

February 2015

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## Notice board

19th March: Annual General Meeting at St James Church Hall in Pottergate, 7:30 p.m. This is your opportunity to celebrate a successful year, and help shape the agenda for the year ahead. The theme will be the *Conservation Area at Risk*, with a surprise speaker. We hope to see as many members as possible.

In 2014 the society was able to reclaim almost £40 in gift aid. A form is enclosed with this newsletter so that we can reclaim on your 2015 subscription. See page 7.



## War Memorial Restored



We celebrate completion of work on the War Memorial, with an image of how it looked shortly after construction.

## Nostalgic views of the North

In 1997 John Moreels discovered more than 400 boxes in the attic of his Newcastle printing business. They contained more than 150,000 engravings, lantern slides, glass plates, negatives and photographic prints, some dating back more than 300 years. John has embarked on a project to save and share the collection, and our evening with John in November was a memorable mix of how the images were found and are being saved; anecdotes from the

families of those pictured; buildings that have long-gone, or changed beyond recognition; and glorious images of local landmarks, captured by unknown photographers, using unsophisticated equipment, and forgotten for decades.

Further information can be found online at [www.photomemoriesarchive.org.uk](http://www.photomemoriesarchive.org.uk), and we can look forward to more delights in future: 85% of the images in those boxes have yet to be examined.

## Advisory Panel

In January we invited members to share views on how our town is changing, and discuss how the Society should respond.

We looked at several recent planning applications, and developments on the Northumberland Local Plan Consultation. Sadly only a few members were able to be

there, but they joined in enthusiastically, and brought a fresh perspective on current issues.

The format was judged successful and we intend to hold another discussion along the same lines at the Grange, Prudhoe St., on 30th March, at 2:00. Please let us know if you are able to participate.

# Some thoughts on Alnwick Placenames: Cawledge

Names of local places can be a rich source of information on our surroundings. They may reflect aspects of the physical and natural world from the weather and land surface to flora and fauna, or on the human history from great events and people to cultural customs, industry and indeed the language spoken. Sometimes they may be the only source of information, when all other folk and recorded memory has been lost.

It is relatively easy, though painstaking, to collect the many different forms of the same placename throughout the years from old maps, books, records, local tradition and dialect. The modern form of a name can be quite different from that of the past. Mis-understandings, errors and miscopies can all change names beyond recognition. Amateurs can fare just as well as a more academic approach, with interest and perseverance the key.

The interpretation of the variations through time of placenames can be much more controversial. Some books profess with absolute certainty that a name means 'such and such..', when often they are merely copying received or folk wisdom. Usually the best that can be done is to put forward various possibilities and allow the reader to make some judgement on likely derivations, and hopefully over the years a consensus may emerge as to the likely origin. One of the strengths of good placename studies is that they highlight areas of fruitful further research.

I thought I might give a few examples of interesting placenames around Alnwick. You may know better, and have great knowledge on some aspects of these names, so why not contribute to the discussion.

Cawledge is a prominent name to the immediate SE of Alnwick, with the Cawledge Burn rising near Rugley and draining the flat boggy land to the west of the current A1, before running to the NNE, via Cawledge Bridge, through the glacial meltwater deepened and beautiful Cawledge Dene, before entering the River Aln opposite Old Hawkhill. The large extent (ca 7 miles circumference in 1569 Tait Vol 2 p373), of the earlier Cawledge Park Estate is testified by the current names of East Cawledge Farm, Middle Cawledge Park and West Cawledge Park.

A name of some antiquity and the variations of the name recorded through time have been listed by Mawer, who gives: - Type 1 - Caweleg (1241); Cauleche (1252); Cauleth (1270); Cau-lathe (1280); Cauleg (1352); Caulage (1479); Calledge (1764); Callis Park (1663); Tait (Vol. 2 p373) adds Cawlyche (ca 1260); College (1654); Cawledge (1668) and a second distinct group Type 2, including the earliest form of Claubec (1190); Claubache (1280). Tait (Vol 2 p) gives the pronunciation at the time, which is confirmed by several friends today who played there when children, as 'Callish'.

## Possible interpretations

The second element in both types is the more recognisable, with type 1 based on Letch (ME leche/lache OE lacu - hence the 'lish/lesh' pronunciation may well have some antiquity). Type 2 has the earlier beck form (ME bache/OE bece).

Latch/leche/laich- 1. Mire/patch of bog 2. Small stream esp. one flowing through boggy ground (CSD). Letch - a long narrow swamp in which water moves slowly among rushes and grass (Mod. Northumb. Mawer p 236).

Beck - brook or stream esp. brook with stony bed or rugged course. (SOED). Both are good descriptions of the Cawledge

Burn especially in its upper reaches to W. of the modern A1.

Common throughout much of the UK (e.g McClure p 230,231) and more work could be done on the distribution of both -letch and -beck forms within Northumberland.

The first element is more problematic. Mawer cannot explain Type 2 - Clau form and for Type 1 - he takes Caw and relates it to the personal name Caua -so we have the 'Letch/boggy stream of Caua'. I find such interpretations unsatisfactory as this individual Caua, is unknown to history and hence it can never be proved or disproved that he/she existed. Caua is simply someone who gave his or her name to the area for whatever reason - end of story, unless other sources of evidence exist.

Can we do any better? Taking type 1 first. The element Caw is not promising - the SOED gives Caw, the sound of crows calling. Possible but crows are common on every letch/beck in Britain. The CSD gives Caw = Ca - a verb of calling or proceeding as in 'caw canny' etc. The Brittonic/Welsh Cau - a hollow (WND) is interesting but would have to a very old name preceding Anglo-Saxon? (This Brittonic 'cau' may be of relevance to names like Cawfields, Caw Burn and Caw Gap on the Roman Wall, between Housesteads and Great Chesters (Tomlinson p195, 196), as they could indeed be very old, pre-Anglo-Saxon, with caw = hollow depression indeed gap, so Caw Gap would be example of tautology - The Gap of the Gap etc.). However if we take the first element as Cawl/Caul, we can perhaps make progress.

The SND gives 1. 'Caul/Cauld/Call' - a weir or dam on a river to divert water into a mill-lade; 'cauld back' - a dam head and 2. To caul the bank of a river is to lay a bed of loose stone from the channel backwards as far as may be necessary, for defending the land against the inroads of the water.

Hence the term Caul/Cauld/Call would refer to a possible dam or weir across the Cawledge burn at an early date pre - 1241 with the earliest Cawl Type 1 form and before 1190 if the Clau Type 2 form is relevant here. The local pronunciation of Callish may hence reflect the Call + leche forms.

