Project -More than Just Names – investigating the Churchyard, was launched in June. As part of that I ran a 5 week Family History Course in the Village which kept me on my toes. Cameron has also run a Photography Workshop for the project and we're now ready to start the Churchyard Survey and the family history research. It's all go. I've also held an introductory meeting for the Kyoel Oral History and Photography Project and will be holding their Oral History training in early September. Both these projects are funded through the Friends. Finally, I am heavily involved in the Living Barracks Project which does keep me busy. I'm involved in a number of working groups including Museum and Archives and Public Engagement. Recently our engagement group have held a couple of events – Collections in a Box and a music session with the Memory Laners who meet in the Maltings. We will be doing more outreach events over the next couple of months and have a few events organised for Heritage Open Days both in and outside the Barracks . Work has started on the conversion of the De-Mob store to a temporary cinema which brings us closer to eventually moving in.

Life is never dull in the Archives. I wonder what the next couple of months will bring for us all !

Linda Bankier

THINGS DON'T CHANGE

On looking through the local newspapers, I came across this article which shows that life and people don't change :

Illustrated Berwick Journal 18 October 1856

Caution Against an Imposter – We have this week to caution our readers against an imposter who is at present going about this neighbourhood. This is a man of respectable appearance, and announces himself as Mr Davies. He took up his residence in this borough towards the close of last week, and by advertisements undertook to give lectures on a new system for learning music. His first lecture was to be given in the school room of Mr Wood in Tweedmouth and amongst the inhabitants of that place made a vigilant canvas for an audience. In numerous places he succeeded in dispensing of tickets of admission, pocketing the price thereof. The night of the lecture arrived and an audience was collected but the lecturer never appeared. The second lecture had been announced for Tuesday night in the King's Arms Inn, on this side of the river. Here also an audience was

collected. The lecturer on this occasion made his appearance, but in such a state of intoxication as to be wholly unfit for any duty. By way of getting quit of a nuisance, the landlord of the Inn sent for the police, who by the aid of a wheel barrow conveyed the lecturer to the lockup, where he was accommodated with a night's lodgings. After Tuesday night's lecture he was to take up a musical class in this town. We understand that this same man has been conducting himself in a like manner in several of the villages in our neighbourhood. He must now change his name, and try some other trick.

Berwick Petty Sessions – Wednesday 15 October - (Before the Mayor and Captain Smith RN) – a professor of music of the name of Davis, was brought up charged with having been drunk. Davis had intimated that he would deliver a lecture on music in the King's Arms Assembly Rooms, on Tuesday evening but when the hour arrived, and the audience had assembled, no Davis was forthcoming. That individual was at length found in a harness room "drunk and incapable". A police officer thereupon procured a wheelbarrow and conveyed him to the Police Office, where he was locked up in a cell for the night. The appearance of a respectable looking man, with a white neckcloth, in a wheelbarrow, attracted considerable attention. Davis expressed the deepest contrition for his offence and was dismissed, on promising to leave the town forthwith.

Linda Bankier

BERWICK HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We've enclosed the Daily Programme for Berwick Heritage Open Days. If you can't come to Berwick over our festival of events, you can try our online quizzes, watch some films or join us at one of our online talks (bookable on Eventbrite) . These relate to the David Moor photographic collection; Berwick Armoury; Berwick War Memorials and Crime and Punishment in Berwick. If you are in Berwick, there is plenty to enjoy and some new venues and events. Here's some of the events involving the Record Office or archives in general:

A Cabinet of Curiosities in Berwick Archives – mentioned above. Just come into the Library on Friday 8 and 15th September from 10.30 to 3pm and enjoy our archives!

Living Barracks on the Road in Berwick Library – come and see some of the collections held by Berwick Archives, King's Own Scottish Borderers and English Heritage and talk to their curators. Monday 11th September, 11.00 – 3.30. Again, just pop in.

