

Alnwick Civic Society Newsletter

May 2017

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Notice board

Our Summer Outing to Alnmouth is planned for 10th June. Get in touch with one of the committee if you would like to join us.

We plan to hold our annual Any Questions event in October. Look out for details in the August Newsletter.

Our "Heritage Heroes" project will celebrate the Conservation Area by describing the story of the town through the eyes of those who have helped to identify, protect, and interpret Alnwick's fine built heritage. We are looking for help with writing, research, dissemination, promotion, and project management. Please get in touch if you are able to contribute.

ADNP Referendum on June 15th: see back page.



Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting was held on 8th March, at St James Centre.

Peter Ennor welcomed all, and reported on the year. The Society continued to be involved with the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and it was disappointing that after five years there was still no date for a referendum. Delays played into the hands of those with a financial interest in major developments, which (ironically) included Northumberland County Council. Other concerns included the threat posed to Alnwick's traditional town centre by the development of 'New Alnwick' to the South. The dominance of the motor car discouraged visitors to the town centre, and proposals for a play park at the Garden would encourage more visitors to spend time and money outside the centre. The Society would continue to press for investment in infrastructure, affordable housing, and diverse employment opportunities.

The Society continued to comment on planning applications and work with the Town Council on local travel and transport issues. It was planning to raise awareness of Alnwick, its history and conservation by publishing and distributing a booklet on the subject of Alnwick's Heritage Heroes.

Gill Parker presented the financial statement. Income had exceeded expenditure by £808.40, including a grant of £600.00 from North of England Civic Trust towards the Alnwick Heritage Heroes project. At the end of the year the Society had 23 single members, 15 joint members, 6 business members and 15 honorary members.

Philip Deakin continued as President. Peter Ennor, Gill Parker and Sue Smith were re-elected as Chairman, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary respectively. Peter advised that this would be his seventh year as Chairman and he would like to make it his last. Elizabeth Jones, David Lovie, Peter Reed, Brian Lamb, John Hipwell and Mary McIlroy Hipwell were re-elected as members of the Executive Committee.

A range of topics was then discussed, including the lack of attendance by members at events and the role and influence

of the Society. Strong views were expressed about the need for a better play park in the town and the possible loss of the playing fields at the Duke's School. There were also strong feelings about proposals for the Column Field and it was agreed that this was an important and valuable open space and that no change was justified. The relocation of the Tourist Information Centre as part of proposals to concentrate local authority services at the Playhouse was regarded by most as a backward step. The poor state of the bus station was raised as a problem.

After conclusion of AGM business, the Chairman introduced Dave Campbell, the Alnwick Town Champion from Northumberland County Council.

Dave is involved in the Council's review of its buildings portfolio and its estates transformation programme. The main aims of the review were to make more efficient use of County Council buildings, to improve service provision and to reduce costs. His job as town champion was to facilitate the flow of information between the local authority, stakeholders and the local community. He stressed that the voice of bodies such as the Civic Society was listened to (if not always acted upon).

The main feature of the review and transformation programme was the bringing together of Council services for local people in one location. Alnwick Playhouse had been chosen to provide one-stop access to services including customer services, the library and tourist information. Completion of the project was likely in summer 2018. The development of a new Council depot and fire station at the Lionheart Enterprise Park was imminent. Various other properties in Alnwick were being sold, or leases surrendered. The buildings on the former high school site were to be demolished and the future of the site was under discussion.

A lively discussion continued on the state of the public toilets, the lack of affordable housing and the loss of playing fields.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Dave before closing the meeting.

Alnwick Improvement Act, 1822

The Alnwick Improvement Act of 1822 addressed Lighting, Paving, Cleansing, Watching, and otherwise Improving the Town of Alnwick.

The first Improvement Commissioners had been established a couple of centuries earlier to deal with sewerage in the City of London and Westminster. These were followed by various Harbour Commissioners, Police Commissioners and Street Commissioners in the 18th century. By the 19th century older forms of local government were poorly equipped to deal with expanding towns and cities. Altogether around 300 Improvement Boards were created, each by a private Act of Parliament, termed an Improvement Act.

