

# The Berwick Civic Society

is a Registered Charity (No. 508953)

Website: [www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

## Office Bearers 2023 to 2024

Chairman ..... Zoreen Hill  
Vice Chairman ..... Anne Humphrey  
Hon. Secretary ..... Anne Humphrey  
Hon. Treasurer ..... Bob Humphrey  
Membership Secretary.... Bob Humphrey

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Cheryl Bee  
Sandra Gann  
Brian Gowthorpe  
Georgina Hill  
Homer Lindsay

## Planning and Development

Chairman Brian Gowthorpe  
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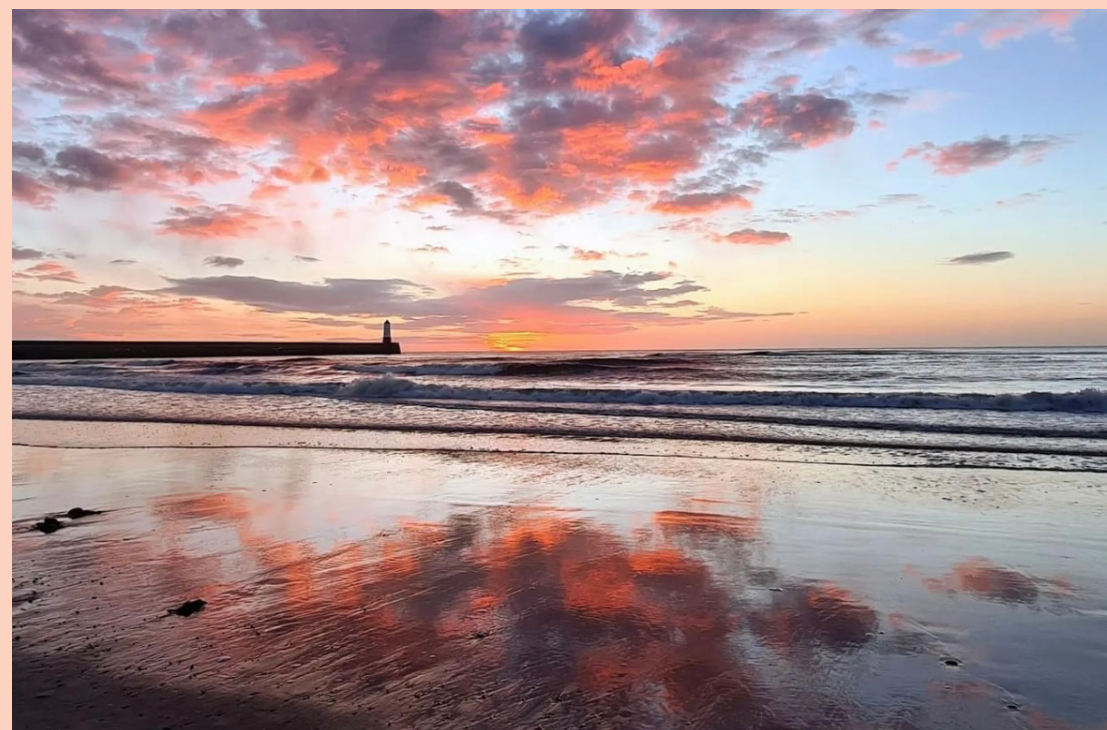
## Events and Promotions

Zoreen Hill  
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Anne Humphrey  
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## The Main Guard

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# BERWICK-UPON-TWEED CIVIC SOCIETY



## SPRING NEWSLETTER

2023



*New archway installed at the the Queen's Garden, Tweedmouth in commemoration to the late Queen.*

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***Cover Photo by Tommy McLeod***

## Berwick's Lifeboat Changeover



*Last launch of Mersey class lifeboat 'Joy and Charles Beeby'  
Photo by Tommy McLeod*

On 15th April Berwick's lifeboat crew said a final goodbye to their Mersey Class all-weather lifeboat 'Joy and Charles Beeby'. She arrived, funded by the Beebys in February 1993 and was officially named at the Carr Rock on the 23rd March 1993 by HRH the Duchess of Kent. However, she has reached the end of her operational life, to be replaced by an Atlantic 85 B-class Rigid Inflatable Boat.

Her final sailing was up the estuary to the three Border Bridges where she was met by the Berwick D-class inshore lifeboat and the lifeboats from Eyemouth, St Abbs and Seahouses, before sailing down to Hartlepool.



