

November 2021



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Our next "Any Questions?" event will be in St. James's Centre on Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

We look forward to hearing from a distinguished panel about their experience of leading our town, businesses and visitor attractions through one of the most challenging periods in recent history. We have promised a civilised debate, but we doubt if members will allow us to avoid some touchy subjects.

As mayor of Alnwick, Lynda Wearn has led the Town Council since 2019. Nick Lewis is Collections and House Officer at Lindisfarne Castle and has recently overseen a major restoration for the National Trust. Having worked on conservation of wildlife in South Africa, Mark Brassell is now Director of Alnwick Garden. Jake Castleman owns Curious Taverns and operates the Pig in Muck in Alnwick and The Cock and Bull in Amble.

For many, this will be the first opportunity in a while to meet fellow members. We have booked a spacious room, and will follow guidance on staying safe. We hope you will be able to join us. The meeting is open to all, so please feel free to bring a guest.



# Alnwick Cholera Memorial Dedicated

On 31st August a short service was held in the graveyard of St Michael's church to bless the new memorial to 136 Alnwick citizens who died of cholera in 1849. The stone has been jointly sponsored by the Australian relatives of one of the dead and Alnwick Town Council.

Lynda Wearn, Alnwick Mayor stated how pleased the council was to be associated with this initiative. She drew a parallel between the three terrible weeks of the outbreak over 170 years ago and our recent Covid experience. In both instances, she said, it had been those most disadvantaged in society who had suffered the greatest.

Dudley George, Chair of the Alnwick branch of the Northumberland and Durham Family History Society provided some background to the initiative. When researching the life stories of all 136, he explained, both the branch and the descendants they had contacted were upset to learn that there had never been a proper memorial to the dead. They had mainly been buried hurriedly in unmarked mass graves to the rear of the church. Relatives in Australia of victim Henry Ferguson had offered a sizeable donation to help erect a stone, to which the Town Council had then added further funds. Biographies of all 136 victims can now also be found on the Family History section of the Bailiffgate Collections website, [bailiffgateneumuseum.co.uk](http://bailiffgateneumuseum.co.uk)

Rev. Canon Paul Scott, vicar of St Michael's conducted the service, using elements of that which his predecessor of the time, the Rev. Court Granville would have used for burials of the dead in 1849. Rev. Scott urged all present, and those who learn about the memorial, to think about the victims, and also their families left in terrible circumstances.

For more details contact Dudley George via [familyhistory@bailiffgateneumuseum.co.uk](mailto:familyhistory@bailiffgateneumuseum.co.uk)



Lynda Wearn, Alnwick Mayor; Rev Canon Paul Scott, Dudley George.

## Community feeding

It is well-known that Alnwick Youth Hostel is based in a building that used to be the Courthouse, Police Station and Correction House. But did you know that during World War II, and for some time after, there was a community restaurant at the back of the building?

When the Youth Hostel opened during Heritage Open Day, one of the visitors recalled being sent here as a child during the war to fetch jugs of soup. It was then a "Community Feeding Centre", better known as a "British Restaurant". These were set up during World War II by the Ministry of Food to ensure that working people could get a nutritional meal away from home, at an affordable price. The Rural District Council were occupying the building at the time, and they offered use of the old Correction House as a communal feeding centre. It opened in November 1941, and was run by Alnwick



A British Restaurant in London, 1942

Urban District Council. Accounts from the first 105 days show that it broke even, with turnover of £865 13s 2d. No meal cost more than 9d, so they must have been serving at least a couple of hundred meals a day.

By 1943, there were over 2,000 British Restaurants serving over 500,000 meals a day. Many continued to operate after the war, and in 1947 the Labour Government introduced the "Civic Restaurants Bill" to ensure they could continue on a self-supporting basis. In 1948 the Alnwick Civic Restaurant was still serving lunch to 300 people a day. It continued to operate until July 1953, having been financially self-supporting throughout its life.

The Youth Hostel is looking for memories of the Alnwick British Restaurant / Civic Restaurant. Can you help?

# Validation of planning applications

We have seen delays in the validation of planning applications and examples where the information provided by applicants is incomplete, or not of the required standard. So we welcomed an invitation from NCC to comment on an update to their planning application validation checklist. Let us know if you would like to see the full response. Some key points included:

- In our experience issues are most common on relatively straightforward household and minor applications. Comprehensive guidance can be daunting. We would like to see some guidance in a more accessible format.
- We have concerns over the inappropriate use of Variations of Condition and would like these to be addressed during the Validation Process.
- Heritage statements are required for a building on a Local List. We want to encourage development of a Local List for Alnwick.
- Additional guidance might be needed to help applicants recognize their responsibilities in relation to different types of heritage asset and their settings.

## Heritage Statements

National planning policy requires an applicant to "describe the significance of any heritage assets affected". We've been taking a look at recent Heritage Statements to see how those in Alnwick compare to standards nationally. In brief: Alnwick is doing better than average, but there is still room for improvement in the way that some applicants assess heritage significance.

Historic England reported about five years ago on the quality of Heritage Statements associated with planning applications.

- Nationally only one in three heritage statements complied with the requirement to describe heritage significance. Others simply listed heritage assets or described the assets without discussing significance. In Alnwick we are doing better: 70% of recent heritage statements comply.
- Nationally, 95% of applications for listed building consent included a heritage statement. We only found one in Alnwick that didn't. The sample is too small to be meaningful.
- Historic England found that one-in-three heritage statements considered significance. They assessed half of them as basic (15%), and half as detailed (16%). Locally, we do better. We found a detailed consideration of heritage significance in 40% of all heritage statements, and a basic consideration in 27%.

