

INTRODUCTION

About the map

The True Description of Her Majesty's town of Berwick is a birds-eye view of the town in pencil and watercolour on parchment. This reproduction is life-size, but it the original is painted at a miniature scale and although scanned at 600 dpi, many details are too small to show clearly. It is

It was probably commissioned by a member of Berwick's military Council, to hang either in his house or in the Council Chamber. The owner probably took it south with him when the garrison was reduced after 1603. It was later acquired by a member of the Cotton family, noted 17th-century antiquarians. The Cotton collection became the basis of the British Library, where the map is available to view.

It is unsigned, but the garland of pears hanging from the title cartouche may refer to the Berwick soldier Thomas Perry, who in 1587 was recorded as being 'an excellent drawer of plats [plans, maps]'. It is assumed to date from the 1580s because the new pier, begun in 1577, had been completed in that year but was badly damaged by 1591.

The artist may have known one or more of the maps produced two decades earlier by Rowland Johnson, the garrison's master mason (see central display) although the True Description does not match the geometry of Johnson's surviving work. He seems to have had access to the whole town, including the top fortifications and the backs of houses; in many ways his experience of making the map must have been similar to that of Cara Lockhart-Smith, whose memories of producing the millennium map of Berwick are displayed on the wall opposite.

The 'true' description of Berwick includes not only the built-up area but also the wider productive landscape which was essential to the town's survival. Two men can be seen leaving through the medieval Scots Gate to cut grass in the town meadows, a privilege only allowed to Guild members. On the Tweed a coble crew is fishing for salmon, one of



One of the ships. The royal standard at the masthead suggests that the Lord High Admiral is on board, and thus that the Queen is defending the town.

the foundations of the town's wealth. Merchant ships cluster at the Maison Dieu quay, while others are out at sea or waiting in the river, demonstrating the importance of local and overseas trade.

A warship shows that the town is under the Queen's protection and the new fortifications, which called for the largest capital outlay of her reign, are well-furnished with artillery.



Many details of the map seem to have been drawn from life, and often compare closely to those in other available evidence, making the map a valuable source for studying Elizabethan Berwick.

Not everything on the map can be taken at face value, however. Its original readers would have used and understood it very differently from us. In particular there are some expressive omissions. These tell us just as much about the mapmaker's view of the 'true' town as what is included, and are explored later in the exhibition on the board 'A True Description?'



This complex in The Ness may be the remains of the medieval Carmelite nunnery. The detached buildings below are the garrison's breweries and bakehouses.



The stone-faced pier, strengthened with timber 'to save the filling from the flash and fall of the billows and water', is proudly presented here as it was in 1580.



Social structure

By 1580 Berwick's population was around 2,500, with approximately 1,000 garrison members and 1,500 civilians. The garrison dominated, as shown in a couplet recited after a school play of c.1600:

For all the Council of this town,

Captains, and soldiers all,

For Mr Mayor, the Aldermen,
and Burgesses pray we shall.

The ruling military Council included Berwick's Governor, his Deputy, the garrison Treasurer and the Gentleman Porter (responsible for the gates). Below them in status were the captains, each in charge of around 70 ordinary soldiers. The civilian Mayor also sat on the Council but had relatively little power; he and the aldermen regulated Berwick's commercial and civilian life through Guild membership and the Bailiffs' Court.

'An estimate as well of the numbers of men in Her Majesties pay there as also of the townsmen and corporation with their families'

Chief officers with their retinues and servants	100
Captains and officers of their bands	60
Pensioners	42
Soldiers	860
Gunners	70
Horsemen	88
The old garrison	42
Workmen, artificers and labourers	845
Freemen and their servants	228
Stallengers and their servants	203
Women servants and widows	275
Children under the age of 13 years	251
Men's wives of all sorts	507
Sum total	3,571

The Mayor and aldermen were chosen from the ranks of burgesses, who were mostly merchants and had the privilege of selling goods from their own property. Lower down the social ladder were the 'stallengers', artisans or craftsmen who, as their name suggests, had to sell from market stalls. They do not appear in the couplet since their children were unlikely to have attended the school.

In spite of the apparent imbalance of power between the garrison and civilians they were in fact interdependent. The garrison's protection allowed townspeople to live and trade in safety. Civilians helped with night watch duty, and merchants lent money to the garrison when the soldiers' pay did not arrive on time.

Small town, wide outlook

Berwick was more cosmopolitan than most small English towns. Its merchants were part of a network stretching to Danzig [Gdansk, Poland] and Tallin [Lithuania] as well as along Britain's east coast from Aberdeen to Newcastle, Hull, Kings Lynn and London.

Many were related to London 'fishmongers' who acted as trusted agents for them and their friends. For example in 1560 William Rhys (a postmaster on the important Berwick-London route) relied on his 'especial friend and factor' Thomas Trumble, a London fishmonger with relatives in Berwick, to ensure his wages went to his widow.

The garrison also provided links with the wider world. Many of the soldiers had served abroad in France or the Low Countries. While the walls were under construction hundreds of masons arrived in Berwick from all over England, Wales and even Ireland. Both soldiers and masons married local women and settled in the town, bringing ideas and customs from their home areas.

The official population of Berwick in 1565, when the garrison was still very large. These figures do not include Scots and other 'undesirables'.

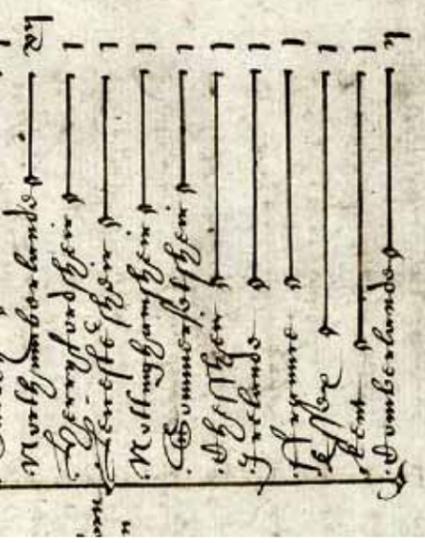


Henry, 1st Baron Hunsdon, Governor at the time of the True Description.

Stephen van Herwijck, c.1561-3.

tants who had married Scotswomen.

Officially, Scots were not allowed to settle in Berwick. Temporary visitors had to stay with trusted burgesses, leaving their weapons indoors if they left the house. However, the reality was rather different. Many households relied on Scottish 'servants, nurses, spinsters and such like'. Single men were less tolerated; in 1594 the Burgesses Court complained that 'James Ramsey, a Scots cobbler, worketh in a little shop in Marygate in the day, and goeth to Tweedmouth



Soldiers came from all over England, and further afield. In 1598 this troop included men born in Surrey, Somersetshire, Ireland and France.

