

February 2017

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Notice board

Our AGM will be held on the 8th March at St James Centre, in Pottergate. If you are interested in joining the committee, or in helping in any other way, then this would be a good time to get in touch. Nomination forms for the committee should be available with this newsletter (if not, just ask for one). At the AGM we will have Dave Campbell as our guest. Dave is the Alnwick Town Champion at Northumberland County Council. We are sure there will be much to discuss.

For our summer outing we plan a tour of Alnmouth, towards the end of June. Look forward to more details in the next newsletter (planned for early May).



Any Questions

St James Centre, Pottergate, on 9th Nov. was the venue for our 2016 "Any Questions" discussion. A lively audience engaged with a distinguished panel: Lisa Aynsley (from Hotspur 1364), Inspector Liz Hall (from Northumbria Police), and Martin Swinbank (Town Councillor, and local activist).

As usual we ranged widely. In the town centre the emphasis was on the need to progress, while valuing and conserving the character that we have inherited. One example was extensive support for solar panels: with the hope that improved technology and design will allow more widespread use in the conservation area, without loss of historic character.

Signage was more controversial. Some were surprised to learn how many visitors have difficulty finding their way around the town centre. Perhaps more signs would help: though some already despair at the existing level of clutter.

All of the panel had family connections with new high school, and all welcomed the new facilities. More than anyone, they appreciate the difficulties in providing a decent education under the previous arrangements.

For some time the Society has been voicing concerns about arrangements for travel to the new school. Some of these concerns were shared, but the consensus was that things seem to be going better than expected. There was, though, widespread concern over the level of congestion on Wagonway Road.

One side-effect of the move to the new school will be a reduction in footfall across the town centre. Some traders are directly affected by loss of business from pupils. Others are

concerned about the indirect effects of reduced footfall by family members, or the general concern that the move will leave the town centre feeling deserted. We learned that independent retailers (who contribute so much to the character of the town) are growing increasingly concerned about the future viability of the centre. The most controversial quote

(left) was, we think, said with tongue-in-cheek.

Perhaps easier pedestrian access would drive more footfall, but achieving this

will be tricky. Delivery vehicles, pedestrians and advertising boards can't easily share the same narrow pavements. There was general support, though, for the introduction of a 20 m.p.h. limit throughout the centre, and along some of the main approaches. Views on other traffic calming measures were more mixed.

New housing developments mean we will be welcoming many new families to the town, and we discussed the best advice to offer our new neighbours. The discussion was grounded in practical experience of recent arrivals, and centred on getting involved with the local community. We felt most newcomers would be impressed with the range of activities on offer. But there is one significant exception: the limited offer for teenagers. Recent cuts mean that the choice has become even more restricted. This is a concern: for the teenagers themselves, and for the well-being of the town as a whole.

Fittingly for a November meeting (but poor timing for a February Newsletter), the panel praised the choice of Christmas presents available from local retailers. We hope readers will keep a note of where they might find original local gifts over the coming year.

"The town is aesthetically better without the kids"

Lion Bridge

We welcome back the Lion Bridge, which was closed from September 2016 until just before the end of last year. We celebrate by recalling selected incidents from its chequered history.

Tate tells of an ancient bridge which spanned the Aln, just downstream from where the Lion Bridge now stands. In 1347 it was "ruined and broken", and Edward III granted the tolls for three years to the men of Alnwick, so that they could repair it and pave the town. Whether it was then repaired or rebuilt, it seems to have survived until 8th November, 1770, when a great flood washed away much of the river bank. The south end of the bridge sank and became

Lion Bridge is a rare example of Adam using Castle Style for a public building, though he did propose a similar style for a prison, and later for a more elaborate bridge that was never built, to link Princes Street and Calton Hill in Edinburgh.

Construction of Lion Bridge occurred at

the same time as Adam's major renovations of the interior of Alnwick Castle for the 1st Duke of Northumberland. Adam's work on the castle was not typical of the Neo-Classical style, for which he was better known. In the 19th century Algernon, 4th Duke of Northumberland replaced much of Adam's work when Anthony Salvin removed Gothic additions and other architectural work, and Luigi Canina redecorated in Italianate style.

Details on the bridge are reminiscent of a child's toy fort, and the stone balustrades on the approaches are carved to look like the sharpened stakes of a wooden palisade. These are intended to amuse, and relate to the architecture of the Castle.

