

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED
CIVIC SOCIETY



Summer NEWSLETTER

2025



HMS Berwick exhibition in progress © A Humphrey

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Cover photo by Tommy McLeod

EDITORIAL

We're watching the world order change before our very eyes! We can try to stand back and observe with a detached academic interest as it plays out, but it's not that easy – because we rarely are detached where the places we care about are concerned. We might well begin to fear the loss of the familiar order, the certainties we've operated under, and to feel concern for the future of our own country and even county.

It's particularly reassuring therefore to be reminded that our county has strong archives, backed by the Trust set up to support and promote them. As Sue Shaw says, history matters (original documents are the tangible proof of past actions and events); it is our collective memory which must be kept alive and made visible to engender and reinforce a sense of continuity, pride, loyalty and belonging. They are the very characteristics and values which enable us to plan and develop for our present and future communities.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Thank you for electing me as Chair again this year and I hope that we will have a very happy and successful year. This will be my last year as an Office Bearer and Committee member. We need new blood as Office Bearers and Executive Committee members, with fresh ideas to ensure that the Society continues and grows.

We knew that we would have to have a long hard look at our finances as we cannot continue to make the large losses of previous years. We have made savings and members have been very good at accepting changes, such as no Christmas card. We have been very fortunate and grateful to members who have given donations, donated / loaned items, printing, stationery, food at events, washed and cleared up, stored items and hand-delivered items where possible; this has saved costs and people's time.



As our printing bill now is only the Newsletter and calendars, maybe we should look at a digital Newsletter: **it's something to think about and your comments would be appreciated.** If you have an email address, PLEASE would you kindly allow us to have it, to save us money and time.

All the Committees are working very hard and I would like to thank them for giving up their time on the Society's behalf. We are seeking more Committee members and Stewards so if you are interested, please contact me or a member of the Executive Committee. This year has been extremely busy for the

Planning and Development Committee, headed by Brian Gowthorpe. There have been hours, and I mean hours, of work being put in by the Committee, especially with regard to The Maltings project, the Living Barracks and the Neighbourhood Plan. We have a wealth of knowledge on this committee. I think we sometimes forget that they are volunteers and the Society owes them a huge debt of gratitude.

This year's Exhibition will be on HMS Berwick and we will be open on 8th & 9th May in line with the town commemorating the 80th Anniversary of VE Day and then from Saturday 25th May to 30th September 2025. The Main Guard will be closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays this year. It has been hard work and we hope that you will enjoy visiting the Main Guard to see it for yourself. Martha and I are now honorary members of the HMS Berwick Facebook page. We have been told some interesting stories, some not suitable for the Main Guard but extremely funny! I must thank Jim Gibson, Cameron Robertson, Martha Andrews, Lance Thornton, Keith Montgomery and Bob Humphrey for helping to set up the Exhibition, Phil Rowett and Michael Gathercole for all their knowledge and expertise. A special thank you to Derrants @ 40, which is donating all the sweets for the Main Guard. Yet again, thanks must go to the people who have loaned us items.

We will again this year take part in the HODS week and are looking forward to welcoming lots of visitors.

There are two talks planned on HMS Berwick this year, the first one in May and the second on 4th October which is the combined meeting with the History Society. This talk will be attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland, the Civic Party and HMS Berwick veteran and will be in the Guild Hall.

Events and Promotions: Zoreen Hill and her committee have been working hard to bring more interesting talks to the Society. It has been wonderful the past few meetings to have a full room of members and non-members. They are also very busy organising the Preview Party and praying that the sun shines!

Finally, without Bryan and Suzanne Stanley, you wouldn't be reading this newsletter, so from the Civic Society – a big thank you and we are so very pleased that Bryan is emerging from having to isolate whilst receiving his treatment.