TNA SP 59/37 f.79

Scottish population was vital to Berwick's economy.

Scottish or English?

Berwick's residents wanted to be seen as loyal to England and often used the phrase 'ever since Berwick was English' as an equivalent to 'time out of mind'. However their Scottish heritage remained obvious. The laws were still basically Scottish; in 1562 a London lawyer complained that 'their law they use now they do according to the Scottish law and they own also of Scotland ground their order of law'. The local surveyors or 'landliners' still used a yard of 37 inches, equivalent to the Scottish ell. Anglo-Scottish marriage was officially unlawful but the wife of Sir John Selby, one of the highest-ranking members of the Council, was Scottish and the Borough Court regularly complained about inhabitants who had married Scotswomen.

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nightly to his lodging', 'William More, a Scots cobbler, keepeth a shop in the town' and 'Shippen Davison, Scotsman, keepeth a cobbler shop in the town & liveth in the town'. These three men must have represented a sizeable proportion of the town's cobbler, showing that the Scottish population was vital to Berwick's economy.

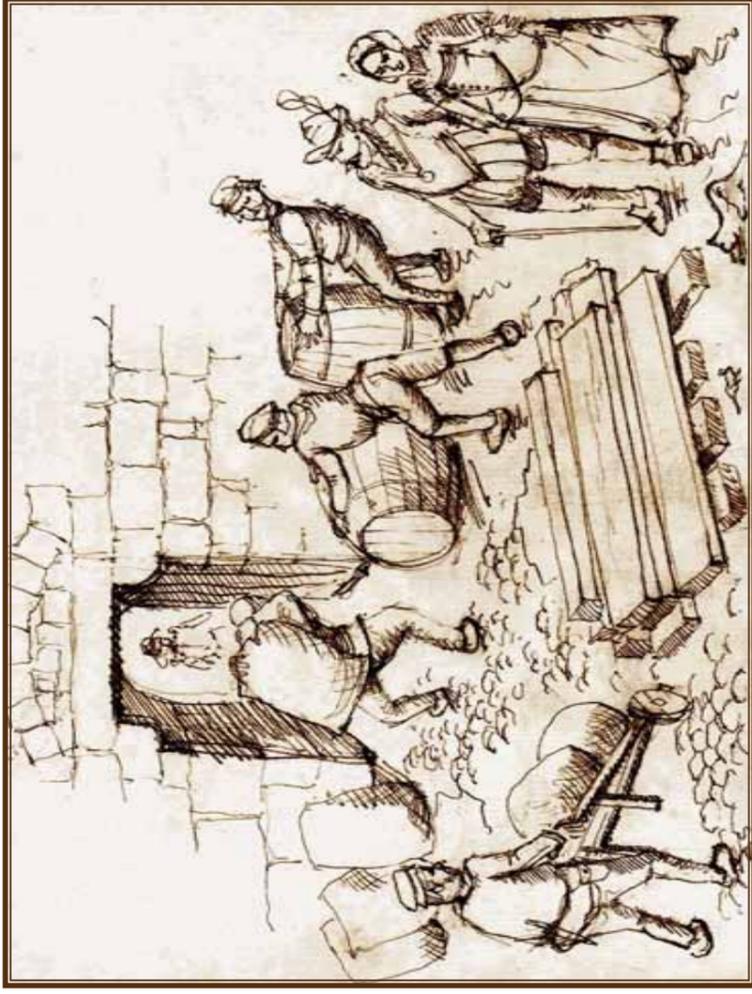
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Above: The burgesses, who had to own property worth at least 40 shillings, lived mainly in Bridge Street, Hide Hill, Marygate and Church Street.

Below: A merchant and his wife are watching as goods are unloaded from their ship at the Maison Dieu quay and carried up to their warehouse in Bridge Street.

Illustration: Robin Kent



CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Church

Attendance at church was vital to national defence. In 1560 the Garrison's New Orders stressed that

the foundation of all worldly strength is to be laid & established with the fear and service of almighty God, without which except the Lord God keep the city & build it, all force of arms, strengths & riches be but vain.

In spite of this the vicar, Robert Selby, was often absent and the church was run by an underpaid curate and one or more 'lecturers'. These were often Scottish, since Berwick had strong links with the Scottish reformers. John Knox preached at the parish church for two years between 1549 and 1551. In 1563 another Scot, John Douglas, 'occupied ... the place of a public minister' in the town. In the



The True Description shows Holy Trinity church at a larger scale than the houses, emphasising its importance. The churchyard was smaller than at present.

summer of 1584 the Scottish minister James Melville fled over the Border to Berwick with his pregnant wife and was licensed 'to teach in a certain house of the town thrice in the week'; unfortunately there is no record of whose house this was.

The True Description shows the medieval church building, sited just to the south of the current one.



Berwick's inhabitants would have sung Sternhold & Hopkins' metrical psalms both in church and at home. Thomas Rugg stocked these books by the dozen (see board 'A Wealthy Merchant'). The 'Old Hundredth' (on the right) is still used in churches today.

Comparison with Johnson's maps on the central display shows that since 1560 the church had lost its belfry but gained a porch and dormer windows. The dormers lit galleries, inserted to create more space in the church. The porch seems to have been added after the church was drawn and painted, and may have been under construction at the same time as the map.

In spite of these additions the building itself was in poor condition. It was also too small to hold all the inhabitants (the town's other church, St Mary's, had been demolished to make way for the fortifications). In 1584 the burgesses petitioned the

Queen

to grant some money to the building of a new church in Berwick, the old being very small and in utter ruin ... cracked, rent and ready to fall and not able to contain the sixth part of all the inhabitants. So that in time of God's divine service, the greater sort of people do bestow themselves in alehouses and other places.

By 1597

the church being old and weak, and many scaffolds [galleries] being built there for enlargement of room, is in great hazard of falling; ... every small tempest hath so feared the people, that both the preacher and them

have often times run forth out of the church, even at sermon time, to save themselves from the danger thereof.