The Man Behind the Medal – John Skinner VC – a workshop where you can find out about John Skinner and see the archives/artefacts relating to him kept in the KOSB Museum. Tuesday 12th and Thursday 14th September 10.30 to 12. Bookable via Eventbrite- limited places.

The Photo Centre 10 years on – Talk by Cameron in the former Studio of the business in Bridge Street. Thursday 14th September at 7pm – Bookable via Eventbrite.

Berwick Town Hall Exhibition – Berwick in the 1990s Saturday 16th ,10-4 and Sunday, 17th 11 – 4.

We've also got exhibitions in the Magistrates Court (open Friday 15th, 1 – 4) ; Free Trade (Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th September 1- 5); Palace Green Pavilion (Saturday 16th 10 -4 and Sunday 17th September 11 – 4) and have supported the Community Crew's exhibition in the Beehive (Saturday 16 & Sunday 17th – 11 -3). Also come along to our guided walks – **More than Just Names** in Berwick Cemetery (Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th at 2pm – two different walks) as well as the Greenses walk (Sunday 10th at 11 and Saturday 16th at 4pm) and Ravensdowne Walk (Saturday 9th at 4pm and Sunday 17th at 10 am).

Eventbrite bookings can be made on - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/berwick-heritage-open-days-34043664105> - or contact us if you want us to help you with this. Our booklet will be available shortly and do come along and enjoy what we have on offer!

Linda Bankier

THE HUGHES, KNIGHT GREGSONS AND THE AUSSIES

One day in May 2023, four Australians walked into a bar, sorry not a bar, into the BRO (the Berwick Record Office). Of Berwick's many treasures the BRO is definitely one of them and its fame has spread to Australia. The Aussies were on a mission. But first, to introduce these four Australians - Peter Taylor, David Allen, Nikki Knewstubb and me, Prue Jolley. David is my brother and Nikki and Peter are our cousins. We are all descendants of the Hughes and Knight Gregson families from near Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Our great grandfather, George Charles Knight Gregson was born in 1851 on the *Lowlynn* estate near Beal. His father, Henry Knight (born in 1821) had been obliged

to change his surname to Gregson in order to inherit the *Lowlynn* estate. Henry's father was the Reverend Thomas Knight, the Rector at Ford for many years.

Our great grandmother Charlotte Louise Hughes (known as Louise) was born in 1850 at *Middleton Hall* near Wooler. In similar circumstances to the Gregsons, Louise's father, George Hughes Pringle, had been obliged to change his surname by Royal Warrant to Hughes in order to inherit the *Middleton Hall* estate from a relative in 1834. He thus became George Hughes Hughes.

George and Louise developed a romantic attachment in Northumberland but agreed to migrate to Australia first and get married out there – which they did in 1880. This was the start of the Gregson branch in Australia and explains our connections to Northumberland.

The thing about the Hughes family is they kept all their correspondence and documents. We first discovered this in Australia when we found boxes of letters, certificates, artwork and photos kept by Louise going back to 1865. This collection is now in the National Library of Australia (NLA) in Canberra as a rare example of an educated woman's voice in rural, pre-federation Australia. Most records in Australia from that time were from men. We thought that that was a large collection, but on a trip to England we discovered an even larger collection of Hughes documents in the care of Drs Thea and Jim Bynon, descendants of one of Louise's sisters. These documents dated back to the 17th century. A cache of Hughes/Middleton Hall documents had already been donated to the BRO in the 1960s (approximately) by a relative, Humphrey Simpson. So these remaining boxes and chests of Hughes documents from Thea & Jim's house were taken up to the Berwick Record Office to join the earlier Hughes/Middleton Hall collection.

So what was our mission? It was 4-fold. Part one was to collect a Royal Warrant from London and transport it to the BRO where it could be added to the Hughes collection. The Royal Warrant, a beautifully decorated document with wax seals in a red leather box, dated 1836, decreed that George Hughes Pringle could change his surname to Hughes and inherit the Middleton Hall estate. It is now safely in the BRO's care.