Anne Humphrey

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

Those of you who were at the 2025 AGM may well recognise some of what follows! The Society's finances remain relatively healthy, and we do everything that we can to keep our costs as low as possible. However, our 2024 accounts show that we actually made a loss of just over £900. This compares to a profit of £200 in 2023, although this was something of a false position as there were some unusual items which skewed the figures somewhat. When you look at the underlying figures our finances for 2024 in reality were actually better than 2023, although we can't escape the fact that on

an ongoing basis we are losing money. We do have a reasonable amount in the bank though, so there is no need to panic just yet. We are doing everything that we can to keep our costs as low as possible, but as we are all finding, everything is getting more expensive.

I did send out copies of the 2024 accounts prior to the AGM, but if anyone didn't receive these, I'm happy to send a copy to you, and to answer any queries you might have. I would like to thank Jim Waugh for once again examining our accounts; it is very much appreciated.

One thing that we do have control over though is the level of our subscriptions. At the AGM it was agreed that these will increase in 2026, for the first time in many years, to £15 for a joint membership or £10 for a single. This is not out of line with other similar organisations in and around Berwick, and I would say is very good value.

Bob Humphrey, Hon Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership numbers are just shy of 200 at present, and it is very nice to see new members joining regularly too. I hope that all of you who are able to get to the talks are enjoying them, and also don't forget that this year's Main Guard exhibition will be open over the summer months.

Sadly, three of our members have died recently; Alan Bowlas, Robert Morris and Christopher Smith. Our condolences go out to their families and friends.

Those of you who were at our AGM will recall that we agreed that, for the first time in many years, our annual subscriptions will be increasing to £15 for a joint membership or £10 for a single from 2026. I will write again specifically on this towards the end of the year before subs become due again.

Here's hoping for an enjoyable summer.

Bob Humphrey, Membership Secretary

EVENTS & PROMOTION GROUP REPORT

A very enjoyable festive season for The Society was followed by an interesting and varied series of talks in the New Year.

In **January**, the newly installed Chairman of the Northumberland Archives Trust, Sue Shaw, gave an informative talk on; "Supporting Northumberland Archives" with a great deal of historical interest. This was followed by Linda Bankier detailing the Trust's funded work in Berwick. In **February** Mark Dodds, who has led the team analysing The Health

of the Town Centre, gave a Presentation to a packed audience that also referenced the Neighbourhood Plan, which has been much commended. Elizabeth Devon was a very welcome speaker in **March**, when she gave a talk on; “Cheviot volcanoes - what were they like and would you have survived?”.

Then after the AGM on 9th **April**, writer and former Fleet Street Editor, Christopher Ward, gave an excellent representation on “Titanic - The Aftermath”, and always a fascinating and emotive subject. Christopher’s own grandfather, Jock Hume, a violinist, was one of the members of the band which continued playing while the ship sank.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the current season’s calendar. The Main Guard Summer Exhibition depicts the various HMS Berwick’s from 1669 to 1981 and two of the talks by historian, Phil Robert will have this as the subject. **The Annual Preview Party is on Friday, 23rd May.** Emails have already been sent out with information on how to apply for tickets. It is always a good occasion and we hope to see many of you there.

Sandra Gann has taken a sabbatical from working in our Committees. All the work she has done is much appreciated, as well as her work in The Main Guard, she has written reports for our meetings, provided delicious food for the buffet and many times has provided very lively votes of thanks. She will, hopefully, remain very much part of the Civic Society. Martha Andrews has taken over from Sandra and has joined the Events and Promotions Committee.

We continue to use The Parish Centre for most of our meetings and have, much appreciated, new tables and chairs.

Many thanks to all who have helped with our events in various ways.

