

The Berwick Civic Society

is a Registered Charity (No. 508953)

Website: 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

Executive Committee

Cheryl Bee
Sandra Gann
Brian Gowthorpe
Georgina Hill
Homer Lindsay

Planning and Development

Chairman Brian Gowthorpe
Cheryl Bee
John Elliot
Martin Laidler
Zoreen Hill
Gilbert O'Brien

Publications

Cheryl Bee
Zoreen Hill
Anne Humphrey
Bob Humphrey

Website Manager

Homer Lindsay

Events and Promotions

Zoreen Hill
Sandra Gann
Anne Humphrey
Georgina Hill
Bob Humphrey

The Main Guard

Cheryl Bee
Sandra Gann
Zoreen Hill
Georgina Hill
Anne Humphrey
Bob Humphrey
Bob Steward

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED
CIVIC SOCIETY



Winter NEWSLETTER

2023



*Heritage Fayre in the Guildhall, 27th October
Zoreen Hill and Anne Humphrey.
© Georgina Hill*

Contents

From the Chairman	1
Hon. Vice Chair / Secretary's Report	2
Treasurer's Report	3
Membership Report.	4
Planning & Development Update	4
Recent talks and events: reports	5
Heritage Open Days	9
Main Guard 2023	10
Conduit Head by Antony Chessell	11
Dining with Monks by Sandra Gann	13
School Awards	15
Remembrance Service	16

Cover Photo by Tommy McLeod

James Walker Obituary



Jim had a long and productive life, dying aged 97 on 11th April. He was originally from Galashiels and was a manager with the Trustee Savings Bank. He lived in Spittal for over 40 years, having grown to love the area during holidays.

He was a historian, the author of 10 books, and was very involved with recording the local salmon fishing industry and its demise. His large archive of documents, images and equipment was given to the Berwick Guild of Freemen in 2017 in the hope that there could be a permanent exhibition in the town.

His work led to many speaking engagements. As well as an award from the Eastern Borders Development Association to acknowledge the value of his work to the area, he was also honoured with a Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society. We were delighted to have him as an honorary member of Berwick Civic Society.



Jim Walker & Bari Bear

From the Chairman

Hello Members,

This has been an eventful period both for Berwick-upon-Tweed and The Civic Society. Residents and visitors appear to really appreciate the town's heritage, history and beauty. There is a sense that things are happening and that there is a great potential for more.

Vice Chairman, Anne Humphrey and myself give a six-minute presentation (three minutes each!) at an interesting and informative 'Heritage in Partnership' networking event for Heritage groups in The Guildhall recently. In preparing for a challenging three-minute timescale, I was struck with how many of the other heritage groups and organisations The Civic Society has been involved with over the years and the benefits of further, future cooperation. In her three minutes, Anne gave an excellent account of the plans to print a Berwick Historic Town Map and also the Old Bridge 400 celebrations.

We have been delighted with the huge success of recent Festivals. For example, The Berwick Literary Festival which was extremely well-attended and received this year. Also, Heritage Open Days (HODs) - there is a report by Siobhan Bankier later in the newsletter.

The Chairman of The Planning and Development Committee, Brian Gowthorpe, in his report details the involvement he has had in many aspects of the Town's development. He is a great asset to us and his work is much appreciated.

The town centre is facing the same challenges as those across the country - indeed, city centres are dealing with extremely large vacant units. However, it is positive news that several of the empty units are being filled here and the imminent opening of a Yorkshire Trading Company outlet in the old Home Bargains site is very welcome. We also hear of a potential interest in utilising the old Iceland site by the 'regeneration via heritage' initiative.



Preparations by Sandra & Zoreen

In Events and Promotions, we have had very entertaining speakers, a wide range of topics and excellent attendances at our monthly talks. Sandra Gann has provided write-ups for some of these later in the Newsletter.

The Main Guard Exhibition Preview Party heralded an outstanding season. 'Salmon Fishing on The Tweed' proved to be subject that really appealed to visitors and locals alike. Many fishermen, former Tweedmouth Salmon Queens and connections came to view the exhibition. It was also really popular during the HODs week. The HODs mascot, 'Bari Bear' and his friend, 'Mr C Gull' paid us a visit and we had a good photographic session!!

