

February 2021



Photograph by Paul Penman

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AGM announcement.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held by Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on 17th March. This is your opportunity to celebrate our achievements in 2020 and look forward to the year ahead. If you would like to attend please email contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk and we will send joining instructions.

If you are interested in standing for one of the positions on the committee then please use one of the nomination forms that you received with this newsletter (if you didn't get one, just ask).

There's more information on Page 7, and if you want to talk things over then any of the current committee members will be happy to help.

If you do not yet feel ready to join the committee, then there will be plenty of other opportunities to contribute during the year ahead.



Some thoughts on the street name 'Green Batt' by Allan Mann

Green Batt is one of the most prominent streets in Alnwick, running along the southern boundary of the old mediaeval centre, and its burgage plots to the north, dividing these from the enclosures and pasture land to the south. We often tell people that the name refers to butts used for archery practice in medieval times. But does that explanation stand up to scrutiny?

Green Batt formed a continuous, flattened arc running along and outside the mediaeval town wall from the Bondgate Tower in the east to the Clayport Tower in the west. This significant position must have played an important part in the origins of its name.

Evidence from elsewhere

A sample of other 'Green Batt/Butt' place names includes a field near Altringham, in Cheshire; a farm between Chester and Nantwich and a field, some 2 miles east of Beverley. All are associated with agricultural use.

The term 'green' in English place names commonly refers to the colour green, has agricultural and pastoral implications, and often refers to grass pasture with good grazing, or in later times, to gardens and leisure activities. The term is common in Alnwick. (Greenwell Rd and Greensfield Ave, and Tate gives the name Bradley Green on Alnwick Moor as meaning '*the broad green pasture*').

Spelling variation: Bat or Batt

The 'Batt' spelling is used today and was used in the 1790s. Batt can be interpreted as '*low lying land, subject to flooding*'. For example, 'Long Batt' is a sandbank and surrounding wet lands on the coast between Holy Island and Fenham Flats. 'Samphire Batts' was the name for a settlement on the River Tees (now partly below the northern end of the Transporter bridge). But for the situation of 'Green Batt' in Alnwick this meaning can be discounted.

The spelling 'Bat' is the one that Tate uses throughout: it was the usage in the mid 1800's. One possible line to pursue links 'bat' to the modern word 'bait': to bait a trap, fish hook. Or, in the north east 'bait' is used generally for food, especially portable foods (pies, sandwiches, packed lunch). If there was evidence of much earlier origin, this interpretation could have related to the word 'bite' and derived from 'beitra' (Old Norse) or 'bat' (Old English) meaning pasture fodder. Hence the name 'Green Bat' would mean something like 'Green pasture land'. However, there is no evidence of this meaning from elsewhere, and as the spelling in 1664 was 'butts' we have to conclude that this derivation is interesting speculation, but of little relevance

Spelling variations: Butt, Butte or But

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary gives some 14 definitions of 'butt', 1 for 'butte', and 2 for 'but'.

1) 'But' can mean 'without', 'outside', 'outer'. (Old English *butan*, Middle English *buite, bute*). Its opposite is 'Ben': 'within', 'inside', 'inner'. The archetypal 'but and ben' Scottish dwelling is Middle English. 'Come ben the hoose' means 'come into the inner living space of the house'. The outer part, the *but*, is where any animals may shelter. The terms - 'in- bye' and 'out- bye' have a similar association. Aln-

wick has a similar usage with 'Bondgate Within' and 'Bondgate Without'. Hence 'Green But' could mean the 'Green Without'. This might be a more plausible explanation if there was a corresponding 'Green Ben'.

2) 'Butt' can be both a verb and a noun: to fix, mark out a limit, a border. Commonly used in the phrase '*butts and bounds*'. This must

be a strong contender given that 'Green Batt' lies along and just outside the mediaeval wall, and as such marks the southern border of the settlement. Even before the construction of the wall, this was likely the line of any defensive ditch, earthwork or palisade. Green Batt also forms an obvious linear feature and this often denotes '*butts*' following boundaries, as suggested by the numerous 'Butts Lanes' throughout England.

3) 'Butt' is a mark for archery practice, more properly for the mound/ knoll or platform on which the target is set. The term butt can then be transferred to the actual firing range and its length.

Archery was an important feature of mediaeval warfare and compulsory archery practice was common in England and Scotland. Other popular pursuits like football, bowls, tennis and golf were felt detrimental to skill in archery. Hence archery practice ranges called '*butts*' were common features of mediaeval towns. (e.g., Butts Lane, Leeds; Bow Butts Galashiels). Archery butts are usually plural as two butts were placed alongside each other to allow firing in both directions.

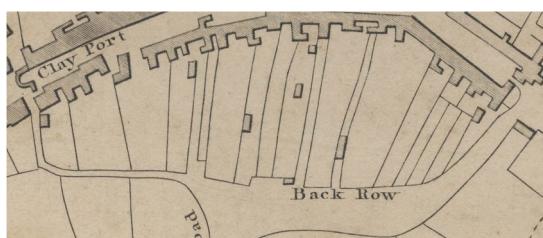
It is thought that professional archers in mediaeval times, could shoot light arrows up to 400 yards. In 1542, Henry VIII standardised the length of archery butts for men at 1 furlong, i.e., 220 yards, though shorter distances would have been used by many. Few studies refer to the practicalities of siting of archery butts close to mediaeval settlements, but given that archery butts were potentially deadly firing ranges, one can easily see the difficulties.