The sculpture of the Percy Lion, that gives the bridge its name, is also from 1773 by John Knowles. It is cast in lead, on a sandstone plinth which forms part of the bridge parapet.

In 1917 a sergeant in the Northumberland Fusiliers lost control of his bicycle on the Peth and crashed into an ambulance on the bridge, breaking both of his legs. Two soldiers in the ambulance were also injured, and the ambulance hit the bridge, causing further damage.

Two crashes that happened in 1937. In one the lorry ended up in the river, upside-down. The driver had to climb out of the upturned cab, and was lucky to escape with his life.



dangerous. On the 10th of December, the corporation paid John Shepherd 3s. to watch the bridge all night and warn people of the danger. Then on the 15th of December the south arch fell in, leaving the others tottering. Two years later, the problem had only been partially addressed, and the bridge was then described as "in a ruinous condition", and "the passage over it hazardous".

The present bridge was then built - some twenty or thirty yards higher up the river than the old bridge; with the foundation stone being laid on the 21st August, 1773.

The bridge spans the river in three arches with two intermediate piers. It was designed by Robert Adam (1728 - 92), one of the most important British architects, who normally incorporated design ideas from ancient Greece and Rome into a Neo-Classical style.

For Lion Bridge, Adam used "Castle Style". He designed more than sixty buildings in this style, but generally used it for country houses where it was popular with clients. The

Ten feet of the parapet were damaged, and the road had to be closed when an articulated lorry failed to climb the The Peth, and ran backwards into the bridge on its way to Manchester in 1950.



According to the Historic England Listing entry, there was supposedly once a matching unicorn on the west side of the bridge (symbolizing Scotland). In the late 1980's the lion was knocked into the river by a fairground wagon crossing the bridge.

In October 2008 the bridge was closed to traffic for four months following flood damage. An inspection by divers on behalf of Northumberland County Council had discovered that the foundations under the central support had been washed out by severe flooding.

"I remember the Percy lion on the bridge over the little river at Alnwick, the leaden lion with his tail stretched out straight like a pump-handle, and why? Because of the story of the village boy who must fain bestride the leaden tail, standing out over the water, which breaking, he dropped into the stream far below, and was taken out an idiot for the rest of his life". (Oliver Wendell Holmes)

Three crashes that happened within two weeks of each other in 1939. The first two lorries went through opposite parapets, but the third missed the parapet.



Conservation areas at 50

The concept of conservation areas was introduced in England, Wales and Scotland by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 through a private members bill led by Lord Duncan Sandys. At the time there was widespread public concern over the pace of redevelopment in historic towns and cities.

Today there are approximately 9,300 conservation areas in England, 500 in Wales, 650 in Scotland and 60 in Northern Ireland.

Alnwick Conservation Area was designated in 1972. It is notable for an

functionally linked to the conservation area.

- The area of Walkergate around the Chantry was added, as historically important and completing the north side of Walkergate.
- The north side of Denwick Lane was added: the stone retaining wall and planting on the bank to the south of the Alnwick Garden is important in marking the entrance to the conservation area and establishing a soft green entrance to the harder urban character of the main part of the conservation area.

When conservation areas were first introduced, designation carried no special restrictions. In 1974, the control of certain kinds of demolition and the protection of trees was introduced. In certain cases, Article 4 Directives may be made, restricting permitted development. Today, designation as a Conservation area essentially controls the demolition of unlisted buildings over a certain size and works to trees, restricts permitted development rights on dwelling houses and tightens regulations on advertising. It also places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas while undertaking their planning duties.

By preserving distinctive local character, conservation areas can improve the local economy, encourage tourism, attract grants and investment, raise property values, prevent un-neighbourly alterations and encourage traditional building trades.

In 2017, Historic England will celebrate the 50th anniversary of conservation areas. They will carry out research into people's attitudes towards conservation areas

exceptionally large number of listed buildings within its boundaries (we counted 225).

The rationale behind the original boundaries of the conservation area has apparently not been recorded, but changes were made in 2006:

- Greenwell Road car park and part of the Castle grounds made no positive contribution, any remaining evidence of the burgrave plot layout had been destroyed by the car park, the area has no architectural interest and little historical context, so it was removed from the conservation area.
- Adding the south side of Prudhoe Street acknowledged the architectural importance of the Police Station and safeguards the east end of Prudhoe Street.
- Yards and kennels to the north of Canongate were included, as an historic continuation of the road,

and the challenges they face in protecting them. They also plan to analyse local authorities' conservation area survey data to better understand what puts conservation areas up and down the country at risk. And, at a time when local authority resources are under pressure, they will ask how local civic groups and organisations can become more involved to help safeguard conservation areas.