*D-class inshore lifeboat.  
Photo by Tommy McLeod*

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello Members,

We are still commemorating the great reign of Queen Elizabeth II. There are local projects to commemorate the late Queen including a scheme at the Queen's Garden, Tweedmouth where she visited in 1956.

We are looking forward to the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6th May. The flag at The Main Guard will be flying at full mast.

Major developments in the town are progressing and we like to give a platform for those involved to give presentations.

So far this year, we have had a talk from Rowan Brown on the Berwick Museum, as they are seeking to move from the Barracks to a new site. Then in March, a panel of four gave an update on the construction of the new Hospital. On 18th April there was a talk entitled 'The Living Barracks' discussing plans, following the recent funding of £4.2m from the Cultural Development Fund, with representatives from English Heritage, the Maltings and the KOSB Association.

On 10th May, Alistair Cochrane will be describing his vision for a Museum on the Quayside entitled 'The Tweed Salmon Centre; An Exciting Project for Berwick'.

Also we have had talks by two very distinguished academics. In January, Professor David Saunders gave a fascinating and very topical view on the situation in Ukraine entitled "Why Putin is attacking Ukraine". This was very well attended and encouraged a good deal of lively discussion.

The AGM this April was followed by a talk by the very popular classicist, Professor Peter Jones who described 'Democracy and Shipbuilding in Ancient Greece'.

Sandra Gann's reports on these meetings are including in this Newsletter.

While there has been considerable investment in Berwick in recent years and several positive developments, there are big challenges too especially in relation to Marygate. We are very lucky to have Brian Gowthorpe as Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee who, with his experience and expertise, is guiding us through Town Centre plans, his 3D model and controversial planning applications. He represents us on the Berwick Forum.

It has been suggested that aims for the Town, which includes Tweedmouth and Spittal, could be around the themes of 'Visuals, Vitality and Viability. There will be increasing benefit in working collaboratively with NCC, other organisations and Berwick Town Council.

However, it cannot be denied that there are certain tensions in the town and conflicting plans. It is to be hoped that next year when we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the opening of the beautiful and historic Old Bridge, the theme song will not be Simon and Garfunkel's 1970 hit "Bridge over Troubled Water"!!

This summer's new exhibition will depict 'Salmon Fishing on The Tweed' and a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable team are collecting materials and items for it. This will be on display in The Soldiers Room which has more space. 'The History of a Garrison Town' panels have been transferred to The Officers Room. The Preview Party will be

held on Thursday 25th May, (you should have all received email invitations) and I hope to see as many as possible at the event.

I will be staying on as Chairman for one more year but now we have a Vice Chairman, Anne Humphrey, who is prepared to take over next year. It is always good to have new personalities with new ideas in the driving seat. There are still a few vacancies on the Executive Committee so anyone who is interested in the Society's work could be opted in the course of the year.

There are those to whom I must express my great thanks. Anne Humphrey for her fantastic work as Hon. Secretary, Bob Humphrey for all his work as Hon. Treasurer. Sandra Gann for her excellent reports on our meetings, help with our catering and collating material for the new exhibition.

Also Homer Lindsay, who manages our website and is happy to continue this even although he is moving home.

We are indebted to Bryan and Suzanne Stanley for collating the Newsletter.

I would like to express gratitude to all members of the Executive and sub groups for all their work and to the membership.

I hope you all have a lovely summer and look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

**Zoreen Hill**

## **HON SECRETARY'S REPORT**

This beginning of this year has been a very busy year for the Executive following and it was a good job I had retired! Having changed careers twice in my life it was now a time to be a Jack of All Trades, which has proved interesting to say the least. Thank you for all your help and assistance in making my job that bit easier. It's lovely to meet and correspond with so many Civic Society Members.

We are busy getting the new exhibition ready for this season and some of you might have seen my car bombing about with fishing nets in it and the like! Our thanks must go to Martha Andrews, Jim Gibson, Ralph Holmes, The Town Museum, Ann Faragher, Stephen Scott, Michael Cullen, Gardo, Berwick Boat Trips, The Rob Roy and Bruce Burns. We have learnt a lot along the way aided by copious amounts of tea / coffee / cake and scones, normally consumed in The Corner House Café and Northern Edge. Sandra Gann and Zoreen have worked so hard and we hope that you enjoy the exhibition as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

The Exec team seem to have formed a Catering Team and I must also thank other members who have donated food throughout the past year and to Robert Ashdown for his washing up expertise - this has certainly helped to recover some of the talk costs.