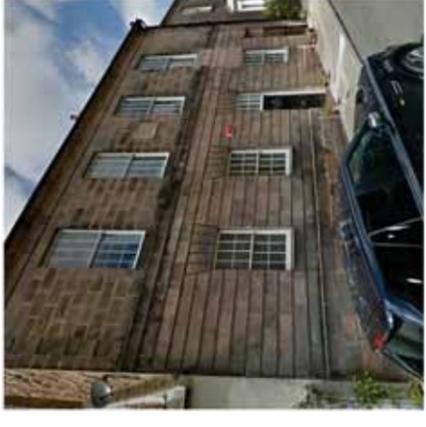
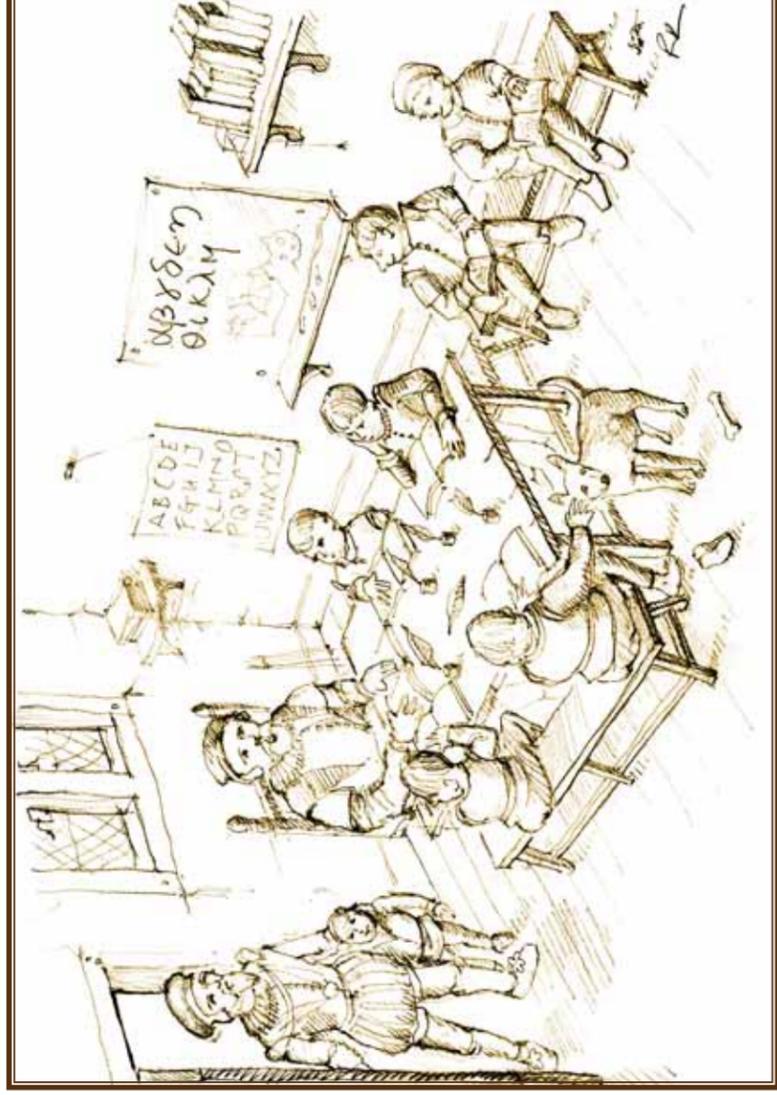
Even then there were no major repairs, and the current building was not begun until 1650.

School

During the medieval period education in Berwick was the duty of the church, and in the fourteenth century the school was 'beside Holy Trinity Church'. Teaching was often the duty of chantry priests, paid for by bequests from the richer burgesses, and soon after the chantries were abolished in 1547 Berwick's burgesses began planning their own school, noting in 1553 'we are desirous to have a school master allowed in the King's Town of Berwick'. In the 1560s the Selby family put money towards a 'free' school, i.e. for the sons of freemen.

Berwick's first schoolmasters are not recorded. However, Aristotle Knowsley moved to the town immediately after graduating from Cambridge in 1574. He was paid by the Government to teach the sons of soldiers as well as of burgesses. He eventually both lived and worked on a site which had belonged to one of Berwick's friaries.

In 1604 Knowsley was made a freeman 'gratis [for no payment], in regard of his long continuance and pains taken with youth in bringing them up in learning and virtue.' The introduction to a school



By the end of the 16th century Aristotle Knowsley lived in this house at the bottom of Ravensdowne. In 1725 the site was used for the Charity School.

play, attributed to him and performed in Berwick c.1600, probably summarises his educational theory:

I promise two things: information and reformation. Information, by instructing diligently with good literature: reformation, by training up carefully with honest discipline. For the school is called *seminarium republice*, the seed plot of the commonwealth, wherein are planted & set many fine scions [cuttings] & gallant grasses which if not timely pruned & respectively regarded will as soon bring forth sour crabs as sweet apples. For the beginning, middle & ending of a happy life, consists in good education & bringing up.'

'A tragedy called Oedipus', Yale University

There were at least two other schools in Berwick at the time. One probably provided only a basic education. The other was a knitting school, run by John Parke. He was made a freeman at the same time as Knowsley 'in regard of his great care he hath of bringing up young children and youth in teaching them and setting them on work to knit and spin'. Unlike Knowsley he had to pay for his freedom but the cost was an investment, since the following year his new status allowed him to regulate the knitting industry in Berwick. This set his 'school' apart from 'knitters and artificers in the town who set a multitude of infants and poor people at work' but, according to him, produced poor quality goods.

Four boys in the junior class of the Free School are having a writing lesson. The youngest ones are still learning to read; they will not begin to write until they can read verses from the Bible. One of their friends has been brought by his father to see if he is ready to begin school.

Illustration: Robin Kent

Access to the new walls was strictly controlled, and civilians were forbidden to use them for pleasure. Scots were not permitted on them at any time.

But exceptions could be made. In 1565 a group of Scottish protestants, temporarily exiled at Newcastle, asked permission to visit Berwick for a day or two ... to recruit their heavy minds with the change of the place' and walk on the walls. An early example of Berwick' as a holiday destination!

The walls cut through at least two streets connecting The Greens with the town centre (Church Street/Wallis Green and Chapel Street). This encouraged The Greens to develop as a suburb with its own individual character.

The medieval walls still offered some protection from the type of raiding described on 'The Bounds of Berwick' on the central display. Inside the old north gate was the 'Scots Market', where produce from the Merse could be sold without allowing Scots into the

By 1580 most of Berwick Castle's functions had been moved to the Palace area in the Ness. At least one building survived next to the gun platform, however, although it is not shown on the True Description . In 1598 it was restored and extended by the Governor, Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, to make the private house shown below. The formal garden is within the basement walls of the older hall.



Detail from Bodleian Gough/Gen/Top/374 p.256

THE WALLS

The walls and their artillery were symbolically important to the town and nation, even in their unfinished state.

In November 1566 the Queen of Scots asked permission to pass through Berwick's bounds on her way from Jedburgh to Coldingham. She camped on Halidon Hill with a company including 500 horse soldiers, and as a mark of respect and a show of strength the garrison lined the walls and 'the great ordnance shot off in all that night'. There is no record of whether she appreciated the compliment!