Civic Voice say: *Designating a conservation area should not be seen as an end in itself: we live in a changing world and for the historic environment to survive and continue to be cherished it needs to be positively managed. We want communities across the country to come together and say "My Conservation Area Matters".*

Planning matters

In 2016 we saw a total of 163 applications across Alnwick and Denwick. Alnwick accounted for 137(85%), and Denwick for 26 (15%). That's an increase of 15% over 2015, when we saw 142 (also 85% from Alnwick, and 15% from Denwick). Although the total was higher than the year before, most of the increase was in the first half of 2016, which suggests that we might be in for quieter times ahead.

Since the last newsletter a number of applications have been permitted. These include the construction of a new club house for Alnwick Golf Club; an outline application for four dwellings in New Row; replacing the windows on the top floor of Alnwick Working Men's Club; returning Hampden House in Belvedere Terrace to a single dwelling; demolition of the existing building and construction of a new dwelling at 12 Bondgate Within; conversion of General Lambert's House/ Narrowgate House to residential use with a creperie in the basement (subject to a lot of conditions); demolition of buildings at the former Duchess Community High School; and at 12 Bailiffgate changing the former convent to bed and breakfast accommodation.

Approval has also been given to convert the former council offices at Allerburn house, and build ten new dwellings in the grounds. The new build comprises 6 five-bedroom detached houses and 4 four-bedroom detached houses. Allerburn House will be refurbished and converted to accommodate 2 one-bedroom apartments and 3 two-bedroom apartments. The western extension to Allerburn House would be converted into 2 two-bedroom terraced houses. The proposals included the removal of a number of trees including one planted by colleagues over 20 years ago to commemorate Gordon Smith, who had worked there.

We share concerns raised by the Town Council about the loss of trees, and agree with their request that trees are assessed by the County Tree Officer, and appropriate trees protected by the application of a TPO, before any further work commences.

These are significant buildings, but neither the lodge nor Allerburn House are listed, and they fall outside the conservation area. Allerburn House has undergone significant alteration, and few original features remain. Nevertheless, the county considers the house and the lodge to be non-designated heritage assets.

On balance we feel approval was the right decision, given where we stand. However, the associated condition of a Section 106 contribution of £85,000 towards affordable housing (off-site, and possibly outside Alnwick) is disappointing.

An outline planning application has been submitted for development of up to 125 residential dwellings at Willowburn Trading Estate. The application was submitted jointly on behalf of Northern Commercial Properties, Northumberland County Council and the Harris & Sheldon Group. Approval is sought for the principle of residential development, with other matters reserved for future consideration. The proposal would essentially change Willowburn from an industrial estate to a residential estate (with a couple of embedded industrial units). Access to the site would be from the A1068, using the existing entrance.

This application raises a number of practical concerns, strategic planning questions, and issues of democratic principle.

There have already been a number of objections based on practical concerns such as the safety implications of mixing heavy agricultural equipment with a residential com-

munity. These concerns are real and valid, but they will need to be addressed when there is a specific proposal, not on the basis of an outline.

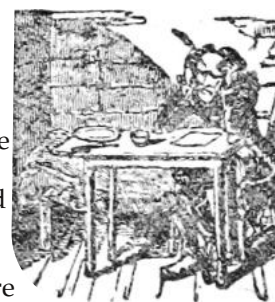
In terms of planning the future of the town, account needs to be taken of the shortage of land for housing, and the limited choice of employment land. There will always be difficult decisions on how scarce resources are best used. With ready access to the town centre and the road networks; and with good communication links, this site has attractions as either residential or employment land. On balance we would prefer it to remain for employment, but have sympathy with those who would prefer it to be used for housing. However, the more important issue is how such decisions should be taken. This application is a direct challenge to the principles of Neighbourhood Planning. The draft policy in the Neighbourhood Plan states "*Proposals for the re-use or redevelopment of existing main industrial sites will be supported provided that they contribute to the creation and retention of employment and/or re-investment in the built fabric and infrastructure of these employment areas. Housing (C3) and retail (A1) will not be permitted on these sites*". Whether we agree or not, the community should have a say. The right mechanism is the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is no immediate need for a decision on this site, and we expect the neighbourhood plan to be agreed this year. In our view this application should be rejected, on principle. Controversial decisions that will affect the future of our town should be resolved by democratic debate, not opportunistic moves by landowners. To approve this proposal now would undermine the principles of Neighbourhood Planning. We also note that, once again, there is no adequate provision for affordable housing. But perhaps the most shocking aspect of this proposal is that the County Council has put its name to it. Clearly, this is a situation where the community is going to have to rely on our elected representatives to give us a voice.