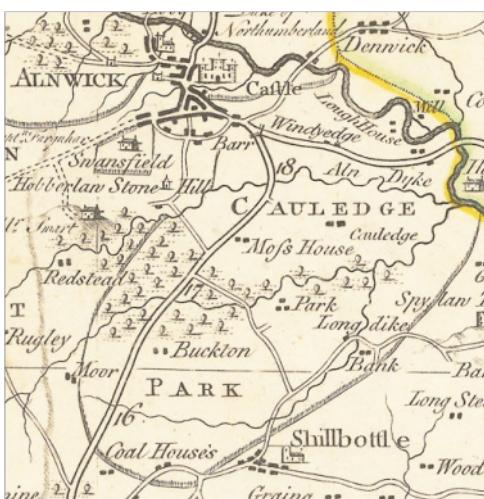
The SOED gives Cawl - a basket, in Cornwall a creel, fish basket (OE cawl, ceawl). There is also a cognate Brittonic/Welsh form of Cawell - a basket, creel, fish trap. (WND) And the modern Scottish Gaelic cab-huil (pron cav-ul) - a conical basket for catching fish/a hose net. (Dwelly) Note these are all wicker structures.

This raises the possibility that the Cawledge burn had been dammed by ca 1190AD to increase the water level for some purpose like a mill lade and/or to provide a weir, trapping fish. This would seem most appropriate in the deeper parts of the Cawledge Burn near its confluence with the River Aln. I have no further historical knowledge on this and hope someone may able to add to this if relevant.

The examples given of Caul/Cauld/Call as dams and fish weirs by the SND stretch from Perthshire, Dumfries to Jedburgh/Tweedale. That such a form was used in Northumberland is evidenced by the weir on the River Coquet at Acklington Park known as 'The Caul', with associated salmon ladder. (Tomlinson p 371)

So I suggest that the name Cawledge may reflect some meaning like 'The Letch/Beck of

Continued  
opposite...



# News in Brief

Unfortunate timing means we are late reporting that Peter Ennor ably represented the society on Lionheart Radio at the end of October. He discussed a range of subjects with presenter James Boyd on the regular "Your Say" programme.

In December the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee welcomed simplification brought by the National Planning Policy Framework, but also expressed concern at issues that are relevant to Alnwick: Unsustainable development in some places is not prevented; Inappropriate housing is imposed upon some communities; and Town centres are not being given sufficient protection against the threat of out of town development. Dr Freddie Gick, Chair of Civic Voice, said "The NPPF has brought simplicity but also uncertainty and confusion to parts of the planning system". The report is at <http://tinyurl.com/p586keo>.

How many members received a new eBook reader for Christmas? The society is preparing an eBook on the Pants of Alnwick, based on material collected for last year's exhibition at Bailiffgate. Before we offer this for wider distribution we would like to confirm that it works on all common eBook formats. So please get in touch if you would be interested in reviewing the early draft on your device.

Taking the opportunity to influence the agenda in advance of the 2015 General Election, Civic Voice has prepared a Civic Manifesto. They believe we face a crisis of civic engagement, the results of localism have been mixed and many feel that their cities, towns and villages are not being shaped locally, but by developers, planning inspectors and the courts. They call for: Every local authority to produce a Place Improvement Strategy; Policies to support collaborative planning for major development and

local plans; Policies to enable local authorities to control use classes and permitted development rights according to local need. The summary manifesto is available at:

[www.civicvoice.org.uk/manifesto](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/manifesto)

Civic Voice, Woodland Trust, National Trust, CPRE, Haste and ResPublica have kicked off a programme of activity on beauty and its contribution to social prosperity. They say that beauty plays a central role in enabling people and communities to flourish. Beautiful places capture the character and ethos of a community. The values that underpin beauty and beautiful places drive a more wholesome and equitable response to local needs. More details at <http://tinyurl.com/ocstup2>



## ...Placenames, continued.

the Dam/Weir/Fish Weir'.

Another interesting, though less likely, possibility is given by the placename of Coaledge, near the mining village of Fordell in the parish of Aberdour in Fife (Taylor Vol. 1 p64). This has the forms of College 1756; Colledge 1775; Coaledge 1856; in current use 'The College'. Hence a modern name associated with obvious coal mining and its derivation is given as the 'coal edge'.

Tait Vol. 2 p374 describes obvious coal exposures in both channel and cliffs of the Cawledge Dene, and that in 1662 there was (at least) one colliery within Cawledge Park demised to a William Watson. In 1745, the Cawledge Park and a Shilbottle Colliery were held by a Mr. Edward Archibald. Coal mining in Shilbottle has a long history and early mines were situated to the N and W between the present town and Cawledge Dene. A brief map survey shows evidence of earlier coal mining just to the South of Cawledge Dene at Colliery Farm (NU 187091) and a colliery near Dene House towards Bilton Banks (NU 207103), which may be the same as the colliery at adjacent Longdykes (?), with coal being moved by trackway into Alnwick via the Wagonway.

So obviously coals of a reasonable quality were exposed in Cawledge Dene and it would seem reasonable to expect local folk and local religious establishments to be collecting and indeed mining these coals even before 1190AD. So, perhaps coincidentally, Cawledge Burn does indeed lie close to the western margins of the Lower Carboniferous coals of the Alnwick area and 'coal edge' may have some relevance.

One of the strengths of placename research is in indicating useful areas of further research. So anyone with expert knowledge and interest in early coal mining in the Alnwick area, please contribute.

The type 2 form of Clau is the earliest but problematic. Dictionaries are of little help and of course, all river drainage patterns resemble a bird's foot. I suggest that the original form was Caul/Cauld/Call and that the oldest recorded form may have been guilty of metathesis (interchanging of sounds and

letters to produce often an easier word to say) – the form Caulbeck/Cauldbeck/Callbeck being recorded as as Claubec. The second 1280 type 2 form Claubache may simply be a copy of the first miscopied form of Claubec of 1190. The common word of Claw may well have been more recognisable to an English/Norman scribe of 1190, than the Old Anglo-Saxon/Celtic form of Cawl = basket fish weir etc. It is also no surprise that metathesis should affect the -beck form, just try saying Clawleche/Clauish etc, whereas Claubec is not so bad. So we end up with ca. Clawbeck but Cawlech in the 2 variations.