Great thanks are due for the Exhibition to Ralph Holmes, Martha Andrews, Jim Gibson and all



Anne & Sandra et al



Mayor John Robertson and Sandra

those who lent pictures, papers and other artefacts. Contributors also include The Berwick Museum and the KOSB Museum.

The popularity of the Exhibition illustrated the value of the fishing industry to tourism. There has been 1000 years of net-fishing on the River Tweed in Berwick. It is an integral part of the town's history and heritage.

For a few weeks in September, I was not well but the support I received from the Executive and other members was outstanding. Anne Humphrey and Sandra Gann led an enthusiastic group of stewards manning The Main Guard - who are looking forward to next year!

There is a new venue for the Christmas Party this year, The Tweedmouth Bowling Club. Not only does it have lovely views of the river but the manager has an excellent reputation for catering. It also allows the events group to chat, relax and enjoy the event with members.

We hope to see many of you there. Wishing you all a very enjoyable festive season.

Zoreen Hill

Vice Chair / Honorary Secretary's Report

This part of the year has certainly been a busy one!

Firstly, I would like to congratulate and thank The Main Guard Stewards who worked so tirelessly to make this year a bumper one for visitors and donations; the compliments in the Visitors Book are a testament to their hard work. The Salmon Net Fishing Exhibition would not have been possible without Ralph Holmes but especially also Martha Andrews and Jim Gibson who were marvellous. We owe them a big debt of gratitude, THANK YOU. The Exhibition is even more poignant when we learnt that Gardo Fishery is under threat of closure, the last net fishery in England and Scotland, a thousand years of history and heritage gone.

I accompanied Zoreen, Lady Hill on the presentations to Longridge Towers, Berwick Academy, Engage and The Grove School, the latter having a huge impact on all of us. The work being done there is amazing and the staff are going the extra mile, even down to the Head, Penny Derries giving up her office to make more room for the children.

I am delighted and very grateful that Mark Dodds has agreed to take over the Historic Towns Trust map, thank you Mark.

The Civic Society is part of the Bridge 400 committee, with Margaret Shaw as the Facilitator, who is doing a sterling job and plans are well in hand for the celebrations next year. The Civic Society donated the prize monies for the Logo Competition. Our Exhibition will be centred around The Old Bridge.

I attended a Chamber of Trade meeting where the Tweed Salmon Queen Committee gave a presentation on their plans for 2024. They are trying very hard to bring this event back to what it used to be many years ago, one of the big events in Berwick. The Society has donated £150 to help them achieve this goal.

As Secretary, I am aware of rising costs and the need to try and make savings where possible, so if you are not on the Membermojo email or not receiving emails please contact me, as using email saves the Society a large amount of money on postage. I am trying to hand-deliver where possible and it would save my time too.

I will not be standing for re-election to Honorary Secretary next year - it's time for a change and to keep the Society healthy. If you are interested and would like some of idea of the job and what it entails, please contact me.

Finally, as we come to Christmas, I wish you and your family and friends a peaceful Christmas with hope and blessings for the New Year.

Anne Humphrey

Treasurer's Report - Christmas 2023

When I started to write this report, I looked back to see what I said last year. I mentioned that we were having what I described as a 'discussion' with Scottish Power about electricity for the Main Guard. I am happy to be able to report that this has been resolved satisfactorily in our favour. It shouldn't have taken them close to 18 months to resolve it though.

We continue to make donations to other local organisations to help them with their work and events. So far this year we have made donations to the Grove School in Tweedmouth, the Tweed Salmon Queen and the Berwick 400 project. We also recognise outstanding achievement at local schools, making awards to students at Longridge Towers, Berwick Academy and Engage.

The Society's finances remain relatively healthy, and we do everything that we can to keep our costs as low as possible. The Main Guard exhibition this summer was particularly successful, bringing in £1,212, with the daily average number of visitors showing an increase of over 30% over the 2022 figure.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Bob Humphrey, Hon Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report - Christmas 2023

2023 has again been a good year for new members, with 13 joining so far this year. Thank you to each of those new members for joining; I hope that you are all enjoying the talks and also that you managed to visit the Main Guard exhibition over the summer. Thanks too to all of you who have been members for longer. We actually have over 180 members which is a very healthy number indeed.