An application has been submitted from Specsavers for refurbishment of the former Collectibles shop. This is a visible and sensitive location, and we have some reservations about inconsistencies in the details of the application, particularly in relation to the colours for the background fascia in the entablature. However, we have found nothing that could be regarded as unacceptable, and on balance we have to agree with the conservation officer: "*the refurbishment and re-use of a commercial property will ultimately serve to protect and enhance building fabric, character and vibrancy of this part of the market town*".

Proposals to demolish and replace an extension at Gleadlands Lodge (Green Batt), and return the building to residential use, with garden studio are very welcome. The structure has suffered badly from neglect, and is in poor condition. A solution is long overdue, and we have commented to support this application which, if granted, will rescue a listed building which is in danger of collapse.

We have submitted a comment on an application to replace modern windows with Georgian style 12 pane sash windows at 10 Lisburn Street. This is a change that we welcome and support. The applicant is to be congratulated for taking a pro-active approach to improving the appearance of this part of the conservation area.



News in Brief

Echoing the spirit of the 1873 article on page six, *"another year has dawned, which for aught we can tell might prove - and why should it not - the beginning of a brighter era"*.

So, we start by welcoming the creation of a path from the Limes onto the Summer Seats footpath. This should provide a useful connection between those

living to the north-west of the town, and facilities to the south and east. Already we've heard this described as a "canny wee gap". Amid concerns about development, let's not lose sight of signs of progress. Not least, on the Maltings, Northumberland Hall, Lion Bridge, the new High School, Hope House Farm, and numerous small, sensitive and important improvements across the town. These include a noticeable shift towards re-introducing wooden sash windows in traditional style.

Northumberland County Council have asked the Town Council for views on the extent of the 20 mph zones outside schools, and whether permanent or flashing time-limited signs are preferred. The feedback at St. Paul's R.C. School was for flashing, time-limited signs from the Oaks roundabout to Barter Books. Because the new High School would be used outside school hours, the feedback was for permanent 20mph signs for the whole of Taylor Drive, through the junction with Weavers Way, to the new crossing at Arkle Court and up to the bus turning circle in the other direction.

The Town Council has received feedback from NCC on various transport issues under consideration for the 2016/7 round of Local Transport Plan funding. These include speed reduction measures, such as new gateway treatments to emphasise the approaches into Alnwick, and highlight the 30-mph speed limit. These will be implemented on Clayport Bank, Denwick Lane, Alnmouth Road and South

Road. This scheme has been designed and is being programmed for construction, but the start date is to be confirmed. NCC are also investigating

interactive signs as part of the scheme on Clayport Bank.

Dropped kerbs have been provided on Wagonway Road and Victoria Terrace. Two locations have been agreed for improved pedestrian crossings on South Road.

These are a puffin crossing just south of the Royal Oaks Estate access road, and a zebra crossing may replace the existing pedestrian refuge on the northern leg of the Oaks roundabout (where the existing pedestrian refuge is). Improvements will also be made on South Road to alleviate road safety concerns for children crossing on the route to school. Further speed surveys will be carried out on Clayport Bank once new speed reduction measures are in place. A light controlled crossing on Clayport Bank will then be investigated. Measures are also being investigated to assist pedestrians in crossing the complicated Wagonway Road / South Road Junction.

It is also intended to consult later this financial year on preliminary proposals for improved streetscape for the town centre. The initial proposals are likely to include providing more space for pedestrians on Narrowgate and part of Bondgate Within.

British Telecommunications plc is proposing to remove 23 phone boxes in the Alnwick area. Northumberland County Council has objected to the removal of six of these, at Callaly, and Whittingham (x 2), because of poor mobile signal, and a high proportion of elderly residents who do not use mobile phones; at Dunstan because of poor mobile phone signal, and at Wagonway Road and West Acres in Alnwick. No objections were raised to removal of phone boxes at Abbeylands, Bolton, Chathill, Denwick, Edlingham, Eglington, Embleton, Hampeth, Hedgeley, Longhoughton, Newton by the Sea, North Charlton, Rennington, Rock, Shilbottle (x 2), and South Charlton.

