

February 2022



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*Our Annual General Meeting will be held at St. James' Centre in Pottergate at 7:30 p.m. on 9<sup>th</sup> March. After the formal meeting, professional photographer Jane Coltman has kindly agreed to speak on the subject of "Jane Coltman's Hidden Alnwick".*

Having recently been registered by the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation we need to choose the Trustees who will be responsible for the management and administration of the society. We are also looking for more Committee Members to help Trustees take the society forward.

The Committee normally meets once a month, and takes a lead in scrutinising planning activity, responding to consultations, organising events and publications, and maintaining relationships with our supporters. Sometimes sub-groups are formed to deal with specific issues.

This is a good time to get in touch if you are interested in playing a more active role in the society as a trustee or member of the committee. If you would first like to know more then any of the current committee members would be happy to talk it over with you. And if you do not yet feel ready for a formal role then there are going to be plenty of other opportunities to contribute during the coming year.



# Any Questions?

On 3rd November we were able to hold our first Any Questions? event since 2019. A distinguished panel attracted a large audience, and drew on their experience of leading Alnwick, local businesses and visitor attractions through one of the most challenging periods in recent history. 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. Mark Brassell is Director of Alnwick Garden. Jake Castleman owns Curious Taverns and operates the Pig in Muck in Alnwick and the Cock and Bull in Amble.

We began by discussing the impact of Covid. At Lindisfarne Castle most visitors prior to covid were visiting for the first time, and had travelled from afar. Now the castle is seeing more repeat visitors, and more who have travelled for 1½ hours or less. It isn't easy for the castle to benefit from the high visitor numbers on Lindisfarne because of the difficulties of putting effective social distancing measures in place in the narrow passageways. The means that their visitor numbers have dropped significantly, and budgeting is a delicate balance act.

By contrast the Pig and Muck has been able to benefit from a vibrant visitor economy because it holds a pavement licence in Alnwick Marketplace. However, so much of the housing stock has now been given over to holiday lets that there is a shortage of affordable rents and the hospitality industry is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit chefs and other staff. Poor public transport is causing staffing problems for the late night economy. Employees face a shortage of routes, infrequent services, lack of late services etc.

Linda Wearn said a bid for funding for public transport improvements would be made to the North Tyne Combined Authority, and ran through some other changes that are happening and planned for Alnwick.

In the marketplace discussions about improvement plans are under way with the new owner of properties on the north side of the Marketplace and there are plans for the future of Northumberland Hall that will involve a community asset transfer. Removal of parking from the Marketplace would free up more space to develop a café culture. This approach was supported enthusiastically by members of the audience. Additional parking is already available on the old Duchess's School site and funding is allocated for a more permanent car park. There is more ground here that the audience felt could be used for affordable housing, and there is sufficient space to accommodate both.

Alnwick Garden wants to keep paid staff employed throughout the year, and Mark Brassell spoke about the importance of trying to sustain the economy year round for the wider benefit of the area. They are looking to dedicated events, such as a Halloween season, and a Christmas season.

The panel were asked how they felt about concerns that the influx of visitors and additional housing were putting a strain on facilities and local services.

Both the Town Council and Northumberland County Council were aware of the concerns, and Mayor Linda Wearn and Councillor Castle from the floor addressed various aspects.

A traffic survey of the whole town was under way. When plans for big developments came forward, payments towards health facilities, education etc. were sought by NCC through Section 106 agreements. Councillor Castle urged members not to underestimate the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan and the growing emphasis on the environmental impacts of developments. For example, the Neighbourhood Plan had been instrumental in dismissal of proposals for new housing on the Willowburn Trading Estate



There were a number of questions from the floor about town centre retailing. These included concerns around the choice of garish colours on shopfronts. There are guidelines for these matters in the Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide produced by Northumberland County Council and the Civic Society. This has been distributed to Letting Agents, Solicitors and others in Alnwick, but there are limits to what can and cannot be enforced. Much depends on encouraging good practice. Consultation on pedestrianisation of Narrowgate would come to a close a few days after the meeting. Concerns over safety at the Clayport and Fenkle Street junction were also discussed.

The discussion ended with an emphasis on the importance of increasing the range of career opportunities in order to retain young people and encourage others to return to Alnwick. With superfast broadband some work can now be done from anywhere in the world. This increases opportunity, but transport and housing remain as issues.

In conclusion, the pandemic has confirmed that Alnwick people are genuinely proud of the place they live and there have been many examples of Alnwick people stepping forward to help each other, even when they have only been able to do so by overcoming difficulties during lock down. It is impressive to see how many people want to visit Alnwick then speak of their visit so positively. This is a resilient community that has shown it can overcome problems and is now ready to move forward.

Our thanks to the panel and all who participated for an enjoyable and thought-provoking evening.

## Also known as...

We all know the lane that runs between the North-East corner of the Marketplace and Bondgate Within. But what is it called? "Market Passage" has a long pedigree, and support from distinguished authorities. But it's not the only possibility.

Writing in the 1860s George Tate tells us that in 1770 this was called "Pye's Lane" or "Hunter's Lane", and that it was later known as "Egdell's Lane". Those were all based on the names of the occupants. These days there are no suitable properties that front onto the lane. So if we wanted to follow the same practice we would need to think of this as "the lane with no name", or maybe the "George Inn Lane".

