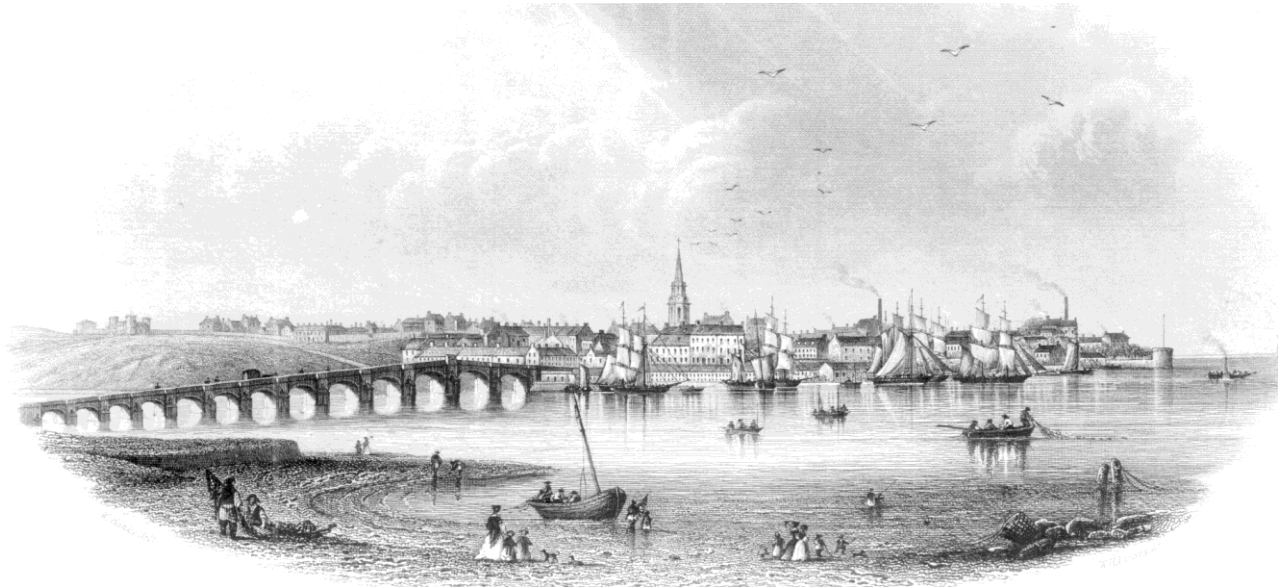


# Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives Newsletter



NUMBER 119 – FEBRUARY 2024

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 8th March 2024

Mrs B.F.C Adams – Berwick's first female Mayor. A talk at Berwick Archives for International Women's Day, 10.30 am

Friday 15th March

Friends AGM followed by talk - The Friends over the past 30 years. Parish Centre, 7 pm

Wednesday 20th March

The History of Berwick's old Bridge in the past 400 years: talk by Linda Bankier at Berwick Parish Centre, 7.30 pm

## **OTHER SOCIETIES' LECTURES**

### **AYTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Ayton Community Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Tuesday 27th February                      Scotland- Beneath the Surface: Bruce Keith

Tuesday 26th March                      (AGM) - The Bondagers and the Bondage  
system: Dinah Iredale

Tuesday 30th April                      Visit to Coldstream Museum

### **BELFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bell View Resource Centre**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 28th February                      The Gardens of Glendale Pyke: John  
Swanson

Wednesday 27th March                      Railways in Northhamshire: Chris Neville-  
Taylor

Wednesday 24th April                      The Cheviot Volcanoes: Elizabeth Devon

Wednesday 22nd May                      Captain Craster's Harbour: Phil Rowett

### **BERWICK CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Venue: Berwick Parish Centre**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 13th March                      Question Time: with Panelists to discuss  
important current issues in Berwick-  
upon-Tweed

Wednesday 10th April

A.G.M. at 7pm followed by a talk from  
Nick Lewis

### **BERWICK HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 21st February

Looking at Berwick's Windows: Annie  
Robinson

Wednesday 20th March

The History of Berwick's Old Bridge over the  
past 400 years: Linda Bankier

Wednesday 17th April

The Life of Henry Percy (Hotspur): John  
Sadler

### **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Parish Centre, Berwick**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 4th March

New Light on the early medieval  
archaeology of Holy Island: David Petts

Monday 8th April

Prehistoric finds and the Portable  
Antiquities Scheme in Northumberland:  
Andrew Agate:

Monday 13th May

Venue: Berwick Guildhall

Reflections on the 2023 Coronation:  
David White (Garter Principal King of  
Arms)

### **BORDERS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

The Research Room at 52 Overhaugh St, Galashiels will be reopening on Tuesday 5th March 2024 and will also be open on Thursdays. Pop in or request an appointment by using the Contacts page on the website

[www.bordersfhs.org.uk/BFHSContacts.asp](http://www.bordersfhs.org.uk/BFHSContacts.asp).