The 4 Australians handing the Royal Warrant to Linda Bankier at the BRO. May 10, 2023. >>

Part 2 of the mission was to establish a link between the Hughes/Middleton Hall collection in the BRO with the collection in the NLA in Canberra for the benefit of future researchers. A link to the Canberra collection is here - : <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-791445823/findingaid>

While most of the NLA collection has not been digitized yet, there are digital copies of two books of over 800 transcribed letters between Louise and her family in Northumberland.

Part 3 was to try to locate the account that Louise's brother, Joseph Hughes, gave to his parents describing his eye witness account of the sinking of the *SS Sarah Sands*. Joseph was a lieutenant in the British Army on his way to India in 1857 with his regiment when their ship, the *SS Sarah Sands*, caught fire. Joseph displayed great bravery during the incident and was mentioned in dispatches back to England. Rudyard Kipling immortalised this event in his story '*The Burning of the Sarah Sands*'. There were so many boxes and a striking large tin chest to look through, so many bundles of letters, that we were beginning to doubt we would ever find it; but, in the last 15 minutes before the BRO closed for the week and we were all due to leave, Nikki found it! We quickly photographed it before packing all the boxes back up for Linda to return to storage.

Part 4 was to try to find as much material as possible about the Hughes siblings who had migrated to Australia. The problem here was, again, that there was so much material that it would take 6 months to do a thorough search. We spent 2 days at the BRO and barely scratched the surface of the material available. But our gratitude goes to Linda Bankier for her assistance. What a powerhouse of knowledge and expertise, she is. Thank you, Linda.

Mission (mostly) accomplished!

We all enjoyed our time in Berwick and who knows one day you might see four Australians walking back into the BRO for further research.

Prue Jolley

A MOURNING PENDANT FOR MARGARET GRIEVE, ORD HOUSE, 1803

In 2020 I started to research James Greive of Ord House due to my interest in the Lowick estate of ca. 600 acres that he inherited from his mother, Hannah, née Staward, in 1842. On finding that not only had he become a Roman Catholic but that on his death in 1864 he bequeathed a painting, given to him by King Charles X of France, to Our Lady and St Cuthbert Church, Berwick, I wrote a short article for the Newsletter, September 2020 (105) and the Lowick Heritage Group website.

In April 2023 Kali Mason of Texas, a collector of mourning jewellery, purchased a mourning pendant for Margaret Greive from Sarah Nehama, a collector and jeweller based in Boston, MA. Kali's research led her to my article on the website and she made contact, kindly sending the photos shown below.

She wrote: My pendant for Margaret is gold with white enamel on one side and gold letters spelling out her name, date of death, and age. The pendant swivels and the back side is crystal with a small lock of hair underneath. I have not seen a pendant like this before - it is unusual. The white enamel indicates the deceased was unmarried. They aren't as common, which is one of the reasons I bought this piece.



Courtesy of Sarah Nehama

Margaret was the younger sister of James and the daughter of William and Hannah. She was buried, as were her parents, at Holy Trinity, Berwick. The entry for her burial in the transcript of the Register reads as follows:

1803 GREIVE April 5 Margaret Greive d. of William Greive Esq., of Ord House. Died Mar. 31 age 16 years. Decline

The use of the word 'decline' suggests that Margaret was ill for a long time. What a moving piece of jewellery and how amazing that it has survived for over 200 years. All we need now is for a *certain mourning brooch set with diamonds with the letters "J G" in diamonds (being in memory of the said James Greive)* to turn up! The latter is referred to in the will dated 1883 of Jane Brown Greive née Kellock, James's cousin who inherited the Ord estate and more. She died in 1884. Jane married her second husband, General John Tatton Brown, in 1872. They received royal licence to add Greive to their surname immediately after their marriage.