The overall position in Alnwick looks better now than the national picture found by Historic England five years ago. We don't have a big problem with missing heritage statements. More heritage statements in Alnwick are of good quality, but not all. Our biggest shortfall is the level of detail when considering significance.

- Two landscape policies in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan should be referenced: Policy HD1: Protecting Landscape Setting and Policy HD4: Approaches to the Town.
- The note on Open Space Assessment is welcome in the context of some recent controversial developments.
- We would like more emphasis on the responsibilities of a developer to address the cumulative impact on the transport network of a series of developments.
- In light of NCC commitments on Climate Action we suggest Transport Assessments should include a statement on how they will maintain alignment with Sustainable Travel strategies.
- Clarification is needed on how the requirements for a tree report have changed, and the differences between a project that impacts trees on and around a construction site, and work on the condition of an individual tree. An initiative to raise awareness of owners' responsibilities may be timely.

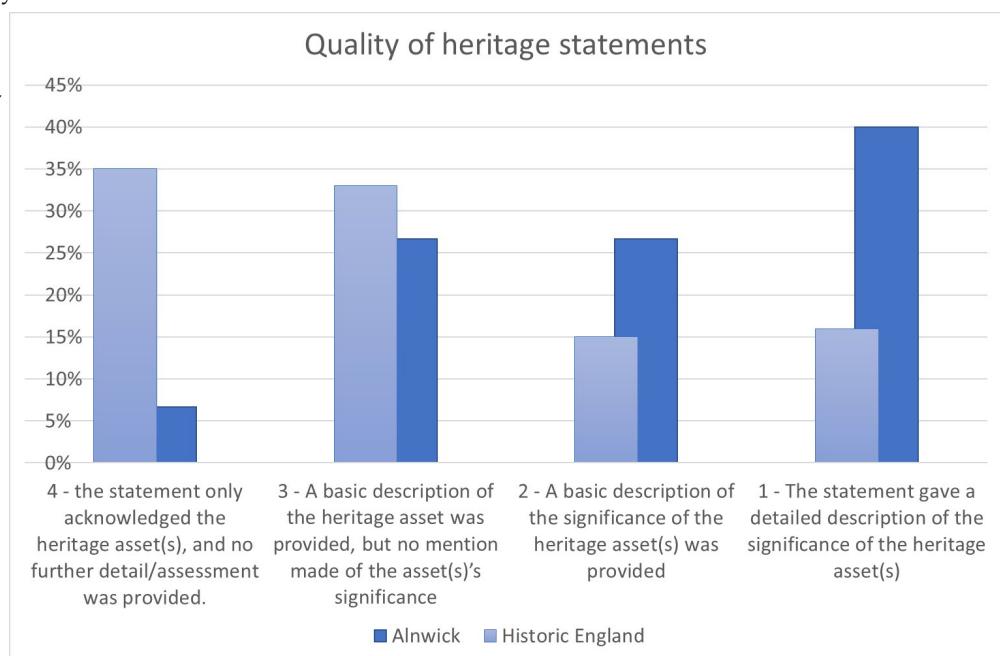
The Conservation team at Northumberland County Council updated their guidance on Heritage statements this year. Their advice is concise, straightforward and pragmatic. Applicants who need more guidance can refer to a detailed advice note from Historic England. With no shortage of guidance we suspect that quality suffers when applicants are not aware of the guidance, or choose to ignore it.

The NCC guidance on compiling heritage statement can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4r5ppnk>

The Historic England advice note on heritage statements can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2yk83d4w>

Historic England research into the heritage dimension of planning applications can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yx4fknv7>



# The mystery of the missing lion, by Dr. C. Shrimpton

This article was first published in Alnwick Civic Society Newsletter, January 1991

When the lion was toppled from the bridge by a vandal armed with a lorry one September afternoon late last summer, it gave rise once more to a flurry of stale myths such as the wagging of its tail at Scotsmen travelling northwards and its supposed companion the unicorn standing as his partner on the bridge's western parapet. But no story concerning the lion on (or off) the bridge can be half so intriguing as the actual case of the Alnwick lion that vanished!

It is the story of the vanishing lion that links together developments at the great Percy houses in the hundred years or so between mid-eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century - that is Northumberland House, Syon House and Alnwick Castle.

First we need to observe developments at Northumberland House just before 1750. There exists in the collection of paintings owned by National Westminster Bank a painting of Northumberland House in the Strand by Joseph Nickolls dated 1746. When studying this painting if you look upwards from the Strand gateway to the line of parapet a figure made familiar by Canaletto's painting of the same view is found to be missing - it is indeed that of the statant lion.

The lion in this attitude has become the one well-known and familiar three-dimensional heraldic symbol of the Percys. There are a number of heraldic attitudes of the beast rampant, passant, guardant, salient, dormant, sejant, couchant etc. The statant lion was ideal for a three-dimensional symbol first as a crest on top of a battle-helmet, then later, in the time with which we deal, as an architectural symbol, particularly on top of a grand palace, its four legs firmly planted giving it stability and its straight head and tail enhancing its nobility in profile.

It is most probable that the coming to prominence of this form of the old Percy badge and symbol coincides with the accession to the great Percy estates of Algernon, seventh Duke of Somerset, and grandson of the Percy heiress Elizabeth, on whom was bestowed the title of Earl of Northumberland of the new creation in 1748. He was busily engaged in restoring Northumberland House with the architect Daniel Garrett in the short time before his death in 1750. It was he who urged his daughter and her husband who succeeded him in the title of Earl of Northumberland to take the surname Percy.

It is, therefore, quite proper to associate this Algernon in the placing of the Percy symbol on top of the chief Percy palace. Canaletto's painting of Northumberland House has been dated 1752-3, so the lion has to be part of Algernon's design for the restored Northumberland House or a continuation of that design by his son-in-law Hugh Smithson.