As with all local organisations, it is our members who make the Society what it is. We are exceedingly grateful to everyone who has helped during the year. Not just committee members, but Main Guard stewards, contributors to newsletters, helping with talks, the Remembrance Service, the list goes on. So, if you think there is something you would like to do to help, please let me or indeed any Exec member know. Many hands.....

Annual subscriptions will become due on 1 January. Our administration system, Membermojo, will send out a reminder as always nearer the time. In many cases it will be nothing more than for your information, as many of you have set up standing orders so the payment will be sent to us by your bank automatically in January. However, if you do pay by bank transfer, cheque or cash that is fine and the email will tell you what you need to do.

Subs remain the same as in 2022, namely £12 for a joint membership or £8 for a single.

We also use MemberMojo to email details of forthcoming talks and events. Not just those that we put on, but in some cases, those put on by others locally. It is only right that we help other groups where we can, after all we are not competing with them are we?

As email is the quickest and most effective way for us to contact you it is really helpful if we have your email address. For the majority of you we do have them, and you'll know that we have it because you'll be getting the notifications coming through. There are some of you that don't though, and indeed there are a few where the address we have is bouncing back to us. If you're not seeing the notifications then if you could let me have your correct email address that would be very helpful.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Bob Humphrey, Membership Secretary

Planning & Development Update

This year has probably seen fewer planning applications than usual. Most have been small scale and relatively uncontroversial. Although much of the time of the Society's specialist sub-committee is taken up in reviewing and commenting on planning applications, we are asked to become involved in a surprisingly wide range of activities. In earlier newsletter articles I have written about holiday homes and 3-D digital urban modelling. I have also mentioned that we have written short practical guides to the strict controls relating to door and window alterations in listed buildings and in the Berwick Conservation Area. We will put these on our website soon and there will be an item in a future newsletter.

We have been busy with other projects under the general heading of town centre vitality. Last year we shared our paper on that topic with the Berwick Town Forum, which is led by the County Council but includes other key organisations. That led to further documents:

- A tracker of interventions that might encourage empty buildings to be let.
- A tracker listing key information about vacant or underused sites in the town centre.
- A list of vacant shops in Marygate with key information and contact details for Create Berwick, the new name for the Berwick Culture and Creative Zone.

That exercise revealed that some landlords are asking lower rents for vacant shops, in some cases below the new annual rateable values that were set in April this year. This must surely reflect the impact of internet shopping and the withdrawal of national multiple retailers from less profitable high street locations. We will be watching this trend with interest.

Brian Gowthorpe, Chair, Planning and Development

The Geology of Siccar Point & James Hutton of the Scottish Enlightenment

Talk by Elizabeth Devon, June 2023



Siccar Point

Elizabeth started the talk by looking at photos of the rocks of Siccar Point as James Hutton saw them. She explained that from his observations of the movement of pebbles, sand and mud in rivers, he saw that the rocks here were all made of sediments, but he noticed that there were two distinct varieties. The lower rock appeared to have been moved into a

vertical position and the upper rock was completely different with the base of it containing pebbles of the lower rock. Society members were encouraged to think like James Hutton and to try to work out what had happened.

In the second section of the talk, there was a brief biography of James Hutton's life and an explanation of the Scottish Enlightenment, a time of tremendous discovery and innovation in all fields, from science to the arts.

Thirdly, Hutton's conclusions about what he thought had happened at Siccar Point were explained. He



James Hutton by Sir Henry Raeburn

thought the Earth worked in a cyclical way like the orbits of planets or blood circulation and that there were many, many cycles. He thought the Earth behaved like a dynamic heat engine so causing rocks to be tilted. His main conclusion though was that the Earth was millions and millions of years old and not 6,000 years as was believed at the time. He said, "We find no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end".

Lastly, Elizabeth gave the up-to-date geological explanation for Siccar Point, the lower rocks being c.435 million years old and the upper c.370 million years old, so leaving a time gap, or unconformity, of about 65 million years. Here she demonstrated deep time with the 'arm' analogy to much amusement!

Sandra Gann

Tin Tabernacles - A Victorian Story

Talk by Sandra Gann, September 2023

A discovery of the site of an old 'iron church' in Spittal lead to an exploration of 'tin tabernacles' as that is what the hundreds of iron churches erected during the Victorian era were called. What were they, why were they called tin tabernacles as they were made of iron and why were they so prevalent during this era?