Sources: *Principal Probate Registry, London, Will and Grant of Probate COW413081g Jane Brown Greive (1884); Berwick Record Office: Transcript of Berwick Holy Trinity Burials 1793 – 1812; The London Gazette, 18 October 1872*

Julie Gibbs

THE PRINCE AND THE SPECTACLES

In 1887, Robert Temple was an 80-year-old man, looked after by his two middle aged daughters. They lived at the West End in Tweedmouth.

At about 10 o'clock in the morning on Friday the 19th of August a swarthy man with a scar on his face and tattoos on his arm came to the door. This appearance wouldn't have worried Robert because he would have encountered all sorts of characters during his long life as a Water Bailiff.

The man at the door was invited in and he asked Robert if he wanted any specs. Robert found an old pair and as the man examined them, he asked if he could have a drink of water and it would seem, deliberately let the specs drop. Imagine Robert's surprise when they were handed back to him minus the lenses. The carpet was given a good shake but no lenses found.

On being accused of theft, the man immediately left but Robert quickly made a complaint to James Frizzel, the Police Constable in Tweedmouth. In less than half an hour the thief was apprehended in Main Street.

As they reached the Bridge to cross over into Berwick the prisoner threw something over the parapet.

Robert was following along and called out to some boys who were playing under the bridge to see if they could find what had been thrown over. It was one of the missing lenses. The boys gave it to Robert who handed it over to the Police.

As they were crossing the Bridge the prisoner said “the old b....r couldn’t see well with the glasses in - so I thought I would take them out”!

When the matter was brought before the magistrates Police Constable Frizzel reported that, while the attempt to dispose of the evidence was taking place, he seized the prisoner’s other hand and found the other glass lens amongst some coppers in his pocket.

The prisoner pleaded guilty and the magistrate, Alexander Robertson Esq. sentenced him to 15 months imprisonment, with hard labour, concurrent with another sentence for 15 months, recorded at the same time.

The prisoner was a 45-year-old hawker whose criminal past was made evident at the time. He had been given 9 stripes for larceny by Duns Sheriff’s court when he was 17 and had many appearances at the courts in Jedburgh and Kelso when his list of crimes included assaults, breach of the peace, contempt of court, malicious mischief, drunk and disorderly conduct, poaching and desertion from the Militia.

He was Robert Rutherford and alias on these occasions was usually “Prince Robert”. He was the son of Esther, the last Queen of the Gypsies in Yetholm.

Charles Borthwick

THE REVEREND JOHN IRWIN

The Reverend John Irwin was the first incumbent of the newly built Church of St Mary's, situated at the head of Castlegate in Berwick-upon-Tweed. He is perhaps more notoriously known for his refusal to read the burial service at the graveside of Elizabeth White, a habitual drunkard and prostitute, stating it would be a 'mockery'. Perhaps it is not surprising that Rev Irwin's actions hit the national press and received strong condemnation in the *Illustrated Berwick Journal* (24 Feb 1871). The circumstances are more poignant as Elizabeth met an untimely death. One winter night, when in a drunken state, she had been carried to the Berwick Ramparts by two young men; leaving her in a stupefied state, Elizabeth died of exposure.

What sort of man was John Irwin? Today's idea of the priesthood as a vocation, a calling from God, has not always been the dominant factor when entering the Church. It was considered a suitable career and an alternative to the Army for those younger sons of the landed Gentry. Many clergy of the Victorian era came from these privileged classes, all too often failing to understand the suffering of those less fortunate. Was John, such a person?

Research has shown that John Irwin did indeed come from the landed Gentry. The Irwin estate was at Calder Abbey in Cumberland. His father, Commander Joseph Irwin, was a younger son therefore not in the line of inheritance. He had a distinguished career in the Navy, seeing much active service. In declining a knighthood for bravery, the Commander stated he had done no more than his duty. In 1821 he became Inspecting Commander of the Coastguard in Ireland, where he served for forty years. He met his wife, Emily, and all his ten children, including John, were born here. On retiring, Joseph returned to his beloved Cumberland. He was 98 when he died, and several newspapers carrying obituaries described him exceptionally favourable; referred to as the 'father of the navy,' much-loved by friends and neighbours, and living an 'unostentatious life of simplicity and active benevolence'. In a London newspaper, John Irwin commenting about his father stated he never used tobacco, and his 'grog allowances was always strictly moderate'. Undoubtedly this man would have influenced the life of his son John.