With the lion established at Northumberland House, it was natural and logical to use this symbol of a revitalised Percy line at the other centres of family ownership and authority. But this did not take place until some twenty years later, first at Alnwick and then at Syon.

The introduction of the statant lion to Alnwick came with Adam's design for the new bridge to replace the one swept



away by the great flood of November 1771. A contemporary plan of the elevation of the bridge shows the statant to have been an integral part of the design of the bridge. The foundation stone of this bridge was laid by the first Duke in August 1773.

From palace decoration to bridge decoration, the statant lion, when transferred to Syon, appeared as the decoration to the top of an elaborate gateway. This is shown in Robert Adam's original sketch of the gateway dated 1775. By 1778, when the drawings of Adam's work for Syon were published - the work on the gateway was completed.

It was not until forty years later that the quartet of Percy statant lions was completed. On the 7th April 1817 a 'colossal' lion 'weighing upwards of a ton and a half, cut out of a single block of stone' was at last hoisted to the top of the Second Duke's column. Wrongly described by both Davison and Hartshorne as a 'passant' lion, this completed the number of statant lions. When Northumberland House was demolished in 1874, its lion was removed to Syon where it was raised to the parapet on the south side of the house.

The mystery lion of the title is a fifth lion, yet strictly speaking in chronological terms it is the second three-dimensional lion to be produced. In terms of historical documentary evidence we have more knowledge of this lion than any of the others, yet this one has totally vanished while the other (pace the lion off the bridge) have remained fixed where they are for a hundred years or more.

Whereas the four lions already described took their form from heraldic attitude, this fifth lion was copied from the work of one of the greatest Renaissance artists and sculptors. Michaelangelo Buonarrotti. This lion - a post-classical lion - stands with his left paw on a globe, his head turned in a guardant attitude and his tail drooped round his right hind leg.

The craftsman responsible for the creation of this lion was the noted sculptor and plasterer John Cheere, described along with his brother Henry as among the most successful English eighteenth-century sculptors. The Cheeres were regularly employed on the architectural works of Robert Adam: in the 1760s they were very fully employed by Adam to provide plaster figures after the antique for Syon House: the Apollo Belvidere for the Hall and Mercury, Camillus, Ganymede, Apollo and Venus di Medici for the Ante-Room. But among their commissions was one in 1766 for "a Statue of ye large lion after the Antique made of block tin & lead & very neat finished & a large Portland Stone Rocky plinth". The lion cost the newly created duke £63, far more than any of the Syon figures.

In addition John Cheere provided for this statue a large strong case 'very strongly braid in ye inside to prevent damage' and with 8 iron clamps at the corners of the case.

The encased lion was transported by porters and wagon from Cheere's work place at Old Palace Yard Westminster to the wharf for transport by sea to Alnwick.

The story of this lion at this point is taken up by the Duke's steward Thomas Butler in his account book.

# Missing lion (continued)

Butler made the following entry for 24th July 1767  
 "Paid William Melon a Bill for Carriage Wharfage & assistance in putting the Statue of a Lion on Board the Elizabeth. Captain Jubb, for Alemouth £1-0-6",

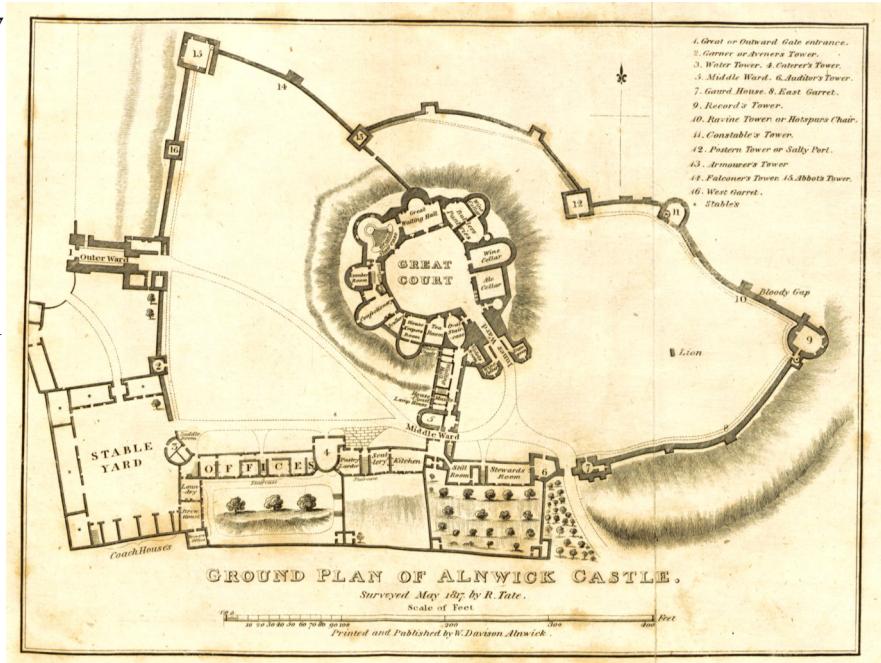
The lion, then, must have arrived at the castle in the summer of 1767. The date of the manufacture of the lion and its removal to Alnwick have significance. 1766 was a notable year for the family: it was the year in which the dukedom was bestowed and perhaps more significantly the year in which the medal was struck commemorating the restoration of the castle keep. The medal shows the castle's gothic style and the battlements thickly festooned with the familiar stone figures.