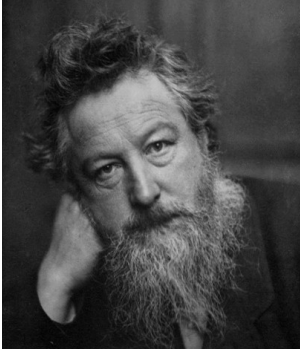
Zoreen Hill

RECENT TALKS AND EVENTS

WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE IDEA OF HERITAGE

A talk by Brian Gowthorpe, 8th November 2024

Many of us are familiar with the name William Morris and perhaps associate it with the Strawberry Thief pattern popularised in soft furnishings. But how many more facets to William Morris’s character were revealed to us in Brian’s talk. William Morris (1834 – 1896) was an English designer, craftsman, poet and early socialist, whose designs for furniture, fabrics, stained glass, wallpaper and other decorative arts were crucial in igniting the Arts and Crafts Movement and revolutionised Victorian taste.



William Morris aged 53

Brian first described the influential events and ideas in society in the century before Morris's birth, including The Enlightenment, The French Revolution, the Enclosure Acts and the Industrial Revolution. Country people moved to industrial jobs in the towns and there were major changes in land ownership. Throughout Morris's life towns and cities expanded enormously with a population explosion that was deeply unsettling for Victorian society.

Morris was born of a wealthy background and enjoyed opportunities to develop his interest in the Arts and his love of the countryside. He had many enthusiasms and was thrilled by new ideas, particularly the revival of medieval art and architecture. He was appalled at the urbanisation and growth of London and the impact of the railways, causing the destruction or radical alteration of many historic buildings of great beauty because they were not seen to be of value in a changing society. This led him to found the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. He was opposed to mass market production and filled his own homes with murals and painted furniture based on Arthurian Legends and Chaucer.

His friendship with Edward Burne-Jones, who he met at Oxford, and with whom he first set up a creative studio, was immensely important. His many other friendships were essential to his personal and professional life. He worked on joint artistic projects and founded a decorative arts company in 1861. From 1877 he started to achieve huge financial success from his store in Oxford Street. Alongside this he had developed his political interests. He was aware of the living conditions of those less fortunate than him and was a key figure in support of socialism.

Underlying all Morris's work was the importance of acknowledging and valuing our cultural heritage rather than destroying it as fashions change. He saw traditional craftsmanship as an essential part of this. His use of images from medieval designs and nature emphasized his appreciation of the deep connection between culture, nature and art. His philosophy can be summed up by his quotation: "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful".

William Morris was a true polymath and his contribution to society, whether designing for the aristocracy or campaigning for the rights of the working classes, continues to be recognised today.

Sandra Gann

THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHIVES TRUST: SUPPORTING NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHIVES

Sue Shaw (Chair) Northumberland Archives Trust, 8th January.

Sue explained that the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust was set up in 2020 to promote and support Northumberland County Council's Archive Service in Berwick and at Woodhorn. There are currently seven trustees, all volunteers, so the Trust's running costs are minimal. The Trustees have a bold ambition to extend and enhance what the Archive Service can achieve.

So far, the Trust is unique in the archive world. With an emphasis on fundraising, it differs from the Friends of Berwick & District Museum and Archives, who concentrate more on research and other practical support. The two charities complement each other nicely.

History matters. The level of public interest in exhibitions of some of Berwick's photographic material proves that local history has a special impact. It can engage a community to regenerate pride in its heritage, renew confidence and inspire new energy. The Archive Service should participate in this process: the Archives are the county's collective memory, to be cherished as evidence underpinning the county's history and culture. Northumberland Archives matter.

Why is additional funding needed? NCC covers the Archive's staffing and accommodation costs but is not duty bound to do much more. There are always more pressing claims to take priority. And in the modern digital world the public's expectations of an archive have increased. To meet these, the archivists have become expert fundraisers, raising substantial amounts from sources including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Archives.

They continue to raise funds but can always use more. Since 2021, the Trust has raised more than £150,000 from charitable sources, the amounts increasing year on year.



Sue Shaw © G. Hill

All public archives have a backlog of uncatalogued material and Northumberland Archives is no exception. The Trust's ambition is to unlock this material.