After 1770 "Hunter's Lane" seems to have remained in use for more than a century. That's the name that appears on Wood's map of 1827. It also appears in a Poll Book from 1847. But in 1834 the lane appears in Pigot's directory as "Market Passage". An early Ordnance Survey town plan called it "Market Passage" in the 1850s. In 1864 a tailor called Mr Taylor was advertising his business as being in "Market Passage". Through the 1870s and 1880s there are newspaper references to recurring problems with the paving in "Market Passage".

On the other hand, a report in 1881 about a meeting of the Board of Health shows both names in use at the same time "Market Passage" was also referred to as "Hunter's Lane". A few years later a report in 1885 about the Street Committee talks about "Market Passage or Chrisp's Lane".

It's useful to know that over time this lane has been called after various different occupants. "Hunter's Lane" seems to have stuck for a long time, but lives move on, and over time the names of occupants inevitably vary. We've recently seen it called Market Cut. Conzen call it Market Passage.

If you had to pick one name for the lane today, what would you prefer?

The consensus seems to be that "Market Passage" is the sensible choice, and we are inclined to agree. But we understand why some of the alternatives appeal.

Thanks to Gordon, Adrian, Lorna, Phil and Allan, and others, for an intriguing diversion.



## Planning Application Validation

Northumberland planners are updating the checklists that they use to validate planning applications. They invited us to comment, and we have now received some feedback:

### Heritage statements

We felt applicants would benefit from guidance to help them recognize different types of heritage asset, and their responsibilities in relation to these.

*We intend to publish a map of listed buildings (including locally listed) alongside the new Validation Checklist so applicants/agents can check if their proposal affects any of these heritage assets. At validation we would only be able to check the applicant/agent has submitted a heritage statement, as Validation Officers are not specialists in conservation. It would be for the Conservation Team as the consultee to comment on the quality of the assessment. If it is not sufficient, they can request more information.*

### Landscape and visual impact assessments

We felt two policies should be included from the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan: HD1: Protecting the Landscape Setting and HD4: Approaches to the Town. Our Policy Team will be updating this section with the latest policies available before the final version of the document is released so can take this into account.

### Transport

We suggested more emphasis on the responsibilities of a developer to recognise the cumulative impact on the transport network of a series of developments, and a statement on how applicants intend to maintain alignment with sustainable transport strategies.

*The Highways Development Manager has suggested additional text: Developers will need to consider the cumulative impacts of proposals on all transport infrastructure and should seek to anticipate committed development and other known proposals via the pre-application service.... Transport Assessments will identify the impacts of development with no mitigations. Developers are required to identify, protect and exploit opportunities for sustainable transport measures ahead of measures to address highway capacity deficit...*

### Tree report

We suggested that this was an area where applicants need further clarification, and that an initiative to raise awareness of their responsibilities would be timely.

*We will be looking at this one in more detail.*

### Any other comments

Our impression is that problems are more common where the applicant has not taken advantage of pre-application advice, and has limited access to professional support. We suggested providing guidance in a more accessible format for minor and household applications.

*We will be creating more guidance for householders regarding what they need to submit. We will also be splitting up the checklist by application type e.g. householder, advert, listed building consent etc and presenting it in a more accessible format. We recognise that presenting applicants with a 70+ page document with every possible option is not helpful and is likely not to be read at all. These steps should narrow down what is required to something much less daunting.*

# Hulne Park Wall

We've been asked about the history of Hulne Park Wall. We thought it would be a straightforward question. It wasn't. The story is complex, with inconsistencies between different accounts

## Royal Forest

Today a forest is an area of dense woodland, but in the medieval world a forest was an area used for hunting, where animals and their habitat were protected. The term 'forest' described the way land was used, not the vegetation. Land selected for the hunt might be woodland, moorland, or heathland. Land that was densely populated was unsuitable and there were better ways to use good farming land.

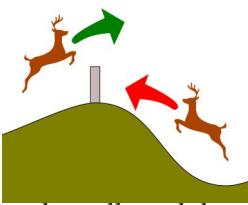
Large areas of England were under Forest Law, which did not allow people to collect fallen timber, harvest berries, cut turf, or put swine out to pasture. The baron could hunt smaller animals, but only the king was allowed to hunt deer or wild boar.

There were three areas of Royal Forest in Northumberland: one to the south of Rothbury, another between the Coquet and the Aln, and a third to the north of the Aln. These fell within the barony of Eustace de Vescy (1170-1215). He might have felt far enough from the king's reach to enjoy use of his own land, but despite this he became one of the most prominent of the barons who pressed for Magna Carta in 1215, then one of the twenty-five barons appointed to monitor the king's conduct.

After Magna Carta, in 1217, King Henry III applied his seal to the *Carta Foresta*. This summarised elements in Magna Carta relating to the Royal Forest. It obliged the King to roll-back the boundaries of Royal Forests, but by then Eustace had been killed at a siege of Barnard Castle.

## Deer park

By the middle of the thirteenth century the Royal Forest was being divided up. Eustace de Vescy's son, William de Vescy (died 1253) was probably first to start enclosing his own deer parks. A combination of ditch, bank and wooden palings allowed deer from outside to leap into the park, but stopped deer inside the park from jumping out.



William didn't need all of the land. He gave privileges on Alnwick Moor (a.k.a. Haydon Forest) to the burgesses of Alnwick. Alnwick Abbey had already been founded, and he founded Hulne Priory, in 1240. The Knights Templar are thought to have had land around the top of Clayport.