Perhaps the lion was meant to celebrate this completion (in similar fashion to the lion on top of Northumberland House) or the duke's recent elevation, though this seems less likely. But where was the lion to go? Certainly not on top of the castle keep, already overladen with figures. The inner courtyard of the keep would seem to have been the obvious place providing the yard with a central point of focus. However, this central yard was already highly decorated with a carved stone shield showing a rampant lion, medallions of the Duke and Duchess in artificial stone and the figure of the friar over the well! (Only the friar now remains.) Whether physically or aesthetically there was room for the lion or whether it was ever intended that the lion stand in this courtyard it is through lack of evidence impossible to tell.

The earliest evidence of where the lion and his pedestal stood comes in the form of an engraving by Godfrey of a picture by Hooper dated April 2nd 1776. The lion stands in what has at different times been called Inner Bailey, the Eastern Bailey or the Middle Ward at a point between the newly constructed Garden gateway and the Octagon towers but set back onto the sward of the bailey. The lion with his left foot on the globe looks towards the keep. The lion, then, had quite quickly taken up a position within the castle precincts which it appears it was destined to keep for a period of three-quarters of a century or more. Obviously he did add interest to the inner bailey, particularly for carriage passengers coming through from the gate houses or for those departing the castle to take a drive through the garden gateway to Denwick, Ratcheugh and beyond.

He was also very obviously a lion of influence, an influence which undoubtedly came with age and familiarity. In 1817, another significant date since it marked the accession of the Third Duke, the wise and highly influential David Smith, the Duke's chief commissioner for more than a decade, wrote in his historical jottings that the inner bailey was now known as the 'Lion Court'. Moreover, the lion formed one of the principal studies in the book of lithographs of the castle published in 1823 from the sketches made by the Duchess Charlotte Florentia, wife of the Third Duke. She reveals the lion in all his glory in a sketch made from the vantage point of the middle gateway looking eastwards towards Robert Adam's Record Tower. Against the background of this ornate tower the lion looks very splendid.

The lion seems likely to have remained guarding his court for



From Davison: A Descriptive and Historical View of Alnwick ... and of Alnwick Castle, 1822

some thirty years more but whether or not he remained long enough on his pedestal to receive yet additional homage is not known. That homage came in 1858 with the laying of a foundation of a new gatehouse to replace the eighteenth-century garden gateway - and the new gatehouse is called the Lion Gateway. It was part of Anthony Salvin's restoration of the castle for the Fourth Duke, Algernon. The gateway was so-called because it led from the Lion Court; it does not seem likely that it was ever intended that the lion should have been moved from his pedestal to the battlements of the gatehouse. However, at some time the lion was deposed, but whether before or shortly after 1858 is not known.

Why he should have gone while he was having a gateway named after him is not at all clear. What seems most likely is that the lion was swept away in the general enthusiasm engendered by the Fourth Duke for the removal of all work internal and external associated with the Adam restoration, - even the figures on top of the castle were severely culled! And another lion was appearing to supplant the lion in his court. The new lion appeared on the west face of the Prudhoe Tower in 1858. He was an heraldic lion carved in relief by the London carver James Forsyth. He was a sejant (sitting) lion holding a banner with the arms of old and new Percy. (To some authorities he is in attitude a mistake since his pose was thought to be based on that of the guardant lion at Warkworth).

The old lion may have had cause to smile at this mistake in the form of his usurper, but his own position was lost. He lived with prestige amid the incongruity of styles of the eighteenth-century but he really had no place amid Salvin's newly imposed severity. A magazine illustration of the castle of 1861 shows the second courtyard bereft of its lion, the pedestal standing there forlorn and empty.

Today the pedestal is gone and all that remains to let us know that Cheere's magnificent lion once stood there is a slight hollow in the ground.

The lion has long since gone, but whither?

# Isolation Hospital

*The Isolation Hospital stood three miles south of Alnwick, and was intended for treatment of Smallpox. It was jointly operated by Alnwick Urban and Rural District Councils, Amble, Belford and Rothbury.*

Until 1980, when smallpox was declared as eradicated, there were two forms of the virus. Variola major was the more severe, with a death rate of about 30%. Variola minor was less severe, with death rates below 1%. In the UK the last significant outbreak of Variola Major was early in the 20th century. The last major outbreak of Variola Minor began around 1919, and peaked in the late 1920s.

At the start of the 20th century Medical Officers periodically had to deal with small outbreaks of smallpox brought from overseas. Ports such as Blyth made provision to isolate any patients. Occasionally there would be a more serious outbreak, but most districts in Northumberland made no preparations to isolate smallpox patients. This caused some concern, but it would need a serious outbreak before provision was made. Northumberland reported 409 cases in 1903 and 373 in 1904. By 1905 a site was identified for Alnwick and plans prepared. The Alnwick Engineering and Foundry Company tendered to provide a corrugated iron building at £264. The chosen site was alongside the former Shilbottle Wagonway.

The Isolation Hospital was opened by 1909, but as things turned out there would not be another serious outbreak of smallpox in Northumberland for almost two decades, and the hospital seems to have been moth-balled. In 1911, though, it was opened and used to treat victims of an outbreak of Enteric Fever (typhoid) at Hipsburn.

Then in the 1920s the number of smallpox cases in Northumberland started to rise again. In 1924 the county reported 392 cases and in 1925 it reported 629. Ashington, Bedlington, and Prudhoe were badly affected, and the Medical Officer was clearly disappointed that the response fell short of what was needed. Smallpox was prevalent in Morpeth, but only one case fell within the Alnwick district. To open and staff the Alnwick isolation hospital for one person would be expensive, so a 75-year old patient from the Alnwick District was treated in the Morpeth Smallpox Isolation hospital at Chevington. He recovered, and the number of cases fell away again.



The buildings were finally demolished in 1967.  
Nothing remains today.