In 1593 eight barrels of gunpowder were 'delivered ... to the master Gunner and Quartermaster for the solemnising of Her Majesty's coronation day, St George's Day, & the coming in and going out of the Lord Governor, Lord Ambassador etc.'

Between 1558 and 1565 at least 60 houses were demolished to make way for the walls. The average compensation for each house was only just over £5, much less than the cost of rebuilding.

The True Description shows the Cow Gate and St Mary's Gate as still incomplete; the Cow Gate was not finished until 1600.

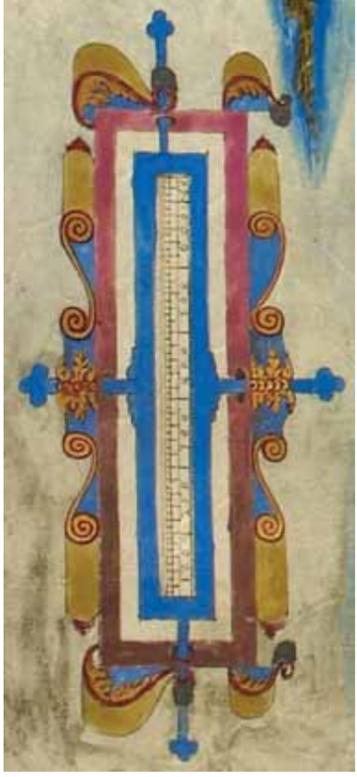
In medieval towns, decorative gate towers were often built before the walls which linked them. (Sometimes, as at Alnwick, the walls were never completed). By contrast, the gates in Berwick's up-to-date trace Italiane fortifications were low-key and subservient to the walls, sending a message of defence rather than of formal welcome.

The southern section of wall was known as the 'Catwell Wall' after a mineralised well on Hide Hill. It was the last section to be begun, mainly because its course was particularly problematic. The obvious defensible line was at the top of the slope leading down to Bridge Street and the Ness, but this would exclude the wealthy merchants' houses on Bridge Street and the garrison's base in the Ness. Even the Duke of Norfolk, Governor-General of the North, could not decide

whether it be more expedient to have that side of the old town next to the haven cut off away, wherein consist all the Queen's storehouses and the best houses of the town; or else to fortify the old wall, and by that means to save all the houses.

It was eventually decided to block West Street, Eastern Lane and Ravensdowne and build a gate on Hide Hill (see Rowland Johnson's plans in the central display). However the wall was never finished and it seems from the True Description that the streets may never even have been completely blocked. The earthworks remained as a scar on the landscape, an early example of 'planning blight'.

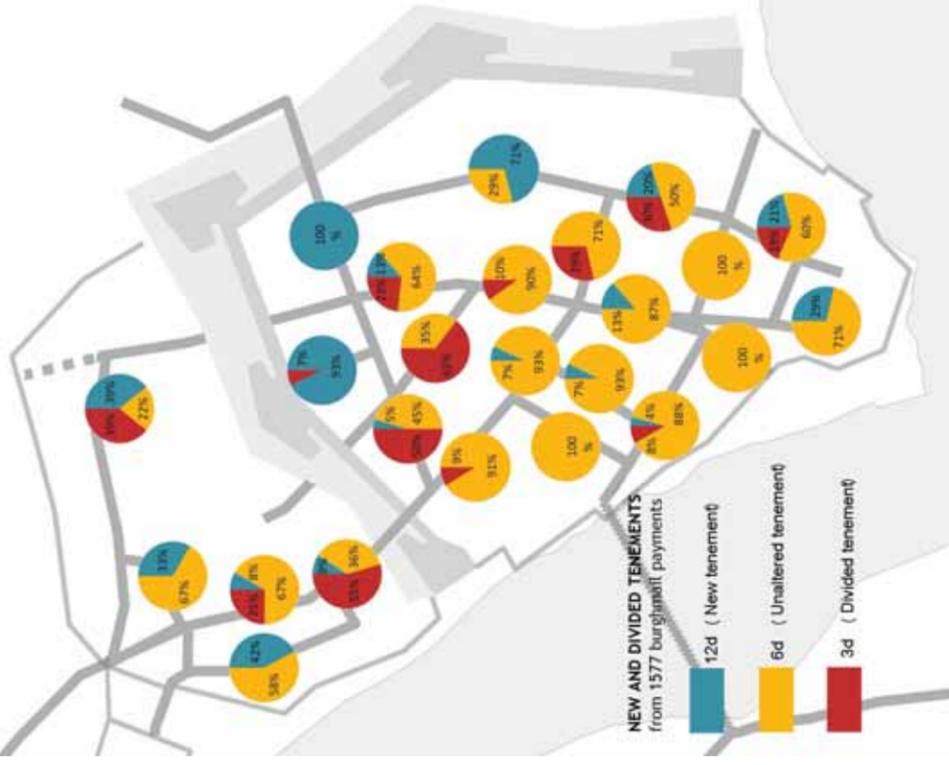
There is much more information about the walls on the boards in the Solders' Room next door.



The decorative scale bar is numbered, but the units are not defined (although they are probably meant to be feet).

Did the cartographer forget what appears to be vital information? Was he acknowledging that the plan is not based on an accurate survey? Or underlining that its 'truth' relies on more than mere metric accuracy?

© Catherine Kent



The True Description does not show Ravensdowne, the Greens or Tweed Street although we know from Johnson's map HHA CPM 1/27 on the central display that they were all built up by 1580.

Town maps of this period often suggest a mythic longevity and stability, although Berwick's history made this difficult to argue for. Maybe the number of new houses built on these streets (the blue sections on the plan above) meant that these areas were not 'true' to these ideals?

A TRUE DESCRIPTION?

What did the mapmaker mean to convey by the title 'The True Description'?

Although it shows some aspects of the town accurately, in others it seems to diverge from what we understand as cartographic 'truth'. As J B Harley has pointed out, Tudor maps were 'instruments of control ... spatial emblems of power ... artefacts in the creation of myth... They offer insight into the shared meanings, attitudes and values of [their] society and of some of the individuals which comprised it'.

This board suggests ways in which these 'truths' might be located within the True Description.

J. B. Harley 'Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography' pp. 22, 40.

Elizabethan viewers would have seen the True Description not merely as an account of Berwick but also as a decorative image.

Many would have visited or served in the Low Countries and seen paintings such as Breughel's Fall of Icarus (below). The map and the landscape use the same 'landscape' format, high perspective and palette of brown, green and blue, as well as the elements of city, productive land, ships, rocks, water and genre figures. In fact, many Dutch landscape painters were also cartographers.