Mediaeval Alnwick had a close association with archery. The Alnwick Muster Roll was taken in February 1514, just 5 months after the battle of Flodden. It lists the names of 71 bowmen from Alnwick and Warkworth. Many of these may well have taken part in and sur-

vived the battle under Sir William Percy. All must have been skilled archers and prosperous enough to provide their own armour, equipment and some their own horse or nag. Several have names identical to known Alnwick burgage holders of the time and may be the same men. Alternatively, some of these Northumberland men may have been in France with the 5th Earl of Northumberland, in the siege of Terouenne and the following 'Battle of the Spurs' in 1513. Alnwick must have possessed archery practice butts to allow for the provision of such skilled men.

Tate states that there were two archery practice areas, both open public grounds, but gives no evidence.

a) the Arrowbutts running southward from Pottergate Tower and west of the wall. The term 'arrow' indicating archery, but it isn't clear where an archery range of up to 220 yds might lie outside of the wall between Pottergate and Clayport.



Green Batt, continued...

b) the Green/ Grirne Butts, to the west or south of the town wall. Pinpointing the actual range may not be possible, but presumably, any archery butts could not be situated too close to a well frequented roadway, giving daily access to many crofts, garths, closes and butts.

The rectangular piece of land bounded roughly by the present Green Batt, Prudhoe Street, Percy Street and Grey Place is of particular interest. All the present-day buildings within this zone are later than 1810, and the patch of land is roughly 200 yds in length (East West). A furlong (220 yards) is 'one furrows length' and a common measure in normal agriculture, but would be long enough to accommodate an archery practice range.

Archery is often the default interpretation of the term '*butt /butts*' in place names, and Tate may very well be correct. Siting an archery practice range in this area of Green Batt is a distinct possibility. However there is a range of other possibilities, and it is not obvious that Tate had evidence that the '*butt*' of Green Batt related to archery.

4) Small parcels of land, disjoined from the surroundings are often termed the '*butt*' or '*butts*'. The map by Sheephause (1624) shows the west end of Green Batt as a narrow roadway between buildings much as the modern street. The eastern end is much wider with the boundary of the southern enclosure (called Easter Piece) being set back some distance to the south of the boundary of the corresponding Wester Piece. This forms a wide rectangle of land roughly bounded by the modern Percy Street (in the west) and Prudhoe Street (to south). This wide strip of land was used for construction after 1810, and the Wood map (1827) shows it in green, i.e., as owned by the Duke. This piece of land, whatever its use, could be termed the '*Green Butt*'.

5) '*Butt*' is a term used in open field / strip/ rigg and furrow farming. As furrows ploughed in opposite directions force earth to the side it forms a ridge or butt. '*Butts*' normally applies to those furrows which are cut short by the shape of the field or at an angle to the others. '*Butts*' may be at ninety degrees to the majority to fill in odd shapes.

This usage may well apply to the Green Batt, especially to the eastern end with its wide expanse between the modern Percy and Prudhoe Streets and Green Batt and Grey Place. This patch of land is also surrounded by considerable evidence of agricultural activity.

The modern Croft Place and the houses Greycroft and Croftlands reflect the position of the former Croft House estate, presumably enclosing earlier croft lands. In Old English a croft is a piece of enclosed ground used for tillage or pasture, often attached to a house/ later, an agricultural holding worked by a tenant. The 1624 Sheephause map shows this area as long strips running North – South following the strips of the burgage plots of Bondgate Without to the north, called 'Bondgate Crofts' on the map. The western end of the Green Batt is shown as burgage strips running up from the Clayport and with surrounding strip farming. The central part of green Batt is lain to the south by the wester and easter pieces shown as enclosed pasture land. Indeed, much of Alnwick is shown surrounded by strip farming, mostly in an N -S

direction. On the 1760 Thompson map, land to the south of the Green Batt has the label 'Crofts and Garths' over it.

The use of '*butt*' to describe agricultural land divisions in and around Alnwick was common. Tate quotes the use of '*acres, half-acres, riggs, sellions and butts*' in Alnwick, with '*half-acres, scribes, butts and tens*' in Warkworth. He also gives '*Fisher Butts*' at Windy Edge farm; a rent of 5 *butts* of land late in the tenure of George Alder from the chantry of St Mary of Warkworth; in 1687 Andrew Blyth had the lower parts of the Clayport Tower and the butt and two balks in the lower field.

Green Batt was indeed used for agriculture in later years. In 1719, Rob Hamilton enclosed part of Green Batt into a close 'which he farms of John Catter and his wife'. In 1741, 'John Dores is to have and enjoy the intake in the Greenbat for 21 years', paying yearly rental to the town corporation.



A similar setting to the Green Batt in Alnwick is evidenced by the well-known street of 'The Butts' in Warkworth. These lie at the ends of the burgage plots on the east side of the main road down to the River Coquet and have constituted cultivated strips from mediaeval times onwards, now allotments and gardens. Green Batt/Butts in Alnwick is in a similar position at the end of the town burgage plots and suggests that the term '*butt/ butts*' as an agricultural

land division is a strong possibility re the derivation of the name 'Green Batt'.

Conclusions.

The most likely possibilities behind the name 'Green Batt' include

a) Agricultural land divisions and cultivated holdings. The term '*butt*' is commonly so used in Alnwick and surroundings areas e.g. the modern '*Butts*' in Warkworth, just beyond the end of the mediaeval burgage plots. The term '*Green Butts*' is used throughout England for field names/ later farm names, accompanied by neighbouring '*butts*'.

b) A green border of the mediaeval town with the 'Green Batt' running along the southern boundary of the burgage plots and parallel to the later construction of the town wall along this line from the Bondgate to Clayport Towers.

c) Archery practice range. Tate states that both the 'Arrowbutts' and the 'Green Butts' were used for archery practice. Whether that was based on evidence (Arrowbutts being the more persuasive), or from the assumption that butts were often used for archery, is not so clear. It is not apparent where on the west or south of the wall, that the archery butts could be safely situated.

