

November 2012

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Notice board

Any Questions? is on November 15th at 7:30 in Bailiffgate Museum. So forgo the Beaujolais Nouveau, and join the panel in discussing issues of the day.



F. R. Wilson of Alnwick

For our October meeting Marjorie Brown, and her husband, Carnegie, treated us to a fascinating introduction to Frederick Richard Wilson, generously illustrated with pictures and examples of his work from their collection.

F. R. Wilson (1827-1894) came to Alnwick in 1854 to work with Salvin on restoration of the castle. Five years later he started his own practice in the town.

We have too little space to catalogue the full extent of his remarkable legacy. Even his obituary omitted important works, but members were treated to an appreciation of notable local examples, including Allerburn House; a Manse in Hope House Lane; St Andrew's Hall in Pottergate New Row; the school in Prudhoe Street which became the Masonic Lodge; Alnwick cemetery and many other examples across town.

Somehow Wilson also found time to serve on the Board of Health and Board of Guardians, to support institutions from Berwick to Newcastle, to write a "Practical Guide for Inspectors of Nuisances", and to take on a role with the glorious title of "Diocesan Inspector of Ecclesiastical Dilapidations".



Allerburn House, "an adornment to the town", designed by F. R. Wilson

In his restoration work, Wilson earned a reputation for respecting the original fabric, and held the view that "those in charge of buildings should feel that they cannot take care of themselves" — a view that will still resonate with members. But these are not his only links to our work today. He also restored the market cross that became a symbol for the society.

The only disappointment of the evening was that many members were unable to attend, and missed an exceptional talk.

In that light, any who may need help to attend the November meeting are invited to contact a member of the committee. We will try to arrange assistance. We would also like to remind members that our meetings are open to all, at no charge. So why not bring a neighbour along to Bailiffgate Museum for "Any Questions?" on November 15th.

Inside: Civic Society Awards (see page 2)

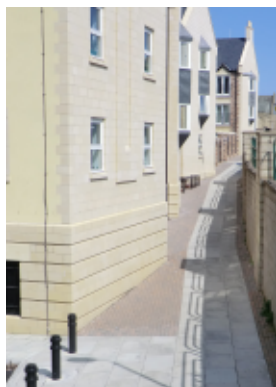
Civic Society Awards 2012

Each year the Society recognises projects that have made a noteworthy contribution to the built environment. We aim to encourage high standards, raise awareness, stimulate interest, and recognise and reward best practice. The 2012 awards were nominated by members, and selected by the executive committee. At the September meeting they were presented by Chris Mullin, former MP, and government minister, author, and current North-East chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Civic Society Award: Apartments at New Row (Ropery Court)

By Gentoo

"The design addresses the steeply sloping site very well. The development incorporates a range of materials and provides a pleasant living environment. The recreation and enhancement of Stonewell Lane is a particularly strong feature"



Civic society Award: Replacement doorway at 12a Bailiffgate

By DP Builders, Hutton Stone, and Vincente Stienlet for Convent of Mercy

"A skilful refurbishment of stone doorway and surround incorporating beautifully carved new stone heads"



Gordon Smith Award: Shop restoration at Bari Tea, 28 Narrowgate

By Caroline Stewart

"Restrained and appropriate renewal works. The simple but stylish shop front and signage are particularly successful"



Commendation: New apartments and shops at Clayport Street/Lagny Street

By Gentoo

"New gateway development into the town centre of appropriate scale and



presence. The Commendation is for the high quality of the new stonework and roofing"

Commendation: Restoration of traditional pub name at Black Swan Public House, 26 Narrowgate

By Michael Ashurst and Amar Roopra

"Restoring the original name for this public house is of sufficient merit to justify a Commendation"



Commendation: New shopfront at Costa Coffee, 69 Bondgate Within

By SGM Management and Design for Costa Coffee/ Whitbread

"Retention and refurbishment of the existing stone arches in this modern shop front scheme is welcomed.