The County Council has updated their policy on enforcement action for offences that could be broadly described as environmental, or related to cleaner and safer neigh-

bourhoods. Examples include Dog control (including dog fouling), Littering, Fly tipping,

Nuisance Parking, Abandoning a vehicle, Graffiti and Flyposting, and consuming alcohol in public spaces. Fixed Penalty Notices are an essential part of the Council's approach and the number issued by enforcement officers has significantly increased. Normally the Council would issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to a first time offender. Where the offender has a history of committing the same or similar offence, and earlier fixed penalties or court fines have not deterred them from reoffending then prosecution will normally follow. Any fines collected will only be spent on related functions of the Council (as required by Government guidance). The new penalties are at the high end of the guidance, but comparable to neighbouring councils. Examples of the increased fixed penalty, and reductions for prompt payment (in brackets):

- Failure to comply with a Public Spaces Protection Order (e.g. dog control, dog fouling, consuming alcohol in public spaces) £100 (£80)
- Littering £80 (£60)
- Fly tipping £400 (£300)

Members will welcome effective enforcement in these areas, and will want to play their part. To report an incident call 0345 600 6400, or see: <http://tiny-url.com/glk23jm>

The County Council is in the middle of a three-year, £25 million project to replace street lighting with new LED technology. Work is now under way in Alnwick. LED lights will reduce energy costs by more than 60% and the cost of maintenance by 60%. Financial savings will ultimately be about £300,000 per year, and the carbon footprint of the street lighting stock will reduce by more than 5,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The new lights are designed to reduce light pollution, and help crime reduction (they result in better images captured at night on CCTV). They include technology that enables street lighting to be dimmed at certain times, and the council are looking at doing so between midnight and 6am. All these are considerations that members will surely welcome.

But what do you make of the aesthetic impact of the new lighting on the conservation area? We would be interested to hear your views.



ADNP Consultation

It's worth taking stock of how things stand on the Neighbourhood Plan for Alnwick and Denwick before we move to the next stage.

Neighbourhood planning was introduced to give communities the opportunity to shape how their area should grow and change. The Localism Act of 2011 gives us, the community, an opportunity to develop a shared vision for our area, then influence subsequent development.

An application was made to designate Alnwick and Denwick as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in summer 2012 and it was designated in April 2013.

Members of the Steering Group worked hard through 2012 to research the issues, and identify options. A consultation was held on the resulting paper in winter 2012 and the feedback used to prepare a draft plan through 2013 and 2014.

Following further consultation, Alnwick Town Council, in partnership with Denwick Parish Council, submitted their proposed neighbourhood development plan to Northumberland County Council, and it was published in October and November 2015.

An Independent Examiner was then appointed by the County Council, to examine the plan, and report back. The role of the Independent Examiner is to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the "basic conditions", set out in the Localism Act.

The plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

The examiner praised a number of aspects of the plan, including the use of Community Action Proposals to ensure that the plan does not lose sight of important local concerns that cannot be addressed by land use planning policies.

Crucially, the examiner concluded that the plan met the basic conditions, and recommended that it should proceed to a referendum. However, this was subject to a number of modifica-

tions. He also noted the tremendous community effort and sustained commitment that had gone into the plan, and described much of the plan, and its supporting information as being of an exceptionally high standard. The examiner also commented that the plan included 63 separate policies. While there is no limit, this is a large number and represents an ambitious approach.

For the plan to progress, it must meet the basic conditions, and some of the policies failed to do so.

Following the examiner's report, the County Council (with Alnwick Town Council, Denwick Parish Council and the Steering Group) has been working to incorporate the findings of the independent examiner.

The County Council accepted some of the modifications, and accepted deletion of some policies. However, they felt that other policies proposed for deletion by the examiner should be retained, and this could be achieved with minor modifications.

Where the examiner and the County Council agreed there is no need for further consultation. However, modifications were required in order to retain 18 policies. These were open for consultation from November 28th till the 13th of January. Having made earlier representations, the Society was invited to comment again.

We have given the County's suggested changes careful consideration, and we concluded that we should support the modifications made by the County Council. In our view they have managed to reinstate local emphasis and context to the inspector's modified policies.