## **BOWSDEN HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Venue: Bowsden Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 4th March	Potted History: Graham Taylor
Monday 1st April	Tweedmouth to Melrose Line: Allan Colman
Monday 6th May	Grinling Gibbons, Woodcarver. The greatest 17 <sup>th</sup> Century woodcarver: Andrew Beckwith
Monday 3rd June	Basket weaving in Northumberland: Anna Corbett

## **CHIRNSIDE HISTORY GROUP**

**Venue: Waterloo Arms Dining Room**

**Time: 7.30pm**

Monday 18th March	James Hutton & Siccar Point: Elizabeth Devon
Monday 15th April	Robert Fortune of Edrom: Anne McNeil
Monday 20th May	Traquair-Tenants Cotters & Workers: Margaret Fox

## **COLDSTREAM & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Thursday 7th March	AGM at 6.45pm followed by The Excavations at Hume: Ian Hill
Thursday 4th April	Kelt Fishcakes and Gilse-net fishing on the Tweed: Jim Gibson
Thursday 2nd May	Are We Nearly There Yet? A journey exploring Scotland's milestone history – and much else besides: Bruce Keith

### DUNSE HISTORY SOCIETY

**Venue: Duns Masonic Hall, 41 Newtown St, Duns.**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 28th February	In the Footsteps of King Alfred the Great: Kenneth McLean
Wednesday 27th March	Sin in Duns: Helen Leighton-Rose
Wednesday 24th April	Members and Guests Evening A.G.M. followed by 2 short talks

### GLENDALE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Wednesday 13th March	Members Evening and Social
Wednesday 10th April	Mr Bevin's Raffle- the Bevin Boys of WWII: Dr Liz O'Donnell

### LOWICK HERITAGE GROUP

**Venue: Lowick Village Hall**

**Time: 7.30 p.m.**

Monday 11th March	Mediaeval Monastery Hospitals and Care: Sandra Gann
Saturday 18th May – Sunday 19th May	Event in the Village Hall, more information to follow on <a href="http://lowickheritagegroup.org">lowickheritagegroup.org</a>

### NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND GENEALOGY GROUP

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

**Time: 10.00am**

Saturday 16th March	Members' Stories: Disreputable Ancestors
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Saturday 20th April A Wine Trader's Letter from 1793: John  
Ferguson  
Saturday 18th May AGM & Members' Stories tbd

### **NORTH SUNDERLAND & SEAHOUSES LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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

Wednesday 28th February Dress to Impress- how the concept of  
glamour has changed over time:  
Bailiffgate Museum  
Wednesday 27th March Bridges of the Lower Tweed: Linda  
Bankier  
Wednesday 24th April The Tragedy of the Short family from  
Lucker Station: Brian Rodgers  
Wednesday 22nd May Life in a Northumbrian Manor: Beth Elliott

### **TILL VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Venue: Crookham Village Hall** **Time: 7.30pm**

Wednesday 6th March Samuel Brown and Union Chain Bridge:  
its history and restoration: Edward  
Cawthorn  
Wednesday 3rd April Fact to Fiction: Cresswell connections:  
Katharine Tiernan  
Wednesday 1st May (date tbc) AGM followed by a talk  
Wednesday 5th June Barmoor Castle Test Pits: John Nolan

## **ARCHIVE NEWS**

Normally the time leading up to and following Christmas can be quiet for the Archives but this year, we have been kept very busy with various things.

**VOLUNTEER REPACKAGING PROJECT** - at the beginning of January we held a public meeting to launch a short pilot project we are undertaking for the Living Barracks Projects. 10 volunteers have signed up for 3 months to help us repackage and renumber a section of the Borough Archives collection in preparation for our eventual move to the Barracks. We need to have some idea of how long this will take. The volunteers had some collections care and repackaging training and have been given some background to the archives they are working on. The group meet on a Monday and have been making great progress repackaging and retying bundles and ticking off that everything is there. It's slow work and so it is important that we know now how long it will take.