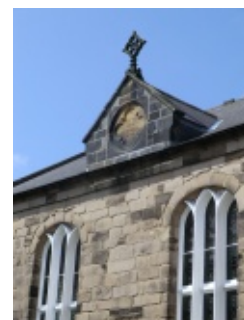


The commendation is also for the use of an individually lettered shop sign"

John Howells Award: Repair works at Alnwick Methodist Church, Chapel Lane

By Len Smith and Son for Alnwick Methodist Church

"Awarded for the skilful repair of an existing stone roof feature and the refurbishment of stone windows, following storm damage"



Continued opposite...

Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood plan: next steps

Individual components of the Neighbourhood Plan have now been developed in draft form, and the team are engaged in combining these into a coherent narrative.

This work has widespread implications for the local economy, employment, housing, recreation, tourism, transport, and the environment, as well as for heritage and culture (where the Civic Society plays a leading role). When completed, the plan will be independently examined by the planning authority, then the whole community will have a

say through a referendum. Once agreed, it will become part of the statutory framework on which planning applications are determined.

We are all keen to see the result of this work, but this is clearly not an exercise to be taken lightly. We hear that the process is already clarifying a number of issues that need to be resolved, as well as identifying some innovative options. We suspect this means that we will have to be patient, but on balance we would prefer that this important exercise takes its proper course.

Civic Society Website

The Civic Society has a new web site.

A Civic Society website can play more than one role. For members a source of information and a platform for discussion. But also a way to take the message to more people. Effective communication among members is vital, but we also want to share pride in our town with others.

The site is www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

What you see today is just the beginning. No active web site is ever finished, and we have hardly started. We have plenty more ideas, but

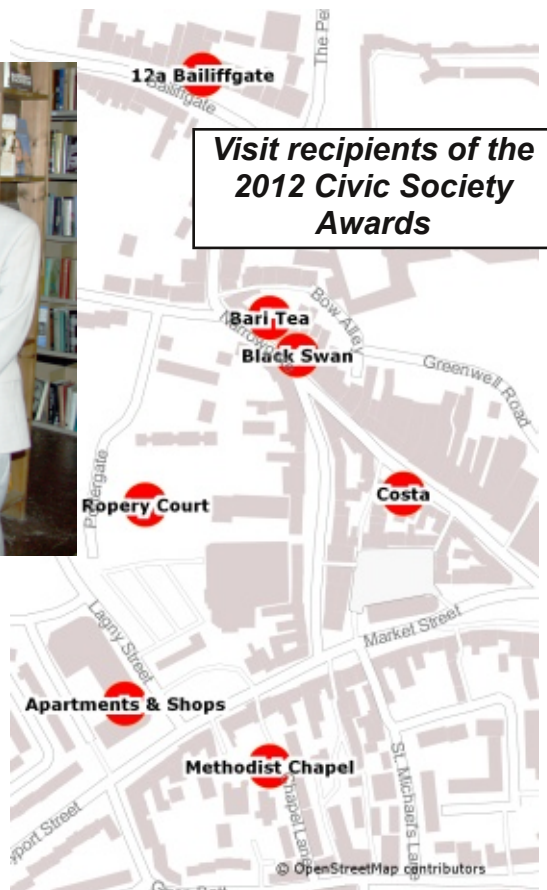
first we are asking members what they would like us to improve, and what else they would like to see. Let us know how our web site can best provide what different people need, highlight things that are important, and work as well as possible.

Bearing in mind that this is not just for existing members, please share it with others as well. Everyone is encouraged to take a look and make their own suggestions. There is a forum for discussion on the web site itself, or contact one of the committee.

...2012 awards, continued



Seen with Chris Mullin (centre) are Sian, daughter of the late John Howells, and award winners Reverend Pauline Fellows (Alnwick Methodist Church), Alan Staples (SGM Management & Design), Caroline Stewart (Bari Tea). Paul Andrews (SGM Management & Design), Michael Ashurst and son Ethan (Black Swan), David Smith (Len Smith & Son), Stuart Hutchinson and Verity Moss (Gentoo), Ian Black (Hutton Stone), Sister Helen (Convent of Mercy) and Vincente Steinlet (Pascal J Steinlet & Son).