I have endeavoured to be mindful of expenses and to this end I am using email and delivery by hand where possible, in order to save postage costs. We are also trying to save on printing costs. Hopefully this will help towards our annual deficit. If you are not receiving emails, please let me know and if you are not already on the email list and would like to be, please also contact me.

I have been working behind the scenes trying to obtain funding towards the Historic Town Map of Berwick; this has at times been trying and I am disappointed at the Town Council. We now need just under £5,000 to proceed with the project and I would be grateful for any help or donations, so that we may achieve our goal and get this project off the ground.

Finally, I will not be standing for election as Honorary Secretary next year, it's time to hand the mantle over to someone else, to keep our organisation healthy and progressive.

**Ann Humphrey**

## **HON. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The financial position of the Society remains healthy. This is a very good position to be in, as it enables us not only to continue with the various things that we do ourselves, but also to make donations to other local organisations to help them with their work and events. We also recognise outstanding achievement at local schools.

However, whilst we currently have money in the bank, we cannot afford to be complacent. Our overall annual operating loss is around £3,000. We are fortunate in that we have sufficient funds to be able to carry this for the foreseeable future though.

Our 2022 accounts have been examined and signed off by Jim Waugh and I would like to record my thanks to Jim for doing this important task for us; it is much appreciated.

**Bob Humphrey**

## **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Over recent months I am very pleased to be able to tell you that our membership numbers have been increasing. For any organisation to be successful it is vital that we have healthy membership numbers, and we definitely have that. Why are we growing? My view is that it is mainly due to the interesting and varied talks which the Society continues to run. Whilst I know that many of you do attend these, if you haven't, I would recommend them. Quite apart from the talks themselves the atmosphere is very friendly and welcoming.

We have approaching 200 members currently, with over 20 joining in the last year.

Many of you know this already, but for those who don't, we use a membership system called MemberMojo to hold your membership details. One of the things this allows us to do is to send emails quickly and easily to our whole membership as long as we have your email address. If you're not receiving emails from us then please let me know. You can see your data online at <https://membermojo.co.uk/berwickcs>. Your data is secure and not shared with anyone else of course. If there is anything incorrect, please let me know. My email address is bobhumphrey01@aol.com.

**Bob Humphrey**

# IN MEMORIAM

## James Walker

We were very saddened to hear of the death of Jim Walker who died on the 11th April 2023 aged 98. Jim was an esteemed photographer, author and historian. We sold many of his books in The Main Guard, often selling out. He was a valuable, Honorary Member of the Society and his influence and knowledge will be incorporated in our new exhibition this year on 'Salmon Fishing on The Tweed'.

To his family, we extend much sympathy. A fuller obituary will appear in the next Newsletter.

## Frances Mary Cowen

In November 2021, we learnt of the death of Francis Cowen in London and that the Society was to be a beneficiary to her estate. Frances was a long-standing member - her family used to live in Berwick many years ago in The Old Whaling House and she retained her love of and interest in the town.

We recently received the bequest for which we are very grateful.

# TOO MANY HOLIDAY HOMES IN BERWICK?

Some members are worried about the number of holiday homes in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal. This has been referred to as potential Beadnellisation, the meaning of which will be clear to anyone who has followed media reports on this issue. The Civic Society decided to investigate. Northumberland County Council (NCC) has been very helpful. Research in 2018 showed that in 21 parishes more than 20% of the total number of "household spaces" are second homes or holiday lets. By far the largest cluster is in the villages east of the A1 from Alnmouth to Holy Island, most within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The densest were Beadnell (67.5%), Newton-by-the-Sea (61.2%) and Bamburgh (54%). Those figures are thought to have increased since, but parish level data from the 2021 Census is still being processed. There are similar problems in parts of Cornwall and other coastal holiday areas.

I asked NCC to provide data for Berwick using current Council Tax and Business Rates records for second homes and holiday lets respectively. The combined data for Berwick and East Ord parishes showed that the total number of second homes and holiday lets was only about 4% of the total, about the average across the county as a whole. Some owners may not have registered their homes in either category but this is the best data available. Nevertheless, there was still a strong feeling that a great many of Berwick's

holiday homes are in the town centre. We needed more detail, so I decided to focus on the Berwick Conservation Area, both within the town walls and without. I found and listed all the postcodes (some streets have several) and sent them to NCC to check against Council Tax and Business Rates records. The results were as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Within the Elizabethan Walls</b>	<b>Remainder of Conservation Area</b>	<b>Combined (Berwick Conservation Area)</b>
<b>Second Homes</b>	11.19%	06.25%	09.22%
<b>Holiday Lets</b>	03.19%	01.12%	02.41%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14.38%</b>	<b>07.37%</b>	<b>11.63%</b>