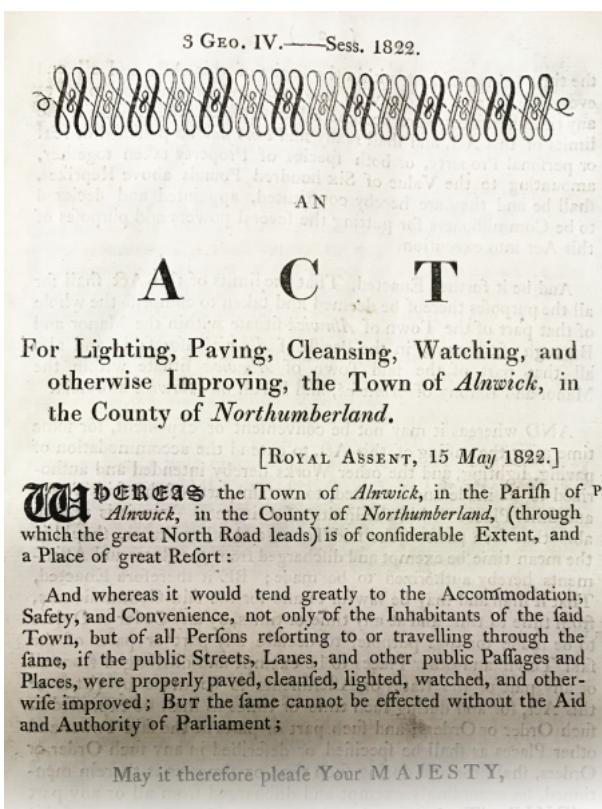
The powers of each Board varied, but (as they did in Alnwick) they typically included street paving, cleansing, lighting, providing watchmen and dealing with various public nuisances.

In 1822 law enforcement was administered locally. Improvement Acts from the 1730's had often included provision for paid watchmen or constables to patrol towns at night. In the early 1800's, some authorities began improving local policing. The City of Glasgow Police, dating from 1800, has been described as the first professional police force in Britain. Industrial towns such as Rochdale (1825), and Oldham (1827) passed acts to improve policing. The Metropolitan Police Act (1829) established a full-time, professional and centrally-organised police force for the greater London area. The idea of professional policing was taken up by Sir Robert Peel when he became Home Secretary (in the same year as the Alnwick Improvement Act was passed).

Eleven years later, in 1833 the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations examined the affairs of the town. The commissioner who visited Alnwick (rejoicing in the name of Fortunatus Dwarris) reported that the town was well lighted with gas, the streets paved and flagged respectably, that there were no watchmen, but there was a constable appointed under this act, who visited all parts of the town at night.

Improvement Commissioners were gradually superseded, and their powers absorbed by reformed municipal boroughs (from 1835) and boards of health (from 1848). Alnwick was not included in the 1835 Municipal Reform Act, and it was not until 1894 that Alnwick Urban District Council was created. The responsibilities of the Improvement Commissioners were taken over by Alnwick and Canongate Board of Health, when it was formed in 1850.

In 1822 Alnwick was adopting a long-established model for delivering local services. With hindsight it was a model that lacked democratic accountability, and had limited ambition. Elsewhere, at the same time, newer and more



ambitious models of local government were emerging, that would later result in the creation of the Alnwick Poor Law Union in 1834, Northumberland County Constabulary in 1857, and Alnwick and Canongate Board of Health in 1850.

Extracts from the Act read:

"And be it further enacted that the said Commissioners may, and they are hereby empowered, if they shall think fit and necessary, from time to time to appoint a sufficient number of fit and able-bodied men to patrol, watch and guard the said streets, lanes, and other public passages and places within the limits of this act, or any part or parts thereof, for and during such periods of the year as the said Commissioners shall think fit, and to make such allowances to such watchmen for their trouble and attendance, and to give such orders and directions concerning the manner in which the watchmen shall be

armed, and stationed for the due and regular performance of their said service, as the said Commissioners shall judge proper and expedient, and from time to time to remove any of the said watchmen, and appoint others in their stead,

"And be it further enacted that the said commissioners may from time to time place and fix boxes against the sides of houses, buildings and proper places in streets, lanes, or the public passages and places within the limits of this act, proper for the use and accommodation of watchmen, in case they shall think proper to appoint watchmen for the safety and protection of the inhabitants thereof; and in case any person or persons shall displace, overturn, damage or injure such boxes when so fixed, such person or persons shall for every such offence forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding five pounds".

"And be it further enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the said commissioners to cause rewards in money to be paid out of the monies arising by virtue of this act, to the watchmen appointed or to be appointed, who may be disabled or wounded in the execution of their office, as they the said commissioners shall think reasonable."

"And be it further enacted that if such watchmen, or any of them shall not observe, enforce and keep the orders, rules and regulations, which shall be made for the purposes aforesaid by the said Commissioners, or shall in any manner neglect their duties, every person so offending shall forfeit and pay for every such neglect or offence, any sum not exceeding forty shillings, and shall, if the commissioners think proper, be immediately discharged from his office or employment".