However, it should be kept in mind that the 'Green Batt' may have applied to a much larger area to the south (and southwest) of Alnwick than is currently indicated by the present Green Batt street and Green Batt House.

A more definitive account will need to await detailed studies of map and written evidence older than 1625/1644 from the archives.

Planning matters

On trees, epicormic growth and lower branches are susceptible to breakage and rot; they can add unnecessary weight to a tree, making it more vulnerable to storm damage and some growth needs removing to comply with highways legislation. So the application for tree work at St Paul's Church is the type of maintenance one would expect from a responsible owner. We felt it needed no comment, though the Town Council would have liked more detail. On Alnmouth Road an application to thin the crown of a beech tree and prune a scots pine at Aldersyde, and at Crag View Cottage an application to raise the crowns of six trees was approved, but there was no case for removal of a sycamore.

At Ravenslaw House an application has been submitted relating to a boundary fence and entrance walls and pillars. We regret the retrospective nature of the application. Neighbours have objected to the effect on line of sight from vehicles.

The discharge of conditions for the development at Windy Edge includes an archaeologists' report which establishes that the site has been in use for 3000 years with a series of pits associated with a shallow pool or spring dating from the Middle Neolithic period through the Bronze Age and into the Romano-British period. Members interested in the full report will find it attached to application reference 20/03061.



This sales cabin in Denwick Lane was finally removed in December, some seven months after the application had been rejected. It shouldn't have appeared in the first place. Or taken so long to remove.

At Grosvenor Terrace the conservation officer does not accept that proposed double glazed windows would be a like-for-like replacement of the

existing single glazed windows, and recommends that the applicant considers the guidance offered by Historic England.

We noted an application to demolish and replace Rosecombe Cottage, on Alnwick Moor. The Town Council has not objected.

Officers have recommended approval of an application for installation of six vehicle charging points at Cawledge Business Park.

A change of use is under way at 5 Fenkle Street. This is a 19th century building in the conservation area, but the plans involve no external change. So, like the conservation officer, we raised no objection.

At Alnwick Golf Club permission was granted in 2018 for a new store and a clubhouse. The plans have now been altered to reduce the scale of the developments. We saw no need for comment.

For the store currently used by Argos, on Willowburn Retail Park, Northumberland Estates are seeking a change to the wording on the approved uses. We are not concerned, but we are intrigued. We look forward to discovering the reason.

We saw no need to comment on a retrospective application to create a store between two existing garages on Pottergate New Row.

We chose not to comment on an application for a double garage with studio at Woodland Lodge (Greensfield Farm) though the Town Council has requested that any covenants regarding commercial use / holiday lettings are respected.

We had already considered an application for construction of self contained cabin at Loan End in Argyle Terrace, and decided not to comment on the revised application. This involves the removal of one holly tree.

The application at Willowburn Trading Estate to demolish existing buildings and construct a hotel has been permitted with number of conditions relating to appearance, highways, and drainage. Our views on the quality of the design have not changed.

Members will recall that we welcomed the application for conversion of 2-8

Bailiffgate to a hotel as an appropriate and viable long term use for the buildings that would conserve important heritage assets. However, we were concerned about massing, parking and highway safety. So we submitted our response as an objection. Alnwick Town Council had similar concerns and spoke at the North Area Planning Committee on 21st January. The committee discussed the concerns and had the difficult task of weighing them against the promised economic benefits. After exploring a variety of options with officers, and weighing the position taken by Historic England they approved the application and listed building consent by a majority of six for, two against and one abstention. There is a long list of conditions to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the plans; to prevent increased risk of flooding; and in the interests of highway safety; and sustainable development; to prevent nuisance in relation to residential amenity; and the amenity of the surrounding area; landscape value, archaeological and historic interest; biodiversity and conservation of protected species.

We anticipate more applications in future for retail to residential conversion. Such developments align well with local and national policies, should attract investment in the fabric of the town centre, bring additional housing provision, and increase activity on the high street. These are all things that we want to encourage. We now have a checklist of basic principles that we will use to assess any future applications, and feedback suggests that the Town Council planning committee are hoping that they will also find this useful.

The public hearings on the Local Plan have now been completed. The county council have been requested by the inspector to carry out further work. When this work is completed, the inspector will finalise her report including what modifications to the plan are required. We will report then.



An Alnwick and Alnmouth Historic Town Map

Project description

You may have seen in the Northumberland Gazette that the Civic Society is partnering with the Historic Towns Trust to create an Historic Town Map of Alnwick and Alnmouth. This is a fascinating project that will capture the built history of the town and port.

The Historic Towns Trust

The Historic Towns Trust (HTT) is a charity whose principal aim is to support and promote research into the history of Britain's cities and towns. Two of its main activities are the production of Historic Town Maps and Historic Town Atlases.

The HTT has produced historic maps for a number of towns and cities. These projects have mainly been in the southern part of England and involved larger towns and cities. They are now keen to work with smaller towns and, in particular, ones in the north of England.

What is a Historic Town Map?

The town map is similar in size and layout to a traditional Ordnance Survey map. The map itself is based on a historic OS map with overlays showing the major historic features, both extant and lost. On the reverse of the map is a gazetteer of the main historic features, with a short description of each.

The completed Historic Town Map will be sold commercially through retail outlets. Any income from these sales, once printing and other production costs have been met, will be shared equally between the HTT and ACS. The ACS will use any funds in furthering their heritage activities within the area.

What is a Historic Town Atlas?

The atlas is a book of maps, with detailed chapters about different historic periods. These chapters are written as formal academic papers, with full referencing, and as such create a full record of the known history of a particular town.

Why Alnwick?