150 years ago: A new Corn Exchange

Members will be aware that an application has been submitted to develop the old Corn Exchange building. This is particularly timely, since 2012 marks 150 years after the Alnwick Corn Exchange was first opened. The Alnwick Mercury (forerunner of today's Gazette) followed the story at the time.

Alnwick Corn Market (Alnwick Mercury, Saturday December 1, 1860)

While other towns have been taking active measures for the accommodation of those having to deal in one of the most important productions of our county, in the erection of buildings to meet their requirements, it is somewhat surprising that Alnwick as being in the centre of a large agricultural district has hitherto done so little in the same direction. We are, however, now glad to learn that this important want will not be much longer felt, as a company has been formed and a most eligible site purchased in Bondgate Within, immediately behind the house at present occupied by F. R. Wilson, Esq. The situation is well chosen, being in a central position, easy of access, with approaches both from Bondgate Street and the Green Bat in a direct line with the Railway Station. It is also an important matter that provision will thus be made, in the erection of a large and commodious building immediately contiguous to the leading thoroughfare, for the holding of public meetings, large sales and other purposes, such a place having been long wanted in the town. We understand the building will be proceeded with almost immediately, and have only to express our hope, that when completed it will be found an ornamental as well as useful addition to the town.

New Corn Market for Alnwick (Alnwick Mercury, Saturday June 1, 1861)

The erection of this building upon the site in Bondgate Street, which we indicated a few months ago, has now commenced, Messrs. Macinlay and Davison of this town having undertaken the work from the designs of Mr. Thomas Robertson. The foundations are in and the walls considerably advanced, so that we may look forward to having the whole completed at no distant date. Although externally, the building will not present any striking architectural feature, the interior will form a spacious room 105 feet long by 52 broad, having a



gallery at one end for the use of ladies on occasions of public meetings, dinners, &c., so that the long felt want of some such convenient place in the town both for the purpose of a corn market as well as for any public assemblage, is now in a fair way of being supplied.

Opening of the Alnwick Corn Exchange (Alnwick Mercury, Monday June 2, 1862)

This requirement for the convenient transaction of business by the inhabitants of Alnwick and the neighbourhood, which has been so frequently sought after, was first opened as a market on Saturday the 17th ult. It is hoped that, as a commercial speculation, it may prove remunerative to its spirited projectors. Independent of its value as a Corn Exchange, it will be of further public utility as a place for drill for both the Volunteer Artillery and Rifle Corps, arrangements being made to fit it for that purpose. The business commenced unheralded by any inaugural ceremony, and the buying and selling proceeded as is the wont, "where merchants most do congregate"...

...Wheat sold at £2 17s. 1d $\frac{1}{4}$, barley at £1 14s. 3d, and oats at £1 4s. 10d $\frac{1}{2}$ per quarter. The market will begin at 11:30 am after a south train has arrived, and will close at 1:30, subject to such alterations as the experience of merchants and farmers may hereafter suggest. The stalls are arranged on the north end, and along the sides of the hall; they are of different sizes to suit corn merchants and extensive dealers, at rents ranging from two guineas to five guineas per annum. It is intended to charge a fee of one penny for every person entering during market hours who is not either the owner of a stall or an annual subscriber.

Picture quiz: Alnwick's lanes

Ancient lanes are among the most distinctive features of Alnwick, but perhaps they are not always fully appreciated. So everyone who can identify those pictured here should award

themselves a warm glow of satisfaction — and a pat on the back if they can identify the odd-one-out. The answers are on the back page.



Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



Picture D



Picture E



Picture F



Picture G



Picture H

Programme

Any questions

7:30 p.m. on November 15th at Bailiffgate Museum

Another of these popular evenings, where a panel of guests are invited to discuss topical questions submitted by members. The panel for this event will include Clare Mills, Liberal Democrat activist and Parliamentary Assistant to Alan Beith MP; Jane Nolan, local businesswoman, and trustee of Bailiffgate Museum; and David Ronn, Managing director of the Alnwick Garden and Castle, formerly National Trust Regional Director for the North East.