"And be it further enacted, that if any victualler or keeper of a Public House, shall knowingly and willingly harbour, or entertain any watchman to be employed under, or by virtue of this act, or permit or suffer such Watchman to remain in his or her Public House during my part of the time appointed for his being on duty as aforesaid, every such Victualler or Keeper of a Public House shall for such an offence forfeit a sum not exceeding Twenty Shillings".

Some 19th Century Planning Controversies

Pottergate Tower Lantern

Tate, History of Alnwick

Of the appearance of the old Pottergate Tower we know nothing; but in 1767 arrangements were made for rebuilding it; Mr. Bell, who had been architect of the Town hall spire, first made a plain plan, which Joseph Brook engaged to complete for £270; then the plan was made ornamental which involved an additional cost of £64; and at last the tower was surmounted by a spire, which added £94 more to the expense. The architect was paid £3 3s. for his plan, and £10 10s. for his inspecting the building; and the whole when completed cost about £580. On April 28th, 1768, the foundation stone was laid, when there were "music and drink, wine and punch to treat the company." The old clock was removed from the Town hall to this tower in 1772.



This tower which was sixty feet high, was in the pseudo-Gothic style of the period; but its grand peculiarity was the spire—a lantern, resembling that of St. Nicholas' Church in Newcastle. Doubtless, purists in architecture could find abundance of fault with the work; yet the men of Alnwick, belonging to the generation now passing away, regarded this tower as the chief ornament and wonder of the town. How, when a boy winding my way to school up the steep of Pottergate, did I gaze with affection and admiration on this beautiful tower crowning the crest of the hill! and I cannot help denouncing the ruthless men who robbed it of its glory. There were high winds in the winter of 1812, which, say the Common Council, damaged the tower and made the upper part unsafe; and therefore they ordered that the spire be taken down and the upper part finished with an open battlement as before, and four corner turrets and vanes. But the reason for the demolition was insufficient, as the damage could have been completely repaired; and plans were laid before the body both by Mr. Henry Hunter and my father, shewing that it could be done; but jobbery seems to have been in the ascendant; and this beautiful spire was pulled down by order.

Northumberland Hall

The Sanitary Condition of Alnwick, Alnwick Mercury, 1st April, 1862

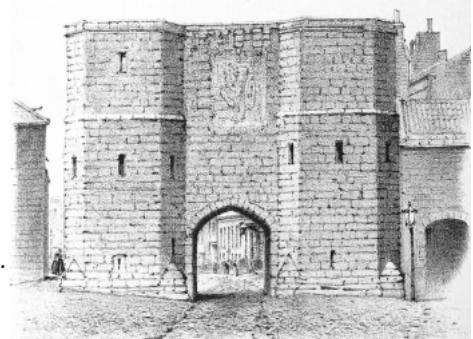
The centre of the Market-Place is occupied by the Assembly-Rooms, 1825, which are built over an arcaded series of butcher's lock-up shops: they are so unsightly in form and design, so innocent of anything like architectural effect that they may be considered to be well-entitled to the name by which they have been comically dubbed - the "one big stane".

Bondgate Tower

Local Notes, Alnwick Mercury, 26th April, 1873

I was very much surprised to observe, from the proceedings of the Board of Health reported in your columns last week, that certain members of the Board entertain views which if carried out might lead to the pulling down of Hotspur Tower. Such a thing cannot be too earnestly deprecated. It does not appear that the Tower is an obstruction to ordinary traffic and as for travelling vans and carts loaded with hay or straw they have always, in the last resort, a road open to them along the Green Bat and into Clayport. Some years ago the Duke of Northumberland made considerable alterations to improve the road in Monkhouse Square, by taking down property which he owned there where the road was narrowest; and this was done, I believe to obviate in some degree the inconvenience that might arise from some vehicles not being able to get

through the Tower. Mr Ainsley talks of improving the south entrance to the town, but I do not think he will find many to agree with him that that entrance would be improved by the removal of the Tower. Quite the contrary. The street would be completely spoiled by its removal. Let any one imagine to himself for a moment what sort of appearance Bondgate would have without it! Of course, if the Duke should prove willing to make a road round it for traffic by pulling down the property adjacent to it on the south side, no one would complain, and an undoubted improvement would be effected; but that is a very different thing from asking for pulling down of the Tower, and it is to be regretted that the two things were ever mixed up as they have been. The Committee will of course collect all the information that can be had as to former agreements and proposals on the subject; but we have little doubt that the Tower, having stood so long already, will survive a good many debates yet.