The great majority of holiday homes are in Berwick rather than Tweedmouth or Spittal, although the numbers there seem to be increasing. We are nowhere near the exceptionally high proportions present in the AONB where local families find it increasingly difficult to find homes, the values of which are very high compared with County averages. NCC introduced a requirement in the Local Plan, Policy HOU10, which requires that any new development in parishes with 20% or greater proportions of second homes and holiday lets must be used as a “principal residence” but this does not apply to existing homes. If the Levelling up bill passes into law, NCC is also considering charging double Council Tax on second homes.



We concluded that the proportion of second homes and holiday lets in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal has not yet reached worryingly high levels but it should be monitored. It is important to bear in mind that visitors are very important for Berwick’s economy and create a lot of jobs. The town needs a range of visitor accommodation. Second homes may have been bought for retirement and eventual full-time residence. The findings have been shared with relevant organisations locally.

**Brian Gowthorpe, Chair, Planning & Development Committee**

# WHY IS PUTIN ATTACKING UKRAINE?

*David Saunders, Emeritus Professor, School of History,  
Classics & Archaeology, Newcastle University.*

We were delighted to welcome to our January meeting, Professor David Saunders who has an encyclopaedic knowledge and personal experience, of both Russia and Ukraine.

There is no one definitive answer to the question posed by our speaker. However, Professor Saunders broke down the many factors that have contributed to the current situation by suggesting there were 8 major issues to consider as answers: 2 cultural, 3 geographical and 3 political; highlights are noted below.

Drawing on examples of Russian history as far back as the Middle Ages, Professor Saunders explained Russia has always been Imperialist. He demonstrated the Russian tendency to attack others in pursuit of the 'Growth of the Russian Bear'. To President Putin, Ukraine is just a peripheral region which became a potential country only because of the mistakes he considered were made by the Soviet leaders in the early 1920s. We were reminded of the many border changes within this vast region with numbers of people living outside the countries of their ethnic origin.

In contrast to the picture President Putin paints of Ukraine, Professor Saunders highlighted many examples, historically and currently, of Ukrainians' desire for independence and democracy, meaning that they would not acquiesce to Putin's demands. Ukraine's advantages are its good strategic position with access to sea routes, it is a vast country mostly of flat grasslands, and its black soil is very productive arable land with rich sources of minerals and rare earth metals.

Putin does not want a democracy on his border. He has attempted to show his strength by invading other regions along the Russian border and getting rid of those people who may be a threat. Professor Saunders suggested that President Putin was forced to launch the current attack on Ukraine because he had tried everything else!

Putin believes that Ukraine is in the pocket of the EU, NATO and America. He fears the growing influence of EU and NATO in those countries that border Russia. There are still disputes about past verbal 'promises' made by EU/NATO not to expand.

Finally, Professor Saunders explored the belief that Putin is wanting to re-establish the Soviet Union, which he refuted by citing many quotations from speeches, e.g. "Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart, whoever wants it back has no brain". President Putin believes that the Soviet Union made worse the problem that his war on Ukraine is intended to solve, seeing modern Ukraine as being entirely the product of the Soviet era. Putin has promoted an anti-Ukraine culture in Russia which has led to popular prejudice supporting Putin's aims. Rather than forming the new Soviet Union perhaps he wishes to reinstate Tsarist Russia?

Professor Saunders was such a knowledgeable and eloquent speaker that question time went on for another hour or two, both formally and informally, during which time subjects such as religion and economics were aired. In conclusion we wished we had had a day with Professor Saunders rather than just an evening.

Sandra Gann

## **A PRESENTATION ON THE NEW PLANS FOR BERWICK MUSEUM & ART GALLERY**

*Rowan Brown, CEO Museums Northumberland.*

At the February meeting of the Civic Society, we welcomed Rowan Brown CEO of Museums Northumberland (MN) who gave an excellent illustrated presentation on the background and organisation of MN and its vision for the future, though Rowan stressed that expecting to hear the actual plans for the Berwick Museum and Art Gallery was a little premature!

Museums Northumberland is run by The Woodhorn Charitable Trust, a charity providing the museums service for Northumberland. It raises funds from Grants awarded from bodies such as the Arts Council alongside money raised through its own museums. There are 4 museums and two historic sites within which there is a vast range of subjects including Arts and Archaeology, Natural, Industrial and Social History.