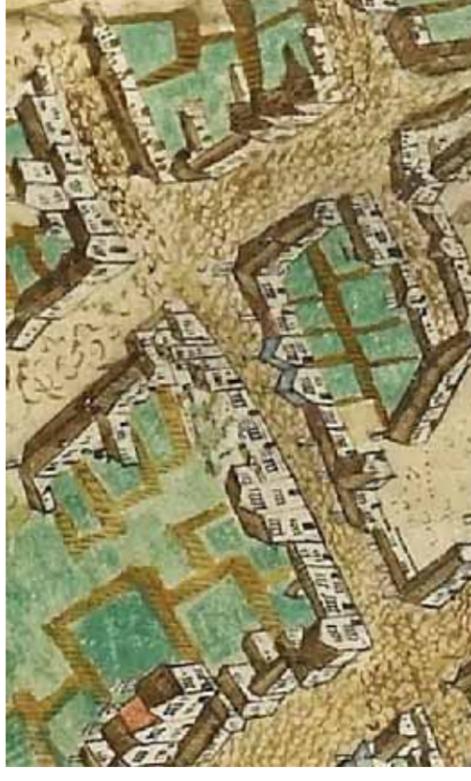
The True Description would have given the viewer an understanding of the social as well as the physical landscape. When hung on a wall, in the manner of a landscape painting, it would have functioned not only as a painted map but also as a painting of a map.



The Fall of Icarus, Pieter Brueghel the Elder, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium.

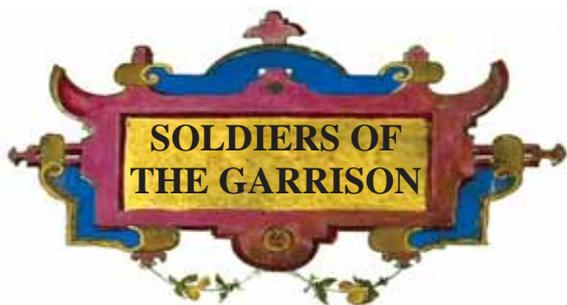


The tollbooth with its tower and foresteps is shown as part of the street frontage, although we know from Johnson's and Speed's maps (on the central display) that it was in the same position as today. Maybe the mapmaker has ignored the alley on the eastern side, as it might be shown on a modern satnav. Or is this a statement about the town's power structure, with the burgesses literally being pushed to one side by the Council?



Another parallel with The Fall of Icarus is the presence of a transitory crisis. All we see of Icarus are a pair of legs and a few feathers fluttering down; the disaster merely emphasises the continuity of everyday life.

In a similar way the True Description shows a single event which contrasts with, and thus emphasises, Berwick's peaceful stability. Most of the burgesses have obviously been fulfilling their civic duty to 'beautify' the town with houses but one site in Silver Street is derelict, with even its boundary walls in ruins (above). This plot had belonged to Leonard Fairley, the garrison's Master Carpenter, since at least 1577 but he did not build on it until the 1590s. While this was by no means the only waste site in Berwick it is the only one shown on the map; did the mapmaker have a grudge against Fairley?



Thomas Smith of Coxons Lane

The soldier Thomas Smith wrote *The Art of Gunnery* in 1600 and *Certaine Additions to the Booke of Gunnery, with a Supplie of Fire-Workes* in 1601 (copies below). He was born in 1565, the son of a soldier who owned property in Castlegate and Ravensdowne.



Coxons Lane, from the True Description. This was a new road, being actively developed at this time. The date-stone was found near the circled area, so the large house may have belonged to Thomas and Annis Smith.

He married Annis Thompson in 1589 and apparently built a new house in Coxons Lane in which to start his new family; the road was being redeveloped at this time, and Berwick Museum owns a carved stone found there which bears the same date and has the initials 'T S' on either side of a lovers' knot. His first book was written from what he described as 'my poor house in Berwick upon Tweed', but in fact the house would have been stone-built and at least two stories high. The datestone, still uncommon at this period, implies that he saw himself as upwardly mobile.



The dated stone found on the west side of Coxons Lane.

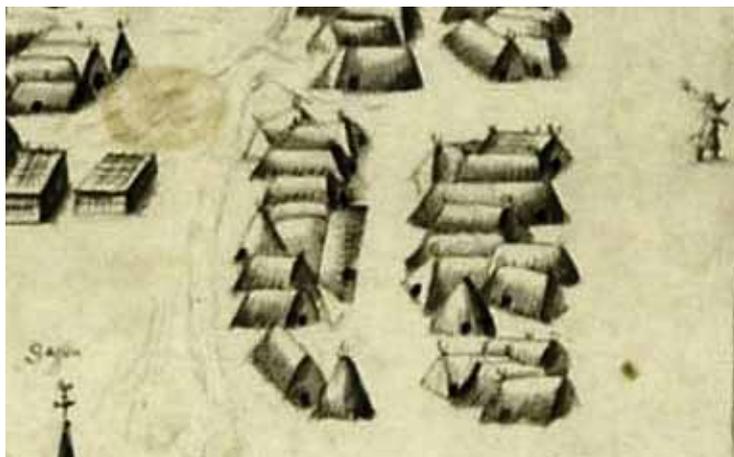
Berwick Museum. Photograph: Jim Herbert

The gunners of Windmill Hole

Most soldiers were not as well-off as Thomas Smith. In 1559 the English garrison at Calais was finally defeated and the gunners posted to Berwick, to man the new fortifications. To encourage them to stay in the town they were given land to build on in a lane behind Castlegate known as Windmill Hole (now Tweed Street).

Rowland Johnson shows it as built up on a map of c.1560 (see central display). But like much of the area outside the fortifications it does not appear on the *True Description*, possibly because soldiers were considered to be transient rather than permanent residents.

However the *General Survey* (see board 'Who Lived Here') tells us something about its Elizabethan inhabitants. In 1562 they still lived in temporary houses, based on 'couples' (simple ground-based crucks), like those which soldiers commonly built when wintering in the field (below). They held the plots 'at will', i.e. on an insecure tenancy, but this was not a problem since there was a good chance that they would soon be posted elsewhere.



Soldiers' winter huts at Sassenheim, near Haarlem, 1573.

HHA CPM/1/39

By the 1580s it was obvious that the gunners had become a permanent part of the garrison. Both they and some stallengers began to purchase grants for the plots in Windmill Hole, giving them security of tenure. They would have begun to build more permanent houses, probably one storey high with mud walls and a thatched roof like those in Samuel Bucks' sketch below.