Green Batt Pump

Report on Meeting of the Board of Health, Alnwick Mercury, 21st October, 1882

The chairman read the analysis of Stevenson Macadam, Esq of Edinbro' which showed that the water in this pump was unfit for household use. Mr Ainsley said that this pump ought to be abolished

Mr W Turnbull said the pump had been used for a long time now, and had never poisoned anyone yet. Dr Candleigh asked how he knew that.

Mr Skelly said that knowing the feeling of the people about this district they should be very careful what they did away with. When these pants were handed over to the board by the freemen it was with the distinct understanding that the board maintain them. He thought the matter should be referred to the committee for consideration

Dr Candleigh said it was an axiom in Sanitary Science that what is not fit for public use should be done away with. They had before them a report from a gentleman who had given an impartial judgement and from that report it seemed they had got a public nuisance in this pump. They could not get over the analysis.

Letter to the Board of Health, 28th October 1882

Gentlemen, we the undersigned inhabitants of Green Bat and the streets and lanes leading therefrom view with deep concern the bare possibility of being deprived altogether of the Green Bat Pant; and respectfully ask your board as the custodians of the said pant not to think of removing it; but rather that you will employ every available means to ascertain and remove the cause of contamination. We believe it will be found to be purely local and therefore removable. It can be vouched for, that this pant has been used exclusively by different individuals for many years without detriment to their health, excepting about 10 years ago when the water became contaminated in consequence of a leak in a neighbouring sewer. On that occasion the board remedied the defect, and the water was alright again. Hoping you will take this petition into your favourable consideration. We beg to subscribe ourselves. Your obedient servants. (list of 230 persons living in the neighbourhood).

Planning matters

The draft Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of protecting the main approaches to Alnwick town centre; to maintain the sense of arrival that contributes so much to the visitor experience.

Others think differently.

The removal of waiting restrictions on a section of Bondgate Within, near the Tower, and their replacement with permitted 2 hour disc parking will create three extra parking spaces, but obscure the start of the historic "wagon road" which is one of the unusual historical features that help to make Alnwick Conservation Area special. We have also pointed out the safety implications that will result from reversing into a main carriageway, with limited visibility through the Tower. With the support of Councillor Cairns and Alnwick in Bloom we obtained a consultation and proposed an alternative scheme, but we understand that we were out-voted, so this scheme is going ahead.

Bondgate Without provides a fine introduction to Alnwick for the majority of visitors, approaching via South Road or Denwick Lane. Its importance is recognised in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to protect the main approaches and gateways to the town centre, not least in order to emphasise to visitors the unique quality of place. So we have also objected to an application for retrospective permission to retain four wall-mounted projecting signs at number 19 (Keith Pattinson). These are prominent and unsightly banners on the public face of the property. More suited to a modern shopping precinct than to a traditional street of varied frontages, they jar with the general ambience of Bondgate Without. We recommend that the banners and mountings are removed and the stone frontage of the property made good. It is important that the message is sent out to all prospective developers that they will not be able to get away with making changes, especially within the conservation area, without prior approval. In the long run it is in the interests of us all, developers included, that the essential character of the conservation area is protected for the appreciation of townspeople and visitors alike.

We have also objected to a variation in an approved plan for windows on the same property. The use of powder coated aluminium frames to the window bays is inappropriate within the conservation area and out of keeping with surrounding properties. Current advice on shopfront design, inherited from the former District Council, advocates the use of traditional materials. We also noted the provision of "new timber windows to entire elevation to match original sliding sash factory finished in white" on the plans and elevations and trust that this means that the current horizontal hinged outward opening windows, installed at the time of the bay window alterations, will be replaced with genuine sash windows.

Play village

It is not clear whether this application will now proceed, but we have objected because of the negative impact it would have on the Grade 1 listed Capability Brown park abutting Alnwick Castle. We wish to associate ourselves with the observations made by Historic England, The Gardens Trust (opposite) and the Georgian Society.

The Design and Access Statement considers vistas from the site of the application and from the adjacent highways but does not assess the view to the site from within the listed parkland, notably from the north bank of the River Aln - the Pastures. Surely the quality of any park is judged by the views within that park, from all angles, ahead of views

into that park from surrounding roads? We also objected to the lack of detail in what is said to be a full application. Many lesser applications have failed to be validated, or have been referred back to the applicant, for lack of relevant information on size, construction and materials. It is surprising that this application passed the validation process at all: let alone in a single day.