Unsatisfactory but such distortions do occur frequently. (e.g. all early written forms of The Hebrides are based on the Celtic 'Ebudes' but some unknown English speaking scribe at some point read and copied 'Ebrides' –indeed easier to say in English, but a mis-application of the original ancient name; (Rivet and Smith p354)

The name of the College Valley in the Cheviots from Kirknewton is obviously similar but I have no older forms and will avoid all speculation at present.

### References.

Mawer A. – The Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham (1920)  
McClure E. – British Place-names in their historical setting (1910)  
Rivet and Smith – The Place-Names of Roman Britain. (1979)  
Tate G. The History of the Borough, Castle and Barony of Alnwick 2 Vols. (1846-9)  
Taylor S – The Place-Names of Fife Vol 1 (2006)  
Tomlinson W.W. – Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland (1888)

### Abbreviations Used.

CSD – Concise Scots Dictionary.  
Dwelly – Faclair Gaidhlig  
ME – Middle English  
OE – Old English  
SND – Scottish National Dictionary  
SOED – Shorter Oxford English Dictionary  
WND – Welsh National Dictionary

Our thanks to Alan Mann for this article. We, and Alan, welcome contributions to this discussion, and suggestions of interesting place names to consider in future issues.

# Northumberland Local Plan: Consultation response

We welcome the emphasis on protecting and enhancing our environmental and cultural heritage. We believe the reduced estimates of population growth are realistic and agree that policies should as far as possible direct that growth towards the market towns and larger settlements, to help sustain local services. We accept that the county's elderly population will continue to expand in relation to population, and that provision must be made for this. We welcome aim of increasing job opportunities to help counterbalance this but we see little in the plan which will encourage businesses in the north of the county capable of attracting and retaining the working age population. Simply providing more housing, especially affordable housing, will not be sufficient. Indeed the danger of doing so is that surplus housing will simply be snapped up by retirees and by second or holiday homes.

We understand the desire to see Alnwick grow but nowhere can we see justification for an extra 1,000 homes. Given the physical layout of Alnwick and a wish to conserve its essential character there are few sites capable of major development. Moreover, those put forward will either rob the town of precious open space or expand the town linearly, altering the balance away from the traditional town centre and resulting in a disproportionate need for additional motorised transport, or isolating the centre. Consideration must be given to the impact of over-expansion and whether it would destroy the very character which makes this one of the best places to live in England.

## Spatial portrait

'Economy and Employment' get twelve paragraphs. 'Natural and Built Environment' gets one, but as the first topic gains some of the priority it deserves in the Local Plan.

This chapter about 'challenges' and 'opportunities' recognises the high quality of our environment and spells out how much it is valued by residents and visitors. However, it fails to mention any of the challenges. Listing challenges such as neglect, misuse and lack of recognition and investment in our townscape and landscapes could help to give a sense of reality and purpose to the Local Plan right from the start.

Will detailed planning guidance originally issued by Alnwick District Council continue to be a part of the local plan? We are keen to ensure that documents such as The Shopfront Design Guide and the Stonework Repair Manual will continue to have a positive effect on design, especially within the Alnwick Conservation area.

One of the key objectives of the Core Strategy is to deliver a thriving and competitive economy, but the spatial portrait only identifies economic and employment growth opportunities in the South-East. None are shown for other areas. Without this information it is not possible to assess whether the spatial implications of employment growth have been fully considered for North Northumberland.

Alnwick Castle dominates only the northern and north-eastern approaches to the town and very little of the town centre itself. Alnwick is the only Ducal town in the region. Its unique history has determined the nature and quality of its townscape and its cultural ambience, making its historic town centre, with its culturally iconic buildings and spaces, as much of an attraction as the castle and gardens.

## Preferred vision

We welcome a determination to protect, nurture, increase, conserve and enhance the environmental quality and cultural identity of Northumberland. We earnestly hope that this will become a reality 'on the ground' and there is a stepping up of

conservation and improvement so this worthy vision does not unfortunately become little more than a hollow aspiration. The Society will do all it can to assist the County Council achieve this vision in Alnwick, particularly through its commitment to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

## Strategic outcomes

Outside the urban south east the outcome of "delivering a thriving and competitive economy" is to be achieved by making land available for development, providing office space and providing an expanding supply of older people to keep shops going. New and expanding businesses will need some more positive incentives to locate or stay in the area if they are to overcome our disadvantage of remoteness from markets. We have been dealt a double whammy of shrinking public sector employment combined with a concentration of what remains in the more populous areas of the county. To overcome the loss of these jobs alone, not to mention expansion of the jobs market to persuade our younger people to stay in the area or return after university will need some considerably more imaginative thinking than is currently demonstrated.

ACS welcomes the Strategic Objective of 'Protecting and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment'. However, the first 2 key outcomes include the words 'within the scope that is possible' and 'whenever possible'. This dilutes the vision. So we don't think these key outcomes have the balance right. There is nothing inevitable about unsuitable development threatening the protection or enhancement historic environment or valuable natural assets that proper control cannot take care of.

Considering the importance and distinctiveness of archaeology in Northumberland and how much it is valued, it gets scant mention or recognition in the Local Plan.

We welcome recognition of the need to improve connectivity but references all relate to the macro level (e.g. improving the A1 and the A69). There is no recognition of the need to examine connectivity at the more local level, especially in relation to new development. Market towns work well just because they are relatively small and compact but they are also congested. New development will make matters disproportionately worse unless positive steps are taken to reduce dependence on and use of private cars.

## Sustainable development.

ACS welcomes the commitment to the conservation and enhancement of historic and built assets.

The policy aims to focus new development in locations which are accessible by public transport, walking or cycling. Major developments will have an impact on all those means of transport and on the use of cars, mainly negative, and should therefore be required to contribute to improvement of those facilities, not just within the development but also in links with the established community. Despite what is said, land use policy should not be seen in isolation from transport policy. A proper consideration is essential of the transport impacts of an additional 1,000 homes in Alnwick, mostly on one side of the town centre, linked by only two through roads, neither of which is capable for significant capacity increase, and in the absence of good cycling and walking alternatives.

## Spatial distribution policy

Unfortunately, the main towns in Northumberland (including Alnwick) do not get the same protection of their character and scale from new development as the smallest settlements in the County. This seems an unfortunate omission.

There is no indication how new employment will be attrac-

ted to the market towns outside the south east of the county. Without a clear idea on how to achieve this and firm policies for expansion of affordable housing, we could end up with an even older community than projected, combined with a rapid expansion of second and holiday homes.

## Economy

ACS welcomes the policy that 'development should be in scale with the size and function of the centre, in keeping with local character...' and the commitment that 'residential use will be encouraged on upper floors on main shopping streets.' Would it not also be beneficial here to accept office/commercial uses too?