**EVERYDAY LIFE IN A NORTHUMBRIAN MANOR** – Beth and her volunteers throughout the County have been transcribing away and the results of all this work is now starting to appear on the Northumberland Archives website - <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/manorial-project/images-and-transcripts/> . Do have a look at all the resources we have put on there about manorial records. We will be adding to it. Beth has also been giving a couple of talks locally about the project to Berwick and Norham History Societies

**BERWICK PHOTO CENTRE AND RECORD OFFICE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECTS** - Cameron has now created over 13,000 catalogue entries for the Photo Centre collection which are available on the Northumberland archives electronic catalogue. He has also been digitising images and looking at our other photographic collections. It's amazing what we have got which has just come in off and on. Following on from our two successful exhibitions at the Granary Gallery, we are hoping to hold another photographic one there in late 2025. I know it is a long way off but we need to start planning now. Our publication of 1970s Photo Centre images and timeline has been very successful and well received. Copies can still be purchased from the Record Office.

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION** - In January I spoke to a group of Senior Education Leaders at Bell View in Belford about LEARN ( our online reaching resource ). I also spoke to the North Northumberland Genealogy Group in the same venue about less well known Family History resources but not on the same day! . As part of my county outreach work, I have also delivered a two part Oral History workshop to a Blossoming Community Project on Make do and mend in the East Hartford area and attended a Village Hall cluster meeting at Ellingham.

**LIVING BARRACKS PROJECT** - I am involved in various strands of this project and am working away in the background on different elements. In December, we held a consultation meeting about proposed themes in the museum and at the end of January we held a Teachers Consultation meeting as well. There will be further

consultation in the next couple of months. To help us assess how much will be involved in preparing our collections for their eventual move, we also have a new temporary member of staff – Amanda Fall is working with us until mid July for 3 days a week on auditing and updating our locations index at our store.

It's only 10 weeks since we produced the last newsletter but we have packed a lot in!

*Linda Bankier*

## EVERYDAY LIFE IN A NORTHUMBRIAN MANOR

The Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor project has been running now for just over a year and a half. In this time, we have set up volunteer groups in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Allendale, Hexham and Newcastle, with a total of 52 volunteers currently taking part. The volunteers have been working hard to create transcripts of some of our manorial documents from across the county, with fascinating findings so far!

Manorial documents relate to the running of a manor and their courts. It's best to think of a manor as being almost like an estate, which may contain tenanted lands, arable areas and woodland, all owned or leased out by a manor Lord. What separates manors from estates is their right to hold manorial courts and to create their own customs or local laws. Manorial records can be used as proof of title to lands, and as such there is a legal requirement for them to be listed and to ensure that they do not leave England and Wales<sup>1</sup>. Beyond proof of title, manorial documents hold a range of uses and areas of interest.

Something which has fascinated all of us, are the unusual roles which manorial tenants may be required to undertake as part of their tenancy. One of these is the 'affeerors', who would be chosen to decide on the size of monetary fine for each broken rule in the manor. In the below Barmoor court roll, you may just be able to see the 'affeerors' listed at the top. Below them are listed the 'Constables', 'Pinder', and 'Aletasters'. 'Constables', much like today, were tasked with ensuring that the rules were not broken, 'Pinders' were tasked with impounding livestock, and 'Aletasters' ensured that the correct measures were used in any ale sold in the manor. Our volunteers researching the Hexham documents have also found 'Allerkeepers', who were appointed within the manor of Hexham to protect the alder trees.<sup>2</sup> While not a manorial role, we did also recently find in Tweedmouth manor a



'peruke-maker'<sup>3</sup> being admitted as a tenant to the manor in 1759<sup>4</sup> - I like to imagine we had some stylish folks in town at that time!



*Barmoor Manor Court Roll (NRO 2372-A-1-1-1-4). Note the 'Affectors' at the top.*

Manorial documents can also be used to trace who was living in a manor at a given time. As part of their tenancy agreement, most manorial tenants were required to attend the courts, and so they are usually listed on the court records with a note of whether they attended. They could avoid attending by paying a small fine called an 'essoin' in advance of the court, without this, if they still didn't attend, they would be charged with an 'amercement' fine, which was usually much higher than an 'essoin'. We've found throughout this project, that the majority tend to favour a 'essoin' over attending the courts!

In addition to finding out about the tenants and their manorial roles, we've also been learning about the laws and customs in our local manors. Manorial courts could only deal with offences where the fine would be less than 40 shillings, which means that the crimes listed in the rolls are usually minor offences, such as loose livestock or unclean properties. The highest offences listed are trespass and blood and affray. There has been evidence in some of the manors that a punishment above a fine was required to keep the peace, with Morpeth manor requesting a pillory and a cucking stool<sup>5</sup>, the former being a type of stocks and the latter a type of ducking stool, whereby the subject would be dunked into a body of water as punishment. Cucking stools were usually used on un-trustworthy market sellers and tradesmen<sup>6</sup>. In other fascinating findings, we've had people listed in the court rolls for buying too many cabbages, accusations of buying dogs solely to steal their neighbour's geese and constables abused by being called 'rogues'!