The £150k includes three grants totalling £15k to catalogue three small but important collections, £30k from the Foyle Foundation to fund the purchase of a sophisticated book scanner needed for digitising bound volumes, and £30k from the Sir James

Knott Trust (which requires match-funding) towards a wider cataloguing programme. It has also funded “To the Future” projects for schools in less advantaged communities, looking at the town’s past, imagining its future and stimulating the children’s interest in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). So far, this has been run successfully in Blyth and Ashington. Sue attended a celebration after the Ashington project and enjoyed a light-bulb moment seeing its positive impact on the children who took part.

At the end of the talk, Linda Bankier talked about the Trust-funded work in Berwick, emphasising that none of it would have been done yet without the Trust’s contribution. She highlighted the work to conserve, catalogue and digitise images from the Photo Centre collection, recording life in Berwick and the Borders in the second half of the twentieth century; and cataloguing a collection of documents relating to the Barmoor Estate in the late eighteenth century.

In questions at the end, Society members showed particular interest in the impact of digitisation on archives.

Sue Shaw

THE HEALTH OF BERWICK TOWN CENTRE & HOW A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COULD HELP

by Mark Dodds, 12th February

Mark has many years of experience as a Planning Consultant in Retail, Town Centres and Regeneration. The audience warmed to him immediately when he told us he had moved to Berwick because he loved the town, environment and the people, though not necessarily the town centre!

He emphasised the importance of the role of the town centre in maintaining the vitality and continued viability of the town both for tourists and local residents. To avoid stagnation and dilapidation it is important to have high quality schools, good health



Photo © G. Hill

and leisure opportunities, good housing and a strong town centre to draw in new people and families. Many of the problems of our town centre are also reflected nationally but the question Mark asked was what can be done?

Initially one needs to have factual information about issues in order to address them and to this end ‘Health Checks’ should be carried out regularly to assess changes and needs and to influence the appropriate authorities. Mark

and three colleagues carried out surveys of footfall at various sites in the town centre in August 2024. This data was compared to the last official Health Check by NCC in 2013. Of the many trends listed, one example noted was the move of large supermarkets to sites outside the town, leaving an opportunity for more small specialist shops, and even food retailers. Another was the increased use of internet banking leading to the closure of banks in the town centre. There was a noted increase in Personal Services offered and places to eat, although the numerous pubs in Berwick in the past has declined. As one would expect a survey regarding heritage was 98% positive.

Mark explained the structure and influence of the Local Plan made by NCC, and the Neighbourhood Plan to be prepared by our Town Council following public consultations. The Neighbourhood Plan can and should influence the County-wide Local Plan. Once a development opportunity is acknowledged on a Plan there is a greater chance of funding and it being realised. The plan is an important step towards identifying our opportunities and driving regeneration.

A welcoming, clean town centre is important for the future of the town. Appropriate car parking is essential, and must cater for locals who use the town most often, tourists who are an important source of revenue, and businesses that provide jobs for local people. Creating the right balance requires a sensitive assessment of the data that has been collected. Information about leisure and other opportunities in the town must be evident and easily available. In conclusion Mark stressed there can be ways of meeting these needs, promoting the right kind of change to improve Berwick Town Centre without spoiling the beauty and heritage of the town which we all love so much.

Sandra Gann

CHEVIOT VOLCANOES: WHAT WERE THEY LIKE? WOULD YOU HAVE SURVIVED?

A presentation by Elizabeth Devon, Geologist, on 12th March.



The talk started with Elizabeth looking for evidence that the Cheviot Hills were originally volcanoes. She showed a geology map which indicated a vast area of lava with granite in its middle. She showed the various types of lava present, all types which erupted violently. She then explored the plate tectonic causes of the volcanic activity, some 400 million years ago, when these plates were south of the equator.

Next, by looking at the VEI (Volcanic Explosivity Index) of recent and well-documented past eruptions, she concluded that the eruptions on Cheviot were amongst the largest occurring on the Earth. It was thus clear that the chance of surviving such eruptions in the Berwick area were not good.