In the first half of the 19th Century new methods of galvanising corrugated iron sheets led to the production of materials that could be used for larger buildings that traditional roof tiles could not have supported e.g. Crystal Palace. This product was ideal for affordable, easily and quickly constructed buildings of any size. It was also very transportable in flat pack kit forms. It became the answer to the need for many new churches both here and abroad in the late 18th to early 19th century.



St. Mary's, Newton by the Sea

The Victorians placed much emphasis on the moral importance of church going. At the beginning of the 19th Century there were about 10,000 parish churches in England. By the 1870s the population had more than doubled and 3,204 new churches were constructed and nearly a thousand completely rebuilt. During this time there was a vibrant and often competitive religious culture with many varieties of belief and disagreements within the protestant and particularly Presbyterian communities which led to the need for new alternative places to worship within small communities.

Following the industrial revolution, by the late 19th Century the opportunities for new work in factories in urban areas led to huge demographic changes – the population living in cities rose from 17% in 1801 to 72% in 1891.

During this period there were also mass expeditions overseas to pursue riches, such as The Gold Rush in Australia and the Yukon and Diamond Mining in South Africa. These expeditions were contrasted with the colonisation of The Falklands when in 1843, thirty Chelsea pensioners were sent out to settle following an Act of Parliament confirming the Falklands were British. Tin tabernacles were purchased in kit form



A Scottish tabernacle

in the UK and sent out to wherever they were needed. They were cheap, portable and transportable and initially seen as a temporary church until a permanent building was constructed.

The era of the tin tabernacles came to an end by the Second World War. However, there are still many examples around, a few still acting as places of worship, many put to other uses. Why were they called tin tabernacles? A tabernacle is described as a 'temporary movable dwelling place' and the process of dipping the iron sheets

into molten zinc meant they became lighter in colour and developed a sheen – in fact they looked just like the tin of tin cans that had been processed for the first time earlier in the 1800s. I think the alliteration also reflected the affection the Victorians had for these unique buildings.

Sandra Gann

King Malcolm II – Borderline Great

On Wednesday 11th October, the Civic Society had its annual joint meeting with Berwick History Society. I stood in for Clive Hallam-Baker, who had been scheduled to talk about the first millennium of Border history until ill-health obliged him to postpone. It happens I have spent much of this year working on different versions of an academic paper relating to the king of Scots at the farthest end of the period, Malcolm II and his legacy.

Has Malcolm, who reigned from 1005 until 1034, been unfairly neglected by modern historians? That's the idea the talk wanted to examine, showing that our understanding of 11th Century Scotland has been distorted by the immense fame and lustre of Shakespeare's Macbeth. Medieval scribes frequently gave Malcolm the epithet 'most victorious king', and at his death an Irish annalist called him 'the honour of all the west of Europe'. Mind you, one thing Shakespeare can't be faulted on is the overall violence and brutality of that era. There was no shortage of references to severed limbs, broken skulls and decapitated bodies, and it was as much as I could do to keep the imagery as tasteful as possible.

Parts of the talk focused on various stone crosses and cross slabs which were traditionally believed to be memorials of Malcolm's battles. In particular I contend that Sueno's Stone, a giant cross-slab in Moray, was commissioned by Malcolm to tell the story of his conquest of Lothian at the Battle of Carham in 1018. It was this battle which fixed the River Tweed as the eastern part of the Anglo-Scottish border, bringing in references to Berwick and to the Old Bridge, which doubled as London Bridge in the 2018 film 'Outlaw King'. Malcolm II is an interesting subject, and although some of the details were a bit grim, I hope I was able to leaven my presentation with humour!

James Bruce

Heritage Buildings in Berwick, adapting to climate change and reducing energy bills

Talk by Brian Gowthorpe, 8th November

Brian is a retired Chartered Surveyor, initially in general practice. Later in his career, as a consultant at Arup, he helped to develop building retrofit skills. He explained the likely impacts of climate change on our homes and communities, particularly in relation to North Northumberland and the Tweed Valley. The Gulf Stream should protect us from the most severe events, but climate change depends on a range of influences, the interaction of which is impossible to predict with certainty. We can expect warmer drier summers and milder wetter winters. The risks of flooding in Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal are predicted to be very low, although sewers in a few streets such as Sandgate may not be able to cope with surplus water during heavy storms. Our gutters and downpipes will need regular checking to ensure they are not blocked.