In 1253, William was succeeded by his son, John (1244-1289) and King Edward I came to the throne in 1272. Forest Law no longer applied, but Edward's military campaigns stretched the national finances. Forests were a potential source of revenue and in 1281 a scheme of disafforestation was drawn up for Northumberland, with annual rental of 17 marks for forests south of the Coquet, and 23 marks for forests north of the Coquet.

When John de Vescy died in 1289 the barony passed to his brother William. He died in 1297, leaving no legitimate heir and the barony fell to Antony Bek, Bishop of Durham. In 1290 Henry Percy bought the Barony for 10,000 marks. The Percy family was acquiring estates in Sussex, Yorkshire, Cumberland and elsewhere in Northumberland. Many of

these had a pair of deer parks. In Alnwick, Cawledge Park lay to the south-east. Sometimes Hulne Park and West Park were managed separately and sometimes together as one.

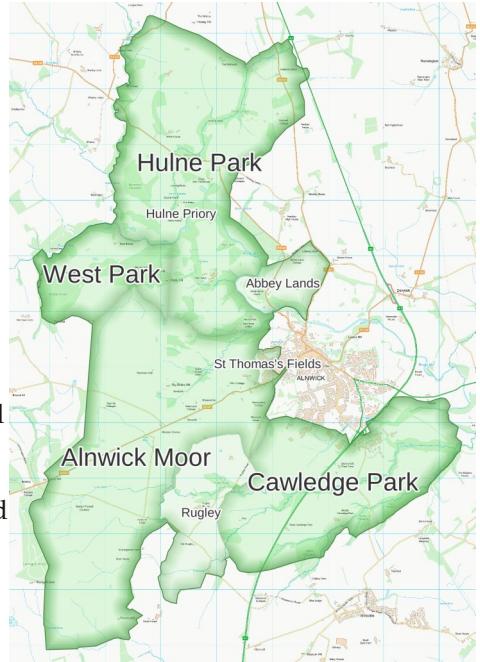
In each park deer were contained by wooden palings and as well as the hunt, the parks were a source of timber and bark (for tanning). Stone was quarried. Cattle were a target for Scottish raiders, so there were enclosures where livestock could be protected. Towers were constructed at Hulne Priory and Heiferlaw, to be used both as watchtowers to defend against raids, and as hunting lodges with observation platforms so that spectators could follow the hunt.

Henry Algernon Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland (1477-1527) was known as "The Magnificent" because of his extravagant lifestyle. At the time of his death he owed £17,000 (about £17 million today). His pastimes were centred on his deer parks, and under him they reached their most advanced state. In 1513 in Hulne Park and West Park he had 215 stags, 410 does and 199 fawns. In Cawledge Park he had 131 stags, 339 does and 148 fawns. By now Hulne Park was enclosed by a stone wall, said to be twenty miles long (but probably less). The boundary of Cawledge Park was six miles long. Hulne Park was described as well replenished with fallow deer, and well set with underwoods for cover and preservation of the deer. *"a very stately park-like ground"*. Cawledge Park, on the other hand, was only partly enclosed with a pale *"which is in great decay, and hence there is no great plenty of deer"*.

Part of the pale of the Hulne deer park can still be seen as a ditch and bank near Cloudy Crags, crossing the 19th century wall at an angle.

## Neglect

The influence of the Percy family waned after the fifth earl. It recovered briefly under the seventh (until he was executed for his involvement in the Rising of the North). After dissolution, others acquired the site of Alnwick Abbey and Hulne Priory, and the state of the parks varied as the fortunes of the Percy family rose and fell. By the 1530s the number of deer in Hulne Park and West Park had fallen from 824 to 160 and the number in Cawledge Park from 618 to 100. Hulne Park and West Park were still partly protected by a wall and partly by a pale. Cawledge was protected by a pale but all were described as very decayed. Then a survey in 1570 found both Hulne Park and West park *"for the most part enclosed with a stone wall"*. In Cawledge, though, *"the pale*



# Hulne Park Wall (continued)

is not repaired". In 1586 there was still a full complement of park officers. When the second duke took over in 1786 the condition of the boundary must have deteriorated. Tenants had been responsible for taking care of it, but there is little evidence that they did. It seems that Hulne Park and West Park were well-maintained but Cawledge was not. By now deer parks were falling into disuse, and the land was taking on a more economic role. By 1605 Cawledge Park was farmed, but the Gunpowder Plot interrupted plans for the same in Hulne Park. The ninth Earl was suspected of having some involvement in the plot, and was confined to the Tower of London and fined. He needed to raise money so he commissioned Francis Mayson and Robert Norton to survey his properties. Their maps show both Hulne Park and Cawledge Park surrounded by wooden palings.

By the end of the seventeenth century agricultural improvement was having an impact. The corporation was inclosing farms on Alnwick Moor, restricting how much stock each freemen could keep, and raising money for the town by renting some of the land to others. Farming now accounted for less than half the income from Hulne Park, as quarries, corn mills and fulling were developed. Agricultural improvement meant that coal mining became important: for burning lime. But the Percy family saw little benefit from these developments. They were absent landlords, rents were difficult to collect, and the management of the estate had become antiquated.

All this changed when Sir Hugh Smithson and Elizabeth Seymour inherited her father's estate in 1750.