Early in WW-2, when children were first evacuated from the cities there were concerns in rural areas that infectious diseases would spread from the slums. By 1939 there had been no cases of smallpox in the county for several years, so the Regional Medical Officer decided that the hospital could better be used to isolate evacuated children suffering from contagious diseases such as scabies, impetigo and ring-worm. A year later the Medical Officer reported that the isolation hospital had been almost continuously in use for this purpose: normally treating from 5-15 patients. Similar diseases were not unknown in rural areas but the Alnwick Isolation Hospital was only used to treat evacuees – it was not used to treat local children.

After the war the Ministry of Health assessed all the Northumberland hospitals and in 1947 it found the Alnwick Isolation Hospital was unfit for treatment of the sick, and declared that it should be closed.

The buildings continue to appear on OS maps that were surveyed in the early 1950s, but by then they are no longer marked as a hospital. The two wards and a separate accommodation building still remained, and a family lived there until it was demolished in 1967, or thereabouts. By then the corrugated iron was more than 60 years old, but still in good condition, and it was re-used for farm buildings.



# News in Brief



William Hardy opened his first shop in Pake's Street in 1872, so the new Hardy shop at 30 Bondgate Within is ready in plenty of time to celebrate the company's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On the ground floor is a retail store, and above that a museum to showcase the story of the company and their products. The building is the former HSBC bank. Originally this was Fountain House, the home of Adam Roberston who is commemorated by the fountain on the opposite side of the road.

The impressive new bells at St Michael's were on display in August before they were hoisted into the tower. They first rang for a practice session on



12<sup>th</sup> August. On 29<sup>th</sup> September the new Bells rang out for the Service of Dedication. Few of us will be able to see the new bells again, but the old bells (which were cast around 1440 and 1540) have been cleaned and can still be seen in the South aisle of the church.

The debate continues, but few of us are now going to change our minds on whether Narrowgate should remain as it is, or re-open to traffic. So it's a relief that the consultation is now under way. We can look forward to a decision, and everyone moving forward. The consultation is open until Nov 5<sup>th</sup>.

It's important to understand that this is not a referendum, but before councillors decide you can have your say (and we hope you will) at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Highways/Roads/Traffic.aspx>

Thanks to everyone involved with Heritage Open Day on Sept 11<sup>th</sup>. More organisations participated than we anticipated, attendance was higher than we expected, and feedback from attendees and participating organisations was positive. Unfortunately we had to postpone our ambition to deliver a lasting legacy in the form of a video of Alnwick's Hidden Heritage.

We think Alnwick should continue to celebrate Heritage Open Days. To

achieve greater impact next year we intend to start preparations earlier and take a fresh look at how best to leave a legacy. With experience and better understanding of who these events attract we have been able to identify several areas where we can make improvements. Let us know if you would like to be involved in a bigger and better festival in 2022.



Since the middle of last year we have reported 39 issues to the Town Council and County Council through our "Eyes and Ears" initiative.

More than half have been fixed. Almost half haven't.



## Heritage Sector Statement on Climate Change

The Architectural Heritage Fund, Churches Conservation Trust, English Heritage Trust, Historic England, Historic Houses, National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and the Heritage Alliance adopted a joint statement on Climate Change. It begins:

*Climate change is one of the most significant and fastest growing threats to people and their cultural heritage worldwide. Responding to climate change requires action but that does not need to be at the expense of our cultural heritage which can help society adapt to the dual challenges of new climates and a low carbon future. ...*

*We recognise that the historic environment has its part to play in:*

- *mitigating climate change by making its contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions*

- *understanding and adapting to the challenges presented by a changing climate*
- *communicating and engaging people with climate change and actions to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to changing climate*

*We recognise that the scale of these challenges merits a collaborative response and we agree to work together to understand and address the impacts of climate change on the historic environment.*

The full statement is here:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/climate-change/>

In the lead up to COP26 Historic England has partnered with the Climate Heritage Network to deliver a series of webinars exploring the theme of cultural heritage and climate action. These extend the existing Climate Friday we-

binars developed by Historic England. The free webinars offer an in-depth look at a range of topics related to climate change and heritage. They are designed for practitioners, and presented by experts in heritage and climate change. This means that for the general audience they are fairly demanding, but they don't require specialist knowledge. So this is a good resource for members with an awareness of the issues, who are ready to explore the subject in some depth, and want to better understand current thinking on policy and practice.

For Climate and Heritage webinars :

<https://tinyurl.com/3vtjpwzz>

For other Historic England webinars:

<https://tinyurl.com/pwptzfsx>

# Energy efficiency in traditional homes

We all have a keen interest in making our homes more energy efficient. Heating of buildings accounts for 38% of Northumberland's carbon emissions and is one of the priority action areas in the Northumberland Climate Action Plan. Economists are looking at unusually low energy stocks, current weather patterns, the economic rebound after Covid and the impact of climate change policies. They warn that the recent rise in energy prices is set to continue. The Society is collecting an online library of relevant information and here we highlight some findings that may interest those who want to see more efficient use of energy in traditional homes.

Northumberland County Council has committed to halve the county's carbon footprint by 2025 and make the county carbon neutral by 2030. Their response to heating of homes and businesses is two-fold: insulation to improve the thermal efficiency of the building stock and a move towards low carbon renewable heating.

## Did you know?

Northumberland County Council is exploring the possibility of district heat networks, with feasibility studies under way in Blyth and Cramlington.

The Council already operates a number of Ground Source Heat Pumps across its estate and is planning to install one at Willowburn Leisure Centre which could save 284 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.

Homes account for 13% of our carbon emissions and rising energy costs will influence homeowners. We need to reduce the carbon emissions from our homes, but improving the thermal efficiency of our housing is complicated by the nature of the stock.