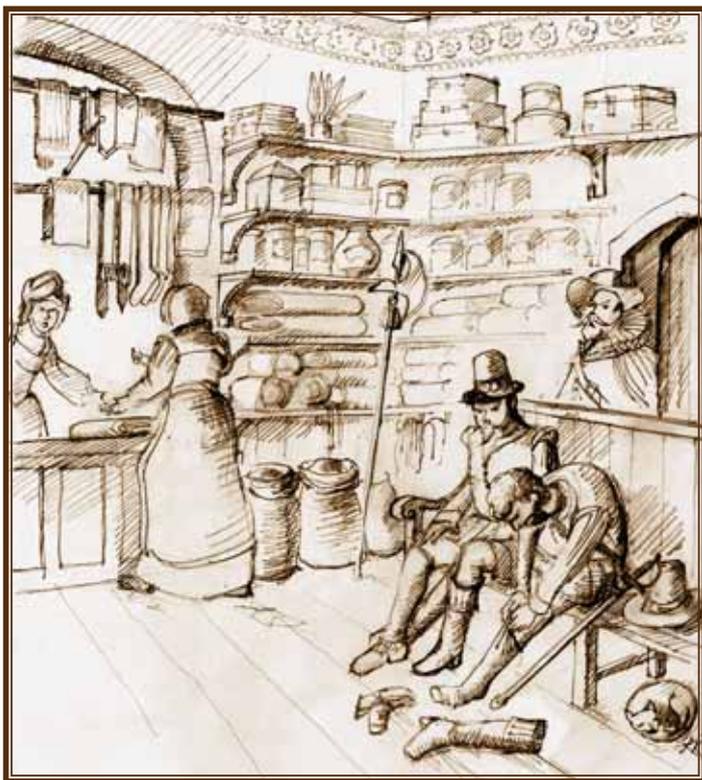
Small single-storey houses in Windmill Hole, in the left foreground, in front of larger houses in Castle Street.

Detail of 'The South View of Berwick Upon Tweed', Samuel Buck c.1743-5. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund.



Thomas Rugg

Thomas Rugg was a cloth-dealer who first appears in Berwick's records in 1562 when he supplied the Guild with its annual set



In the shop a soldier and his friend decide between socks from Colonsay and Skye, while Jane Rugg sells a length of taffeta to a customer in the street. The Deputy Governor is coming in to look for a new pair of gloves for his wife. When Thomas takes him up to the gallery afterwards, to show off his latest Italian black velvet cloth, he will ask him who painted the new border hanging from the ceiling.

Illustration: Robin Kent

of Sergeants' gowns. Berwick was at the centre of his cloth trade between London and Edinburgh, and his stock came from as far away as Italy and the Western Isles of Scotland.



'My new house in the market place'

In 1563 Rugg was made a freeman and could open a shop in the market place. He purchased what is now 51 Marygate (Vision Express). His probate inventory, a list of possessions taken after his death in 1573 (right) gives a glimpse into the shop. 'Painted borders' hung above the shelves. Customers could sit in comfort on the 'long settle'. The scent of spices filled the air: pepper, ginger, nutmeg, liquorice, aniseed.

When Rugg bought the house it was only two stories high, like most in Berwick. He decided to build a third floor, to provide more space for his family and show his wealth. The building work led to a party wall dispute with his neighbour to the south, Leonard Trollop, which is recorded in the Borough Archives, but the *True Description* suggests that eventually they agreed to build matching upper storeys. Each floor of the house had one large chamber with a fireplace. The new upper floor also had Rugg's study and possibly a corridor or small gallery lit by the large window shown on the *True Description*. Important customers might be invited up to enjoy the view, have a drink and admire Rugg's more expensive goods. Behind the house was a large hall where the family cooked and ate, and beyond this the stable and garden.

In 1589 Rugg's son Toby built two additional chambers above the hall, which became a single-storey kitchen. The chamber above the shop was used for meals. As social expectations changed, this became a common way of improving Berwick's houses.

Far left: Thomas Rugg's house, three stories high.

Left: 49-51 Marygate today. The houses were refaced in the eighteenth century but the line of the party wall is still obvious.

Thomas Rugg's Inventory Includes:

Fabrics

baye, carsaye, broadcloth, frezaduo, Hampshier, cotton, carse, louze, motley, Peniston, Kendal rug, rugg, Manchester freize, Kendal freize, canvas, Scottish linen, Holland, diaper, Scottish harden, canvas, worsted, Millan, sackcloth, striped canvas, taffeta, grogram, boulder, velvet and sarcenet,

In colours including

ash colour, black, purple, sky, green, flesh colour, tawny, golden colour, veze, gollany colour [buttercup yellow], white, rust, russet, frost, grey, orange, and frost upon green.

His inventory also included

the painted borders, a long settle
leather jerkins
11 round caps, 2 womens' caps, 1 Scotts cap
3 round silk girdles, 2 waist girdles, 6 sword girdles
1 doz. red stockings, 1 doz. yellow stockings
1 gilt dagger, other daggers
5 doz. bowstrings
1 doz. Colonsay socks, 1 doz. Skye socks
99 pairs of hose
3 doz. shirts
2 lb 3 oz. of nails
1 halberd
4 stone of rosin
4 frying pans
71 gross of various buttons
11 doz. latten [wooden] spoons
2 parcels of pointing laces
1 doz. lute strings
5 doz. sword crampets [to hold a sword in place]
680 tacketts [hobnails]
17 knives, great & little
8 cords
2 gross of hooks and eyes
2 ropes
300 shoe buckles
2 hammers
2 pairs of pincers, 3 pairs of snuffers
109 lb. of sugar, 4 lb. of pepper, 1 doz. of annat seed, 5 lb. of ginger, 1 lb. 3oz. of nutmeg, 8 lb. of liquorice, 1 lb. of cinnamon, 1 lb. of cloves
3 lb. of curtain rings
6 doz. thimbles
21 felts [felt hats], 6 felts for women hats of many types including 3 lined with velvet, 3 for women, 4 black crowned, 2 velvet, 5 coarse felt
13 doz. trenchers [wooden plates]
5 doz. earthen pots
6 lb. of glue
2 reams of paper
8 lb. of bombast [cotton padding]
3 pairs trunk hose
6 bells
28 locks of various types
10 pens and inkhorns, ink
6 sand boxes
6 purses
10 brushes and combs
11 lb. of alum
26 lb. great spiking nails
3 pairs of balk & scales [weighing scales], weights
numerous ribbons
lace, including pearly lace, red billament [decorative] lace, statute lace
3 oz. of Spanish silk, 1 lb. 3 oz. of Colonsay strong silk, 4 lb. of black strong silk, 103 oz. coloured stocking silk
42 grammars [Latin grammar books]
1 doz. psalm books in metre, 1 book of the abridgement of statutes, 1 book of philosophy
1 dozen catechisms, 1 gross of catechisms, 3 psalm books in prose
6 doz. playing cards
6 doz. and 3 pairs of gloves, 24 pairs of womens' gloves
200 fir deals [boards], 120 double spars, 120 rafter boards
300 paving tiles
13 salmon barrels
86 sheep skins



What shall we do with the drunken soldier?