Fortunately, there were only primitive plants on the land at the time but the fish in the sea would have heard the explosions.

Elizabeth was able to present the geological data in a way that made it accessible to even the most unscientific members of the audience. She clearly showed that the clues to the Earth's story are all there beneath our feet for us to read. The audience went away with a greater understanding of the significance of this knowledge and why we are able to live and work on our piece of the planet at this time.

Anne Humphrey

TITANIC – THE AFTERMATH

by Christoher Ward on 9th April 2025.



John 'Jock' Hume

On the 14th April 1912 the White Star Liner 'The Titanic' struck an iceberg on her maiden voyage and sank in the North Atlantic, 400 miles off the coast of Nova Scotia. Of the 1,497 men, women and children who were swept into the sea, over 1,000 were never seen again. One of whom was 21-year-old Jock Hume, the grandfather of Christopher Ward. Jock was not just a passenger on the liner but a gifted violinist, a member of the eight-piece band that so famously continued playing as the ship slowly sank beneath the waves.

This opener set the scene for Christopher's excellent presentation of the tragedy, the fake-news, the salvage attempts and the aftermath, using illustrations of film and newspaper clippings throughout that reflected his own skills as a former journalist and news editor. An added dimension was to hear from a direct descendant the effect of this tragedy on the families left behind. This was in an age when class determined so many aspects of people's lives including death. One example being that Jock's pay as a bandsman stopped the exact minute that the ship sank beneath the waves.

There were many examples of the organisational responses to the disaster. White Star Line initially was reluctant to acknowledge the extent of the tragedy, leading to newspaper headlines giving misinformation. It was not until four days later, following



picture © G. Hill

more accurate reports from others, that White Star Line was made to take some accountability. It finally sent the Mackay-Bennett (the 'ship of death') to recover bodies reported to be floating in the sea and return them to Halifax, Nova Scotia. However, many management failures were noted: there was an inadequate supply of lifeboats on the Titanic when she set sail; the Mackay-Bennett had a scarcity of coffins to store the bodies found; there was not enough embalming fluid and many bodies were stored in ice on deck or were 'buried'

at sea. Sadly, it was class inevitably which determined this outcome. Those deemed to be working class were more likely to be buried at sea than those whose name or clothing reflected someone of prestige. Christopher drew parallels with disasters in contemporary corporate life that we all recognised. However, we noted that the Public Enquiry set up soon after the event published its findings just two weeks later!

The system created for collating unidentified bodies was commendable and has been used since. An identity number was given to each body and to any belongings found with it. Later, photographs of each corpse aided further identification but sadly there are still 40 unclaimed bodies in the Fairview Lawn Cemetery in Halifax, Nova Scotia where Jock is buried. There is also a commemorative plaque in his home town of Dumfries to him and another local lad who was also serving on the Titanic.

With so many lives lost in the disaster, why were members of the band singled out for recognition of their bravery? I think the answer is in the determination of members of the band to continue to play music on the sinking ship to lift the spirits of everyone until they too were engulfed by waves.

Sandra Gann

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BLIGH 1754 – 1817

LIEUTENANT, HMS BERWICK 1781-1783

Captain William Bligh was born on 9th September 1754 in Cornwall, an only child. His father was a Customs Officer in Plymouth. He grew up to be a British Royal Naval Officer best known for leading the crew of the HMS Bounty in the 1789 Mutiny on the Bounty led by Christian Fletcher. How many people know that he served on one of our HMS Berwick ships?

He was made a lieutenant on HMS Berwick, a 74-gun ship commanded by Captain John Ferguson, after the Battle of Dogger Bank in September 1781. He continued to serve on HMS Berwick regularly until the American War of Independence ended in September 1783.



He left the navy in 1783 to work on Duncan Campbell's ships until 1787. Campbell was a wealthy ship owner who traded with the West Indies where he owned several plantations. It was while commanding Lynx, Britannia and Cambrian on voyages to the West Indies that Bligh encountered Christian Fletcher. Fletcher served under him as midshipman and then as gunner. The two men enjoyed a friendly relationship, with Bligh being a mentor to the younger man.