The County Council will now consider all the comments they receive, before a final version of the plan is prepared for the Local Referendum. At this point, all residents of Alnwick and Denwick will have the chance to vote on whether the neighbourhood plan should form the basis of planning decisions in Alnwick and Denwick.

For the plan to be adopted, it must receive majority support from the local community. If more than 50% vote in favour, the council must adopt it as new planning policy. We hope members will vote.

Full details can be found on the County Council web site:

<http://tinyurl.com/hz8dg5q>

The Alnwick Mercury.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1873.

THE NEW YEAR.

The period of retrospection has now past and that of hopeful anticipation has taken its place. At the close of the Old Year it was but natural that we should all look back, review the chances and changes, the alterations of hope and fear, of sorrow and joy, of storm and calm, prosperity and adversity, which, during the twelve months that have glided by, have been the common lot of individuals, of communities, and of nations. Much there may be to regret in such a retrospect, and under any circumstances can hardly fail to produce even out of pleasant memories, a certain feeling of sadness, when it is remembered that the past cannot be lived over again. But now all that is changed. The night has given place to the morning; another year has dawned, which, for aught we can tell, may prove—and why should it not?—the beginning of a brighter era in the world's history. It lies before us, a virgin page to be inscribed by the pen of History with characters of good or evil import, according as the case may be. What is to come is hid from our eyes, but at this season, if at any we may well be justified in preferring to indulge in cheerful anticipation, for we all feel a new starting-point has been reached, and we therefore are ready to exclaim with one consent, "Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest!" Though storms have swept over the land, proved the rivers in deluge over the plains, and strewed the coast with shipwrecks, yet it is pleasant to reflect that in the political world there is peace everywhere—peace almost as universal as reigned throughout the world at the Nativity of the world's Redeemer. We might without much exaggeration apply to this present time the glorious lines of the poet:—

"No war or battle's sound
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng."

We know indeed that it is vain to indulge in the expectation that this state of things is in no danger of being disturbed; but at least we see no immediate cause why it should not last for some time to come. For the nations are in need of rest. France is not likely to court another struggle for many a day, Russia seems to know how to attain her ends without fighting, and Germany appears to be awaking to the conviction that

"Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war."

We in England may for our part hope that as time rolls on the prejudices that divide one class of society from another may be gradually done away with, and that the various classes of which society is composed may cause to lie one over the other in strata inexorably distinct in character, but may be fused into a more homogenous mass: so shall the English be *one people* in a fuller sense of the word than they have ever yet been, and so shall England continue to lead the nations as of old in their course towards that state of things, distant, it may be, but not, we hope, unattainable—

"When each shall find his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,
And gathering all the fruits of Peace, and crown'd
With all her flowers."

Surge in Heritage Interest

"Heritage Counts" is the annual audit of England's heritage, produced by Historic England on behalf of the Historic Environment Forum. The latest report, published in December 2016, shows that visits to historic sites are growing, membership of heritage organisations is increasing and participation in heritage is becoming more inclusive.

Three quarters of the adult population participated in heritage activity last year. English Heritage, the National Trust and the Historic Houses Association increased membership (10%, 8% and 11% respectively).

Heritage appeals to people from all walks of life. Participation is rising fastest among adults from lower socio-economic groups and Black and Minority Ethnic groups. There has been a dramatic decrease in the participation gap between least and most deprived communities.

These reports emphasise that heritage is being used to help shape both national and local identity, and maximise the value of a place for residents and visitors. Trends toward devolution and localism mean that local place-making is increasingly important for local economies and communities.

The research shows that heritage is being used to enhance local pride, provide places with a unique selling point and to attract visitors - but also strengthen the quality of life for residents and businesses. Local organisations, such as Business Improvement Districts, are using heritage to shape the image and identity of their local communities. 89% of Business Improvement Districts feel that heritage plays an im-

portant role in the image and identity of the district. Half rated heritage as being important to achieving their objectives.

In November, just before these reports were published, Northumberland was announced as the winner of the Silver award in the Best UK Holiday Destination / County at the 2016 British Travel Awards. So it is interesting that the

Northumberland "Independent Spirit" brand has been built around promoting Northumberland's unique cultural heritage, traditions and landscapes, with historic market towns promoted as the jewels in the crown.

Heritage makes us happy

Survey responses show that heritage plays an important part in our well-being and quality of life. People who visit heritage sites report that they are happier than those who do not. 56% of adults surveyed agree that their local area's heritage is important for their own sense of identity.