Museums are no longer just the buildings of yesteryear holding artefacts in glass showcases but dynamic environments reaching out to people of all ages and backgrounds in their communities. An important role is collaboration and liaison with partners, an example being the project of the Union Chain Bridge which supports learning and cultural engagement across national boundaries. Rowan also emphasised the impact of art on the well-being of individuals giving an example of the work done through photography with substance abusers.

The educational role is an important function of the Museums. Rowan told us of work done in local schools to increase pupils' confidence in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), firmly believing that if children are not introduced to such subjects in their early years, they will be disadvantaged in later life.

Of great interest to the audience was the vision Museums Northumberland had for the Berwick Museum and its national treasure the Burrell Collection, bequeathed to the town with the proviso that it should remain in situ. Rowan spoke passionately about her desire to achieve a modern museum in Berwick, with environmentally friendly facilities, offering good access, serving the needs of visitors, and showcasing art, archaeology and also the natural history and built environment around. Here the lack of funding was the key factor in forwarding any plans. Rowan pointed out that the Museum in the Barracks has no conveniences, nor cafe, facilities that make visitors

linger and help to generate income. Currently the Museum is closed in the winter months and it is housed in a rented English Heritage site.

She would like the Museum to be a core part of Berwick culture, contributing a valuable service to the Town and County, generating its own income and working with local people of all ages and backgrounds as in the scheme to form Community Advisory Panels determining future acquisitions, exhibitions and projects. However, the serious lack of funding means that despite Rowan continuing to assess various sites and ideas, there can be no plans published just yet to achieve this aim.

Rowan allowed plenty of time for the many question the audience had. We thanked her for the way she listened to our frustrations with good humour and honesty which was much appreciated.

**Sandra Gann**

## **An Update on Building our New Hospital**

*Talk on 23rd March by Marion Dickson, Executive Director, Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Professionals; Damon Kent, Managing Director, Northumbria Healthcare Facilities; Liam Robertson, Project Manager, Turner Townsend; Cara Charlton, Head of PR, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation.*

The Society welcomed the opportunity to have a presentation by a panel made up of senior management, led by Marion Dickson, giving an update on the construction of Berwick's new hospital. It was acknowledged that there are frustrations about the delay caused by the legally required archaeological investigations, but it is also accepted that we have benefited from the wealth of knowledge and information about what has gone before. The delay caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was also discussed and it was highlighted that it did lead to a better understanding of important issues, such as infection control. This contributed to a revision of initial plans, for example to ensure infection prevention control is the best it can be.

The new £35m hospital is to be built on the site of the existing one. Much of the old infirmary has been demolished and the rest – with the exception of the clock tower - will be demolished once the new hospital is built. The ground will then be landscaped with good access. The construction alone is estimated to create full-time employment and significantly boost the local economy - during the build and into the future.

A large proportion of the hospital services' infrastructure will be built off-site at Merit's factory in Cramlington, as pre-assembled modules – a modern method of construction that enables them to be developed alongside work on the hospital site. It is envisaged that the new hospital will start to operate by the end of 2024. It will then not only provide top quality healthcare well into the future but discussions are already in progress to increase the number of appropriate services provided at the hospital and the number of regular clinics.

Services that were noted as being of particular concern to residents were cardiac and routine blood tests. Meanwhile the impact of distance and costs on elderly and vulnerable patients in gaining access to these services in the south were raised. Marion reassured the audience that discussions about this issue were already in progress and solutions mentioned included help with transport. The Trust is going to confirm these details.

Further detailed information is included in the Trust's latest media release on its website: <https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/our-locations/berwick-infirmiry/new-hospital-berwick#c713da38>.

Since the 12th century Berwick has had hospitals within the City walls providing care for sick, vulnerable and needy people, including travellers. It is good to know that this will continue and that the new facility will provide care from a hospital fit for the 21st century and beyond.

**Sandra Gann & Cara Charlton**

## **The Living Barracks**

*A presentation and update by Andrea Selley, English Heritage; Rose Lamont, The Maltings; Andrew Herberts, KOSB; and Karen Lounton, NCC.*

We were fortunate to have a multidisciplinary panel of speakers – all Partners in the Living Barracks Project - at an extra meeting of the Civic Society in April. Together, their vision is to ensure our 18th century Barracks will be a fully utilised and thriving cultural hub to be enjoyed by both locals and visitors. They will have amenities essential for any visitor attraction – cafe, shop, an accessible lift and most importantly toilets! Some of the key points of a comprehensive and informative presentation follow.