A high proportion of buildings in Berwick and district were built before 1914 using traditional techniques and materials: mostly sandstone, lime mortar and timber. Buildings have solid walls that are load bearing. Traditional buildings were simpler, not equipped with heating, plumbing and electrical systems. Open fires needed draughts to draw the air in and chimney flues to expel the smoke, quite different from the levels of airtightness expected in modern buildings. Without draught proofing and blocking gaps and holes, traditional homes can lose up to 25% of heat through ventilation and infiltration.

Retro-fitting is the process of updating older buildings to meet the challenges of climate change and achieve higher energy efficiency. This will make our homes more comfortable, cost effective and meet national goals of greenhouse gas reduction, enforced by the Climate Change Act 2008. A retrofit hierarchy would be to: i) Reduce demand, ii) Maximise efficiency, iii) Use renewable technologies. This matters because houses are currently responsible for more than 75% of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings in the UK. Brian explained that building physics has become much more important. U-values measure how effectively building elements and insulation allow heat energy to be transmitted to the exterior. Two case studies of local historic buildings illustrated problems and possible solutions.



A case study, Shoe Lane, Berwick

However, first steps should be the simple measures which can be taken by us all. Within the home we should stop draughts and air leakage and use heating and electricity more thoughtfully with better controls. Where possible, roof, wall and floor insulation should be planned in as part of other home improvements. Replacement windows can help but often more because of better draught proofing. Efficient heating and

hot water systems are important, and gas is likely to be a key fuel in older buildings for many years to come. It is vital to understand your building. Do your own research and, if necessary, get impartial advice about the most appropriate interventions. Air source heat pumps are unsuitable for many traditional buildings because of the low temperatures generated. We should be very careful of over-optimistic sales pitches for expensive technologies.

Several organisations have guidance on the most efficient ways to achieve our aims and the grants available, but the message is clearly action is needed now but passive intervention first! We will provide a link to useful information on the Society's website.

Brian's love of buildings and their place in society was apparent in this timely and informative presentation.

Sandra Gann

Heritage Open Days - 2023

September saw the return of Heritage Open Days (HODs) to Berwick and once again the town was painted pink as the distinctive HODs bunting and banners took over. The 2023 programme was our biggest ever with over 75 free events for people to explore between 8th and 17th September. After a difficult few years for us all, it was nice finally to face relatively few challenges in the lead up to this year's event. Covid is of course still making its presence felt but gladly the days of social distancing are behind us and, unlike last September, no national emergencies threatened to overshadow what we had worked so hard for.

Berwick HODs is forever evolving and as we are always on the lookout for new things to add to our programme. This year we took a slightly different approach and decided to spread our walks out over the two weekends instead of concentrating them on our main Saturday and Sunday. This was an overwhelming success, so we will definitely be continuing this in the future as it allowed us to offer a wider variety of walks and, as an organising team, we felt a lot less overwhelmed on our main weekend. As well as new walks we also added some new sites to our programme and some venues which haven't participated in a few years. We were delighted to welcome back Berwick Masonic Hall, Berwick Lifeboat Station, Berwick Magistrate's Court, Palace Green Pavilion and Berwick Drill Hall. New events included activities in Berwick Library and Berwick Archives as well as new guided walks in Berwick Cemetery and around Lord's Mount.

Although HODs primarily focuses on Berwick's history it also incorporates aspects of the present. Major upcoming changes in the town are the plans for Berwick Barracks and The Maltings, and we were delighted that both sites wanted to be heavily involved this year. The Maltings offered more than 10 'Access All Areas Tours' which allowed people to see behind the scenes and even get a chance to take to the stage. The Barracks was also a busy place during HODs: all areas were open for free during our main weekend but guided tours were also available of the KOSB Museum and the English Heritage areas. Both of these venues will function very differently this time next year and we

are very grateful that we could give people a chance to explore them before they change forever.