Joseph Banks, naturalist and explorer, also knew Bligh well, and it was he who probably recommended him for the Bounty voyage for which he was given command in December 1787. Only a few weeks after sailing, the mutiny led by Fletcher Christian took place and Bligh, loyal to his friend and colleague, was set adrift with 18 others. It was Bligh's seamanship skills that got them to a safe harbour in Timor, Indonesia after 47 days at sea.

A court-martial inevitably followed but Bligh was cleared and resumed his naval career in 1790. He was the Master of the ship Resolution during Captain Cook's Third Voyage. He was promoted to Commander of HMS Irresistible until May 1802 and commanded HMS Warrior from May 1804 to 1805.

Bligh was known to have a volatile temper on occasions and though he made firm friendships he was often at loggerheads with his crew. However, he was well respected for his nautical skills. Following his career at sea he was appointed a Colonial Administrator and then in 1806 Governor of New South Wales. Finally, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Bligh died on 7 December, 1817, aged 64, in Bond Street, London and is buried in Lambeth churchyard. Throughout his career in far-flung places, he had a successful marriage to his wife Elizabeth until her death in 1812. Twin boys died as babies but five daughters survived. His legacy continues in several place names around the world and in an evergreen tree, *Blighia sapida* or ackee tree, cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions around the world for its edible arils.

1. King, James. *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean: performed under the direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore in the years 1776, 1777, 1778 1779, & 1780.* W. & A. Strahan. 1784.

2. All 76 of Bligh's notes were reproduced in the article "Bligh's Notes on Cook's Last Voyage" by Rupert Gould, *Mariner's Mirror*. 1928. Vol. 14, no. 4. Pages 371-385.

3. www.captainblighhouse.co.uk .

4. PROB 11/1603. Held at The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

Sandra Gann

ART ON TAP



Drinking fountains – often called pants in the north-east and Borders - are so familiar in town and village street scenes that they're almost invisible, just old municipal street furniture, often in Victorian Gothic or neo-classical styles, that no longer captures our attention. And we no longer need the free clean drinking water they supplied in an age of contaminated sources. But they're fascinating: part tap, part monument, some tiny, some monumental, a water supply

dressed up in ornate stonework or metal with decorative fittings, sculptures and memorial details.

They were either commissioned by responsible local authorities, conspicuously gifted by local dignitaries, or bought by public subscription. An example of the latter is the neat little pant in Newton on the Moor, "erected by the tenants" in 1914 to celebrate the golden wedding of Shalcross Fitzherbert & Cecilia Widdrington of Newton Hall (see above © B & S Stanley).

Alnwick has three fountains extant. St Michael's Pant on Clayport Street was commissioned by Alnwick Borough Council and erected in 1765 to replace an earlier one. In 18th-century Gothic style with a projecting trough to catch the water (it still does), it features St Michael on a pedestal lancing a winged dragon. The builder, Matthew Mills, was properly recognised for his plumbing and paid £60. The architect was paid £4 16s for the construction, and the sculptor James Johnson £5 7s 6d for the substantial Saint and dragon. Much later, the William Dickson Fountain (1873) was erected on Pottergate, in polished pink granite with a glass lantern, with bronze plaques also featuring St Michael and his dragon. The designer isn't known, suggesting maybe that the construction of pants was often merely a bread-&-butter job for architects. Berwick-born Dickson was a solicitor (following his father Patrick), founder of the Alnwick & County Bank, and a highly regarded local historian. Then in 1891, Adam Robertson presented a drinking fountain to the town. He had founded a thriving company of decorators, was significant in Alnwick politics, became a Freeman, and clearly wanted a decent memorial. Situated on the Market Street cobbles, it is a sturdy structure in sandstone, with eight polished pink granite columns capped by a dome and topped with a bronze and glass lantern.