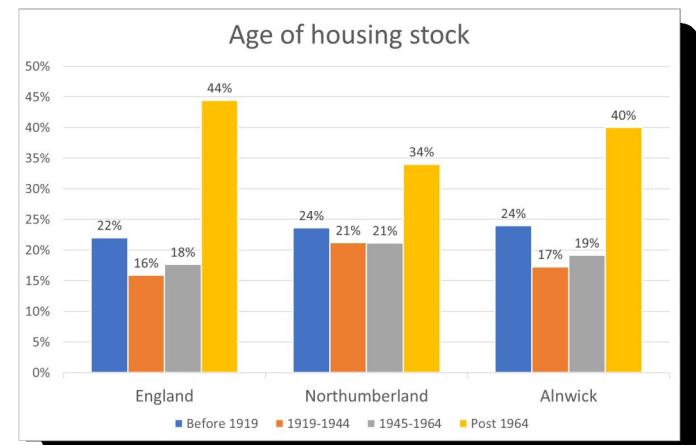
England has one of the oldest housing stocks in Europe. More than one in five homes is over a century old. In Alnwick it is almost one in four. Some types of structure that are common in Alnwick (such as single skin stone-built properties) are regarded as "hard to treat". They are both thermally inefficient and difficult to insulate.

## Did you know?

The number of homes that date from before 1918 is increasing. That's because non-domestic properties are being converted into homes, and existing houses are being divided into multiple flats.

There are no simple solutions. Progress will rely on legislation and financial support from national government but understanding and engagement are likely to be more effective where they are locally driven.

Our homes are not yet on course to meet climate action targets, despite a 20% decline in carbon emissions. This has mainly been achieved by shifting electricity generation to lower carbon sources. In future, changing our own behaviour is going to play a more important role. However, surveys show that, while 93% of the public see climate change as a serious issue, only 5% identify heating as a significant contributor of carbon emissions.



There are gaps in our knowledge, but extensive work is under way to understand the energy efficiency of different types of traditional building, the benefits and costs of different approaches, and how owners of England's pre-1919 buildings can best improve energy efficiency.

A building contributes to climate change over its whole life, from building to demolition. During building, the extraction and transport of raw materials, groundwork and construction all create carbon. At the end of its life demolition creates carbon. This is known as the building's embodied carbon.

## Did you know?

Over a period of sixty years roughly two-thirds of the carbon emitted by a new home is operational carbon: generated by heating, lighting, ventilation and cooking. Around a third is carbon embodied in the building.

The carbon emissions embodied in a traditional building are easily forgotten, but when they are taken into account they make a significant difference. It is important to ensure that Alnwick's traditional domestic buildings can contribute to our low-carbon future. We cannot build our way out of climate change.

## Did you know?

Over the next thirty years, because of its embodied carbon, a traditional Victorian Terrace in Alnwick that is sympathetically refurbished will emit less carbon than an equivalent new build.

Retrofit is the process of improving the energy and environmental performance of a building by adapting the interior and exterior. Retrofit can make a traditional building much more energy efficient, but it needs a well-considered plan that considers the whole building, building services, building users and any heritage significance. Assessing the building and the way it is used will help to identify the measures that are most suitable.

Given the enormity of climate change, some call for urgent action, but large scale retrofit carries significant risks. Poor quality retrofit can damage a building and even the health of the occupants. Work on a traditional building can affect

# Energy efficiency in traditional homes (continued)

heritage significance and value in a variety of ways. Any work must also comply with building regulations and insurance requirements. Inappropriate measures can lead to unintended consequences, such as condensation and mould growth or more serious fabric decay such as wet and dry rot. Where planning permission or listed building consent is required, the nature of what is being proposed will need to be weighed against the risk of harm to heritage significance. Careful planning and professional advice can help to mitigate these risks.

## Did you know?

There are 900 homes in Alnwick that date from before 1919. If we were to retrofit one a week it would take 17 years before the programme was complete.

Experts recommend a 'whole building approach'. This considers the context of a building (Construction, Condition, Historic significance), and the factors that affect energy use (Exposure), before considering potential improvements and the respective benefits, comparative costs and technical risks. An owner who takes a whole building approach will consider changes to both the fabric (Walls, Roof, Floors, Windows, Doors, Chimneys, etc.) and services (Power generation, Heating, Water storage, Lighting and Ventilation).

Reducing emissions through retrofit can be costly and disruptive. The costs are specific to a building and a household. They depend on the cost of products, local labour, how and when the work is carried out. They are variable and bespoke. Recent research shows that where retrofit is approached as a standalone project, the average cost of retrofit for traditional buildings is £457 per tonne of carbon. Costs are estimated to be about 10% lower if the retrofit is incorporated into a wider renovation or improvement project.

Low impact energy efficiency measures are also an important part of an energy efficiency strategy for a traditional home. These can be achieved quickly as part of a phased approach. Examples include:

- Draughtproofing measures are quick, cost effective, and will improve comfort as well as cutting carbon emissions. Adding draught proofing to windows and chimneys, and fitting roller blinds to single glazed windows can reduce carbon emissions by more than 10%.
- Heating system controls can help to manage the temperature in different parts of the home at different times. Unresponsive and poorly operated controls can increase energy use, but emissions can be reduced by almost 10% through slight reductions in the thermostat, and turning heating off when it is not needed.
- Low carbon lighting. Replacing inefficient lighting with energy efficient

alternatives (such as LEDs) is a simple, low cost, low risk way of reducing electricity consumption.