When planning the project, we had hoped that we might achieve 2500 volunteer hours over the 2.5 year timespan, but rather incredibly we have already reached 2800 volunteer hours, with just over half a year left to the project. This shows both the dedication of the volunteers and I hope shows just how interesting the documents can be. There has been a real interest from our volunteers in the

document findings, with many starting to research their findings. We have a total of 548 documents transcribed so far, for the manors of Tweedmouth and Spittal, Norham Town and Castle, Wooler, Barmoor, Lowick, Holy Island, Morpeth, Hexham and Allendale, so there's a really wide geographical reach in the transcripts. Some of these are now available on our Northumberland Archives website, under the 'Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor' tab<sup>7</sup>. Do take a look and see what you can discover in the manorial records.

*Beth Elliott*

*Project Archivist – The Everyday Life in a Northumbrian Manor Project.*

<sup>1</sup> The Law of Property Act. (1922): <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/12-13/16>

<sup>2</sup> Hinds, A. B. *Hexhamshire*. United Kingdom: A. Reid & C., 1896. (p278).

<sup>3</sup> Peruke – A wig, usually worn by men.

<sup>4</sup> Tweedmouth Manor Court Book. Q1-4 –425.

<sup>5</sup> Morpeth Manor Court Roll, 1668. SANT-BEQ-28-1-10 (page 27).

<sup>6</sup> Pettifer, E. W. *Punishments of Former Days*. United Kingdom: Waterside Press, 1992. (Page 105).

<sup>7</sup> Everyday Life in Northumbrian Manor Webpage: <https://www.northumberlandarchives.com/manorial-project/>

## AGM AND VOTING

The business of the Annual General Meeting requires voting for the acceptance of the Minutes of last year's AGM, the Chairman's Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report for 2023, and for the Committee elections. We have decided to continue with the voting procedure adopted in the last few years by means of email and postal voting: this allows the necessary business to be completed in advance of the AGM and it enables more people to register their vote. A **voting form** is being distributed with this Newsletter, and we urge members to send in their votes by **Friday 8th March 2024**, either as an email attachment or by a postal delivery to the Record Office. Thank you for your support.

The **AGM and Spring Lecture** will be held on **Friday 15th March** in the Parish Centre, starting at 7.00pm. The lecture is entitled "The Friends Over The Past 30 Years" and will be given by Linda Bankier.

*John Spiers, FBDMA Secretary*

## FRIENDS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OUTING

This year the Friends celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation in 1994. To mark the occasion, Lord Joicey, (our President since the beginning) has kindly

agreed to host a visit for us, to some of the venues on his estate at Ford and Etal. In the early years of the Friends, our AGMs were sometimes held at Ford.

As yet, no detailed plans have been drawn up for the day, except that it is hoped to hold it sometime in the latter half of June. The day is intended to be a flexible occasion so that people can come and go as they like, and there would be opportunities for refreshments (including a donated celebratory cake)

When a more specific plan is in place, members will be communicated with by email. If you do not normally receive emails from the Friends but you would still like to hear about the arrangements, please leave a message for the Secretary of the Friends at the Berwick Record Office, giving your contact details.

*Bob Steward*

## **HISTORY OF LONGRIDGE TOWERS– PART 1**

Today we associate Longridge Towers with the school of that name that has operated on the site since 1983 but the building itself dates back to 1879 and is on the site of a previous building which was called Longridge House. I have traced much of the history of the building and the people and organisations that have been associated with it through documents retained by the school, old newspapers, the internet and the research which Bernard Shaw undertook in the 1990s. I hope that you find this as interesting to read as I have to research.

### **Longridge House and the Mathers**

Major Bertram Orde owned Longridge House until 1838 and the family had owned it since 16th century.

The Orde Family sold Longridge House at auction in July 1838 when the estate of 500 acres was auctioned by Smalls Auctioneers in Newcastle. The advertisement states that “the mansion house is commodious with gardens and grounds that are set out with much taste”. They had advertised the estate in January 1838 and one has to assume that they had no interest and hence the auction. The house was bought by William Mather who had been the recipient of a large bequest two years earlier following the death of a distant cousin.

To trace the source of William Mather’s fortune we are lucky that on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1914 J.C. Hodgson delivered a paper to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle entitled “The Mather Millions or The Mutation of Wealth”.

The story begins with Alexander Adams who was born circa 1735 to Benjamin Adams of Acton and his wife Elizabeth who was a Collingwood from Little Ryle. Alexander was one of five brothers and his father farmed at South Acton, now Acton

Hall, which had been purchased by his father in 1682. Alexander was apprenticed in 1751 to Edward Mosely and was admitted to the Hostman's Company of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1759.