The Revised Transport Assessment states that the large number of extra vehicles which would be generated by this development can be accommodated within the existing parking provision but this includes 600 spaces in the overflow car park. It assumes that visiting vehicles and occupants will spend up to 3 hours at the Garden, which is the same as is assumed for visitors to the current Garden. For this to be true there will either be no crossover between the two types of visitor, in which case the Play park could be sited elsewhere in Alnwick in a less sensitive location, or the current garden activities will lose trade to the Play Park, to the detriment of their viability. If, as we would expect, visitors stay much longer at the Garden/Play Park, the current capacity of the car park will often be exceeded during the middle of the day, most notably noon to 3pm. Even by its own calculations, the Revised Transport Assessment assumes heavy dependence on the 600 vehicle overflow car park, which is an unimproved field. With much more regular use at weekends and school holidays it will become much more churned up and potentially unusable. This problem will be exacerbated if coastal holiday-makers and others perceive the Play Park as a suitable wet weather activity.

Already at peak times, traffic can be observed queuing in both directions in order to access the main car park, on one occasion that we observed as far as the Denwick bridge, to the detriment of local traffic. This direction has priority over traffic coming from the War Memorial junction, which uses the short right turning lane just over the brow of the rise on the approach. Already, when traffic is unable to access this lane it is forced to queue back into the main north-east bound carriageway to the danger of through traffic. Other significant queues occur at the War Memorial junction, which can only become further congested at peak exit times. At the very least a proper junction assessment needs to be made of this junction and if necessary a S106 agreement put in place to improve traffic flow there.

The footpath between the overflow car park and the garden entrance is already too narrow for safe use by family groups and would need to be widened to accommodate the extra footfall which will arise.

The new development will result in additional employment in Alnwick but many of the jobs on offer will be low quality seasonal jobs and not the sort of employment which will encourage young people to move to or stay in Alnwick or give them the means to buy their own properties to settle or remain here. Also, by taking the centre of gravity and focus of the Alnwick Garden away from the town it will discourage visitors from exploring the town.

We are not against the Play Park idea in principle and would support it if it were to be built in a less sensitive location closer to or within the town itself. We urge Northumberland county Council to disallow the application in its current form.

Play Village

We felt that the comments on the proposed play area from Historic England and the Gardens Trust were worth quoting in full.

Historic England said...

Together Alnwick Castle and its designated park and garden form one of the most important castle estates within England; this is reflected by the former being a grade I listed building and the latter a grade I registered park and garden. The part of the park and garden to the north of castle called the North Demesne was created in the 1770's by the pre-eminent 18th century landscape designer Lancelot Capability Brown, whose 300th anniversary was celebrated nationally and internationally last year. Brown's extensive shaping of the River Aln and its river valley as it passes before the castle created a harmonious and unified experience of landscape and history that can still be readily appreciated today and which must rank amongst his most memorable achievements. Consequently, the North Demesne is a sensitive historic landscape

central to the significance of the grade I registered park and it makes a major contribution to the significance of the grade I castle through forming its immediate setting to its north.

The proposal is located within a dene in the North Demesne to the east of the castle and just south of the River Aln.

Although it is only a small portion of the overall parkland area the proposed development in this location will be highly visible in Brown's landscape which forms part of the setting of Alnwick Castle. The proposed play village is completely at odds with this historic location: a concentrated development in a largely undeveloped open landscape. It comprises structures and buildings whose style is unconnected with their surroundings and in a location and of such a scale that they cannot fail to be noticeable in the wider landscape and the immediate setting of the Castle.

The resulting impact would be highly damaging to the historic environment as it will conspicuously intrude into the harmonious landscape that underpins the significance of the registered park and garden and the setting of the grade I listed castle. We consider that this would constitute substantial harm to the significance of both highly graded heritage assets and fail to preserve the setting of a listed building in accordance with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Likewise the application is contrary to saved and emerging local development plan policies and guidance on the historic environment and landscape and to paragraphs 132 and 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Any harm to heritage assets requires clear and convincing justification, with substantial harm to a grade I registered park and garden and grade I listed building being wholly exceptional. We consider that the scale of public benefit required would have to be substantial and clearly established to meet the requirements of policy. We do not consider that this has been demonstrated.

Newsletter

Considering this, Historic England strongly objects to this application. We ask that if the proposal is to be considered by planning committee, that you inform us of the committee date and send us a copy of the committee report so we can consider its contents. Also, should you be minded to grant permission we would need to consider whether to request that the Secretary of State call in the application for his determination.