Questions for the panel can be submitted before the evening to any member of the the committee; or on the night through the chair, Peter Ennor.

We know from experience that panel discussions like this can be particularly interesting for anyone who has recently arrived in Alnwick. Since our events are open to all, we encourage members to invite any new neighbours to join us for the evening.

Parking in the marketplace

After considerable debate, the society submitted the following response to the consultation on parking in the Market Place.

Alnwick Civic Society agrees that the indiscriminate parking problem in Alnwick Market Place needs to be addressed and that this important open space in the Alnwick Conservation Area should be treated sensitively.

The Society recognises the need to allow access by service vehicles but believes that this should be time restricted as in many other shopping areas in the country. It is suggested that loading be restricted to the hours of 4.00 pm to 10.00 am.

The Society does not support any parking in the Market Place. It maintains its long held view that the space should be vehicle free as far as possible and a safe, friendly environment for local people and visitors. It does not believe that the proposed 11 limited waiting spaces will help local businesses significantly and is likely to result in a traffic hazard for pedestrians. The proposal will result in a constant flow of drivers entering the Market Place throughout the day looking for spaces and waiting for spaces to come free. Reversing cars will be a particular danger for pedestrians.

Our opposition to parking includes parking for the disabled. The ground surface is not very suitable for people with mobility problems; the area immediately to the east of the Market Place on the north side of Market Street would be a more appropriate location.

To omit parking from the proposals will remove the need to mark spaces for loading and the number of signs proposed. The proposed proliferation of signs will be visually intrusive and detrimental to the street scene.

The Society believes that the Market Place would benefit from more activity and interest at certain times but not by allowing vehicles to drive through. There are other more imaginative ways of adding interest to this important historic space.

The Council's attention is drawn to the emerging Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and what might be contained within it plan. Responses to the recent consultation exercise on the plan contain several responses to the Market Place, car parking and intrusive signage. The general indication is that cars should not be allowed and more positive use of the space should be made.

The Society supports the creation of more parking spaces in the town centre and considers that that this can be achieved in the streets surrounding the Market Place. We are happy to discuss our ideas with the County Council.

News in brief

Heritage at risk

English Heritage updated their Heritage Risk Register in October. Three sites in Alnwick are highlighted again - Bondgate Tower (Grade-I) for damage by high-sided vehicles; General Lambert's house (Grade-II*) for lack of maintenance, and the scheduled Camp on Alnwick Moor for shrub and tree growth. Heiferlaw Defended Settlement in Denwick is also at risk from forestry. Across the North-East more than 6% of grade I and II* listed buildings are at risk. Still the highest proportion in England, this compares to 1.7% in the South-East; and 3% nationally.



Congratulations to the Bailiffgate Museum...

...on securing a grant of £308,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. As well as a refurbishment of the main collection area, this will help take the museum into different communities to record the local heritage, and the museum is looking for members of a community steering group. We are sure that members of the Civic Society will wish to actively support this exciting initiative. Those who are keen to become involved should contact the museum directly.

Alnwick Civic Society

Planning matters

In their ongoing efforts to develop a more effective relationship with the County council the planning sub-committee held a very positive meeting with Peter Rutherford, who is responsible for the North Area Development Management Team. At a time when we know that planning and conservation officers throughout the country are under a lot of pressure, and are having to spread themselves thinly, it is encouraging that those responsible here are still willing to work with local community groups such as the Civic Society, and that they are able to get out and about in their area.

The number of planning applications in Alnwick has been running at an average of almost 8 a month through 2012,



but in recent weeks the application of most interest to members has been the proposal by Weatherspoons

to develop the former Corn Exchange or Cinema at Bondgate Within.

This is an important proposal for the town, and any response will need to weigh the implications for a range of issues which concern members of the Civic Society. We hope that as many members as possible will share their views as our response is developed. They can do so (as always) by contacting members of the committee directly. Or they can now comment and discuss the proposal through the society web site. Go to www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk and follow the Contact menu for email details, or the Forum menu to find the discussion area.

In developing a balanced response a number of different factors need to be considered, and we are interested to hear arguments both for and against. However, we must remind members that competition with other businesses is not an issue that can be considered when determining a planning application.