Heritage develops connections between people and groups in local areas. Over 90% agreed that investment in the historic environment had resulted in a nicer place in which to live, work and socialise, as well as creating a more attractive visitor destination.

However, in an uncertain world, perhaps the most striking finding of all is the view from Historic England that our shared heritage and history is an important source of identity and stability.

More details can be found on the Historic England web site: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/>



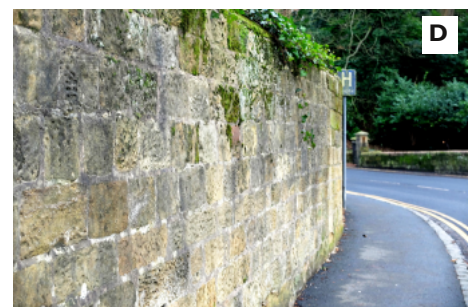
Quiz: Conservation Area Boundary

How familiar are members of the Civic Society with the boundaries of Alnwick Conservation Area?

Here we present eight pictures taken in, and around, the current Conservation Area boundaries. Can you identify these different locations?

We are feeling generous, so bonus points are available. The Conservation Area boundary doesn't always run where people might think. Can you also say which of these locations fall on the boundary, which inside, and which of them fall outside the Conservation Area boundary?

The answers are on the back page, but rather than cheating, you might want to revisit Page-3 for some useful hints.



Diary dates

Civic Society...

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 8th March at 7:30pm in St. James Centre, Pottergate. If you are interested in joining the committee, or helping in any other way, then this would be a good time to get in touch. If you didn't receive a nomination form with this newsletter, then they are available on request.

At the AGM we will have Dave Campbell as our guest. Dave is the Alnwick Town Champion at Northumberland County Council. The role of Town Champions is to work with a variety of stakeholders, share information and promote the delivery of County Council plans in their town. There is no shortage of matters to discuss, so we hope you will bring your questions for Dave Campbell to the meeting.

Our summer outing is planned for late June, as a tour of Alnmouth, led by Tessa Percy, and will include a visit to Alnmouth Friary. We will provide more details in the next newsletter.

Our next newsletter is planned for early May. Suggestions for items that will interest our readers are always welcome.

...and more

Howick Hall, re - opens 11th Feb for the *Festival of Snowdrops*

Alnwick History Society: next meeting at Bailiffgate Museum, 7:30p.m. on 28th Feb, 2017: *The Old Great North Road*, Alistair Sinton

Wallington: *Ranger Walk, Rothley Lake*. 7th Mar, 13:00 - 15:30. Originally designed by 'Capability' Brown to be a fishing lake but now a top spot for wildlife. Boating essential.

Bailiffgate Museum: *Illustrating Harry Potter* from March - late June. Showcasing original illustrations, sketches, models and final prints from the new edition of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, illustrated by Jim Kay.

Cragside: 5th April, 13:00-15:00 *Turning Water into Light*, a 3 mile walk with engineer Robin Wright to hear about Lord Armstrong and his lifelong passion for water power at the first place to be lit by hydroelectricity. No booking needed.

About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in the 1970s, 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.



Who's Who?

President: Philip Deakin

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

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Other Executive Committee members:

John Hipwell

Mary McIlroy Hipwell

Elizabeth Jones

Brian Lamb

David Lovie (davidlovie307@btinternet.com)

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

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Twitter: @AlnwickCivicSoc

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

Quiz Answers

- A) Clayport Bank, steps above Lisburn Street (on the boundary)
- B) Gas Lamp fitting, near the Pant in Walkergate (inside the boundary)
- C) Castle Railings, Bailiffgate / Peth (inside the boundary)
- D) Wall, north side of Denwick Lane (on the boundary)
- E) Lion Bridge, parapet (outside the boundary, which ends north of Walkergate)
- F) Canongate, Mayor's Column (outside the boundary, which doesn't cover the West side of the road)
- G) Police Station, Prudhoe Street (inside the boundary)



Stop the presses:

As we head to the printers we have a question for members:

What is the best use for an empty bank?

100 years ago:

Newcastle Daily Journal, Saturday Feb 3rd, 1917.

The Pinfold, in the Green Batt, Alnwick, is being taken down for restoration, its wall having become dangerous. Like to Bondgate or Hotspur's Tower, from which the "Pumfaad" is only about 100 yards distant, it is one of the features of olden Alnwick, and is the property of the burgesses of the ancient borough.