ACS welcomes the constraints on development which protect the scale, local character and individual and wider settings of heritage assets. Context is reinforced as being material to applications for new development.

ACS welcomes a policy which encourages new development to reuse existing buildings and previously used land in rural areas. Why is this encouragement not also applied to towns and urban areas? And why not widen the welcome 'protection of character, diversity and tranquillity' to towns and urban areas too?

ACS welcomes the emphasis in policies for Tourism and Leisure Facilities on strong design guidance to successfully integrate new developments into existing urban and rural settings.

## Housing

The allocation of 1,020 houses is justified by the "emerging Alnwick Neighbourhood Plan aspirations." To the best of our knowledge and belief, the ADNP housing figures were based largely on the first draft Core Strategy because the legislation requires Neighbourhood Plans to take account of allocations in the Local Plan for their area. In other words, the justification for a high allocation is circular! We do not believe that there is community support for this allocation or the effect it will have on Alnwick's character, setting and limited green spaces.

The arguments put forward in relation to affordable housing in the Northumberland Coast AONB apply equally to Alnwick. There is empirical evidence that much of what might have been affordable housing in the Alnwick Conservation Area has been adapted for use as holiday homes. This makes us doubtful if the policy can be effective in Alnwick at large in providing sufficient affordable housing in the plan period.

We do not accept the let-out provided by the viability assessment. Clearly, landowners could use this to avoid their social obligations to provide affordable housing whereas a rigid enforcement of the affordable housing criteria would force owners to adjust the price of land to what the developers could afford. There is nothing revolutionary about this approach as it is well known that land with planning permission for development is worth many times land without such permission.

## Natural, Historic and Built Environment

ACS welcomes the principles which actively promote a shared understanding of significance and limit the impact of urbanising effects on our landscape. We suggest that this principle be taken further by setting out guidelines which enable our historic towns to be sensitively composed visually within their landscape.

We are also concerned that this policy does not give full recognition of the significance of our designated Conservation Areas. They are of vital importance in the protection of many of the things which make Northumberland special and attract many visitors to the county. They should therefore be given equal weight to assets of national importance. Northumberland is relatively fortunate in that historically there has been relatively little pressure to develop and update conservation areas, as a result of which they have maintained an integrity

not often seen elsewhere. It would be regrettable if this was to be lost through piecemeal changes within the areas, especially in non-listed buildings which co-exist amongst listed buildings. Policy on heritage at risk should include Conservation Areas at Risk.

We welcome the recognition that future development can have an impact on the setting of towns and villages.

Policy is insufficiently strong in protecting the historic built environment; it fails to recognise the importance of maintaining the integrity of conservation areas through protection from inappropriate development within them, especially of non-listed buildings. Compared with other policies it seems to be half-hearted in its aims ("...where the availability of resources allows..."). We have for many years advocated that the county council (and its predecessor planning authority, Alnwick District Council) promote article 4 directions to control permitted development in the Alnwick Conservation area, without success. As a result, we find that steady erosion of the character of the area through numerous minor changes has taken place. This issue has been exacerbated by the recent relaxation in planning rules.

We are surprised at the omission of Alnwick Castle from the list of iconic buildings.

We disagree fundamentally with the assertions that "The provision and funding of public transport is not a land-use planning matter and is therefore outside the scope of the Core Strategy" and that public rights of way and the provision of cycle lanes are likewise out of scope. Such a blinkered approach is currently leading to some poor planning decisions which we would not wish to see perpetuated through the life of the core strategy. If it were the case, why are development policies based on concentrating growth in areas already well served by public transport?

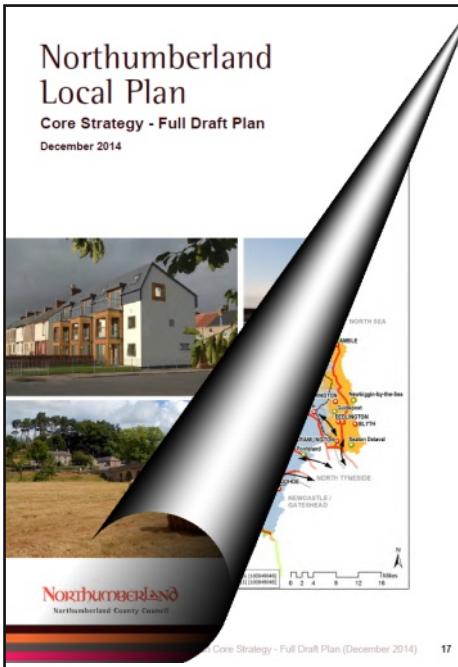
Under continuing pressure on public expenditure, support for public transport is being cut back or abolished. Such pressure can only intensify. We accept in principle the policy to concentrate growth in the towns and larger villages but it must be understood that as towns grow the need for alternatives to walking grows disproportionately. In Alnwick growth is likely to be largely linear, along lines where there are effectively only two routes, both already well used. The need to consider how people will move around within the town is even more acute.

## Mobile communications infrastructure

We welcome the policy but suggest that it should apply equally to non-mobile issues, including the siting of new broadband boxes and other infrastructure in sensitive townscape locations.

## Community facilities

Skills shortages may be an obstacle to growth. The plan seeks to allow residents to access education and training in convenient locations across the County, and to develop new skills and responsibilities through volunteering. Currently the policy only proposes that community facilities should be retained, and improvements facilitated by: resisting loss; addressing deficiencies; requiring developers to contribute; and treating registration as an "asset of community value" as a material consideration. Implementation needs to be based on an assessment of deficiencies that must be addressed. In light of the identified skills shortages, this assessment would have to include the provision of infrastructure which helps to perpetuate traditional skills, and develop new skills necessary for economic growth. There is a need to proactively support Skills Centres, open to all, which encourage skills development, enable business incubation, and facilitate leisure pursuits based on high quality craft and manufacturing skills.



# Bondgate Quarters

We have already examined two of the four Alnwick quarters. We now compare the remaining two: Bondgate Within and Without.

Samuel Johnson notoriously remarked that “*the noblest prospect which a Scotsman ever sees is the high road that leads to England*”. One of those high roads was the Great North Road, which passed through Alnwick, along Bondgate. Tate describes this as “*the street of the bond-men*” ... “*wide and extends northward from the south entrance of the town*”.

The Great North Road was a post-road in the 17th century and a turnpike from 1741 until the late 19th century.