Alnwick has been identified by the HTT as an ideal candidate for a 'small town' pilot project due to a number of factors:

- The town has a long, well documented history, which will simplify the creation of the map,
- The town has a number of interesting 'layers' of lost and surviving historical elements which add interest to a map,
- The town is a popular tourist destination which will provide a good market for the map,
- The town fits the profile of size and location to meet the strategic aims of the HTT.

The HTT approached the Alnwick Civic Society (ACS) with regard to participating in the production of an Alnwick and Alnmouth Historic Town Map. This approach was prompted in part by the "Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes" publication, which was a

joint project between the ACS and Bailiffgate Museum. This publication has been well received in many heritage circles.

An Alnwick Historic Town Map

An initial team of people from various local heritage groups and other potential stakeholders has been established. These include Bailiffgate Museum, the Alnwick and District Local History Society, the Alnwick Branch of the Northumberland and Durham Family History Society, the Aln Valley Railway and Northumberland Estates. We are also hoping to involve the Freemen as well as a number of individuals with knowledge in specific areas. This team will collate the information which will be used for the map.

Links with the Duchess High School have been established and ways of involving students both in the creation of the map and using the completed map to support curriculum work are being pursued. Links with primary schools are also being explored.

The production of a town atlas is a much larger project and is not being proposed at this time, though it could develop from the successful creation of the town map.

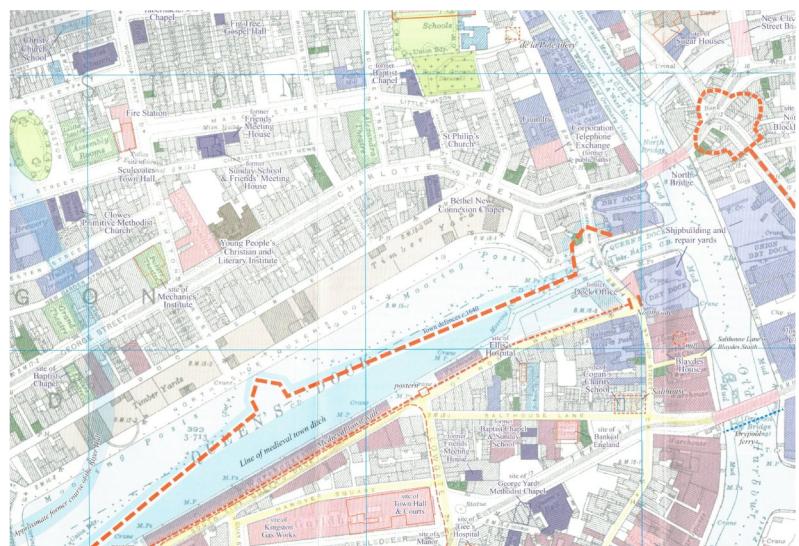
What is required?

The project is a partnership between the ACS and the HTT:

- HTT will carry out all the work required to create the map and arrange for printing. They would market and sell the completed map.
- ACS will bring together and lead the local team responsible for providing the historic information for the gazetteer and map overlays.
- ACS will coordinate the raising of funds associated with creating the map.

Historic information

The main work will involve the creation of an introductory text, the collection of information to create the gazetteer and the provision of information for the map overlays. Historic images will also be required as illustrations in the gazetteer.



Historic town map continued...

Project costs

The estimated cost of the project is £9,200. These costs mainly relate to cartographic work in support of producing the final map. This work will be managed by the Historic Town Trust using experienced contractors.

One of our members, Mary Carter, is leading the fundraising activities and has already submitted three grant applications.

Project timing

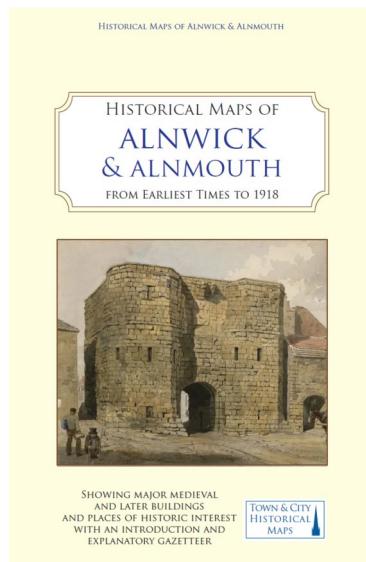
The project team is now in place, though new members will be brought in as necessary. Work has started on defining and collecting the required historical information.

The formal project commitment is planned for mid-2021, by which time the majority of the required funding will need to be in place.

The overall project is planned to be completed by early 2022.

Benefits of the project

The project will have several local benefits:



- The project will bring together groups and individuals who are interested in the heritage of the town,
- The project will provide opportunities to promote and explain local heritage to residents and, in particular, schoolchildren,
- The completed map will attract visitors who are interested in the history of the town and its environs,
- The base maps and associated data will be available at no cost to not-for-profit groups, for example, for education and displays,
- The data collected during the preparation of the map will be collated into a searchable online resource which will facilitate future research,
- The map could provide a stepping stone to the creation of an Historic Town Atlas at some point in the future.

Supporting information

www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/

www.historictownsatlas.org.uk/

Bondgate Tower

At the end of last year we saw the short-term closure of Bondgate Tower in order that some emergency repairs could be carried out to the arch that had been struck by a vehicle. The work was done during one of the lockdown periods when traffic was much less than normal so it was hard to gauge what effect a closure during the holiday period might be, but we can use our imaginations.

We will all have heard various adverse comments from people who feel that the new stone that has been inserted into the arch is too obtrusive. While understanding this point of view, we need to be cognizant of the conflicts that are in play when it comes to restoring what is over 600-year-old stonework. Any "honest repair" will have to achieve a difficult balance. Some want to make sure that the whole story of the building is legible. Any repair should avoid the risk of falsifying the record by doing something that is indistinguishable from the original work. Equally, some want to respect the historic patina, and ensure that any changes appear unobtrusive.