The Hostman's Company were a cartel of businessmen who formed a monopoly to control the export of coal from the River Tyne. They were so known from the medieval practice of "hosting", whereby local businessmen provided visiting merchants with accommodation and introduced them to local traders. The Hostmen acted as middlemen with whom the coal producers and those who shipped the coal to London and elsewhere were forced to deal. Towards the end of the 16th century, the Hostmen began to buy up leases in the Tyneside coalfield until they soon had a near total monopoly on the production of coal. By the time Alexander was admitted as a member their power was starting to wane, however, he clearly prospered and by 1778 he was listed as a "coal fitter" with an office in Broad Chare. Apparently, he made a fortune as a merchant in East India and was a founder member in 1783 of the Newcastle Fire Office which provided insurance for buildings, houses and goods against damage by fire. This was the first such company outside London and many of the original 21 founders were well known Newcastle names like Surtees, Clavering and Brandling. At the time of his death in 1817 he owned Espley estate as well as Acton and Eshott which he had inherited from his brothers who had predeceased him.

Alexander Adams left his fortune to his illegitimate son William Adams (born 1778) whose mother was a Barbara Carter and who had an orange stand on Sandhill. Alexander obviously maintained a close relationship with his son as he paid for his studies at Edinburgh University and left Barbara Carter £ 1,000 on his death. William who had qualified as a Doctor in Edinburgh in 1800 moved to Bengal in 1806, perhaps because of his father's connections with the East India Company. He died in Calcutta, whilst working as an assistant surgeon, before he learnt of the will of his father. The inheritance, which was £500,000 (nearly 29 million in today's terms) of which the estates were valued at a £250,000, was left to his maternal cousin Thomas Naters who was at that time living at North Hero on Lake Champlain in Vermont, America. Lake Champlain is just south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel.

However the will of Alexander Adams, as far as the estates were concerned, was not correctly executed and as a result the estates were divided amongst a number of cousins and Thomas Naters only received the cash. Thomas Naters returned to Europe in 1823 and bought Goldenburg Castle (Zurich) in Switzerland (dates back to 1300s and is now a vineyard) and died in 1836 aged 72. He was a recluse but was known as a philanthropist in both Switzerland and in the UK. He left £ 120,000 when he died. The inheritance then passed to another cousin William Mather who is

described as a bricklayer in Newcastle. It seems more likely from reports in the paper that William Mather was already a successful builder in Newcastle at the time of the inheritance. The 1820s and 1830s was the period when much of the centre of Newcastle was rebuilt. Grey Street, Eldon Square, the Royal Arcade and many of the streets of beautiful town houses were built in this period by Dobson and Grainger so it is not unreasonable to suggest that Mather worked with Grainger given that Mather's son was later to marry Grainger's grand-daughter. However, it was William Mather that was to purchase the Longridge House Estate in 1838.

We don't know how often William Mather stayed at Longridge however he was obviously involved in the local community as there is a record in the Berwick Advertiser of "his very handsome annual donation to the British School at Horncliffe" and also of the sum of £ 75 subscribed towards the establishment of a public reading room and library in Tweedmouth.

William Mather died 16<sup>th</sup> March 1863 aged 76. He had three sons William Adams Mather, Joseph Mather and Charles Thomas Naters Mather.

William Adams Mather died on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1864 aged 35. In the Newcastle Daily Journal of 1st June 1864 he is described as Wm A Mather of Beech Grove in this town and Longridge, Berwick, Major in the Newcastle upon Tyne Rifle Volunteers. It reported that he died suddenly whilst in London. "He was suddenly seized with illness, on Wednesday last, whilst in London. Medical assistance was at once called in; but from this time he continued to sink, and died about two hours afterwards." His funeral, which had full military honours, was a significant event in the town and according to the paper was attended by between six and ten thousand people. He was buried at St John's, Elswick in the family vault alongside his mother and father.

Following William A Mather's death, Joseph Mather ran the Longridge estate and the younger brother, Charles Thomas Naters Mather lived at Beech Grove in Newcastle. On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1866 Joseph Mather married Jane Milvain in Benwell Church but their happiness was short lived as he died on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1867 aged 32 and was buried in the family vault alongside his parents and brother William.

Joseph's obituary in the Berwick Journal of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1867 gives us some clues as to the life style that the family enjoyed: "On the occasion of his marriage, he proceeded with his bride to London, and thence to his estate in Switzerland, where, finding the climate too hot, he returned to England, and sojourned for a short time at Tynemouth, after which he proceeded to Scarborough where his yacht, the "Gypsy" was awaiting him; and it was at the latter place he caught a severe cold by getting wet when returning on shore in the yacht's cutter. The cold unfortunately brought on an attack of bronchitis, which never entirely left him. Unhappily in the month of

October last whilst driving through Northumberland to his seat in Horncliffe, he contracted a severe cold which induced a relapse of his previous complaint and from that time to the period of his decease he was ailing.” The paper went on to describe him as a man of immense wealth but most unpretentious, kind and generous to the poor. It is interesting to note that when the Newcastle Journal of 21<sup>st</sup> January 1867 reported on his funeral at St John’s, Elswick there were no women present.