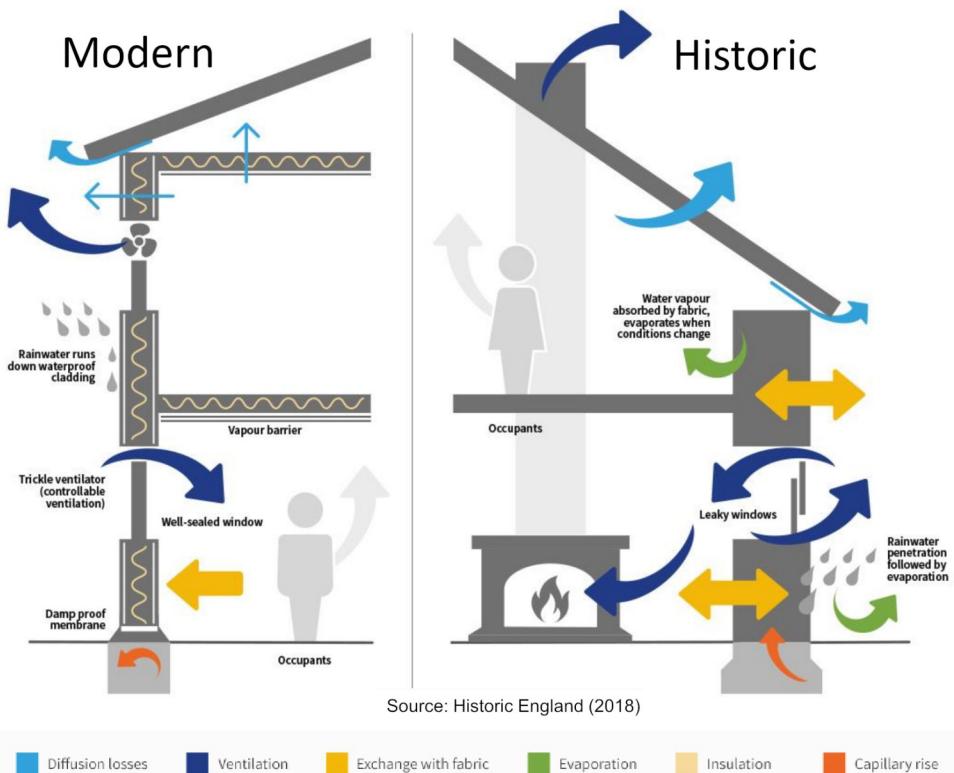
- Heating upgrades: Low carbon space heating systems include A-rated gas boilers and air-source or ground-source heat pumps. Depending on the scope of the change a heating upgrade carries medium level of risk. Upgrading hot water systems depends on the nature of the existing system but is normally associated with a heating upgrade.

- Roof/loft insulation: there can be significant risks associated with some forms of roof or ceiling level insulation, insulation between and above rafters, insulation between and above weatherproofing. By comparison, loft insulation is relatively simple, quick and low risk.

Bespoke solutions will be needed to minimise energy costs and maximise the carbon efficiency of Alnwick's traditional housing stock. We are collecting a library of guidance for members who are interested in exploring the subject further.

We urge owners of Alnwick's traditional homes to:

- Keep up with small repairs: one in four of Alnwick's homes have stood for more than a century. Continuing to maintain these buildings properly will ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from the embodied carbon.
- Understand your building and the needs of the household. Take a 'whole building approach' to get the balance right, assess the costs and benefits of different options, ensure energy-efficiency measures are suitable and avoid unintended consequences.
- Climate action is urgent, and we need to act now. It is important to consider low-impact measures as part of the overall mix. Small changes accumulate to make large differences, they can be implemented quickly, and have immediate impact.



# Planning matters

At present we are considering an average of 14 applications a month across Alnwick and Denwick. Most are household or minor applications that need no comment. We concentrate on major applications, and those which impact on heritage and the conservation area.

There are proposals for construction of a 2 storey house in the paddock to the north of the Old Vicarage in Northumberland Street. We decided not to comment.

At 9 Paikes Street there is an application for change of use from a cafe and hot food takeaway (fish & chip shop) to a hot food takeaway on the ground floor, with two flats on the first and second floors. The scheme needs the shopfront changing to form an entrance to the flats. This is a listed building. Few original features remain on the ground floor, but there are original features on the upper floors. We didn't comment, but the Conservation Officer has concerns about internal changes on the second floor which would not preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building. They do not support this proposal but could support a more restrained scheme. They did not object to inserting a second door, but did suggest design changes based on the Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide.

At Clive Villa a previous owner replaced the original timber sashes with top-hung, non-opening units. They are unsightly and a poor substitute for the originals. The original double front door was also replaced by an incongruous modern door. There is an application to replace both the door and windows with more accurate wood replicas of the originals. This also involves reinstating the original shutters. It is welcome.

Approval has been granted for new signs on the Hardy Store at 30 Bondgate Within. Planners recommended approval and their comments are worth noting as an example of a position that we would agree with, and would like to see more often. *"With regards to visual amenity the scale, size, design and colour palette are considered to be acceptable and typical of this type of development. The signage would not appear as a dominant feature within the street scene and would not cause detriment to the street scene. This is of particular importance as the site lies within the Conservation Area. It is considered that the character and appearance of the conservation area would be unaffected by the proposed signage".* The only regret is that the application was retrospective.

Another variation of condition has been submitted on land south-west of Greensfield Farm. The use of these variations is controversial and we objected again as we see this as a new design that needs to be reconsidered.

Changes have been proposed for the second phase of the development at Windy Edge. We know that there are concerns in the town about the impact of this development on the landscape, protection of footpaths, and education and healthcare services. We did not object, but commented that an increase in the number of houses, and a shift towards accommodating larger families reinforces the case for revisiting the Section-106 agreement. We also noted that the developer appears to be building and marketing identical

house types in Penrith, Preston, Sunderland, Blackburn, and elsewhere. They may want to reconsider their claim that "The house types used will reflect the Northumbrian vernacular".