John's early life in Ireland could be more extensive in detail. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin but moved to England after graduating. The Bishop of Durham ordained him in October 1853 at Auckland Castle before he commenced his first position as a curate at St. Nicholas' Church in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It must have been a challenging post, for, newspaper reports reveal that on his first day of duty, cholera caused 168 interments. He was later to become Chaplain of the cholera hospital.

John Irwin embraced opportunities to become involved in the community of Newcastle; reports inform that he was Chaplain to the Royal Victoria Blind Asylum and the Secretary for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; he subscribed to the Ragged and Industrial School and significantly became the Chaplain to the Newcastle Gaol. In this position, he heavily criticised the Gaol conditions as a 'training ground for young criminals.' In his view, the lack of isolation cells and extensive overcrowding were untenable. He challenged the 'right' to send a young girl to prison, who had done nothing more than sell oranges on the footpath, or was too poor to pay a fine when the result would be to lock her up with the 'vilest, the most hardened,' of her sex. (Newcastle Journal, 20 Mar 1858).

While he was in Newcastle, he married Katharine Conran. Katharine was the daughter of a prominent Army Captain, James Samuel Conran. James Conran was a wealthy man, and undoubtedly, Katharine's marriage to John on 12 January 1856 would have brought a substantial marriage settlement.

John likely obtained the position of vicar of St Mary's Church through the influence of fellow Irishman Reverend George Hans Hamilton, the vicar of Holy Trinity Parish Church in Berwick. In November 1858, John moved to Berwick, ready for the consecration of the new Church. The Church sat at the head of Castlegate near the

Greenses area of the town, where a community of fishing folk lived. In a later recollection of his early days in the parish, he gave a humorous account of his difficulties when knocking on several doors; somebody rebuked him with "We dinna want any Church folks," and "What do ye want here?" Reports in the local newspapers show how he became engaged with the town's life. He frequently chaired The Mechanics' Institute meetings, a movement to promote adult educational and cultural interests, particularly amongst the working classes. He was at the forefront of proposals for a new school building to serve the working-class children residing in Castlegate and the Greens). In February 1866, John was appointed as the Chaplain to the Gaol. However, he didn't forget the people he'd known in Newcastle, for when the deputy governor of the Gaol, David Wood, was dismissed after a prisoner escaped, John wrote expressing support for Wood, remarking on his 'unremitting vigilance' in carrying out his post (24 May 1860 *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*).

John Irwin may well have belonged to the privileged classes, but his life as a clergyman does suggest a genuine concern for the lives of poorer folk. The Workhouse was situated in the Parish of St Mary's; John was the visiting clergyman. In a letter in the *Illustrated Berwick Journal* (20 Jul 1866), he defends himself against allegations of interference in the Workhouse made by the Master. It would appear he had expressed concern that a 'lunatic pauper' was left on a ward where the patients were 'exceedingly distressed and disturbed by her cries.' When the Master failed to act, John went over his head and instructed the doctor to attend.

John and Katharine had eight more children during their time in Berwick. Their lives, however, were not untouched by sadness. On 31 October 1863, their ten-month-old son, Joseph Senhouse, died from impetigo. A few years later, on 3 November 1870, their three-year-old daughter Katharine died of Tubercular Meningitis. The couple's eldest son, James Conran, died at fifteen in May 1873. The death certificate shows that he had suffered from Phthisis for three years. John Irwin was on the deathbed of all three children.