Initially it was hoped to use all the buildings on the historic site for educational, cultural or social activities. However, following financial viability studies it was realised that the necessary funding for such a large project would not be available, despite grants already received from organisations such as the Government Cultural and Development Fund. Consequently, in order to secure the site's future, consideration is being given to returning the West Block and Clock to residential use.

Detailed site plans showed us the way in which current spaces and outhouses will be repaired and revamped to enable year-round use providing extra facilities to the existing services (e.g. studios for local artists and 'crafters'). Consideration is also being given to appropriate areas for temporary spaces for The Maltings to use as an entertainment space during their refurbishment. Assets such as the Gymnasium Gallery, now used for contemporary exhibitions, will be updated.

The Barracks' home for the KOSB goes back to 1881 and, despite the disbandment of the Regiment in 2006 when they were amalgamated with the Royal Scots Battalion,

it still remains a special place for the Regiment. There is a commitment to ensure that the Barracks remains a focal point for this community with personnel continuing to offer advice and support to veterans. The Parade Ground will continue to play an important part of the Town's heritage; an important site for the Minden Day Parade, it could also be used for other displays and outdoor entertainment.

Finally, but very importantly, Berwick Archives would be located within the Barracks enabling staff to work on one site with adequate areas for storage. This would allow longer opening hours and a more spontaneous response to the public seeking information and opportunities for research.

It was stressed that this vision of heritage, cultural and military organisations working together had the aim to bring life into empty buildings and to be of benefit to Berwick, its people and its economy. However, we were reminded it is still in the early stages and it is important to listen to the views of the people of Berwick. To this end a series of Public Consultations will continue and we have welcomed the offer by all of our Panellists to return in due course to give us an update.

**Sandra Gann**

## **Democracy & Shipbuilding in Ancient Greece**

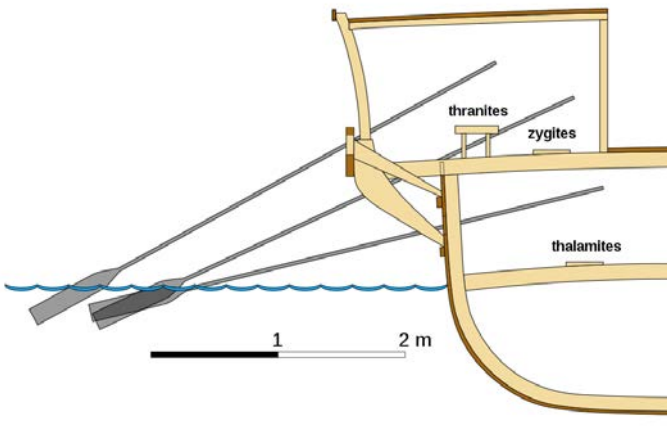
*Dr Peter Jones, Classicist & Writer*

It was with great pleasure we welcomed back Dr Peter Jones to talk, following our AGM, at the April Meeting of the Civic Society.

Dr Jones challenged our perception of democracy, suggesting that the Athens of the 5th and 4th century BCE was the first and last true democracy - that is a state truly run by the people. However, he clarified the point that the 'people', were males over 18 who had been born in Athens and had both parents born in Athens. These were the citizens, regardless of status, wealth or class, who were able to participate equally in the procedures of state.

Fundamental to the system were three main bodies: i) the Assemblies - open meetings held throughout the year every 8 days - which all citizens were free to attend. ii) The Council of 500, who dealt with governance, chosen by random selection from citizens who put their names forward. However, citizens taking responsible roles were not without accountability and were scrutinised by their fellow citizens. Punishments, a fine, exile or execution, were given when performance failed to meet required standards. iii) Groups of Citizens, over the age of 30, were also chosen by lot to act as jurors in daily court proceedings. The only exceptions to this 'equality by lot' system were the 10 elected Generals who dealt with such issues as finance and religion.

Dr Jones went on to describe the importance of the trireme as a factor in the success of the Athenians' domination of the sea at this time. A crucial element of this success



*Trireme oar system. © Eric Gaba (Sting fr. Sting)*

was the skill of the three-tiered system of oarsmen working harmoniously together in cramped conditions. These oarsmen were not slaves but paid citizens, and their skill was highly valued and a factor in Athenian maritime power. The contribution of these citizens could be seen as an

extension of their democratic beliefs.