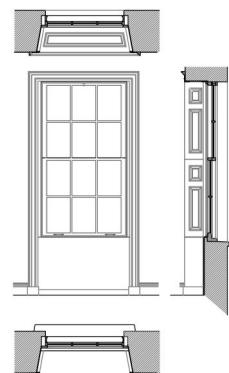


Five window surrounds have been renewed at the Youth Hostel for safety reasons. The history and appearance of the hostel is an important part of its appeal, and this sensitive like-for-

like replacement will be welcomed. The Conservation Team raised no objection.

More details have been submitted regarding the treatment of windows on the former Duchess's High School. On a significant listed building at a prominent position within the historic core of the town this has the potential to become a model of good practice. We would like the Conservation Officer to provide independent confirmation that both the principle and design of replacement has been well considered. The result could then provide a benchmark for future window replacements and might come to be seen as a turning point in understanding the standards that can be maintained alongside effective climate action.

At a time of growing concern over climate change, with many 19<sup>th</sup> century windows reaching the end of their life, we are concerned that current policies on historic windows provide insufficient protection for townscape character. Owners looking for energy savings often feel that the guidance they receive is obstructive. As a result there are already many examples of inappropriate window replacements within the Conservation Area and this situation is likely to get worse until guidance can be reviewed.



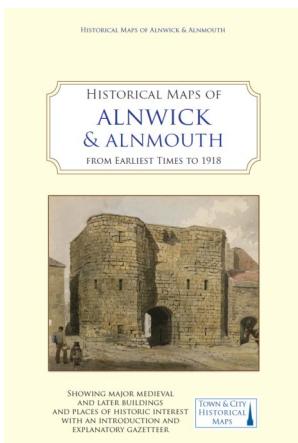
There is a retrospective application for outdoor seating at Adam and Eve, the former Mr. Fox on Clayport. We hope that appropriate weight will be given to the potential adverse impacts on living conditions in nearby residential areas, including considering limits on the hours when the external seating area can be used. It is important that businesses and homes can co-exist in the town centre. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the role that town centre housing plays in economic regeneration and reducing the need for travel as people are co-located with shops and services. ADNP Policy E5 on Tourism Development requires that development will not have adverse impacts on living conditions in residential areas.

# Quiz: Putting heritage on the map

Our work with the Historic Towns Trust is almost complete, and the Historical Maps of Alnwick and Alnmouth will be available in time for Christmas.

We will announce details of the launch shortly. Meanwhile, here are some images of our small team at work: carefully surveying our historic town.

Do you recognise the locations? You can check your answers on the back page.

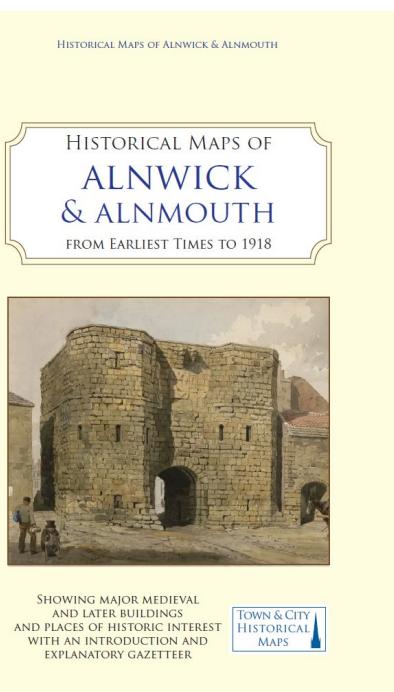


## Diary dates

**Any Questions:** our topical debate on local issues will be held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in St James Centre, Pottergate. We are proud to welcome Mayor Lynda Wearn, Nick Lewis from the National Trust, Mark Brassell from Alnwick Garden, and Jake Castleman of Curious Taverns. Please put this in your diary. It is an open meeting so we hope members will invite a guest and encourage them to participate.

**Christmas lights:** we understand that switch-on is planned for Friday November 19<sup>th</sup>. Watch out for further details.

**Historic Map of Alnwick and Alnmouth:** Watch for details of the launch event. We expect to announce this shortly.



## 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.



### Who's Who?

**President:** Peter Ennor

**Chair:** Peter Reed

**Treasurer and Membership:** Gill Parker

**Honorary Secretary:** Sue Smith

**Other Executive Committee members:**

- Ian Hall
- Mary Carter
- Elizabeth Jones

**Web:** [www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

**Email:** [contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

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

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

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

**Heritage at risk:** report your concerns here:

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

## Remember, remember...

Thomas Percy (1560-1605) was second cousin once removed to Henry Percy, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland, who appointed him Constable of Alnwick Castle with responsibility for his Northern Estates. Thomas believed that King James had reneged on promises of toleration for English Catholics, so in 1604 he joined Robert Catesby's conspiracy to kill the King and his ministers by blowing up the House of Lords. He helped to fund the conspiracy and secured leases to property in London, including the undercroft beneath the House of Lords, where the gunpowder was placed. When the plot was exposed on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov 1605 he fled to the Midlands but was caught and shot on 8<sup>th</sup> Nov. His patron, the Earl of Northumberland, had not been involved in the plot, but was nevertheless imprisoned in the Tower of London until 1621.



## Quiz Answers

A. The Shambles, below Northumberland Hall  
B. St Michael's Church  
C. The Marketplace

D. Lion Bridge  
E. Pottergate Pant and Narrowgate  
F. Bondgate Tower  
G. Mechanics' Institute in Percy Street