Alnwick’s position on this road was an important factor in subsequent development. Davison, in 1822, informs us that: “*The town affords several commodious inns, and, being situated on the post road, maintains an intercourse with other places by regular mail and stage coaches. The principal inn is the White Swan, at which the mail and union coaches stop...*”. In 1826, Parson described how travel links affected locals: “*...being near to the Scottish borders, on the post road between London and Edinburgh, the inhabitants are a mixed race, consequently there are but few provincial peculiarities amongst them; and the traveller is often surprised at the great variety of character exhibited*”.

Bondgate Tower has been dividing Bondgate Within and Without for more than five centuries, and dividing opinion for at least two centuries. Davison reported that the tower was considered an obstruction, and that some had asked for it to be removed. He explains why the Duke was unwilling, but remarks that “*at the same time it must be observed that if the gate were removed, few provincial towns in the kingdom could boast of a better street*”. He could not know that almost 200 years later, the tower would remain - despite repeated calls for removal; or that Google would describe Bondgate Within as “*Britain’s best shopping street*”.

Many will agree with the correspondent who wrote to the Alnwick Mercury in 1860: “*... we should deeply regret to see the removal of Bondgate Tower. It is a time-worn record of the past, and so long as it remains, it ever teaches us how much happier are the times we live in, as compared with the past, when such towers and walls were necessary for the preservation of life and property*”. Ironically, having survived varied threats, the tower is now at risk from vehicles. Another impact could cause a collapse. So those who deplore the obstruction may yet see it gone. Until then, we will continue to rail at the surrounding clutter.

“*After passing through the tower, Bondgate Within widens, and a fine view of the town, and especially of the Market Place is obtained*”.

The Neighbourhood Plan makes a distinction between the historic core of the town, and the roads along which we approach. This entrance is described as providing a “*complete gateway experience*”, and a “*strong sense of arrival*”. In 1922 Charles Harper (The Great North Road) made a similar distinction, from a different perspective: “*It is something of a shock to the sentimental pilgrim northward bound, that the entrance to historic Alnwick should be by the gas-works, the railway station, the Farmer’s Folly, and other unmistakable and unromantic evidences of modernity that spread beyond the ancient confines of the town...*”

The road was already busy when the opening of the station created additional traffic. In 1862 the Alnwick Mercury reported “*We would demur to the condition of the approaches to the station, which being the common traffic road for goods, cattle, wood, and passengers, is dreadfully cut up. The footway has been newly paved with soft brick quarls, which are already crumbling and cracking.*” So the pavement from the tower to St Michael’s Pant was relaid with flags, and a wagonway laid to improve deliveries to the centre from the station. Before the Cornhill Branch opened there were also suggestions that a light (‘agricultural’)

railway should be laid along Bondgate, and up Clayport, then across the moor to Glanton. The prospectus suggested that, far from interfering with traffic, this would reduce pressure on the roads, so save on the cost of repairs. Needless to say, it was never built.

Traffic has not been the only pressure. Parts of Bondgate Without and Bondgate Within are at risk from flooding in heavy rain. Climate change may be making things worse, but the problem is not new. In 1858: “*water had gathered to the depth of a yard on the foot pavement on the northern side of Bondgate and the whole of the cellars and apartments on the ground floor were completely flooded*”. In 1878 “*boxes and packages were swept away and cellars were flooded, the streets in certain places were almost impassable for foot passengers*”. In 1889: “*there was another outburst from the manhole of the main sewer at the station corner, and basement kitchens were flooded by backwater from the main sewers*”.

The layout of Bondgate Within was established by medieval burgage plots, but the layout of Bondgate Without was influenced by ribbon development along the Great North Road. The differences are apparent when following Pevsner: beginning at Belvedere Terrace, and working towards the centre. In Bondgate Without individual structures are highlighted: the Railway Terminus, Percy Column, War Memorial, Column Cottage, and Bondgate Hall. Beyond the tower it is mainly groups of buildings which attract attention: “*unassuming late 18th and early 19th century properties*” to the south, and to the north “*typical 18th century houses*”, and “*a row of banks*”.

The future for Bondgate is likely to include more residential use, and signs of this are beginning to emerge. In the meantime, developments by local businesses have tended to enhance the quality of the street, but over-enthusiastic use of illuminated signs by banks has been a concern. Our ancestors built imposing banks. Even their most distracted customer is unlikely to mistake them for anything else, so we find it hard to sympathise with their desire for more prominent signage.

Away from the main routes, Hotspur Street and Green Batt still follow the line of the town wall. Later developments reflect subsequent changes in use, without entirely destroying the original layout.

Bondgate no longer carries the Great North Road, but it remains an important entry and route through the town, bringing the familiar conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. There is no shortage of ideas on how these pressures could be alleviated, but our view is that piecemeal fixes will prove inadequate, and a comprehensive approach to traffic management and excessive street furniture is long overdue.

Still, the tower remains in place, yet we can echo Davison (and perhaps Google too) in claiming that “*few provincial towns in the kingdom could boast of a better street*”.

## Listed buildings

**Bondgate Without:** Former Railway Terminus, Tenantry Column, War Memorial, Column Cottage, 1&3, 8, 10, 12&14, Bondgate Hall & Stables, 13-17, 20, 22, 45&47, Fleece Inn

**Bondgate Tower:**

**Bondgate Within, North:** 52, Bondgate Without, 2, 4&6, 8 and walls, 10, 12&14, 16, White Swan, Lloyds Bank

**Bondgate Within, South:** 1, 5&7, Globe Inn, 39, 41&43, 47, Robertson’s Pant

**Hotspur St / Green Batt:** 2 Hotspur St; 1, 3&5 Hotspur Place; Former Workhouse, Keeper’s House, and Wall; Tanner’s Arms / Brewers Arms; Glebelands Lodge; Pinfold; Green Batt House, garden wall and gate piers, 1-3 Croft Place; 4 Grey Place; Corn Exchange; 36 and 38 Green Batt.

## **Gift Aid Declaration**

In 2014 the society was able to claim almost £40 from HMRC in the form of Gift-Aid on member subscriptions. This was one of a number of successful initiatives which has helped to put our finances on a more stable long-term footing.

We anticipate a busy year in 2015. Development is under way on the first tranche of 1,000 new homes, and we do not know where the rest will be built. Relocation of the high school will go-ahead: and we have been promised a working group will look again at travel arrangements. Consultation is under way on the final stages of the Northumberland Core Strategy, and we anticipate a referendum on the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan by the end of the year. English Heritage have declared that Alnwick Conservation Area is at risk; a number of our historic assets are threatened by under-use or decay, and at least one is due for demolition. Each month we see about a dozen planning applications for new developments across Alnwick and Denwick. And this list may not include your most pressing concerns.