Dr Jones contrasted the Athenian direct democratic system with modern day representative democracies where citizens vote for politicians to make decisions for us. Although it was interesting to hear that Switzerland came nearest to the democratic ideal, as it publishes proposed laws so that the Cantons can debate and make their opinions known by vote before legislation. One could debate how much the Athenian people ruled rather than just the section of Society composed of adult males, but we are indebted to Athens for being the birthplace of Democracy.

Dr Jones is an advocate of making the Classics accessible to all, and his love of the subject and informative and humorous talk left us questioning our own use of the term 'democracy', but eager for his next visit to learn more.

**Sandra Gann**

## Tennant's Pipes

A recent clay pipe find in eroded sand dunes at Amble led me to the inevitable Google search (other search engines are available), which yielded a relevant scholarly investigation by Peter Hammond of the Society for Clay Pipe Research. The bowl of my almost complete pipe is marked with TW next to the stem, and has a lattice heart on the other side. One side of the stem is marked 'Tennant & Son', the other 'Berwick'. Mr Hammond tells us that this is William Tennant, born in Berwick in 1838, oldest son of Charles Tennant, the owner of a pipe-making business in Tweedmouth. William

worked with his father until 1872, at which point (possibly after a quarrel) he moved to Newcastle to set up his own pipe-making business (which survived until 1925, though he had retired by 1901 and died in 1916).



Charles Tennant, painter and glazier, was born in Edinburgh in 1805, but by the mid-1840s he had taken over the pipe-making works near Kiln Hill in Tweedmouth (visible on the large-scale OS map of c1852). We learn that in the 1861 census he describes himself as a pipe manufacturer (a thriving business) and grocer. He died in 1875, and, William having already left, Charles' second son Robert continued to expand the business (and his grandson, Robert Tennant Tait, later ran Tennant's tobacconists and tobacco blenders at 13 Castlegate). Peter Hammond quotes a detailed and fascinating account in *The Berwick Journal* (October 1884) of the Tweedmouth pipe factory and the manufacturing process. Clay pipes being so common, I'd always assumed that they were mostly made of local clay, but it seems that all pipe clay came from Devon.

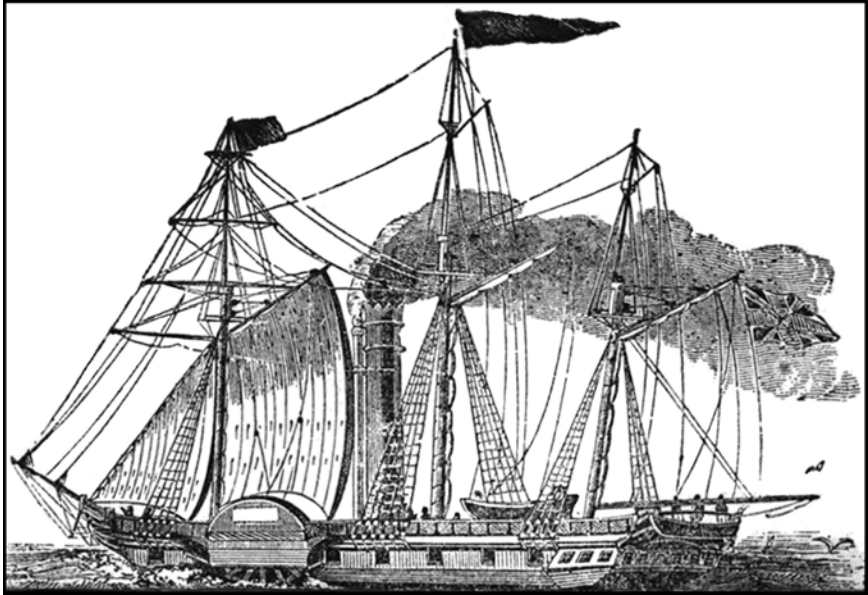
The Tennant pipes were apparently very popular, known for their "excellent finish": 'Tennant's Clays' and the initials TW were known in the UK and abroad. Examples have been found all over the north-east, in the Yorkshire Dales, Nottinghamshire, and even in the River Thames, probably, suggests Peter Hammond, dropped by the north-eastern crews of coal boats. The *Berwick Journal* piece notes that: "Mr. Tennant's customers are found on both sides of the border and each pipe that is sent out from Tweedmouth has a finish and beauty of shape not found in those turned out by any other maker. The fancy pipes manufactured by Mr. Tennant are in some cases very artistic in design and combine not only beauty and shape but are good smoking pipes." The photographs of even my simple specimen maybe do indicate a degree of precision and refinement compared to more basic examples I've seen.