## Pleasure grounds

The new Earl wouldn't become Duke until 1766, but he already brought experience of managing large estates, and political skill. Restoring the castle and improving the parkland was an effective way for him to establish his authority, stimulate the local economy, and hence earn support from the community. But the Earl and Countess were interested in landscaping the park, not extending the boundaries. When they asserted their rights as landowners, and brought a lawsuit against the town they were concerned with clarifying the rights of the different parties. The most notable change to the perimeter of Hulne Park came when trees were planted at the South-West corner, on Brislee Hill. It is said that the Freemen got lost in the mist during their annual ride of the boundary. The Duke's agent took advantage of the mistake to appropriate an extra 50 acres.



The next Duke had a military background, and a tidy mind. In some places he expanded the park. He acquired and demolished Alnwick Abbey around 1806, retaining the gatehouse as a new entrance. He also acquired Bassington Farm, and exchanged land with the freemen at the Stocking Burn. Following these changes, between 1806 and 1811, he defined the new boundary with a perimeter wall. Some say this was built by French prisoners of war, but

in reality the work was carried out by estate workers, local masons, and David Stephenson, the Duke's architect.

The third Duke added more land at Heckley, expanding the park to the east. But he also made a significant reduction. The old Eglington road passed through the park, and this compromised its privacy. So when the Eglington road was turnpiked in 1826 some 1,500 acres of the park was cut off, and a new wall built along the turnpike.

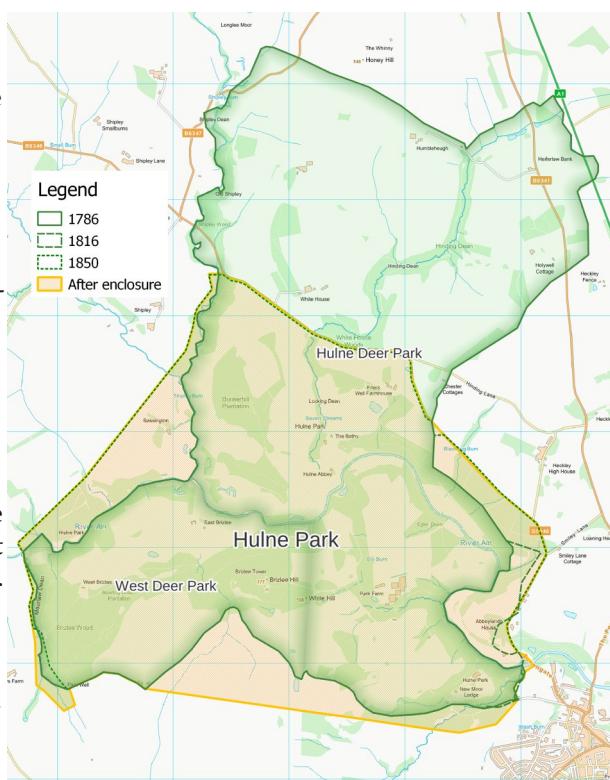
There were still outstanding disagreements over the boundary of Alnwick Moor, but these were settled in 1854 by the Alnwick Moor Enclosure Act. Under this, the parish gained a Recreation Ground, the Duke gained 237 acres as compensation for rent due, and the Freemen gained 54 acres to cover legal expenses. Once the boundary was settled the Duke planned a new entrance lodge and a wall from Stocking Gate to Cloudy Crags. Forest Lodge was designed by Salvin and built in 1854.

The new wall blocked an ancient footway from Stoney Peth to Cloudy Crags so the duke offered to build the wall six feet within his own land, leaving room for a public footpath along the outside of the park. It doesn't seem to have been clear whether the Duke was proposing to provide the footpath, or just the land. By 1871 the wall was in place, but no

path had been built, and the Board of Health felt that the town had been deprived of an ancient footway, without gaining a new one.

There have been no subsequent changes to the perimeter of Hulne Park. Any further work on the wall has been for maintenance or repair. For example, on 3 November 1900, about forty yards of the wall were washed down by water rushing into Shipley Burn.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between the wars, we have been told that maintenance work was carried out under a job creation scheme for the unemployed. We have not been able to find out more, but would welcome information on this, and any other parts of the story that we have missed.



# Historical Map

The Historical Map of Alnwick and Alnmouth has now been published, and it was a pleasure and a privilege to welcome so many members and guests to the launch at St James Centre on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Nick Milea from the Historic Towns Trust, and our own Ian Hall gave a brief talk on how the project came into existence, and how the map was developed.

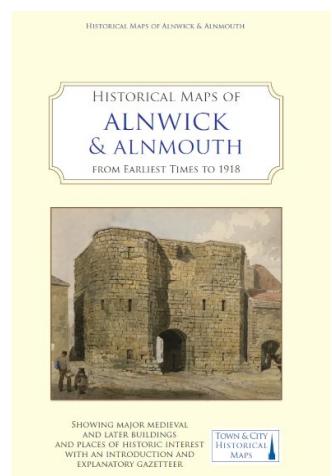
The mission of the Historic Towns Trust is to support and promote research into the history and topography of British cities and towns, and to disseminate the results, in particular by the publication of historic town atlases and other maps and related works, prepared mainly through partnerships formed with local interests. As well as Alnwick and Alnmouth they have recently published maps of Canterbury, and Coventry, updated their map of Oxford, and will soon launch a map of Beverley.

After an initial meeting in Alnwick, the Civic Society formally agreed to start exploring the project in October

2020, approached potential partners in November and the first team meetings were in December 2020 and January 2021. The fundraising target was reached in February 2021. By July we had our first view of the map, and it was approved for printing in October 2021.

Work is now under way to use the map to engage people with the story of Alnwick and Alnmouth. This includes projects with the Duchess Community High School and other schools.