### **Who is ready to help take the society forward?**

Under our constitution the management of the society is in the hands of an Executive Committee. This consists of three officers: a Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary; along with up to eight other Executive Committee members. Members of the Executive Committee may be co-opted during the year, but most are elected at the Annual General Meeting. So once a year there is an opportunity for members to bring additional expertise, fresh energy, and new ideas to the work of the society.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the management of the society. Naturally it deals with administrative essentials such as finances, and membership. Importantly, members of the Executive Committee also take a lead in scrutinising planning applications, responding to consultations, organising activities for members, publishing a variety of printed and online material, and maintaining

So in 2015 we are again asking members to complete the Gift Aid form. It won't raise a huge amount, but it costs nothing, and adds something to our efforts to involve members, and engage the local community.

If you are in a position to allow the society to claim Gift Aid on your 2015 subscription, please complete the form on the reverse of this page, and return it to:

Hon. Treasurer: Mrs Gill Parker,  
29 Belle Vue Gardens,  
ALNWICK,  
NE66 1XX.  
Tel: 01665 606371

## **Nomination Form**

I nominate.....  
[name of member – please ensure nominee concurs – self nomination is permissible]

For the position of.....  
[Chair / Secretary / Treasurer / Committee Member]

Nominated by..... [your name]

Signed..... Date.....  
Return, by 12th March, to Peter Ennor, The Grange, Prudhoe Street, ALNWICK, NE66 1PZ.  
Telephone 01665-602952 or email [peter.ennor@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.ennor@btinternet.com)

## Gift Aid Declaration

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Alnwick Civic Society to claim Gift Aid on my Membership fee and on all future payments until I notify them otherwise.

Date:..... Name:.....

Individual Membership (£8.00):

Family Membership (£12.00):

Signed: .....

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the Civic Society will reclaim on your gifts for that year.

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# The Old Post Office (One Clayport)

The first records of a postmaster in Alnwick date from the 17th century. Before that, letters were sent by messenger. At the beginning of the 19th century the Post Office was in Pottergate, but later moved to the west side of the Market Place. Mail from the north would arrive at about 9:00 a.m. and from the south at about 10:30.

The penny post was introduced in 1840. By 1855 the post office had moved to Fenkle Street, and apart from a brief period in Paikes Lane it remained there for more than half a century. In 1861 a post-office savings bank was opened. Within three years it held 196 accounts. From 1869 telegraph wires connected the post office and station via Dovecote Lane, Green Batt, and St Michael's Lane. A telephone exchange was first proposed in 1888, and by 1893 an exchange in Bondgate was serving three subscribers.

From January 1909 those over the age of 70 could apply for a non-contributory old-age pension, and collect 5s a week, or 7s 6d. per couple (providing they were of good character). At the time, just under 300 people in Alnwick fell into this age band (we don't know how many were of good character).

By 1912 Alnwick Post Office served an area from the coast to the Cheviots. There were sub post-offices in villages and in Wagonway Road. The Alnwick postmaster, Mr T. B. Eames, had almost 40 staff, including a head and eight postmen serving the town, ten rural postmen, three boy messengers and twelve clerks. They needed bigger premises, and moved to Clayport in December 1912.

The building is Grade II\* listed, and dated by English Heritage as early 19th century. In the early 18th century, the land belonged to George Potts, who was described as a merchant. As well as this property in Clayport, he owned other plots in town, held land in Carlecroft, and Wreighill, and acquired Stoney Hills in 1706. The Potts family was connected to Holystone, and had links to the Grey, and Farquhar families through marriage. The Clayport property passed down the family, and in the early 19th century was owned by Margaret Farquhar Detchon, and her husband Ralph Hanson Dawson, a "Gentleman Wine Merchant" from Wapping. Mar-



## Picture quiz

In 2014 English Heritage identified Alnwick as a Conservation Area At Risk. So we picked that as the theme for this picture quiz. We challenge readers to locate each of the concerns that we have illustrated.



garet died in 1861. The property was later acquired by John Drysdale, a coach builder, who had previously been operating from Bondgate. The archway dates from Drysdale's time.

## Alnwick Mercury, 8 June, 1912

*The work connected with converting a portion of Messrs. Drysdale's coach manufactory into a more commodious post-office than already exists continues to progress rapidly. The façade portion of the premises on the ground floor is to be utilised for the public business and a room will be set off for the postmaster at the east end. The upper rooms are to be used for telegraph, telephone and battery arrangements. Immediately behind the principal building for a distance of 120 feet the one storey erections have been pulled down, and will be rebuilt to form a sorting room, 50 feet long, with mail, postmen's parcels post and linesmen's rooms, etc., continuing up the yard area. The upper portion of the yard, extending nearly to Green Bat, is still retained as a coach manufactory, etc., by Mr Wm. Trotter, of Wooler, who has succeeded to the business formerly carried on by Messrs. Drysdale brothers. The approach to the coach building premises will still be through the archway at the east end of the principal building.*

## William Robinson

It is with great sadness that we report the recent passing after a long illness of a former chairman of the Civic Society, Bill Robinson.

Bill was born in Whitley Bay in 1945 and on leaving school joined the RAF college at Hendon. He graduated from there as an electrical engineer and had a distinguished career in the Air Force, ultimately being responsible for all Royal Air Force electronic maintenance throughout the world.

While serving at RAF Boulmer he and his wife Jenny bought a house in Howick Street in Alnwick. He retired from the RAF as a Group Captain and joined British Rail in charge of Health and Safety. When he finally retired in 2005 and lived full time in Alnwick he was never one to be idle. He wrote and had published a biography of his father who had flown with the RAF during the war. He also wrote a series of articles for "Management Today". He took over the chairmanship of the Civic Society in 2005, a post he held until 2009. The Society sends its condolences to Jenny, Daniel and Sarah.

Bill will be greatly missed.

For extra bonus points, we also invite readers to propose another concern in the Conservation Area which they would like to be brought to wider attention.



# School Travel

The society prepared an assessment of travel arrangements for the new high school; and shared it with town and county councillors. With their support we presented it to the county planning committee. They agreed that a working group should re-assess the travel plan while the project went ahead. We expect to participate. Our discussions (summarised here) focussed on alleviating congestion by encouraging cycling.