Clearly the Mathers were a very wealthy family and they mixed with people of a similar background in business in Newcastle. Following Joseph’s death in 1867 the family estates passed to Charles Mather. On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1870 Charles Mather married Annie Liddell at Lady’s Chapel, St John’s Wood and they made their home at Longridge House.

To be continued.

Stuart Bankier

## DID HE FALL OR WAS HE PUSHED ?

Following an incident on the Scottish side of Coldstream Bridge on the evening of 25 November 1853, John Tait, a blacksmith living at Thornington in Northumberland, was apprehended and taken before Alexander Wood, Esquire, sheriff-substitute of Berwickshire, to give his version of events. This was the beginning of a process which culminated in a trial conducted by two judges from the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh sitting in the Circuit Court in Jedburgh in Spring 1854. Had a major crime been committed ?!

### **The Indictment**

After investigations over a number of weeks, Tait was *“Indicted and Accused by her Majesty’s Advocate for Her Majesty’s interest of assault, especially when committed to the injury of the person, fracture of bones, and danger of life”*, this being *“a crime of an heinous nature”*.

So what was he accused of? - *“... you did, wickedly and feloniously, attack and assault William Hogg [a flesher, aged 49, living in Coldstream, Berwickshire] ... and did seize him and throw him over the parapet of the bridge whereby he was precipitated from a height of forty feet, into the said River Tweed, in consequence of which the knee-pan of his left leg was fractured, and his left leg and knee and left arm were severely bruised and injured... to the danger of his life”*.

### **Preliminary Issues**

The cross-border nature of the alleged crime caused some difficulties for the Scottish prosecutors sitting in their offices only ten miles from the crime scene. The

Procurator Fiscal's office in Duns seemed to find the exact location of Thornington problematic. After discussion they opted to insert in the indictment "*Thornington in the parish of Kirknewton or township of Kirknewton*". And, "*afraid of not designing the English witnesses properly*" they consulted Messrs Marshall and Sanderson, solicitors in Berwick, for help with parishes, designating one witness as "*residing in Cornhill in the Parochial Chapelry of Cornhill, parish of Norham*" to be absolutely precise.

The Sheriff Clerk in Duns had a problem too. Writing to the Crown Agent in Edinburgh he stated "*As the pannel resides furth of Scotland it appeared to me that the Indictment could be executed only by a Messenger at Arms and I sent for Mr McWatt, the only Messenger in this county, and desired him to proceed to Thornington... this, however, Mr McWatt refuses to do*". Why? Because "*the Auditor of Exchequer has refused to allow him more than 7/6 a day which does not cover his expenses*". Question: Where could the indictment on Tait be served? Answer: At the Market Cross in Duns!

### **Hogg's Version of Events**

It was market day in Coldstream, the town was buzzing and the pubs were full. So what actually happened to bring about a trial in the highest court in Scotland a few months later?

Hogg stated in his declaration:

*"I have known the accused... for several years intimately, and have always been on the best of terms with him. Between 2 & 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Friday 25 Nov 1853 I accidentally met Tait in Coldstream & after going to different shops with him making purchases we went together between 4 & 5 o'clock into Reid's public house on the High Street where we had two gills of whisky which he paid for. An hour or so afterwards we left Reid's together and I went along the road towards the bridge with him setting him so far home. When near the bridge I was about to bid him good bye & return home when he invited me to go a little further and get another gill in Jacksons. We accordingly went into Jacksons where we had one gill between us which he paid for. I think the witness Duncan was in Jacksons drinking some beer when we went in. After drinking the whisky Tait and I left Jacksons together. We were then on perfectly friendly terms & had had no dispute whatever in the Inn. I intended setting him across the bridge. Duncan rose to come away when we rose, but I cannot say whether he followed us to the door immediately. I walked with Tait about 10 or 12 yards on the bridge, and then stood still at the side of the bridge to make water.*