Copies of the map are available in local book shops, at Bailiffgate Musem, and online.



## Gates, Gates and Ports. Gordon Castle writes...

During my Christmas book browsing I came upon one of the many (thousands!) that I accumulated after 24 years at Barter Books, but which, like most, I had not got round to reading. Entitled A Dictionary of Common Fallacies, it turned out ironically to be nothing of the sort, as it might otherwise have appealed to one trained in philosophy (that most unexpectedly useful lifelong friend of those required to reason with others!). It was in reality a dictionary of faulty common assumptions, rather than unsound arguments (the usual meaning of fallacy), and whilst arriving at that conclusion I came across an interesting item about gates in English towns and cities and how the word was a frequently used suffix added to place names but much misunderstood as to what it referred to. I had no idea that this was a scholarly bone of contention, but some readers might well be aware and have already formed a view. Though not an etymologist, I did study linguistics for a year at Newcastle Uni, before giving in and taking up philosophy instead.

Bondgate, Pottergate, Narrowgate, Walkergate, Bailiffgate and Canongate I had always assumed like many refers to the actual or former presence of a gateway into town through its walls, adding some weight to the assumption that Alnwick's walls were ever actually completed, despite there being no conclusive evidence that they were. Whilst the Anglo-Saxon word geat does indeed mean gate as in modern usage, those parts of England invaded by the Danes, mainly in the east, would most probably have derived their word gate from the Danish gata, which means road, way, or street. For example, Cumbergate in Peterborough means street of the woolcombers.

Confusingly, whilst Westgate in Newcastle Upon Tyne most certainly refers to the road or gate to the west of town, in Peterborough Westgate refers to the street of the weavers (websters)! But, sticking with gates meaning either modern gates or streets, if Westgate in Newcastle was originally a street name why is it now referred to as Westgate Road? Perhaps road is a later addition based on a wrong assumption.

Getting back to Alnwick, if one assumes that gate did originally refer to a street it explains my lifelong failure to understand how Bondgate Within and Bondgate Without could refer to gates outside and inside the actual gate. Did Narrowgate ever have a gate and if it did why would it be described as narrow, given it is likely to have been no narrower than the arch under Bondgate Tower? Narrowgate meaning narrow street is more fitting a description even now, though Tate refers to the existence of an actual tower without providing any evidence other than an unclear drawing on Mayson's map of 1622 across the Bow Burn. Canongate is also not known to have had an actual gateway, and Walkergate even less likely, with Bailiffgate another uncertainty. Surprisingly, unless I have missed a para somewhere, Conzen, in his magnificently researched book, Alnwick As A Study In Town Plan Analysis, does not provide any full definition of these street names, though he does of others like Fenkle Street, perhaps reasonably assuming the word street requires no explanation. However, he makes frequent mention of Bondgate Tower and Pottergate Tower, as though the distinction between gate and tower needed to be made. Conzens does go so far as to quote Tate about Bondgate being derived from the Bondmen who held the land in tenure, but tantalizingly does not explain gate.

Finally, those who have got this far might have asked themselves why Clayport is not known as Claygate, though it is certainly old enough in Alnwick's history and once did have a tower and gateway of some kind. Port in this sense must derive from the old Latin Porta or old French Porte, meaning gate or entrance. Clayport Street is a name that indicates the reference to a street was normally separate from its entrance name. This very English absorption of multiple foreign language origins, French, Latin and Scandinavian, into the modern form of English usage reflects the diversity of the nation's former inhabitants and could be used to support the assumption that Alnwick was around as a settlement long before the Norman invasion, despite the lack of physical evidence.



# William Henry Knowles in Alnwick

W. H. Knowles (1857-1943) was well-known as an architect and antiquarian in North-East England. Around Alnwick he designed the Parish Hall, 26 Bondgate Within (now Halifax Bank), and Lint Close (now the Friary) in Alnmouth.

W.H. Knowles was born in Newcastle in 1857. He started his own architectural practice in Gateshead in 1884, then operated in various partnerships.

More than a dozen of his buildings are recognised as sufficiently important to be protected by listing. These include: the Quadrangle gateway, Former school of Bacteriology, Former Department of Agriculture, Fine Art Department, School of Architecture, and Armstrong Building at Newcastle University; 104-108, Grey Street (1902-4) for Mawson, Swan and Morgan (booksellers), and surrounding lamp standards; 8 Mosley Street, 28 and 30 Mosley Street; War memorials at Humshaugh, Embleton and Cullercoats, and the Ashington Miners Memorial (now at Woodhorn). His buildings in Alnwick are the Parish Hall and 26, Bondgate Within (now Halifax Bank) for the North Eastern Banking Company. He also designed Lint Close (the Friary) in Alnmouth. None of these are listed.

Knowles retired to Cheltenham in 1922 where he became Chairman of Cheltenham Civic Society. He later moved to Malvern, where he died in 1943, aged 86.

## Parish Hall

The Parish Hall opened on 13th November 1913, designed in late Tudor style, by W. H. Knowles. It was equipped with a hall, classroom, under-floor heating, ladies' & gents' cloakrooms, accommodation for a caretaker, and a copper boiler capable of making tea for 150 people in 9 minutes. The Newcastle Chronicle

described the building as "an elegant structure with a commodious hall, having an area of 44 feet by 26 feet and about 20 feet in height, intended to be used for classes, meetings, lectures, and entertainments".