Now that a few weeks have passed since HODs and we have gathered together our visitor numbers we are delighted to announce that we received over 13,500 visitors! This is a brilliant statistic that confirms we are growing every year and building our visitor numbers from 12,800 in 2022 and 9,000 in 2021. The top attractions of 2023 were The Town Hall (1860), The Main Guard (927), Berwick Visitor Centre (904) and Bankhill Ice House (829).



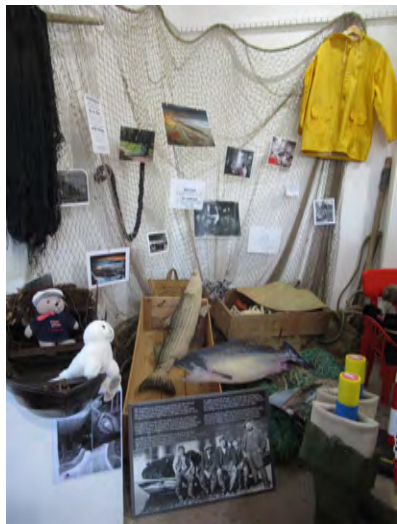
Bankhill Ice House

HODs is a lot of work for all involved and we are thankful to the whole town for how much they support us by opening sites and attending our events. Most of all thanks must go to my fellow members of the steering committee for the blood, sweat and tears that went into HODs 2023. We are all enjoying a well-earned break before planning for 2024 starts in January. If you have a venue you would be willing to open or any ideas for places you would like to visit during HODs in the future, please let us know.

Siobhan Bankier

The Main Guard 2023

We are very pleased to report a very successful season this year with visitor figures increased by 40.8% from a similar period in 2022 (8,306 / 5,899) and our income from donations (£664.95) and sales (£546.60) of £1,211.55 is an over-all increase of 39.2%.



A corner of the exhibition

Our Visitors' Book has always included compliments on the clarity and presentation of our main static exhibition giving the complete history of Berwick-upon-Tweed and showcasing Berwick's naval and regimental history.

Our second exhibition this year featured 'Net Salmon Fishing on the Tweed' and we experimented with new ways to attract a wider audience. We were loaned an 8-minute film on a loop about the fisheries on the Tweed with another screen showing slides. Narratives were presented on facts and figures alongside stories of the Tweed including the Salmon Queen Celebrations, the Tweed Water Spaniel dog and of course 'traditional' fishing or poaching! We were fortunate to have been loaned many photographs, paintings and artefacts including



Angela Waite

fishing nets, tackle, a small boat and the Salmon Queen's Cloak from 1958. Pic. 23-11 (16a) This was something that moved one of our first visitors to tears – she, Angela Waite, was the daughter of that Salmon Queen, Christine Stewart! Angela had never been to the Main Guard, decided to go in, and immediately saw the photo of her late mother. She kindly lent us the pearl necklace and earrings presented to her mother when she was Salmon Queen, as well as photos.

The exhibitions seemed to connect with so many locals as well as visitors of all ages. Children enjoyed searching for the hidden stuffed seals and colouring sheets enabling their parents to enjoy the exhibition at a more leisurely pace.

We look forward to carrying some of these ideas forward to 2024.

Sandra Gann

Conduit Head, Castlegate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

Hundreds of people walk down Castlegate every day, many not looking above eye-level and not noticing (unlike observant Civic Society members) a worn stone headwork, plaque and lintel above an emergency side-door of the B&M superstore. Those that do see them would probably be surprised to learn that, together, they form a Grade II listed structure and all that remains of the entrance to an important, but long-gone, town reservoir constructed at the end of the 18th Century. The structure is resting on a modern, pink concrete imitation stone wall. Fuller tells us that, in 1799, soon after its construction, the reservoir stood:

“about half way between the foot of Castlegate and Scotch gate, on the north side of the pavement. It measures sixty feet in length, sixteen feet in width, and eight feet in depth. The quantity of water which it is capable of holding is 200 tons. Nothing of the building is seen but its front, which is of fine hewn stone; the other parts of it are covered with earth.”