The Gardens Trust said...

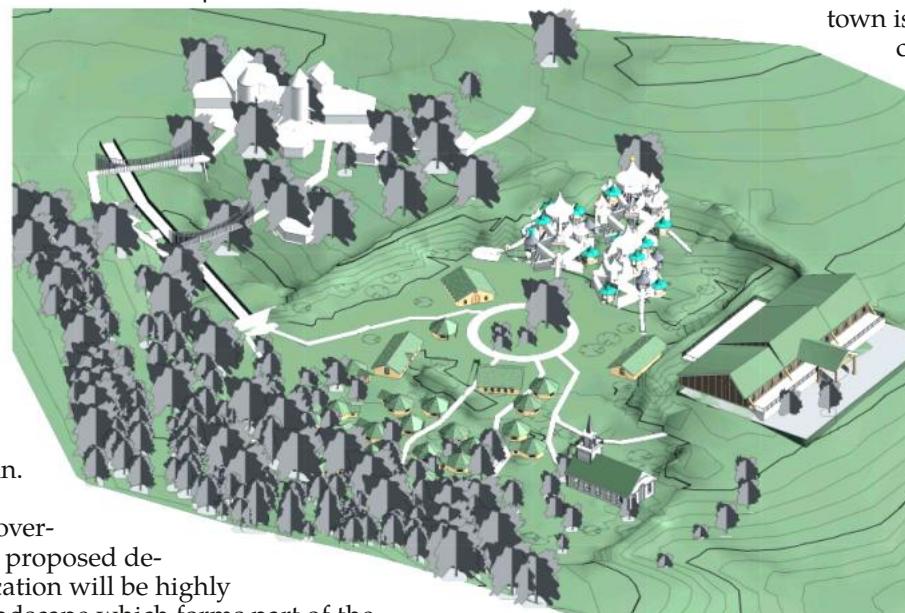
2016 was the tercentenary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Last year's Capability Brown festivities, brought international prominence to arguably England's most famous landscaper, which of course has particular resonance in Northumberland, his birthplace, and Alnwick was one of his principal commissions. His work provides the setting for the Castle and its views, a fact acknowledged in the Design and Access statement (2.3 – The landscape around

Alnwick Castle has been designed so that the town is not in view of the castle with principal

views over the North Demesne (the area of the Grade I registered Park and Garden within

which the site lies). Given all of that it seems ironic that so soon after a national celebration of his work, which has been hugely beneficial in terms of tourism and a wider understanding and appreciation of his work, that the proposed new visitor attraction (the Long Hall mainly) has

been put in what is one of the most important Alnwick views. It will also be very visible from the parkland on the east side of the Aln, a key area of the Brown design. The enormous play village "a benchmark for outdoor play around the world and a standalone visitor attraction" (1.0) would very seriously compromise the very historical asset the estate seeks to promote. The Design and Access statement (3.3) mentions that "parts of the site were ... lowered and raised to allow inclusive access" but no consideration appears to have been given to the effect the play village would have on the significance and understanding of the heritage asset. Its very size prevents any kind of screening and amelioration of the negative impact on one of the highest profile areas of the Brown landscape, compromising a visitor's ability to appreciate his historic legacy. NPPF advises that significance "can be harmed ... (by) development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm ... should require clear and convincing justification." (NPPF para.132). There is nothing in the application to substantiate this requirement. The development would also appear to be contrary to Alnwick Town Council and Denwick Parish Council's own wish to preserve the unspoiled historic landscape (2.5) and indeed the principal views over the North Demesne (the area of the Grade I Registered Park and Garden within which the site lies."



News in Brief

Congratulations to our newly elected County Councillors.



The Society contributed towards the cost of the replacement Lectern Maps that have now been installed in Column Field, the Marketplace, and Bailiffgate. A fourth lectern is planned for Bondgate, but at present we do not know the exact location. Hopefully these will help the growing numbers of visitors to interpret our fine townscape, and encourage them to explore.

We have received mixed reactions to our question about the new street lighting. Of greatest concern to the Society is the future for the traditional-style standards in the conservation area. So far we have not been able to get clarification on plans for these (see Quiz).

Last year we carried out a traffic survey on Willowburn Avenue to provide a baseline before the opening of the new High School. This year we will be carrying out a further survey to assess the impact. This will be on 16 May 2017 (between 7.30 am and 9.00 am). More volunteers would be helpful, so if you would like to get involved, please contact Peter Ennor.