## 26 Bondgate Within

The Building now occupied by Halifax at 26 Bondgate Within was designed around 1914 for the North Eastern Banking Company by W. H. Knowles. The Alnwick & County Bank had been founded by William Dickson and William Woods in May, 1858. They took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the collapse of the Northumberland & Durham District Bank in the previous year. Mr. Dickson was a solicitor in Alnwick, Mr. Woods a banker in Newcastle. This was taken over in 1875 by the North Eastern Banking Company. That amalgamated with Bank of Liverpool Ltd. in 1914 then in 1918 acquired Martins Bank, changing its name to Martins Bank Ltd in 1928. Martins was bought by Barclays Bank in 1969. One family of banks had traded at 26 Bondgate Within from 1858 until 1978.



## Lint Close

Lint Close was built as a private house in stages, between 1904 and 1920 for Arthur Schofield and his wife, Anne. It stands on high land, north of Alnmouth, overlooking the estuary. Pevsner describes it as a "large and quite impressive house with an eclectic mixture of Gothic and Baroque motifs". In *The Arts and Crafts Movement in North East England*, Barrie and Wendy Armstrong highlight the gables and bays on the garden front and describe them as being a harmonious mix of styles. Memorable internal features include some elaborate fireplaces, an early electric light, and some fine stained-glass. After Mrs Schofield died in 1952 the house had a

chequered history, as a hotel and night club with a colourful reputation. It was acquired in 1961 by the Society of St Francis.



## Excavations at Alnwick Castle

In 1902, repairs were being made to the carriageway through the gatehouse at Alnwick Castle. What everyone thought was a solid foundation to the road turned out to be a pit that had been filled in. This was excavated, and

# W. H. Knowles (continued)

Knowles published *"The Gatehouse and Barbican at Alnwick Castle, with an account of the recent discoveries"* in Archaeologia Aeliana Series 3. Vol 5, p. 286.

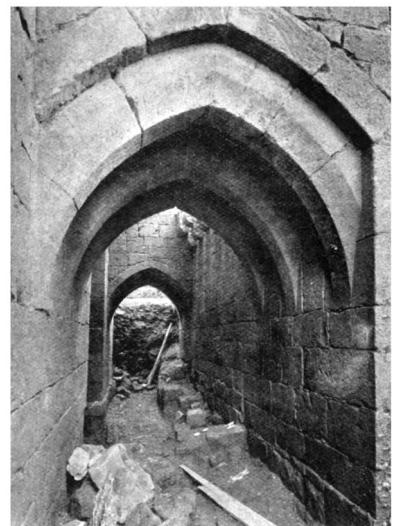
To place the findings in context he describes extensive work on the castle in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century to strengthen the defences. By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century warfare had advanced further and more work was needed to update the defences. The gatehouse and barbican together result from those developments. Alnwick has an outstanding example.

The gatehouse alone was an impressive entrance to the castle, and provided a number of obstacles to obstruct any unwanted intruder. But no matter how impressive, a gatehouse was still the most vulnerable point on the castle perimeter, and would be the main focus of any attack. So the barbican was added. It projected in front of the gatehouse to frustrate any opposing army. Together the gatehouse and barbican provided a variety of defensive features: a moat, drawbridge, portcullis, and gates.

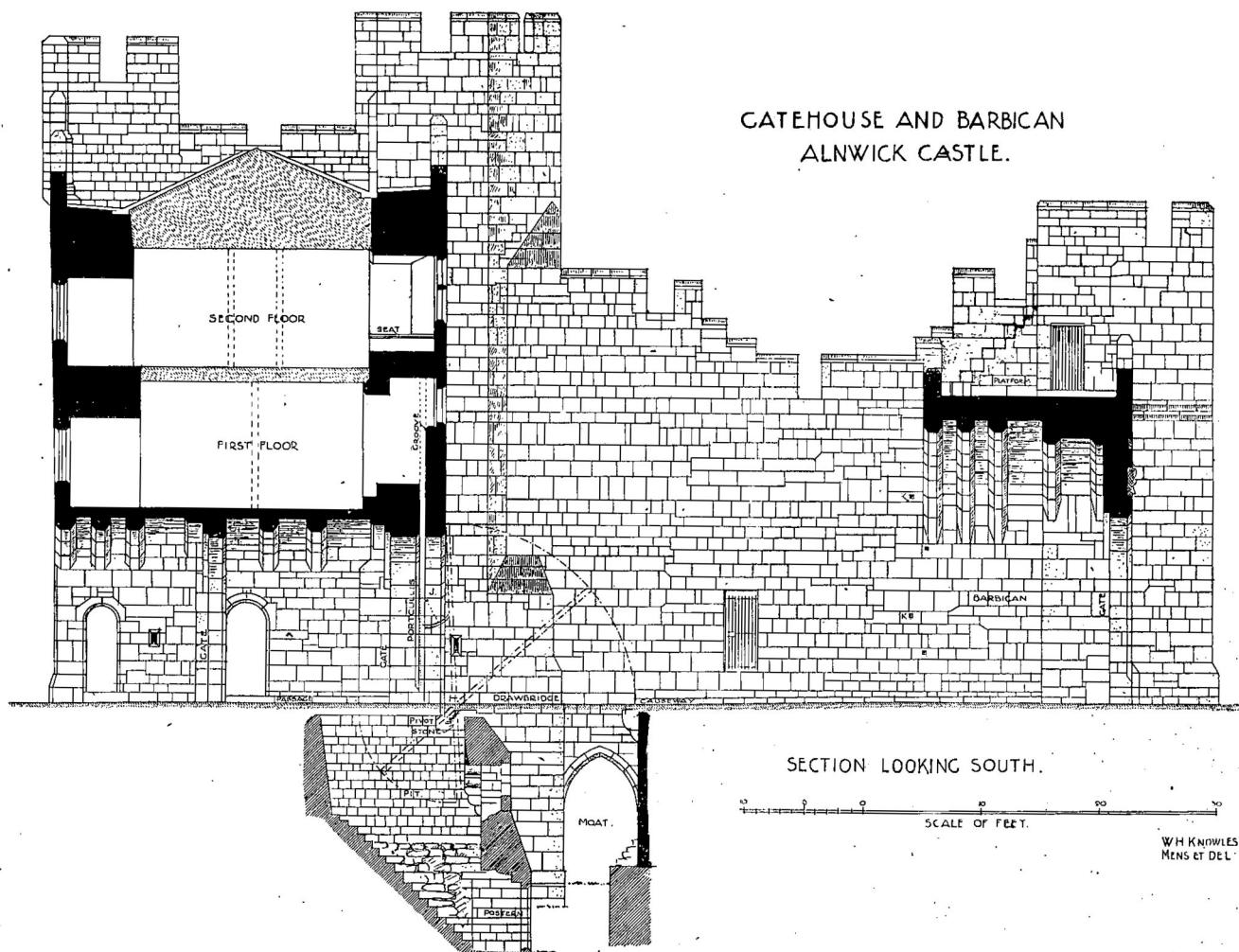
When the gatehouse and barbican were excavated they discovered signs of a drawbridge that had been worked from below: not in the usual way, from above. It bridged a moat under the barbican, pivoted at the level of the road, and when it was raised a counterweight would drop into a pit under the gatehouse.