The high school is going to have a big impact on movement through the town and we think more can be done to alleviate the effect. To be clear - we do not want to delay this project. What we want is to ensure that:

- access for students, staff and parents to the new school, is straightforward
- the issues are properly considered, and
- reasonable measures are taken to alleviate the wider impact on the town.

People get to and from school, by bus, walking, car or cycling.

Bus companies are at their most stretched when pupils need to get to school. Extra bus services would require new buses and more drivers. The scope for new services is limited.

The school Transport Assessment was based on pupils walking up to 2km to and from school. These days most parents would see 1km as the acceptable distance. Either way, significantly fewer pupils will be living within walking distance of the new school. The result is that fewer will walk, and there will be more cars on the road at peak times. Those in Alnwick who live more than 2km from the new school are likely to have the fewest travel options. More cars will mean more traffic and more parking at the school site.

Many secondary age children have bicycles which they use recreationally - but currently nobody seems to be using them to cycle to school. Why? No doubt one reason is that parents are concerned about the safety of their children.

We think these fears could be overcome by establishing a safe cycling route from the town centre to Willowburn Avenue, and linking this to the places where people live.

Such a route would not only serve the new high school. It would give adults as well as children an alternative to the car: for new housing East of Greensfield, for other developments proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as existing employment, leisure and retail facilities on the south-east of town. It would also improve access to the centre of Alnwick for visitors who cycle.

Every cyclist who used this route, rather than using a car on South Road or Wagonway Road, would be relieving congestion, and making life easier for those who don't have a choice.

The nucleus of this route already exists from York Road to Cawledge View as recreational land along the old Cornhill Railway track bed. This would need to be surfaced and opened up. A controlled crossing is already planned above Willowburn Leisure Centre, and there is plenty of

room for widening pavements on Willowburn Avenue.

By using quiet residential roads, and upgrading sections of public footpath links could be provided that cross the town and bring all residential areas within an easy and safe cycling distance of the new school. This would not only draw traffic away from the busy Wagonway Road, and South Road, but also avoid particularly difficult junctions such as the Oaks Roundabout and the South Road/Willowburn Avenue roundabout.

We acknowledge that this suggestion is not without issues. As long as Lindisfarne School remains in use, we would like to provide cyclists with an alternative to using Swansfield Park Road at peak times. We cannot find a way to avoid crossing Wagonway Road, but at least parents would be able to tutor children on the hazards at a crossing point rather than worrying about them riding along the whole length.

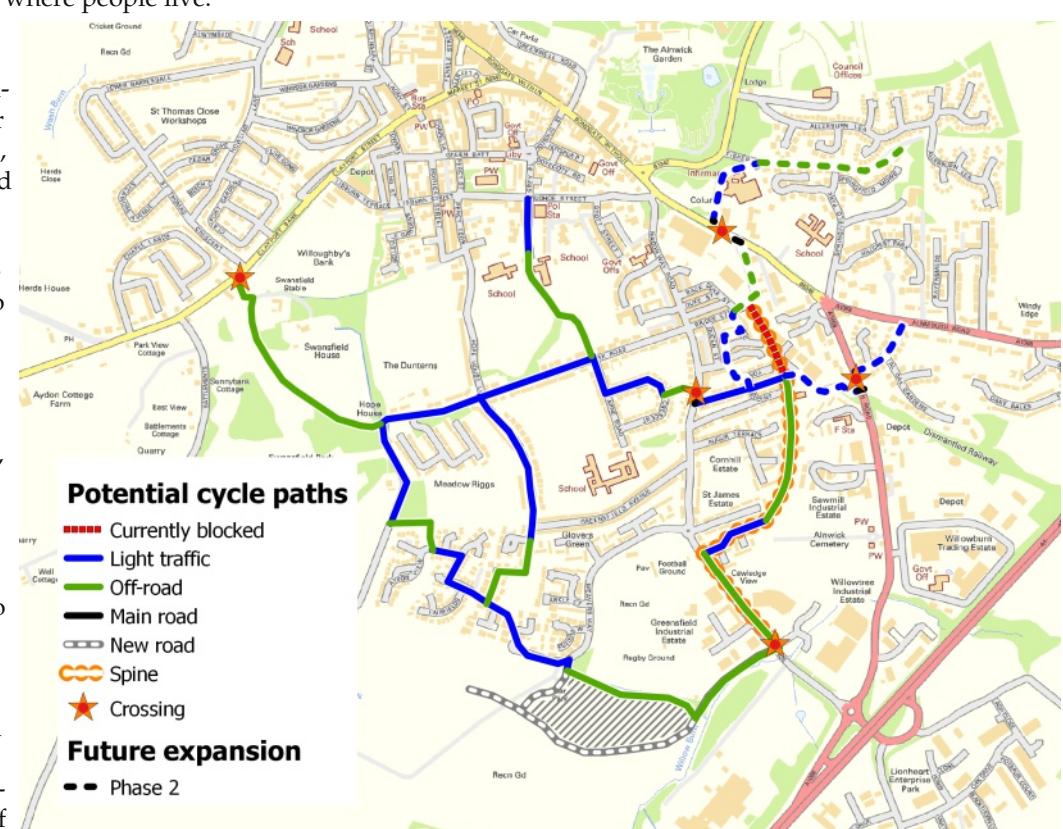
Clearly this suggestion has a cost. And funding will need to draw on a variety of different sources. This is not going to be straightforward. To make it possible at all, it is vital that all parties adopt a coherent approach.

We think the long-term economic case is overwhelming.

Unless something is done to alleviate pressure on Wagonway Road and South Road then congestion here will eventually constrain development of employment opportunities to the South-East of town, as well as proposals for relocation of middle schools, and perhaps even further housing developments.

The environmental and health benefits of cycling are well known, so in summary, it is our firm belief that we are presented with a unique opportunity to establish a proper cycling infrastructure for Alnwick, which will make a positive contribution to education, the environment, economy, employment, road safety and health.

Our proposal is illustrated below. Blue lines show low-traffic areas that are already acceptable safe routes for cyclists. Linking sections for use by pedestrians and cyclists are shown in green.



# Planning matters

## Proposals

During the second half of 2014 planning activity in Alnwick and Denwick looked busier than normal, particularly in October, with nearly twice as many applications compared to Oct 2013. However, a relatively quiet November and December meant that the volume of activity over the last three months has been more typical.

We did not consider that representations were necessary on the development of a new community fire and rescue station and offices to the south east of the existing County Council depot at Lionheart Enterprise Park.

We objected to three proposed replacement antennae on the Telephone Exchange on the grounds of further visual intrusion within the town centre conservation area and asked that consideration be given to mounting these further towards the centre of the roof where they would not be seen from the surrounding streets.