Others have written about Berwick's water supply within their wider coverage of the history of the town, notably Mackenzie (1825), Sheldon (1849), Scott (1888) and the Civic Society's own David Brenchley, in 1997. From them, we learn about the various sources of supply over the centuries, from St. Cuthbert's Well, Tweedmouth, Halidon Hill, Pethcar Lough (sic), 'Nyne well Heads', and from fields around the town and wells within the town such as the Cat-well in Hide Hill. At different times, there were open ditches, clay pipes, wooden pipes and lead pipes sometimes flowing through clay-dammed pools called 'stanks' and sometimes intercepted by offshoots called 'spriggs',



Conduit Head building

going to individual houses. There was a cistern at Calf Hill, various troughs and basins and public collection points known as 'pants', for example in Castlegate, the top of Hide Hill and 'the foot of Hide Hill at the Fish Market'.

Until the end of the 18th Century, there were always problems such as leaks, an imbalance of supply, water running to waste because there were no stop-cocks and no charges to enable essential repairs to be carried out. It was not until 1782 that a committee was formed and proposals put forward in 1783 for the building of a reservoir. In 1788-9 the committee agreed to a plan which provided for the reconstruction of the water supply to a reservoir and the laying of supply pipes within the town.

During construction of the foundations for the reservoir in Castlegate, numerous bones were found from the former graveyard of the Church of St. Mary's, said to be 'the ancient burying-ground of the inhabitants of Berwick'. Unfortunately, the bones 'of many a tall fellow and goodly woman were thrown over the Windmill Bank'. This was not the former St Mary's Church near the War Memorial, which was built in 1857/8 and is now the Northstar Day Care Centre, but a previous St. Mary's Church that stood near the current Castlegate car park and which was demolished ahead of the building of the Elizabethan walls.

Northumbrian Water now supplies water to Berwick from boreholes fed through modern treatment works. The stone headwork in Castlegate, the conduit head, is the only reminder of the 18th Century reservoir that once stood behind it. The headwork has become neglected in recent years; weeds and moss have established themselves and although the worn lettering on the plaque can still be read, the lettering on the lintel is now indecipherable. The facing of the concrete supporting wall shows considerable spalling due to frost damage and this has deteriorated further since the photograph was taken earlier in the year. The worn but visible wording on the plaque reads:

Renovated 1909

G. G. MACLAGAN, M.B.C.N, MAYOR

Fuller and Mackenzie state that the now indecipherable original lettering on the lintel was:

Begun to be built 1789. G. Forfter, Efq., Mayor.

Finifhed 1790. David Stow, Efq., Mayor.

Representations have been made (2023) about the condition of the structure and it is hoped that this will lead to appropriate renovation.

Antony Chessell

Sources:

Fuller, John. *The History of Berwick Upon Tweed etc.* Various printers: Edinburgh, 1799, p182.

Mackenzie, E. *An Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive View of the County of Northumberland etc.* Volume I. Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1825, p291.

Sheldon, Frederick. *History of Berwick-Upon-Tweed etc.* Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black; London: Longman, Brown, Green, and London: Longmans; Berwick: John Wilson, 1849. pp.300-2.

Scott, John. *Berwick-Upon-Tweed: The History etc.* London: Elliot Stock, 1888, p213-14.

Brenchley, David. *A Place by Itself.* Berwick-upon-Tweed: Berwick Civic Society, 1997. pp99-101.

Dining with Monks

As a diversion in lockdown, I thought it would be fun to enrol on to a ‘virtual’ Medieval cookery course run jointly by the famous Blackfriars Monastery restaurant in Newcastle. Their setting within 13th Century medieval monastery buildings influenced them to specialise in medieval banquets in the beautiful buildings, and the Medieval Studies Department of Durham University (eatmedieval.com).

The course was based around some newly discovered recipes found in Durham written by the Monks in 1170 - a time when monasteries were prolific throughout the kingdom. In the 13th Century there were at least 8 different religious orders of monks in Berwick alongside religious founded hospitals and churches.

The recipes caused great excitement amongst historians and are now under the safe keeping of Cambridge University but not before the Durham Historians and the Blackfriars Monastery Restaurant



Dining with Monks

chefs painstakingly transcribed many of them into appetising dishes acceptable to modern palates. Previously the oldest medieval recipes found dated from the 15th Century so these were a precious find. Yes, there was an opportunity to learn how to roast a whole hog with stuffed head if you were so inclined but mostly the eighty or so participants from all over the world that 'zoomed' into the course chose to cook dishes using the range of sweet and savoury sauces, based on wines, vinegar, honey, herbs and spices, that could be served with any meat, fish or vegetarian options. We cooked sweet and savoury pies. We made a ginger conserve and other sweetmeats and seeped wonderful mixtures of hot and cold spiced wines. Of course, these recipes were catering for the highest ranks of society; a simple pottage would be the daily diet for many.