Viewpoint

We are approaching the season when many of us take stock of the year that has passed, and look forward to the year ahead. In our family this means that we will be remembering the good times passed, and anticipating others to come. We will be regretting our mistakes, and complaining about things that we cannot change. We will celebrate with those who achieved what they most wanted, while we sympathise with those who have been less fortunate, and grumble about those who aren't behaving as we think they should.

If your editor was more organised we might have tried to achieve a similar balance between the past, the future, the positive and the negative in this, the last Civic Society Newsletter of 2012. We would have aimed to produce an even-handed review that weighed achievements against disappointments; supported those who share our point of view, and challenged those who argue differently. But we didn't. We just looked for a mix of topical items that we hoped would interest members.

As things turned out, the content ranges across the richness of our past, celebrates recent

achievements, and looks forward to the future — without ignoring issues that still need to be resolved and concerns that need to be addressed.



This variety wasn't by design, so was it just chance that things turned out that way? We don't think so. We prefer to think that a healthy mix of content was almost inevitable given the varied work of the society, and the range of topics that interest members.

Given such a choice, most of us are inclined to accentuate the positive when we talk with outsiders, but tend towards the negative with each other. There are certainly some things about our town that are not as we would wish. But the 2012 Civic Society Awards are just one reminder that there is also much for us to be grateful for. So we hope that members won't have too much to complain about before our next issue in January, and that they will find some time to reflect on all that makes it good to be in this town.

Diary dates

Civic Society...

15th November – “Any Questions?”. Bailiffgate Museum at 7:30 pm. Note that this venue has changed from the first announcement.

...and more

22nd November, Northumberland and Newcastle Society, Mr Colin Haylock, President of the Royal Town Planning Institute at 5.30pm, Dickinson Dees Offices, Quayside, Newcastle
23rd November, Alnwick Christmas Lights switch on
27th November, Alnwick & District History Society, History of Farming in Northumberland, Bailiffgate Museum, 7:30

Quiz answers

- A) Corn Exchange Lane
- B) Bow Alley
- C) Dodds Lane
- D) Chapel Lane
- E) St Michael's Lane
- F) Pickwick Lane
- G) Correction House Lane
- H) Stonewell Lane

As for choosing the odd-one-out: each lane is unique, and it is probably possible to make a case for any one of them to be chosen as the odd-one-out. Our vote, though, is for Bow Alley. Apart from being named an alley, rather than a lane, Bow Alley follows the route of the Bow Burn, and probably marks part of the original town boundary: while the others mark the boundaries between medieval burgage plots.

About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in 1974, following the defeat of proposals to re-develop the town centre with a modern shopping area. Since then it has sought to influence development proposals, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure they protect and enhance our heritage.

The society has been involved in a number of successful high profile campaigns. It continues to pursue its objectives by providing a voice for members; through dialogue with planning and conservation professionals, and like-minded organisations; by offering advice, scrutinising and commenting on development proposals; and by recognising excellence, organising public meetings, developing guided trails, and a variety of other activities.

In response to recent changes to the planning system the society is heavily involved in development of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and works with local partners to influence policy at a county level. It seeks to influence national policy in co-operation with other bodies within the civic movement, and was a founding member of Civic Voice.

All who share our aims can support the work of the society: by joining as an individual, family or corporate member; by participating in activities, sharing ideas, raising areas of concern and pointing out examples of good practice. Or simply by demonstrating pride in our town, and spreading the word about the value of our work.



Who's who?

President: Philip Deakin

Chair: Peter Ennor (peter.ennor@gmail.com)

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Chair of planning sub-committee: Michael Apted

Other Executive Committee members:

Elizabeth Jones

Brian Lamb

David Lovie (davidlovie307@btinternet.com)

Peter Reed (peter.reed@aligre.co.uk)

William Stafford

Caroline Stewart

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Twitter: [@AlnwickCivicSoc](https://twitter.com/AlnwickCivicSoc)

Facebook: [AlnwickCivicSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AlnwickCivicSociety)