*I think Tait stood still for the same purpose but am not sure. He was however quite close to me at the time, & I saw no one else near us or on the bridge. It was about 7 o'clock (& moonlight – crossed out). I was quite sober, and I considered Tait so also. Immediately after commencing to make water I felt myself falling through the air into the river below. The thing was so instantaneous that I was not conscious of being lifted off my feet & thrown over the bridge. I could not swear that I felt any one touch me. I certainly did not pimp (i.e. break wind) or throw myself over the bridge, but how I was thrown over I cannot explain. I am quite convinced in my own mind that Tait, and no one else, must have suddenly lifted me up & pitched me over, because he alone, so far as I saw, was close to me at the moment, but I could not swear positively that he did so... I fell on my left knee & arm into the water & was for a moment completely immersed. I was partially stupefied, but had sufficient self-possession to crawl to the bank, which might be 5 yards from where I fell in. The water reached my breast when I fell. When I got to the bank I was unable to use my left leg & arm but crawled up the bank sideways to the house of the witness Donaldson which adjoins Jacksons & which I entered dreeeping with wet. I was conveyed home in a cart and have since been confined to bed and attended by a surgeon who can describe my injuries. I did not call out when falling over the bridge, but I think I called “murder” when I got out of the water. I have never seen Tait since the moment I stood still to make water. I could swear that I was thrown over the bridge by somebody. I had got no other drink than the share of the three gills. I had not bidden Tait goodbye when thrown over. My intention was to have gone across the bridge with him, and I told him, on coming out of Jacksons, that I would go along the road with him for a short way”.*

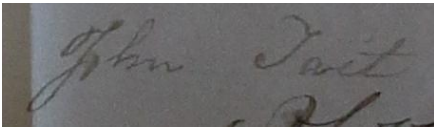
National Records of Scotland - Crown Copyright



## Tait's Version of Events

What did Tait have to say? Did his version of events differ from his friend's? In two respects, yes, one minor, one major. After stating that they had two gills of whisky in Jacksons, not one, he continued:

*"After the beer was finished Duncan asked me to go away home... When at the door I bade Hogg goodnight and he walked away towards Coldstream while Duncan and I walked together over the bridge which is in an opposite direction. I declare that I did not take hold of Hogg upon the bridge or fling him over the bridge into the water. I did not when going over the bridge hear any plunge in the water and I did not know till two days afterwards that anything had happened to Hogg. All which I declare to be truth".*



National Records of Scotland - Crown Copyright

## The Medical Examination

What did the surgeon, Dr George Gillies, have to say? On 30 November he certified *"on soul and conscience"* that, about 8 o'clock in the evening of Friday 25 November, he was sent for to examine Hogg who told him that a man had thrown him off Coldstream Bridge. Upon examination the doctor found him *"very cold and his pulse feeble"* and noted that there was a fracture to his left knee-pan and that his left arm from the elbow to the hand was severely bruised. The next day and the day following leeches were applied and he was given repeated doses of calomel and opium. *"I am not prepared to say that he is altogether free from danger altho' at present I think he will recover.....P.S. When I first saw William Hogg I thought his life in danger"*.

On 9 December there was a further communication from Dr Gillies:

*"William Hogg is in such a state that the taking of his deposition is out of the question at present... he was in the habit previously of taking a good deal of whisky which was withheld from him when the limb was so much swelled & inflamed. He remained quite sensible till the day after you saw him but in consequence of want of sleep & perhaps some degree of concussion he has never been quite sensible since..."*

## What Happened Next...

Was it more trouble than it was worth attempting to elicit a deposition from Hogg? It would appear so. The Berwickshire legal authorities told the Crown Agent in

Edinburgh that, having received intimation from Dr Gillies that Hogg was out of danger, they did not consider it necessary to take any deposition from him. They added: *“When at Coldstream today we saw Hogg walking about the street on crutches”!*

The matter was clearly causing quite a stir in the neighbourhood. On 8 December Andrew Torrie in Coldstream had reported to the Procurator Fiscal in Duns that he had heard that Tait was *“going off to Ammeraca but the truth of it I can not learn”*.

So where was Tait when all of this was going on? Was he lying low or just getting on with his trade? On 10 December the Crown Agent noted that he could not be apprehended again unless Hogg died, and doubted whether there would be sufficient evidence to charge Tait with murder.

### **The Trial**

Jedburgh Spring Circuit 1854 - three witnesses from Northumberland took the stand, two for the prosecution - James Duncan, a hind, residing at Tithe Hill in parish of Carham (who had been in the drinking party in Jacksons), and Edward Laidlaw, residing with James Carr, innkeeper in Cornhill, parish of Norham. Thomas Hunt, a farmer, spoke in Tait's defence.

There must have been a sigh of relief from Tait when the foreman of the jury delivered its verdict – by a majority, Not Proven. He was acquitted and deemed innocent in the eyes of the law, free to go and resume his normal life - but perhaps with a cloud still hanging over him. The verdict, peculiar to Scotland, just meant that the prosecution had been unable to prove its case that Tait was responsible for Hogg ending up in the river.