Herbs

For me a big bonus was extending the range of fresh herbs and spices I can continue to use in everyday cookery. Thanks to a friend who has a medieval herb garden, and a specialist supplier, now I am familiar with the use of herbs such as alecost, hyssop and dittany alongside the more familiar ones we all use today. The spices were another adventure. They included mace, and a range of long peppers and cubebs and my favourite 'Grains of Paradise' found on the west coast of Africa which are as delightful as their name implies, being a sweet spicy pepper with undertones of cardamom and ginger.

Each day we had an excellent variety of short historical films on such topics as the daily life of a monk, feast and fasting, and history of the monasteries, cathedrals and medieval life including gardens full of herbs and flowers essential for medical and culinary purposes. All enhanced with beautifully illustrated medieval manuscripts and film. The live and recorded cookery demonstrations filmed in the kitchens of the Blackfriars Cookery School in the 13th Century Dominican Priory, were available to us for reference over a three-week period so we could fit in the course to our own lives. For me the huge benefit was that no one was watching me cook and it was up to us how much or how little we did in our own kitchen.

We learnt that medieval food was one of the great cuisines of the world. Popular images of bone flinging feasts, dirty water and foul-tasting food covered up with spices could not be further from the truth. The food eaten in Europe from about 1150 to the beginning of the 1500s was of considerable sophistication using exotic ingredients brought back during the Crusades. Sugar was not introduced to our country for another century or so. The hospitality of the monks to strangers was renowned though their own rules of abstinence were very strict up to the 12th Century when these rules were not taken so seriously. Indeed, by the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 16th Century many people thought that the monks were having too good a time and had moved a long way from their pious past – but that is another story.

Sandra Gann

School Awards



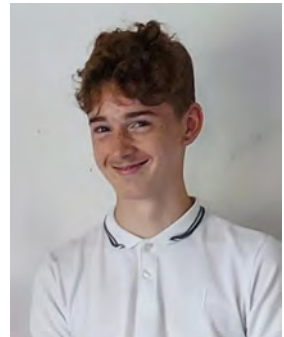
Grove School, Penny Derries & pupils

It has been a very enjoyable experience presenting The Civic Society's School Awards.

For the first time it was agreed that we should give a donation to The Grove School, so on the 27th June, Anne and Bob Humphrey and myself visited the School. We were greeted by the Head, Penny Derries, who showed us around. It was really impressive to see the pupils and the excellent staff and

facilities. In the plans for investing in and restructuring the local schools, it would be good to see The Grove fully supported.

On 27th June, Anne and I went to Engage, the alternative education provider, run by Jackie and Paul Brothwood, who do fantastic work. The winner of our award was Mark Voase, a Year 10 student who is studying the guitar, making good academic progress and has an excellent attendance record. A charming boy whom we wish every success.



Mark Voase at Engage

Later that day, Anne and I were joined by Sandra Gann at Berwick Academy where our Award was presented to Kyra Bell for her work in the community especially with The Youth Project. Kyra hopes to go into Art and Design - she showed us examples of her illustrations which are really stunning.



William Allis at Longridge Towers

Then on 29th June, Anne and I had a lovely visit and hospitality at Longridge Towers Founders Day and Prize-Giving. We are delighted that our Award went to William Allis of the Lower Sixth for achievements in the school, and also his involvement in the local community with the cadets, Riding the Bounds and playing the cornet on various occasions locally. He is well known for playing beautifully at our Remembrance Services at The Main Guard over several years.

Zoreen Hill

Remembrance Service, Main Guard, Friday 10th November

The service was conducted by the Rev. Canon Christopher Smith, Piper Andrew Smith played the Lament, and the Last Post and Reveille were sounded by cornet player William Allis. Major Lance Thornton, KOSB, recited the exhortation. We were honoured with the presence of Veterans, 40 children and six teachers from Longridge Towers, together with members of the public, of the Civic Society, and four dogs!

Anne Humphrey



Outside Main Guard



Remembrance Wreath window