These are matters that lead to complex philosophical debates between conservation professionals. Some lean towards a more purist approach, and others are more pragmatic.

We should be glad to see Alnwick's built heritage arousing such passionate debate. Better this than disinterest. We do need, however, to keep in mind that work on such an important Grade-1 listed and Scheduled gateway will have been carefully considered. We will leave it to the conservation professionals to decide whether this piece of work has been carried out in a way that maintains historical integrity.

More importantly, however, we need to keep the long-term aim in mind, which is to provide the tower with the protection it needs so that it suffers no further damage from incompetent and inattentive drivers.

We all want to make sure that the tower will still be standing in another 600 years! You'll know that Historic England have put the Bondgate Tower to its highest 'at risk' level. It is well accepted that one large collision could cause a serious, if not catastrophic collapse. It's not a straightforward problem, but we don't think it's one that can be ignored. Our hope is that the key stakeholders can work together to find a long-term solution. We'll keep you updated, but please keep in mind that the appearance of the repair is not the only worry.



Trees in and around Alnwick

There are a number of initiatives, emanating from the Neighbourhood Plan, involving tree planting which members of the Civic Society might like to be informed of and even offer their help in some way. Covid has put on hold some of these but not all.

Alnwick Town Council has completed a survey of trees in Alnwick Cemetery. Are there other areas in which tree identification and a mapping survey could take place? eg. The Column Field.

The Town Council will also complete its 'Ribbon of Trees' in the town. A further 12 will be added to the 8 already in place.

176 Cherry trees have been given to the town from the Japanese ambassador to the UK. About 100 have been allocated areas. Suggestions would be welcome for places to plant either a single tree or a group of trees.

The Town Council also has a grant available to plant trees. There is a map available showing Northumberland County Council land in the town, with potential for tree planting, but members may be able to suggest other areas in their vicinity.

The Friends of the Earth are making progress with their 'Community Orchards.' There are plans for sites in Swansfield and the Chapel Lands area. Again there may be other potential sites in the town.

Executive Committee

Our Annual General Meeting will be held by Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on March 17th. This is your opportunity to celebrate our achievements in 2020 and look forward to the year ahead. If you would like to attend please email contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk so that we can send joining instructions.

The Executive Committee consists of three officers: a Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary; along with up to eight other committee members. If you are interested in one of the positions, or in helping in any other way, then this is a good time to get in touch. You should have received nomination forms with this newsletter (if not, just ask for one).

The Executive Committee is responsible for the management of the society. It deals with administrative essentials such as finances, and membership. Members of the committee also take a lead in scrutinising planning applications, responding to consultations, organising activities, publish-

ing a variety of material, and maintaining relationships with elected representatives, planning professionals, various national and local bodies, and media. The committee meets about once a month. When appropriate, sub-groups are formed to deal with specific issues.

The society has always been fortunate in being able to draw on a considerable amount of enthusiasm, and a broad range of expertise. If you know somebody who is ready to help to take the society forward, or if you have something to contribute yourself, then please return a nomination form. If you would first like to know more about the work of the Executive Committee then any of the existing committee members would be happy to talk it over with you. And if you do not yet feel ready to join the Executive Committee, then there will no doubt be plenty of other opportunities to contribute during the year ahead.

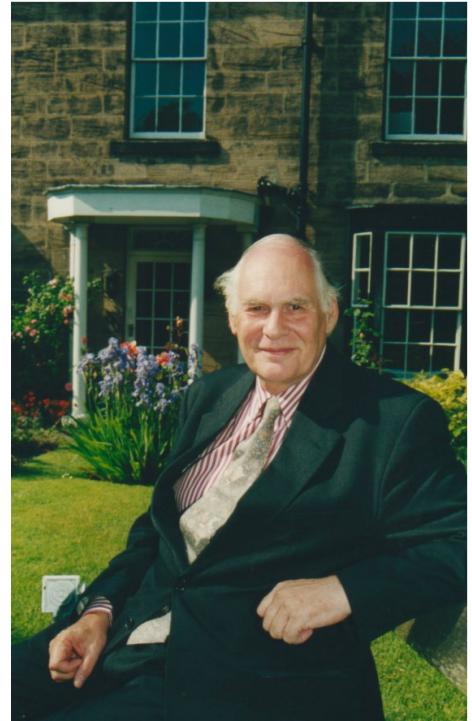
Philip Deakin

Our president, Philip Deakin died peacefully at home on 29th October, aged 83 years. Philip's involvement stands out as a constant thread through the story of the society. He was elected secretary at the inaugural meeting on 7th October, 1974. Over the following decades he served as Chairman or Secretary for over half of the society's existence before accepting the role of president in 2011. He understood the importance of introducing new blood into the society, and the need for a pro-active and long-term approach to caring for and promoting the town. To this end he applied his deep understanding of Alnwick's heritage and his extensive network of contacts. Without his efforts Alnwick would be a poorer place.

Beyond Alnwick, Philip encouraged other communities to set up their own Civic Societies, and his wider community service included chairmanship of the North East Federation of Civic Societies, founder member, and former chair of the Border Archaeology Society, Trustee of the Alnwick Garden Trust and chairman of the Chillingham Wild Cattle Trust. The extent of his community service was recognised by the award of an MBE.

With his wife, Marjorie, Philip wrote Alnwick in Old Picture Postcards, and more recently he contributed to a history of Chillingham Cattle with Sir Humphry Wakefield and others.

Philip will be widely missed and our sympathies are with his family.