In the 1890s, Cdr F. M. Norman (very active in Berwick civic life) offered Berwick a Jubilee fountain to commemorate 60 years of Queen Victoria's reign. The town council initially resisted, as the MacLagan Memorial erected earlier "had not really and truly been a boon to the public". However, there it stands within a few feet of queuing traffic, a 5-metre-high, much-stepped, pink granite column with lion-headed spouts, topped by sandstone cushions and a bronze crown (see below). Morpeth's memorial

fountain (1886, moved and restored 2003) in the market place was funded by public subscription to commemorate a Mr Hollon of York who in memory of his wife founded an annuity to distribute among 13 elderly men and 12 women of 'good character'. It is a sturdy structure in granite, with open arches, four basins, and a lantern.



Twentieth century versions include Longframlington's fountain erected in 1911 to commemorate the coronation of George V. It is a simple sandstone column with a lion's head spout, and topped with a rather severe lion, a symbol of British strength and pride. George Reavell's Robertson



Fountain at Branxton is an elegant and austere piece in pink sandstone, with flat pilasters, curved flanking walls with seats, a wide stepped cornice, and an iron tap and bowl (see left © B & S Stanley). It was erected in 1910 'To the memory of Watson Askew Robertson of Pallinsburn' (worth looking up if you're interested in complex family histories). Unusually for the period, the plumber was a Mrs A. Ford (or did she just sign the invoices?).

The origin of the word 'pant' in this context is unknown, but there is speculation that pond was originally pronounced *pand*, possibly from the Saxon *pyndon* – to enclose or shut up.

Suzanne Stanley

The Coldstream Guards and Berwick

The Coldstream Guards return to Berwick Tuesday 10th June to celebrate their 375th Anniversary this year. In 1650, Governor of Berwick George Fenwick and his father-in-law Sir Arthur Hazelrigg gave men to form Monck's Regiment of Foot on the outskirts of Berwick.

Berwick remained their base until 1659 before moving to Coldstream. The Regiment impressed Berwickers by its industry, clearing midden heaps and carting stone from old Berwick Castle to build the Cromwellian Church.

In 1660 they marched through deep snow from Coldstream to St James's in London, securing the City, dissolving Parliament for new elections and restoring King Charles II. Thomas Gumble described them as 'that Small Company of Men who God made the instrument of Great Things'. The King asked Monck "where have you marched from?" And so he renamed them Coldstream Guards; had he asked "where were you raised?" it might have been Berwick Guards.

The Coldstream have deployed on almost every major campaign or war since: with Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession; Wellington through the Peninsular Wars and whose holding of Hougemont Farm secured victory at Waterloo; Raglan in the Crimea; Roberts in the Boer War; Haig in the First World War; Alexander and Montgomery in the Second. Since then, they have conducted operations in Malaya, Borneo, Palestine, the Canal Zone, Aden, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Bosnia, and the Gulf War. They've also served in Afghanistan and in Iraq; in the British Army of the Rhine during the Cold War, provided short term training teams all over Africa and countering poaching, and training hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers. This October they deploy to Cyprus as part of the UN force.

It all began in Berwick, no better place to give thanks for this remarkable record of service than on Tuesday 10th June 2025 in Berwick Parish Church, which its men helped build.

1030 – Arrive Railway Station.

1045 - March down Castlegate and Marygate to Guildhall.

1100 - Welcomed by Mayor.

c.1115 - March to Holy Trinity with St Mary.

1200 - Service of Thanksgiving.

c.1430 – March to Station. Route Marygate and Castlegate.

1514 – Depart Railway station.

All welcome to line the streets from 10.30am.

The Colours of The Coldstream hang in Berwick Parish Church in perpetuity, granted to Berwick Parish Church by the late Queen to mark the Regiment's 350th anniversary 25 years ago, when the town granted them The Freedom of Berwick.