They were able to work out how the drawbridge would be locked into place, but couldn't say with any confidence how it was raised and lowered. However, they did find other ways that military engineers in the 15<sup>th</sup> century had updated the Norman defences. These included: extending the barbican beyond the curtain wall; infilling windows; adding towers so that defenders could discharge missiles at any attackers; creating an area within the barbican where troops could assemble before making a sortie, or could shelter if they were forced to retreat; and which would form a killing ground if it was ever taken.

The detailed account by Knowles includes a number of photographs and drawings of the findings.



Moat below barbican



# Planning matters

Scrutinising and commenting on planning applications has been handled in the past by the Executive Committee but we are experimenting with involving more members. Each month we share information on planning activity with a few members who have volunteered to act as an Advisory Panel. We invite comments, and provide feedback on conclusions. Initial results are encouraging. Needless to say, we don't always agree, but fresh perspectives are welcome. Joining the group doesn't require expertise in the planning system. You have views on the future of Alnwick and we want to hear them. So if you would like to participate, please let us know.

*Consent has been refused to reinstate a door and fix display panels to the ginnel under the Town Hall.*

The Town Council did not object, and we did not comment. Conservation officers had no objections to the reinstatement of the door opening, but judged that the glazing and artwork panels would detract from the simplicity of the historic space, and conceal historic fabric.

*There is an application to demolish farm buildings and build 18 houses on land South of Greensfield Farm.*

Use of the footpath network to the south of Alnwick is growing, and we welcome the progress that is being made with the proposed Alnwick Greenway. So we share concerns about the impact of this development on an existing right of way. We think consideration should be given to enhancing the network of footpaths in this area, and specifically the drainage issues where the farm track crosses the Cornhill railway trackbed. As a minimum, we think an alternative route of similar quality should be provided both during and after construction, with conditions to prevent any action that would obstruct or deter public use.

The Town Council have raised a variety of concerns and the County Archaeologist has identified the buildings that will be demolished as non-designated heritage assets that need to be recorded.

*The Conservation Officer has responded in detail to the application for replacement windows at 2, Bailiffgate. They address both the principle of replacement and the design, but with most emphasis on the principle of replacement because they recommend refusal.*

Energy efficiency in historic buildings is a hot issue, and one where members have strong, and differing views. We still hope that this application can become a benchmark for good practice and a turning point in understanding of what can, and can't be done. We have yet to reach that point, but understanding different positions is going to be key to finding a way forward. We urge anyone with an interest to read the report and consider the issues raised by the Conservation Officer. We have added a link to the page on our web site that deals with Climate Action.

<https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/climate-action/>

*Several members expressed concern at the colour scheme chosen by Happy Nails at 14, Narrowgate.*

The Town Council objected to their retrospective planning application, and the Conservation Officer advised that neither the colour scheme, nor the vinyl signage complied

with the standards set out in the Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide. We welcome the changes that the applicant now intends to make, and look forward to seeing them implemented.



A vibrant town centre depends on the success of our independent retailers, and they are facing particularly challenging times. We helped to develop and distribute the Shopfront Design Guide because we wanted to help independent retailers navigate a system that can appear daunting, but should be helping them to make the most of their location. It's disappointing when some chose not to take advantage of the advice that is available, but we hope others will recognise that this guidance can help them to avoid expensive mistakes and build a successful business.