As local members will be aware, work is under way on the Oaks Roundabout to improve safety on routes to school. To those who complain that it will slow traffic, our response - "Yes - that's the idea". We had reservations about the overall design, but we understand that there are already indications that it is working.

Northumberland C.C. has drawn up a Local Transport Plan Programme for 2017-18, with a total value approaching £20m. Locally this includes a contribution to Aln Valley Railway, and improvements at Alnmouth Station. In the town are improvements on Narrowgate, pedestrian improvements on Wagonway Road near the Co-op, Carrigeway repairs on Upper Howick Street, Allerburn Lea, and Weavers Way. The planned spend locally comes

to just over £60 per resident. That's roughly in line with the spend per head across the county, so it's difficult to argue that Alnwick is getting less than its fair share of the total budget. Whether the budget for the whole of Northumberland is adequate is an entirely different question.

Members will recall that the Society has applied for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to produce an illustrated booklet which will describe the town's heritage through the eyes of those who have contributed to its identification, protection, and interpretation. The first response described our bid as being of good quality, but others competing for the same funding had demonstrated better value in terms of the outcomes. However, the Heritage Lottery Fund has been helping us to strengthen our case and re-submit the bid. We hope for an answer around the end of May.

Our thanks to Gordon Castle, who has kindly donated a copy of Conzen's study of Alnwick to the Society Library.

The referendum on the Neighborhood Plan is scheduled for 15th June. See back page. **This is important!**

Some long-lost banks of Alnwick

In the 1820's banking in Alnwick was handled by agents of banks based elsewhere. Joseph Hardy, at 18 Narrowgate (now Grannies), was the local agent for the Tweed Bank. This bank failed when three of the partners were declared bankrupt in 1841. The partners had some previous history, as they had earlier been involved in another failed bank before going on to form the Tweed bank.

By 1826, at 39 Fenkle Street (now Dickinsons), Edward Stamp was agent for the Newcastle Bank. He had taken over from Thomas Ferguson, who had previously operated in the Market-place. In his obituary Edward Stamp was described as "*distinguished for the punctuality and regularity of his business habits, for the sense of honour he manifested in all his transactions, and for the sterling integrity and uprightness of his moral character*". Which perhaps explains how he survived in a turbulent banking environment for 40 years.

The imposing building at 27 Fenkle Street was built around 1840 as a branch of Northumberland and Durham District Bank. In 1857, shortly after presenting accounts which showed "*a very prosperous state of things*", reality struck. They had to apply for assistance from the Bank of England, and as they could not give a satisfactory account of their true position, their request was refused. It emerged that in reality their declared assets were of dubious value, and liabilities in the region of £3m. When they became insolvent they were the principal bank in Alnwick, and it was reported that "*the gentry of the district, the tradesmen of the town, and almost every person in the neighbourhood dealt with it; and its sudden and unexpected suspension will cause extensive*

embarrassment and distress". Lambton & Co. (formerly The Bank in Newcastle, or "Nabobs' Bank" because of connections with India) took over branches of the Northumberland and Durham District Bank after the collapse. It merged with Lloyds Bank in 1908, and the building became a drill hall.

In 1810 a Savings Bank was founded in Alnwick, by local worthies. It had, according to Tate in 1848, "*always been regarded as a safe place for the investment of the savings of the industrial classes; and hence the number of depositors has been considerable, evidencing also the thrifty habits of the people in the district*". Initially the bank purchased a small house in Narrowgate, then commissioned the building between Fenkle Street and Narrowgate, which cost £2,000. It was designed in 1855 by William Smith in a style that has been described as "*playful gothic*" (Historic England), or as "*one of those expensive attempts... which did so much to bring Gothic Architecture into disrepute*" (Alnwick Mercury, 1 April 1862). As the bank grew it moved to larger premises in St. Michael's Lane and this building became a hairdresser's. The bank subsequently became part of the Trustee Savings Bank, which merged with Lloyds Bank to form Lloyds TSB Group in 1995.



Parish Hall

On 10th June we will be exploring Alnmouth for our summer outing, and we look forward to visiting the Friary.

The Friary was originally a domestic house (Lint Close). It was built between 1904-16 for Arthur Schofield, a Ship Owner and director in Reyrolles, among other companies. The Architect was W. H. Knowles (1857 – 1943), who worked extensively in Newcastle and designed the Miners' Memorial that is now at Woodhorn. Knowles was also known for his excavations of Roman and Medieval remains, and he carried out important excavations at Corbridge, Tynemouth Priory, and Alnwick Castle. After retiring he moved to Cheltenham and became Chairman of Cheltenham Civic Society.