King Charles III is The Colonel in Chief of The Coldstream and is taking a keen in interest in their visit. The Regiment will be led by General Sir James Bucknall, who will report back to The King on an event which marks the start of an historic week for Berwick and The Nation, for they parade before The King at Windsor Castle on the Friday then again on Horse Guards Parade Saturday for Trooping of The Colour.



*Colours of Coldstream Guards
© Alan Hughes*

Alan Hughes

Note:

The late Viscount Ridley, Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland loved Berwick and its Parish Church, and his grandfather Sir Edwin Lutyens created the magnificent screen behind the altar. He was also a former Coldstreamer and fellow Vice President of The Coldstream Guards Association with Canon Alan Hughes. On one visit in 1996 Alan asked if Lord Ridley could secure a visit to Berwick by Queen Elizabeth and the Freedom of Berwick for the regiment. Alan was asked to set out his request in writing which he did in 1996; this correspondence is now in Berwick Archives. Lord Ridley was then Lord Steward of The Royal Household, the senior Officer of Court and perfect advocate for such a request. In cooperation with the then Borough Council over four years, the vision became a reality.

Christopher Smith - In Memoriam



Christopher Smith's death on 11th January at the age of 80 has been widely mourned not just in Berwick and Northumberland but also in Liverpool, Sheffield and Doncaster and even wider afield - parishes where he served as a priest. Testament of this was evident at his memorable funeral attended by well over 300 people. For us in Berwick where he and Christine retired, we shall be ever grateful for the way he helped establish and chaired the annual Literary Festival and supported the cultural life of the town including work with young people, church music and liturgy and of course the Civic Society, for which he led previous Civic Society Remembrance services at the Main Guard.

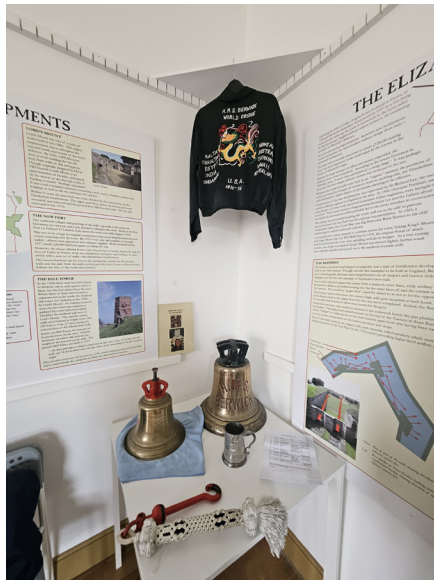
Tall in stature, he was large and generous too in personality and wisdom, and exuded warmth, laughter and an easy manner. To be in his convivial company was always a pleasure, especially over a glass of wine that was, to use a favourite term of his, "quaffable". He was, of course, a devoted priest and theologian. Having read theology at Cambridge and Oxford, he served in many challenging parishes where he is still remembered for his gift in regenerating congregations, and being friend to the disadvantaged no matter what their faith or none. He was a canon of Sheffield Cathedral and also a chaplain royal to the late Queen which required him to preach at the Chapels of St. James Palace. Indeed, his sermons and talks, whatever their subject matter, and not just religious topics for he was something of a polymath, were always riveting and full of memorable anecdotes. He was a dab hand at bridge too, I believe!

We miss him terribly both at Holy Trinity where he shared so much of his energy, as well as Berwick at large. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Christine who looked after him with such devotion during his last year and to the family. May he rest in peace.

Zoreen Hill



HMS Berwick bell © Anne Humphrey



HMS Berwick bells in exhibition © Anne Humphrey

In the times of darkness, love sees.

In time of silence, love hears.

In times of doubt, love hopes.

In times of sorrow, love heals.

And in all times, love remembers.

*In Memory of
Alan Bowlas
Robert Morris
and
Christopher Smith*



The Berwick Civic Society

is a Registered Charity (No. 508953)

Website: www.berwickcivicsociety.org.uk

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