John Irwin spent approximately fifteen years working in Berwick. In the summer of 1875, he moved with his family to the Parish of Hurworth, a village on the River Tees, about 3 miles from Darlington. The newspapers again evidence that John remained active in his concern for the welfare of the poorer folk. He went over the Town's Sanitary Authority and wrote direct to the Local Government Board, complaining of the state of sewerage in the town, which he described as a 'nursery' for typhoid fever, of which the poorer classes were the victims.

John was to spend the rest of his career as a vicar in Hurworth. His wife, Katharine, died on 19 June 1891 with a kidney tumour. Five years later, John re-married Margaret Elizabeth Bell; he was 65 years old. His new wife was a 45-year-old spinster from a merchant family in Liverpool.

Of John's surviving children, one stands out; Emily Francis. Emily remained single and trained as a nurse at King's College Hospital, London. In the 1901 Census Record, she worked as a District nurse in Ryhope, Sunderland. Ten years later, she is in the Census Register, living at the Diocesan Mission House, College of Durham, and registered as a 'Deaconess.'

John retired as Rector of Hurworth-on-Tees after 52 years serving as a Minister in the Church. He moved to Hove, Sussex, where he died on 24 April 1908. At his bedside was Emily, still a Deaconess at the Mission house. She had come to be with her father at the end of his life. It paints a picture of a loving father-daughter relationship.

John Irwin was a clergyman from the privileged classes but with his feet in both camps. His work as a minister brought him to those less fortunate, sometimes becoming their voice when they had none. His life demonstrates a genuine vocation to help those in need. His actions in refusing to read the burial service at the graveside of Elizabeth White seem harsh. However, he would have known Elizabeth in a personal way that history doesn't reveal. Not only would he have seen her frequently being abusive and drunk on Berwick streets, but, as Chaplain to the Gaol and visiting clergy to the Workhouse (two establishments Elizabeth frequented regularly), he would have conversed with her on a personal level. Looking at Elizabeth through a 21st-century lens, she is one of society's victims. Abandoned by her husband, history tells Elizabeth's story through a string of court appearances for drunkenness, abusive behaviour, prostitution and vagrancy. Five children born to Elizabeth were left in the workhouse, only one surviving to adulthood.

John Irwin was a vicar from the nineteenth century. His empathy with the poor and unfortunate of society perhaps didn't extend to those he considered hardened, who didn't want help, and whose behaviour impacted those more deserving in society: Elizabeth White being such a person. It cannot go unnoticed that he had lost his 3-year-old little girl Katharine

His refusal to read the burial service may not have been an easy one to make. It is possible that upon arrival of the funeral party he simply realised his conscience would not let him go through a service which would amount to a 'mockery,' and as such, would be a blasphemy towards the God he loved and served.

Susan Charlton

BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS

Berwick Advertiser, 7 February 1873

EXTRAORDINARY SELF-MUTILATION BY CLERGYMAN

A few nights ago (says a Central News telegram) the Rev. W. Marsh, late curate of Melton Mowbray, on his return from an excursion in Ireland, aroused his Landlord, whom he called to help him "in taking out his eye." On going to him the landlord found him in the act of gouging out his eye with a penknife, he having already cut off his right hand with a razor. On his dressing-table lay a Prayer- Book and Bible, the latter being open at the passage, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off," &c. Medical aid was called in, and a proper amputation of the arm made. The Rev. gentleman is progressing favourable.

Berwick Advertiser, 21 February 1873

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON'S MUNICIPAL BANQUET

The Mansion House Municipal Banquet, to be given by the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, on the 26th of March, will be one of great interest. Invitations have, according to the London City Press, been sent out to more than 200 of the Mayors of the leading towns of England and Wales; the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the members of the diplomatic corps, and to all the members of the Cabinet, nine of whom, including Mr Gladstone and Mr Lowe have already accepted. [It will be seen from the proceedings of the Town Council meeting of Wednesday, reported in another column, that the Mayor of Berwick (Alderman Purves) has received an invitation to this banquet and has accepted it.]

Carole Pringle