Discussion with Historic England

On 27th January a group of us met, online, with Kate Wilson, from Historic England. We were delighted to welcome members from Berwick Civic Society who joined the discussion.

Kate is a member of the Historic England team that covers the North-East and Yorkshire. As well as Northumberland they cover County Durham, the Tees Valley, Tyne and Wear, the East Riding of Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

Kate's team is responsible for partnerships, Heritage Action Zones, and Heritage at Risk. Her colleagues deal with other matters such as planning applications, and listings.

The discussion focussed on different areas where our Civic Societies, and their members can contribute to the conservation of heritage. We concentrated on identifying heritage at risk, different aspects of statutory protection and heritage on the high street.

In broad terms, Historic England leads on addressing risks to Grade-1, Grade-2* and Scheduled monuments. Northumberland County Council leads on risks to buildings that are Grade-2 listed. So the principal concerns for Kate in Alnwick are Bondgate Tower and Narrowgate House. Good progress is being made at Narrowgate House. The level of risk is reducing, and the expectation is that it will be removed from the register in due course. Before Bondgate Tower can be removed there will need to be more work to reduce the risk of collision. (see page 6). For other heritage at risk in Alnwick Kate encouraged us to continue the efforts we have been making to record various issues, and advised us to work with Conservation Officers in Northumberland County Council.

Historic England recognise that the history of statutory protection means that coverage of different types of listed building is uneven. However, even where we can see gaps and inconsistencies, they are reluctant to encourage an influx of proposals for listing from local groups. Their own resources are limited, and they focus first on examples of heritage that is seriously at risk, and then on studies around themes that have been chosen nationally. The result, for us in Alnwick, is that when Historic England consider any of our suggestions for additions to the list, it is going to be the level of threat that will be the principal factor in the decision. However, there are other areas where the Civic Society and our members can make a useful contribution.

Northumberland does not currently have a local list. This is an area where Historic England encourages Civic Societies to work with their Local Authority. We began to consider how best to approach this last year. Members may remember that the subject came up during our discussion with Rob Murfin in October. We do not have to wait for the Local Authority to adopt a local list, so as a first step we have begun to compile a list of Alnwick's Buildings of Note. We are keen to assemble a panel for

members who are interested in taking this forward. See page 10 for more details.

There are two related areas where Kate had suggestions about how we might help. One is enriching list entries with local knowledge. Some of the buildings on the list for Alnwick are well-known, but there are others where much remains unknown. We are invited to share our knowledge and pictures of listed places, and Civic Society members may even be able to unlock some secrets.

There might also be opportunities for members to assist with surveys and assessment of Alnwick's hidden heritage. In the past the

hidden heritage was a significant concern in Berwick and members of the Civic Society were trained to carry out some of the work. With concerns over high street occupancy and the potential to make better use of upper floors there may be an opportunity to revive this activity, and we may want to consider a similar initiative in Alnwick.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/>

There is more about enriching the list on the Historic England web site, and we encourage any member who is interested in this activity to get in touch.

Prompted by a question from a member, we discussed the concerns we all share for the future of our High Streets. Kate made the point that these concerns pre-date Covid, although the pandemic has emphasised trends that were already apparent. The principal focus for Historic England is on the High Street Heritage Action Zones. The idea is to use heritage to unlock the potential of high streets, fuel economic, social and cultural recovery and breathe new life into the high street. In each case the lead partner works with Historic England to develop and deliver schemes that will transform and restore disused and dilapidated buildings, deliver new homes, shops, work places and community spaces, restore local historic character and improve the public realm. There are twelve High Street Heritage Action Zones across the region (Barnsley, Hexham, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Middlesbrough, North Shields, Northallerton, Selby, Skipton, Sowerby Bridge, Wakefield). This list (obviously) does not include Alnwick, but perhaps there are lessons we can learn from experiences elsewhere.

Finally, Kate talked about some of the other areas where Historic England is active. These include the impact of climate change and sustainability in relation to our built heritage; a focus on well-being and the importance of engaging the interest of younger people in conservation and heritage.

No doubt these are issues that we will return to in future. For now, we are grateful to Kate for leaving us with much food for thought, and the encouragement to press onward in a number of areas. We hope that members will step forward and get involved in the areas that interest them most.

"Things happen when local people get angry and challenge"

News in Brief

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 set a cut-off day for recording footpaths and bridleways that existed before 1949. After 1st Jan 2026 it won't be possible to use historical evidence to add rights of way to the definitive map (the legal record of rights of way). Ramblers want to safeguard the network of paths into the future, and they have already identified over 49,000 miles of potential lost paths across the country. This has been the first step in a long process to put some of these paths back onto the map. The five steps they will follow are:

- Identify historical paths which may be lost rights of way ✓
- Prioritise those paths which add the most benefit for people
- Research the individual path to find out if it can be saved
- Build an application based on historical evidence
- Submit the application by 1st Jan 2026

The campaign is called "*Don't Lose Your Way*". You can find out more on the Ramblers' Web site:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk>

We welcome the new bin store in Pake's Lane, but reserve even more enthusiastic applause for the work that has been done on Alnwick's festive offer by the Town Council, Chamber of Trade (and traders in general), Alnwick Garden, Groupe Geraud (the markets), Alnwick Christmas Lights, Christians Together and other stakeholders. In the face of tight Covid restrictions, and a considerable amount of uncertainty they delivered a memorable and safe experience for visitors and locals alike. The different lighting displays were impressive, it was a good idea to smarten up the passage-way through the Town Hall from Fenkle Street to the Market Place and an inspiration to hang mistletoe at each end. The Christmas Crib displays were delightful and well supported.