We reviewed an application for alterations to the former shoe shop at 46 Bondgate Within to create a Mind charity shop, but felt that no representations were necessary.

We examined proposals for internal and external alterations at Ye Olde Cross, Narrowgate. We had no objection in principle to painting the name (The Dirty Bottles) on the wall, but expressed concern that the drawings suggested the design would be too large and style ill-suited to the building.

## Abbeyfield

The Abbeyfield Society propose to demolish Ravenslaw House as part of a major project to develop housing and care provision for the elderly. We view the loss of this building as regrettable, but probably inevitable. We hope that a history of the building will be prepared, and have submitted some material for this.

Looking forward, we discussed the new hybrid care facility at some length, and have a number of concerns. Many issues have already been raised about this development: scale, design, material, privacy, loss of light, parking, traffic flow, evidence of need, and flaws in the process. We were

particularly concerned about the inappropriate scale of the building for the size of this site, and the inevitable consequences of inadequate parking provision.

Members who are interested are advised to examine the documents associated with the application. The illustrations used in the local press do not show the actual proposal.

We also note that there seems to be no more talk of the redevelopment in Dispensary Street which was originally thought to be associated with this proposal.

Our proposals on cycling provision are shown opposite. We see that Northumberland County Council have prepared a Cycle Plan, and opened it for consultation, but this essentially describes the process by which further proposals will be developed. We welcome the initiative, and will comment on local issues when there are tangible proposals to examine.

**At risk** English Heritage has identified four sites at risk in Alnwick and Denwick. The Neighbourhood Plan listed these and more. We can think of other assets that some may consider to be at risk. Are there more that you would like to see added to (or removed from) the following list of heritage that may be threatened by underuse and/or decay?

**English Heritage:** Bondgate Tower; General Lambert's House; Iron Age Camp on Alnwick Moor, Heiferlaw defended settlement

**Neighbourhood Plan:** Former Mill, and Malthouse on Dispensary Lane; Glebelands / Croft Lodge; The Corn Exchange; High Pant (well head), on Clayport Bank; Eye Catcher, Swansfield Park; Camphill Column; 5 Walkergate; 18 Narrowgate; Council Chambers/Old Post Office; Northumberland Hall; Town Hall

**Others:** Hobberlaw Lime Kilns; Sion Chapel



# Friends of Column Field

*Possibly the most infuriating element of this photo is that it is not even a result of carelessness and abandonment but intentional vandalism. It takes real effort to lob those filled doggy bags, bottles and empty cartons over the railings. But there has been a rally from the community and this is the tale.*



Northumberland Estates is rightly protective of the Tenantry Column (more detail online at [www.un-discoveredscotland.co.uk/almwick/tenantry-column/index.html](http://www.un-discoveredscotland.co.uk/almwick/tenantry-column/index.html) strangely) and has been careful of those given custody of the key that allows access to the graveled surround behind the iron railings.

In the past Alnwick in Bloom has had restricted permission but this spring the promise of the Civic Society's probity did the trick and continuing authorised

access granted. Let's face it, the Civic Society does Do Monuments. On AiB's suggestion and ACS's acquiescence the Friends of Column Field was formed to allow regular clearing of this target area and Gill Parker and Trish Jones stepped forward as the two ACS warriors against wanton waste.

With such a vast improvement underway AiB felt due notice should be taken and submitted The Friends of the Column as exemplary candidates for an **It's Your Neighbourhood** award. This award, driven by Northumbria in Bloom, the NorthEast representative of the RHS, is given to those volunteers who step forward to improve their local environment. This Autumn Gill and Trish were awarded the exalted classification of thriving - closely matching the well oiled and professional wheels of the likes of the Alnwick Garden Volunteers.

*The North East and Alnwick salute you!*



## Diary dates

### Civic Society...

19th March: Annual General Meeting, St James's United Reformed Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick, 7:30 p.m.

30th March, Advisory Panel to discuss current developments and the position the Society should take. Open to all members. 2:00p.m. The Grange, Prudhoe Street.

Next issue of Newsletter: May 2015.

### ...and more

History Society. 28th Feb: Brown Rigg - A Unique Educational Experience; 24 March: Domestic Servants in the 19th Century; 28th April: Convicts Conflict & Capture at Trafalgar. All meetings at Bailiffgate Museum, 7:30 p.m., with a small entrance fee for non-members.



## Quiz answers

- A) Northumberland Hall / Assembly Rooms (Grade-I listed)
- B) Alnwick Brewery, Dispensary St (Grade-II listed)
- C) Glebelands Lodge, Dovecote Lane (Grade-II listed)
- D) General Lambert's House / Narrowgate House, 31 & 33 Narrowgate (Grade-II\* listed).
- E) Adjoining 11 Narrowgate (Grade-II listed)
- F) 3, Walkergate (Grade-II listed)
- G) Bondgate Tower (Grade-I listed)

## 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 successful high profile campaigns. It continues to pursue its objectives and provide 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 changes in the planning system the society has been 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 business 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.



Founding Member

*To the Editor of the Alnwick Mercury.*

SIR,

I beg to direct the attention of your readers to a very seasonable hand-bill lately issued by the Alnwick Local Board of Health, in which it is ordered that "every occupier of every house or tenement adjoining to any street, shall, as often as occasion shall require, keep clean and free from FILTH and DIRT, the footway and pavement in front of, or adjoining to such house or tenement." They are also directed to clear away, before 10 o'clock in the morning, from such footway and pavement, all SNOW that may have fallen since the previous morning. For fear any of your readers should be under the delusion that snow only is meant, I would remind them that *filth* and *dirt* are mentioned also, and are equally as dangerous to the foot-passenger as snow. The filthy and slippery state of the pavement in all parts of the town, especially in wet weather, must be apparent to all; and now that the Local Board has signified that such a state of things will no longer be tolerated, it is to be hoped that all good citizens will cheerfully aid them in the good work.

I remain, Sir,

Yours obediently,

ONE WHO HAS SLIPPED.

Alnwick, January 29, 1862.

## Who's Who?

President: Philip Deakin

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

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Other Executive Committee members:

Michael Apted

Elizabeth Jones

Trish Jones

Brian Lamb

David Lovie ([davidlovie307@btinternet.com](mailto:davidlovie307@btinternet.com))

Peter Reed / Newsletter ([peter.reed@aligre.co.uk](mailto:peter.reed@aligre.co.uk))

Caroline Stewart

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

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