Tweedmouth was also blamed for harbouring local troublemakers. The Governor complained that 'the soldiers go over the bridge and fight at Tweedmouth daily' and described the township as 'the receipt, and as it were the den of all disordered people hanging upon the garrison'. He could do little about this since most of the township was controlled not by him but by the captain of Norham castle.

'Inhabited by fishermen'

No 'true' description of Berwick could omit the townships across the Tweed. A survey carried out in 1561 described Tweedmouth and Spittal as 'inhabited by fishermen'; many burgesses owned part-shares in a salmon coble, and one is shown in action on the *True Description*.



Salmon-netting with a traditional Berwick coble, at Paxton House.

Photo: Geograph. CC BY-SA 4.0

To outsiders the people of Tweedmouth appeared to include 'more Scots than English'. This was particularly worrying given its position at Berwick's bridgehead, since it meant that Scottish spies might pass unnoticed (or at least unchallenged). Scottish *émigrés* also felt at home there; the Presbyterian ministers Andrew Melville and John Colville (with his household of fourteen) lived there at various times.

'The said town [Tweedmouth/Spittal], and a great street, parcel thereof, is inhabited by fishermen that doth fish the river for salmon, and also go to the sea in fishing for sea fish, according to the usage of that country. And now of late certain soldiers that have licence have built there upon the common certain victualling houses, and so the recourse and access of people to the town is much from Berwick. [But] fishing is the chief maintenance of the said town'

Survey of Northumberland and Islandshire, 1561 (Raine 1852, 32)

The slope up to Tweedmouth common was already an industrial area, with pottery and tile kilns on Kiln Hill and at the rear of houses in Tower Road. In 1560 the Crown gained control of a vacant plot above the churchyard (now Brewery Bank) and developed it as 'Tweedmouth New Row' with a *domus* (industrial building) and eight houses.

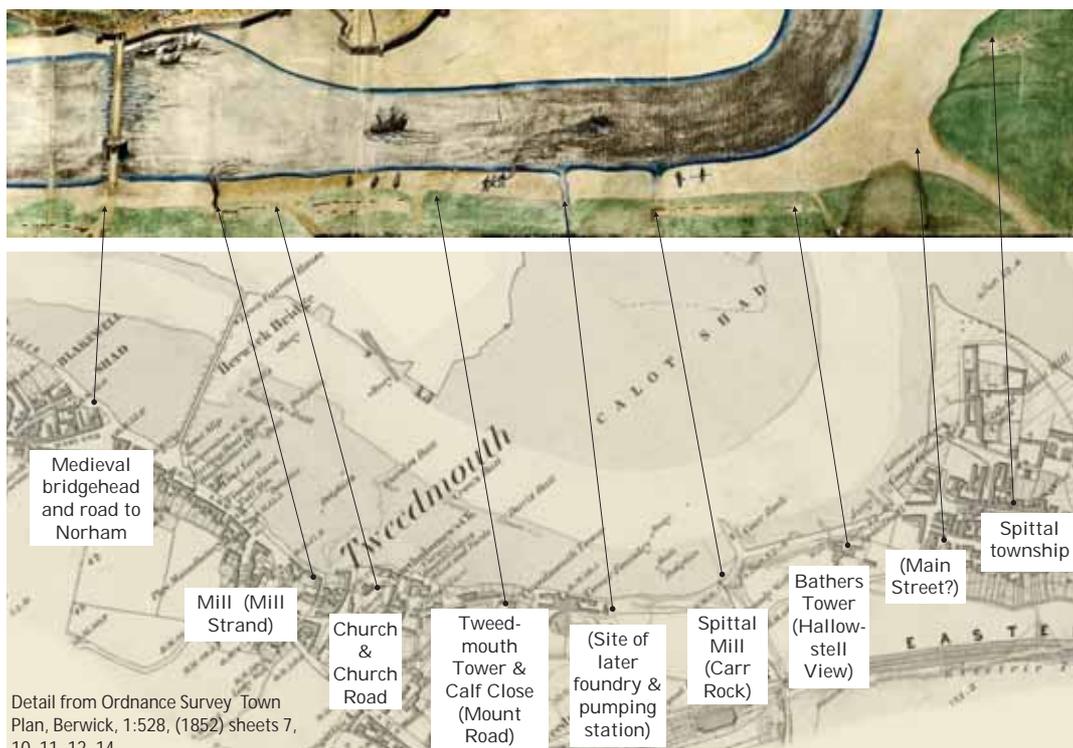
The *domus* was on the site of the Borders Brewery and the development may have included the licensed 'victualling houses' described above.



Brewery Bank, the site of 'Tweedmouth New Row'.

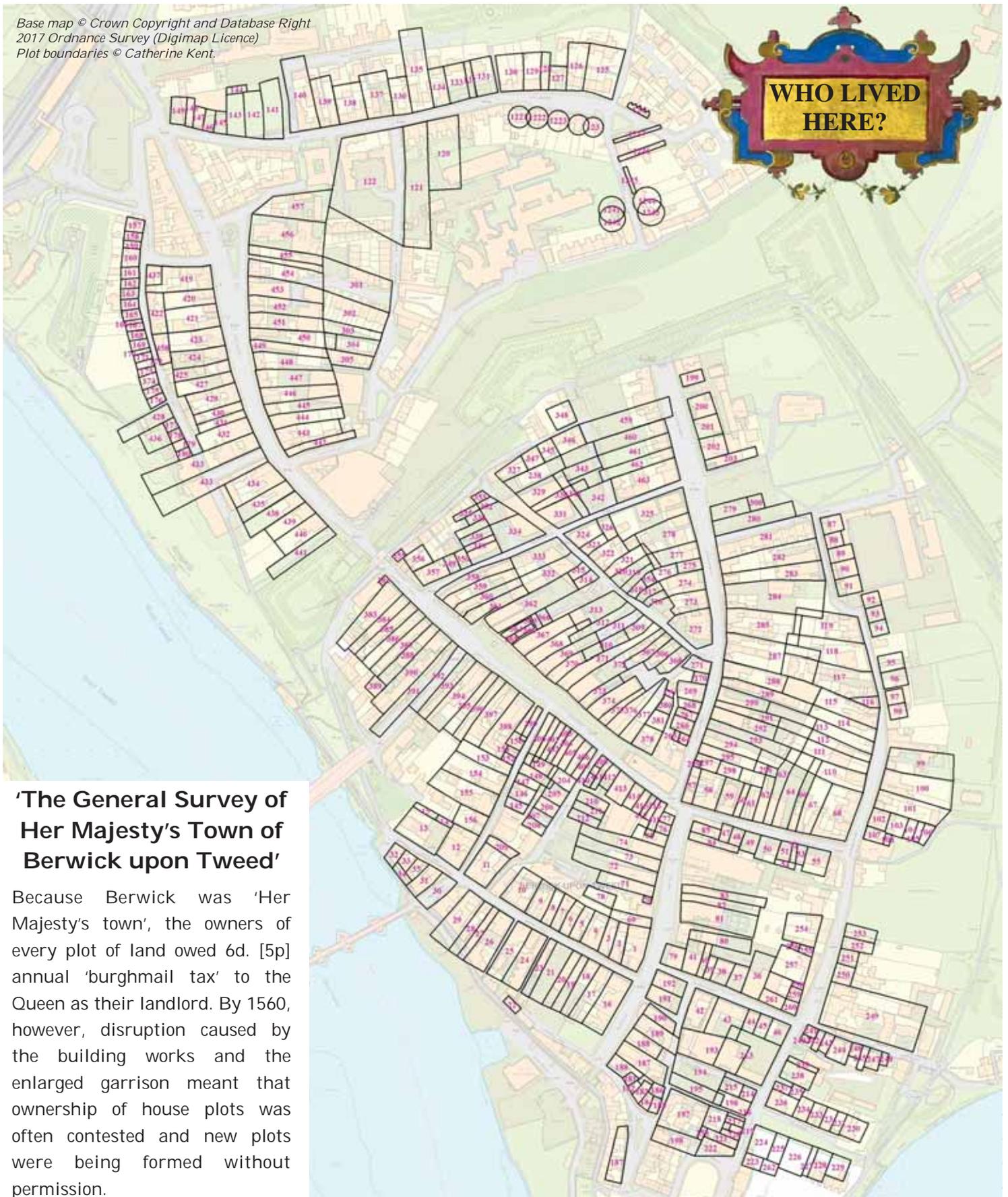
As with Berwick, the *True Description's* 'truth' about Tweedmouth and Spittal is recognisable but also presents some problems.