This is a worrying time for everyone who cares about the health of our High Streets. However, in Alnwick there is room for some optimism. With our accessible size, strong heritage, and diversity of independent shops, we don't face the same struc-

tural challenges as the City Centres, large Retail Parks, or even some neighbouring towns. Our retailers also benefit from a supportive community. Alnwick people care about the vitality of the high street, and want to see it thrive. The response to Covid and the 2020 Christmas offer show the extent of support across the community. We mustn't underestimate the scale of the economic challenge, but nor should we underestimate what can be achieved when the different stakeholders work well together.

Our November picture quiz featured several examples of Alnwick's metal-work, and members with an interest in such things will be glad to hear that St Michael's church has requested an estimate for work on their gates, in order to be ready for this to be carried out when the church's financial situation allows.

As we look forward to Covid restrictions being relaxed we anticipate that members of the society will again become engaged in a range of meetings, events and projects that involve contact with the wider community. We need to recognise that, through these activities, trustees, members and other volunteers may come into contact with those who are vulnerable to social conditions, loneliness or abuse. This could be in any sector of the community. We have therefore adopted a safeguarding policy that aims to:

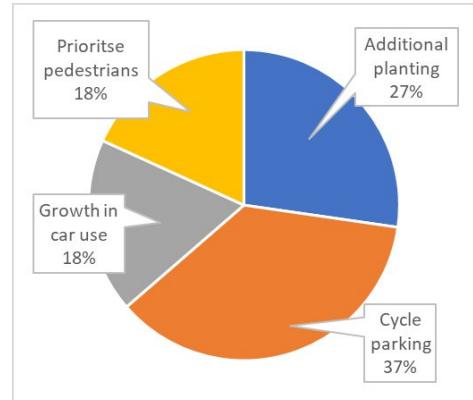
- protect people who come into contact with the Civic Society
- protect the society's trustees, members and volunteers
- raise safeguarding awareness.

If you are involved in such activities and would like to see a copy of the policy then please get in touch.

Alnwick Town Council Sustainable Travel Working Group have been pressing for more cycle parking in Alnwick for some time, and we welcomed plans by Northumberland County Council for additional stands on Narrowgate, outside the Playhouse, in the Market Place and near the Bus Station.

The council is also planning to create an additional 196 parking spaces on Howling Lane. Is it too much to hope

that the combination of extra places to park cars and more widespread use of sustainable transport will mean that some of the existing parking provision in the town centre can be freed up and used for other purposes? We asked how people thought any such space should be reallocated. More than a third opted for extra cycle parking.



It's a very small sample, so we won't read too much into it. But it's not what we expected.

What did we learn about the impact of closing Bondgate Tower on traffic movements?

The timing of the closure was deliberately chosen outside the main visitor season and during Covid restrictions in order to minimise the impact. Most remaining traffic would therefore be local and work-related. Neighbours reported a significant increase in volumes, particularly at the start and end of a working day, and noticeably among heavier vehicles. The increase was greatest on Green Batt and on the first day. We suspect that drivers hadn't anticipated the closure, but quickly found alternative routes.

Traders found it difficult to separate the effects of closing Bondgate from the wider impact of Covid restrictions, but we heard reports that some drivers heading east through town found it difficult to turn around in Bondgate after failing to notice the signs.

With virtually no visitor impact, the most important lessons is that even locals will need early and effective signage when Bondgate Tower next needs to be closed.



Buildings of note

Alnwick has an unusually large number of buildings that are considered nationally important: so they have statutory protection through the listing scheme operated by Historic England. There are other buildings in Alnwick that are also part of the town's heritage, or prominent in the townscape. They are important locally, but do not satisfy the criteria that Historic England apply for buildings that they consider worthy of national protection.

Some local authorities use a Local Heritage List to identify places that are important to local people, but which Historic England do not consider suitable for statutory protection. A Local Heritage List doesn't impose the full requirements of statutory protection, but it can still help the planning authority to take account of any special local architectural or historic importance when they consider a planning application.

Around 80 planning authorities (one in four) use a Local List to identify special places which do not qualify for more formal protection. Being on a Local List doesn't carry the burden of planning requirements and constraints that are associated with full statutory protection. Instead, a Local List raises aware-

ness of buildings and places which are important to the community, and means that when change is proposed, the significance of some heritage of local importance can be given due consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

A Local List has to be adopted by the planning authority. In our case that would be Northumberland County Council. Development of a local list was one of the Community Action Proposals in the Alnwick And Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and NCC are still hoping to obtain funding to support such an initiative across the county. But at this point in time, they are not actively working on a local list.

Meanwhile, whether or not NCC are able to proceed, we think there is value in identifying buildings in Alnwick that make a significant contribution to Alnwick's distinctive identity, but lack full statutory protection. We do not want to call this a "Local List" because it won't carry the same weight. So we have called it "*Buildings of Note*".

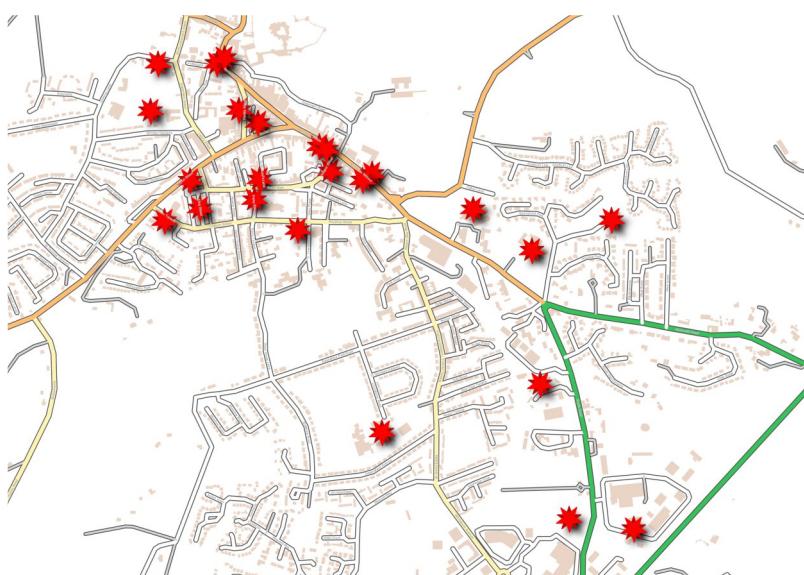
In time such a list for Alnwick may help contribute to a Local Heritage List for Northumberland. For now this is an initiative by the Civic Society, but one that we hope will raise awareness of some important buildings, help us to engage with the wider Alnwick community, and potentially collect background information that will be useful to stakeholders.