Peter Hammond's detailed and very well-illustrated account is packed with information about both the factory and the family history. To read it, go to Publications on the Society for Clay Pipe Research website, and find Newsletter 75, Spring / Summer 2009, pages 44-56. It is a fascinating insight into a long-lived significant local business.

**Suzanne Stanley**

## Book Review

### **“From triumph to tragedy the story of the paddle steamer Pegasus”**

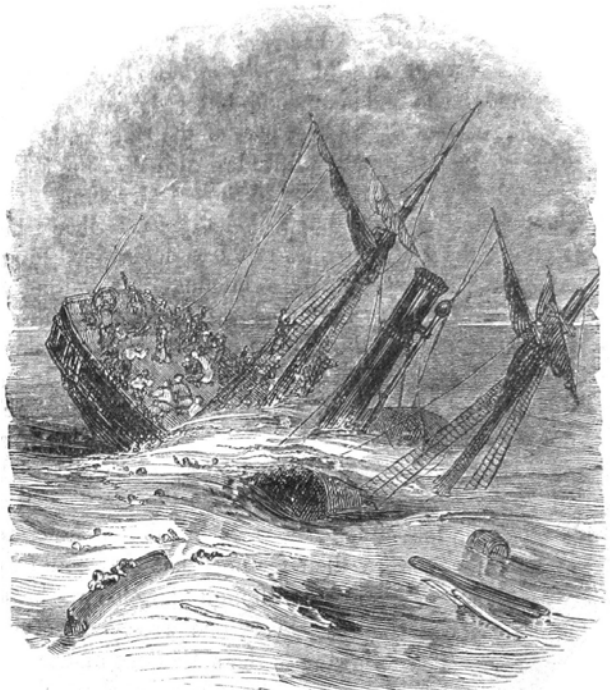


*Paddle Steamer, believed to be the Pegasus*

If you enjoy wandering round gravestones, you might have noticed in the churchyards at Holy Island and St Aidan's at Bamburgh that some unfortunate souls are there as a result of the sinking of the Pegasus in July 1843. How so? Local historian Jane Bowen found in the Northumberland Archives a collection of 'Reward' notices searching for information about lost passengers, her curiosity took over, her painstaking research commenced, and the outcome was this fascinating story.

The Pegasus was built by Barclay & Co. in Glasgow, specifically for the Leith-Hull route, and was, in its time, at the forefront of design. She carried cargo plus passengers, who could either travel steerage or in "most commodious and elegant" accommodation, "comprising every comfort of which any Steamer can boast". Passengers' use of the Pegasus was often linked to rail routes at either end and formed part of a longer journey. The route was a lucrative one, the lists of cargoes carried being an insight into the vigorous industry and the short-haul sea trade in the Victorian era. The Pegasus carried everything from bags of seed for growers, ironmongery and oil, to racehorses,

mail coaches, and even Mr Van Amburgh's Menagerie. The passengers on the fateful day were from every walk of life, from a Mrs Stewart of Paisley, London-bound to see her son, to Edward Elton, a noted Shakespearian actor and player manager. The author has uncovered a surprising amount of information about the history of the Pegasus from its construction onwards, and the lives of many of the crew and 41 passengers on the final voyage. Saddest of all, though it helps place the event firmly in its time, is the recorded detail of precisely what the victims were wearing, and of their possessions, as bodies and some luggage were recovered during the weeks after the disaster.



*Contemporary image of the Pegasus sinking*

Given that the route was so familiar to the crew, the reason for the sinking is something of a mystery, despite accounts given by five of the six survivors. Ships passing Northumberland could either avoid the Farne Islands by sailing further out to sea, or could safely use the undoubtedly riskier Inner Passage as long as the channel markers were followed. On 19th July 1843, the inner route was taken, and on a clear, calm night, the Pegasus struck the Goldstone Rock between Holy Island's Emmanuel Head and the Farnes. Descriptions of the struggles of crew and passengers thereafter is distressing to read. However, at 180 years distant from the tragedy, I have to say that the facts are gripping. The author handles the information with great sensitivity, but brings it alive in a way that thoroughly engages the reader. I recommend this well-constructed book as a valuable and vivid piece of local shipping history.

**Suzanne Stanley**

*From Triumph to Tragedy – the story of the Paddle Steamer Pegasus and her people 1835 – 1843. by Jane Bowen. Novum Publishing, 2021. 231 pages; illustrated. £12.99. Obtainable from Grieves Stationers in Berwick (or on-line).*

## Riding the Bounds