*Variations have been submitted to the original application for Lilidorei. We objected to the first application on several grounds, but have now made observations that we hope will add weight to the efforts being made by statutory consultees to mitigate the risks.*

Firstly, both Historic England and the Gardens Trust have concerns related to the risk of harm to the setting of Alnwick Castle, and the landscaped parkland. Both are assets of national importance, but the castle and parkland have also been enjoyed by generations of Alnwick people and we believe that weight should be given to the level of concern in the town at the risk of irreversible harm to enjoyment of this landscape. For example, the visuals only help with understanding of the impact from near the castle - not from other locations on North Demesne. The most popular circular walk around the Pastures from town is already marred by the level and speed of traffic on Denwick Lane, and we think consideration should be given to the impact of a further increase in traffic volumes, including measures to manage safety and speeds.

Secondly, Highways England have proposed that visitor numbers should be limited to a maximum of 188 per hour. The implication is that the strategic road network does not have sufficient capacity to support larger numbers, and that the road network will become a constraint on further growth in visitor numbers. Not all traffic will arrive and depart along Denwick Lane, so if this is the case, then the longer-term implications for economic development in Alnwick are grave. We think careful consideration must be given to:

- The level of confidence that can be placed in the projected traffic volumes
- The potential impact of this development away from Denwick Lane, on traffic and parking elsewhere in the town
- Whether adequate provision has been made for the future investment in the capacity of the road network that will be necessary to support long-term growth in Alnwick's visitor economy
- What further provision could be made in the context of this application to encourage a shift away from cars being the dominant form of transport that visitors are obliged to rely on?

# Quiz: Eyes on the world, that let in the wind

Languages other than English have drawn on the Latin “*fenestra*” to describe a glazed window. For the name of the frame, it’s likely that “*casement*” and “*sash*” both derive from Old French: “*casse*”, meaning “box”, mangled into “*châssis*” or “*enclussement*”. But the word we use in English for a window is derived from Old Norse. Their “*vindauga*” wasn’t glazed. It was just a hole in the wall. A hole called “*wind eye*” (“*an eye on the world that lets in the wind*”).

Here are some examples from around Alnwick. We can’t say whether these let in the wind, but all contribute to the appearance of the building and some to the appearance of the town.

How many can you identify?



## Diary dates

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in St. James Centre on Pottergate at 7:30 p.m. on **9th March**. After the formal meeting, Jane Coltman has kindly agreed to speak on the subject of Jane Coltman's Hidden Alnwick.

As a newly formed Charitable Incorporated Organisation we need to choose Trustees who will be responsible for the management and administration of the society. We are also looking for new Committee members help take the society forward. If you are interested in playing a more active part in the society then this is a good time to get in touch.

Please put the following dates in your diary. All will be held at St. James Centre in Pottergate, and will start at 7:30 p.m.

**May 11th** - Mick Grant. History of Theatre in Alnwick.

**July 13th** - Jessica Turner. Following in the Footsteps of St Aidan.

**September 9th-18th** Heritage Open Days (details to be announced)

**September 14th** - Paul Henery. Wildlife Protection Police Officer and Wild Life Artist.

**November**: Any Questions 2022 (details to be announced).

## Some notable anniversaries

4th Feb 2000: death of Michael Robert Günter Conzen

6th Feb 1845: Death of Thomas Coward, the last of the Alnwick Waits

20th Feb 1952: Twenty-three of Alnwick's historic buildings listed including Alnwick Castle; Town Hall; Percy Tenantry Column; St Michael's Pant; Hotspur Gateway; Dorothy Foster's House; Northumberland Hall; Pottergate Tower; St Paul's Church

1st April 1921: Great Britain road numbering scheme allocates the number A1 to the Great North Road from London to Edinburgh.

1st April 2009: Alnwick District Council abolished

9th April: Palm Sunday Eve this year. Traditional fair for shoes, hats and pedlary (see below)

12th April 1935: RMS Olympic withdrawn from service after a career of 24 years.

25th April: St Mark's Day: traditionally the date of the initiation ceremony for new Freemen

26th April 2002: Opening of Bailiffgate Museum

## Annual subscriptions

Is yours up to date?

## 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.

**CIVIC  
VOICE**  
talking civic sense

Founding Member

## Who's Who?

**President:** Peter Ennor

**Chair:** Peter Reed

**Treasurer and Membership:** Gill Parker

**Honorary Secretary:** Sue Smith

**Other Executive Committee members:**

- 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:** [@AlnwickCivSoc](https://twitter.com/AlnwickCivSoc)

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

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

**Charity registration number:** 1197235

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

[https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-at-risk/](http://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-at-risk/)

## Quiz Answers

A. Dome above Bailey's, 49-51  
Bondgate Within

B. Former St. James Hall,  
Pottergate

C. Former Duke's School  
Without

D. The Plough, Bondgate  
Pottergate

E. Pottergate Tower  
F. 9-13 Fenkle Street (former  
Nag's Head)

G. 26, Fenkle Street (a.k.a.  
Tobacco Heights)



Revenge his father's death, was also mortally wounded, and died soon after. This town lies on the river Aln, and has a market on Saturdays, and five fairs annually, viz. on Palm-sunday-eve, for shoes, hats and pedlary, May 12, (if on Sunday the Saturday before) for horned cattle, horses and pedlary; the last Monday in July, for horned cattle, horses, linen and woollen cloth; the first Tuesday in October, for horned cattle, horses and pedlary; and on the Saturday before Christmas, for shoes, hats, poultry and woollen cloth.

Chapman's *Hill* is that famous range of mountains to the north

The entry for Alnwick, from "England described: or The traveller's companion. Containing whatever is curious in the several counties". (1776).