During 2021 we hope to bring together a panel of a few members who will draw up a shortlist of such buildings in Alnwick. Meanwhile we are inviting Civic Society members to participate in a survey that we hope will help the panel to draw up that shortlist.

You can find the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NFCBDNG>

Please get in touch if you would be interested in helping the selection panel.



We have already been sent some suggestions.
Do you recognise these locations? Are they Buildings of note?

Quiz: Are you stumped?

Alnwick boasts a remarkable collection of obsolete street furniture. So for our first quiz of 2021 we have chosen to celebrate several stumps and broken posts from lamps, signs, etc.

Can you identify the location of these six examples? If you are completely stumped you might need to use the list of answers on the back page.

Don't leave it too long. We hope these won't last much longer. So we advise members to marvel at these magnificent specimens before they disappear. Give them the recognition that they deserve. Tell your friends, point them out to visitors, post your images on Instagram and share your videos on TikTok.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/SelfService/Report.aspx>

We encourage members to report similar problems using the correct form (above). If you do, you will receive an acknowledgement by email. Please forward it to eves.ears@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk. That will allow us to log your report, and keep track of progress.



B



A



C



D



E



F

Correction

Our thanks to the alert reader who spotted an error among the quiz answers in our November issue.

We described the railings from the former Duchess's School as being in front of Derwentwater House. Derwentwater House was acquired by the 1st Duke after James Radcliffe, 3rd Earl of Derwentwater, was executed. It was then demolished. The building that we see today was constructed on the same site as Derwentwater House. It later became part of the Duchess's School, but it is properly known as the 'Commissioner's House'.

Diary dates

Annual General Meeting: Our Annual General Meeting will be held by Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on 17th March. This is your opportunity to celebrate our achievements in 2020 and look forward to the year ahead. If you wish to attend please email contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk and we will send joining instructions.

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 committee members. If you are interested in standing for one of the positions on the committee then you should have received nomination forms with this newsletter (if not, please ask for one).

Almost a third of our current membership has joined the society within the last twelve months or so. With so many new members it's frustrating that our normal events cannot take place. It is now more than a year since we have had an opportunity to meet socially, thank members for their support, and get to know you better. However, we all remain hopeful that the situation will improve during 2021. Meanwhile, we are careful not to make excessive use of email to stay in touch with members. So we are relying, even more than usual, on members to follow our activities on Twitter: [@AlnwickCivicSoc](https://twitter.com/AlnwickCivicSoc), Facebook: [AlnwickCivicSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AlnwickCivicSociety), Instagram: [alnwickcivicsociety](https://www.instagram.com/alnwickcivicsociety/) and our web site: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk.

Reminder: Members who joined in the last six months will not need to worry about their annual subscription until 2022. But for most individual and family members the annual subscription falls due in January. Under current restrictions it's difficult for us to send round the Hairy Man of Rugley to put pressure on anyone who is late. So please check that you are up to date with your subscription.

Also, if you think we may not have your current email address it would help if you could let us know.



Situations Vacant: the Poo Platoon

Yet again, we hear a growing number of complaints about dog mess on Alnwick pavements. We sense a rising level of frustration with the irresponsible owners who are at the bottom of the problem.

We could call on the Town Council or the County Council to do more (we do). But we can all think of better ways to spend public money than picking up after dogs with irresponsible owners.

Our plan is not to clean up their mess ourselves.

Instead we are throwing down a challenge to our members

We think our members are resourceful enough to run a witty guerilla campaign in 2021 that will capture the imagination of the town and generate some outrage. We already have ideas that we think could make a lasting change in the way that Alnwick's dogs are emptied. Do you want to know more?

Please get in touch if you see yourself as one of the Poo Platoon (or even Captain Poo)

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, and amid growing concerns about the future of our town. Since then, we have sought to influence developments, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure that proposals protect and enhance our heritage.

The Society pursues its objectives through a variety of activities. We provide a voice for members through dialogue with planning and conservation professionals and like-minded organisations. We offer advice, scrutinise and comment on development proposals; recognise excellence; and organise public meetings. Members were heavily involved in development of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and we work with local partners to influence policy at a county level. We seek to influence national policy by co-operating with other bodies in the civic movement, and the Society 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, student, 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

Who's Who?

Chair: Peter Reed

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Other Executive Committee members:

- Peter Ennor
- Ian Hall

Web: www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk

Email: alnwickcivicsoc@gmail.com

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

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

Instagram: [alnwickcivicsociety](https://www.instagram.com/alnwickcivicsociety/)

Heritage at risk: report your concerns here:

<https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-at-risk/>

Quiz Answers

- A) At junction of Prudhoe Street and Wagonway Road
- B) Corner of Hotspur Street and Bondgate Without roundabout from the East
- C) One of three on South Road, approaching Oaks
- D) Narrowgate, between Oxfam and Ruby Tuesday
- E) Market Street, next to the crossing, outside Bailey's
- F) South Road, just below Barter Books