- The 'great street' between West End and the mill along has been compressed, and its houses omitted; was this a social comment on the inhabitants?
- St Boisil's has a tower, and Tweedmouth Tower does not. Did the church have a tower? Were they accidentally transposed? Maybe Tweedmouth Tower was uninhabited?
- The two-storey house in Spittal may have been used for drying nets. But a stone tower here is unexpected, and there is no other evidence for it. Did it exist?



Detail from Ordnance Survey Town Plan, Berwick, 1:528, (1852) sheets 7, 10, 11, 12, 14.

Base map © Crown Copyright and Database Right
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Plot boundaries © Catherine Kent.



'The General Survey of Her Majesty's Town of Berwick upon Tweed'

Because Berwick was 'Her Majesty's town', the owners of every plot of land owed 6d. [5p] annual 'burghmail tax' to the Queen as their landlord. By 1560, however, disruption caused by the building works and the enlarged garrison meant that ownership of house plots was often contested and new plots were being formed without permission.

In an attempt to regain control the military Council had a detailed written survey of the town prepared in 1562, recording the name of each taxpayer, the dimensions of their plot and the details of their title to the land. The burgesses paid to have a copy made, and this survives in the Berwick Borough Archives; the map above is based on its information. A few pages relating to The Greens are missing and several entries were difficult to map,

particularly where boundaries had been disrupted by the walls, but most of the plots listed are shown. Numbers relate to the survey transcript, below. Besides being an important resource for Berwick's general history the survey provides glimpses of individual stories: for example domestic tragedy (134), fraud (447), the Council's mismanagement (89, 96), suspicious title deeds (209) and even suspicious people (246).



Documentary Evidence

Compared to many towns of a similar size Berwick has rich documentary resources, although like the architectural and archaeological evidence its survival has been dependant on fortuitous events. Fire was a common problem; in the 1562 *General Survey* several tenants could not prove their title to a house because their deeds had been burned (186, 367, 309). During the 16th century long-lasting vellum was being replaced by more fragile paper for many documents, and by 1901 the Historic Manuscripts

Commissioners reported that Berwick's archives were in a sorry state, 'much injured by damp and neglect' (photo below). This accounts for the missing information about the Greens in the *General Survey* (see the board 'Who lived here').

The original survey of Northhamshire and Islandshire quoted on the 'Tweedmouth and Spittal' board is lost. But its text survives, firstly because the 17th century gentleman John Orde thought it worth copying into his commonplace book and secondly because his papers eventually found their way to the Durham Cathedral Library.

Similarly, the *True Description* still exists not merely because the Cotton family donated their collection to the nation in 1702 but also because in 1731 it escaped a fire which destroyed many other documents in the collection. While we might regret their loss, it makes us even more grateful for the contribution made by 'our' map to our understanding of Berwick's history.

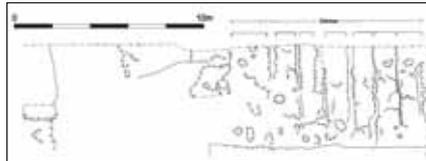
It is easy to take historical evidence for granted, but its survival is by no means inevitable.

Architectural Evidence

Berwick's walls and coastline would still be familiar to the artist of the *True Description*, but its houses might seem unrecognisable; Georgian and Victorian advances in industry and agriculture provided the means and the incentive to rebuild the town almost entirely. However, the houses were sometimes only partially rebuilt and earlier fabric is often discovered during renovation or demolition. These days this would be preserved or recorded as a matter of course but even in the recent past recording was not always seen as important. In 1963 the wall-painting from the Old Hen and Chickens, seen on the board 'Streets and Houses', was only saved because someone contacted the National Trust for Scotland; their restorers removed it hurriedly 'in very unpleasant conditions while the building which contained it was being demolished'. See also the photograph of 7/9 Marygate, right.



Above: architect (?) and demolition contractor at 7/9 Marygate in the early 1960s. Taken by a passer-by, and the only record of the fireplace. *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club 1963, before p.39.*



Above: linear features to the rear of a house in Marygate, interpreted as possible raspberry beds and similar to gardens on the *True Description*.
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Below: *First Book of Enrolments, 1570-1636, prior to conservation.*
Photograph: Berwick Record Office.



Archaeological evidence

Parts of Berwick are many metres deep in archaeology but, ironically, this richness means that excavation must be kept to a minimum and is only carried out in response to development. Since short lengths of stone walls are difficult to interpret, the results are not always informative for a study such as this. However, archaeology may link with other evidence; an excavation in Marygate, for example, found soil patterns in the rear garden similar to those which can just be seen in some gardens on the *True Description*, confirming that other such details on the map also echoed contemporary features.

Acknowledgements

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For full references to any of the material, e-mail ck@robinkent.co.uk.



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