What do you think? And did Hogg resume his friendship with Tait? We will never know.

*The research materials on which this article is based are held in the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. References: AD14/54/173 (Crown Office); JC26/1854/109 (High Court of Justiciary*

*Margaret Fox*

## **BERWICK ADVERTISER SNIPPETS**

### **Berwick Advertiser, 21 March 1873**

#### THE NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY COMPANY

At an adjourned meeting of the shareholders of North British Railway Company held in Edinburgh on Friday, the “General Powers” Bill of the Company was approved of

for the present, after some discussion. The Bill contains a variety of proposals- amongst others, the erection of a passenger station in Bothwell Street, Glasgow. In the course of some remarks the chairman of the Company (Mr Stirling of Kippendavie) said he was satisfied that from the changes which would be made on the measure in Committee the shareholders would have another opportunity of considering the Bill.

**Berwick Advertiser, 21 March 1873**

THE TWEED FISHERIES

A number of inhabitants of Biggar have entrusted Major Hamilton, M.P., with the presentation of a petition to the House of Commons, relative to the Tweed Fisheries Acts of 1857 and 1859. The petitions allege "That in the upper waters of the Tweed the salmon proper is never to met with save and except during the months of "close time" and a short period thereafter," and "that the expressions "foul, unclean, or unseasonable," used in the said Acts, is vague, unsatisfactory, and capable of multifarious interpretations." And they pray that the House of Commons "may be pleased to alter or amend the said Acts, so as to secure more effectually the liberty of the subject in regard to summary arrest for alleged illegal fishing and protect him from such proceedings as can now be taken by any bailiff or other individual to satisfy feelings of vindictiveness, vengeance, or jealousy. The annual close time may be declared to expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January in each and every year, and that from and after that date up to the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November in each year, every salmon taken by means of the rod and line, either with the artificial fly or any legal bait, may be a lawful capture, and not subject to be returned by reason of any alleged foulness, uncleanness, or unseasonableness.

**Berwick Advertiser, 21 March 1873**

ADULTERATION OF MEAT AND DRINK

The Police Commissioners of Dundee, in order to ascertain whether it was necessary to appoint a public analyst, recently ordered an analysis of the various articles of food sold in Dundee. The report of the analysis was laid before the Commission on Thursday. It was stated that 21 articles in daily use had been analysed. The result in the case of some articles was satisfactory, in others it was lamentably the reverse, as out of 18 samples of tea, some of them purchased from the largest warehouses in Dundee, there was not one pure sample amongst them

that was not more or less adulterated with Prussian blue, blacklead, starch, turmeric, carbonate of lime, China clay, and terra alba. The samples of coffee were mixed with chicory, and the samples of cocoa with starch and sugar. Four samples of flour and bread were mixed with alum, and four samples of butter were mixed with fat. In the samples of confections, oatmeal, pepper, sugar, rum, claret, port wine, sherry, porter, bitter ale, sweet ale, and brandy there was no unadulteration, (that is they were all adulterated) Out of 13 samples of whisky, 10 were adulterated, and three were adulterated with fusel oil and methylated spirits. Two of the adulterated samples were got from shebeens, and the others from a public-house. It was resolved that Mr Macadam, Edinburgh, should analyse the other half of the same samples.

**Berwick Advertiser, 21 March 1873**

BORDER SCENERY IN THE ROYAL SCOTTISH EXHIBITION

The forty-seventh annual exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and architectural designs by living artists in connection with the Royal Scottish Academy, at present being held in Edinburgh, contains several local works illustrative of the scenery and surroundings of the Tweed and other spots of interest in the land "Scot" Among the local views, purchased by the Royal Association for the promotion of the Fine Arts and private individuals are the following:- No. 9262 "A quiet Nook near Ladykirk, Berwickshire," John Blair artist, £17 17s; No 379, "The Death of Marmion" R. Gibb, £120; No. 946, "At Ayton Mill, Berwickshire," by J. C. Wintour, A.R.S.A., £10 10s; No. 770, "A Grand Pic-Nic in Denholm," R. M. Ballantyne, £10 10s. Mr Wintour also contributes a sketch, "View of Ayton" which has been well spoken of, but certainly it is not a picture that strikes one as resembling what it professes to portray. The painting has a clump of trees on the right, another on the left, and between these are seen a richly wooded hollow, with church spire peeping through the foliage towards a distance of dark blue hills, and the castle at the top of a lofty mountain. Mr Sam Brough, A. R.S.A., has a fine local picture in the exhibition, "The Quhar and the Tweed," and Mr Arthur Perigal, R.S.A., has also some fine Highland landscapes.

*Carole Pringle*