In Alnwick Knowles designed the North Eastern Bank (now Barclays), and the Parish Hall on Canongate.

From the Alnwick Mercury, 11th May, 1912

The row of dwelling houses on Painter Hill is in process of demolition. Upon the site there is to be erected for the Duke of Northumberland a Parish Hall or Church Institute in connection

with St Michael's Church from plans prepared by Mr W. H. Knowles, F.S.A. Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The new parish hall is destined to replace the present Guild Rooms opposite the church gates, and will be used for all parochial functions. The gatherings of the Men's Guild, the Women's Working Party, the Mothers' Union, the Ruridecanal meetings, lectures, etc. will all be held under the roof of the new building, a little to the north-west of the ancient church, it has a front elevation to Canongate. It is to be a one-storey building, with ground and first floors, and a red-tiled roof in keeping with the surrounding new properties in the immediate neighbourhood.

As one looks at the plan of the building, the left half has a gabled front. It contains the main entrance. To the left is to be a tablet in the wall bearing the dedicatory inscription. The greater part of the length of the building (on the right, as viewed by the spectator) will consist of a large hall. There is to be a platform within it, located against the gable next to the Church. An ante-room with a platform entrance will be erected at the same end of the building. The hall will be 44 feet long, and 26 feet wide. Entrance will be obtained by the front door and passage.

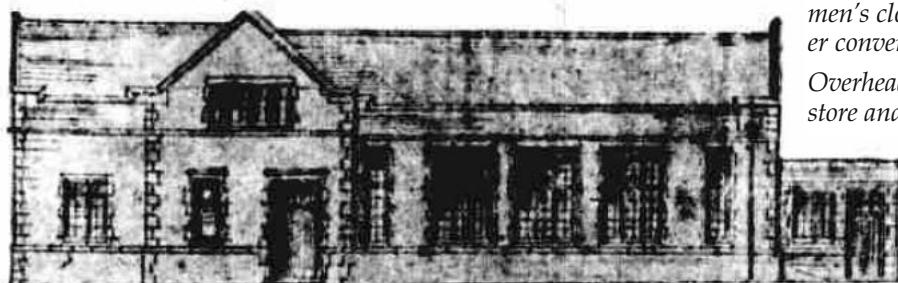
On the left of the latter will be arranged a large classroom 23 feet long by 18 feet wide, with lavatories, staircase, men's cloak room, crockery cupboard, store, sink, and other conveniences, also boiler house and coals below.

Overhead will be a kitchen, scullery, large room pantry, store and linen cupboard, bath, etc. for the caretaker.

From the front door a corridor will lead straight through to a spacious billiard room at the rear, 28 feet long by 18 feet wide, with large lantern roof light.

(Ruridecanal = relating to a Rural Dean)

PROPOSED ERECTION ON PAINTER HILL.



Quiz: Traditional Lighting

The updating of our street lighting has made us all aware of more traditional styles in the town. (see News in Brief for note on current activity).

Here are eight examples of historic, and traditional-style lighting from around the conservation area. How many of them can you locate?

The answers are on the back page.



Diary dates

Civic Society...

Our Summer Outing to Alnmouth is planned for 10th June. Get in touch with one of the committee if you would like to join us.

Our annual Any Questions event is planned for October. More details in the August Newsletter.

...and more



June 15th

This Newsletter goes to the printer a few weeks before the date scheduled for the referendum on the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. Since the date was announced, a general election has also been called.

Some have questioned whether we are really going to have an opportunity to vote separately for our Member of Parliament, and for our Neighbourhood Plan within a few weeks of voting for County Councillors.

As we write, we have been advised that the referendum will definitely go ahead (unless something goes terribly wrong).

All members have a keen interest in the future of our town, and the Neighbourhood Plan contains important protections and policies that will guide planning decisions for the foreseeable future. We urge all members to exercise their right to decide how the town develops, and encourage others to do the same. If you care about the way Alnwick develops you should support the plan.

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.

**CIVIC
VOICE**
talking civic sense

Founding Member

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

David Lovie (davidlovie307@btinternet.com)

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

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

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

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



A) Top of Fenkle Street (Mivesi Restaurant and Town Hall behind)

B) Market Place (Town Hall behind)

C) Pottergate Pant (Pottergate Tower behind)

D) Bondgate Within (White Swan behind)

E) Robertson's Fountain (HSBC Bank behind)

F) The Peth (Castle behind)

G) Narrowgate (Oddfellow's Arms and Dorothy Forster House behind)

H) Bailiffgate (Museum behind)



Quiz Answers