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## For your diary:

**Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>** Alnwick Flower Festival. This joint venture between St Paul's Church and St Michael's Church will be held this year at St Michael's Church. The theme is "Give thanks"

- Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug 6:00 p.m. Opening by Mayor Geoff Watson. £5.00 per ticket to include nibbles and glass of wine/soft drink
- Thur 4<sup>th</sup> to Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Aug: each Church takes a day to do refreshments etc.
- Sun 7<sup>th</sup> Big Sing: involving all the Churches. All are welcome, at 6.00 p.m. but the Church will be open from 1.00 p.m. for a final look.

**Aug 20<sup>th</sup>** - Summer outing: the fascinating geology of Howick Bay (see page 3)

**Sept 14<sup>th</sup>** - Paul Henery. Wildlife Protection Officer and Artist. St. James Centre, Pottergate, at 7:30 p.m.

**Sept 12-17<sup>th</sup>** Heritage Open Day (see page 2)

**Sept 27<sup>th</sup>**: Launch of "Northumberland - a guide" (see page 3)

**November**: Any Questions 2022 (details to follow).



# Heritage Open Days, 12-17<sup>th</sup> September: Plan your visit

By opening heritage sites that are not normally open to the public, and laying on activities that are not normally available, Heritage Open Days provide us with an opportunity to:

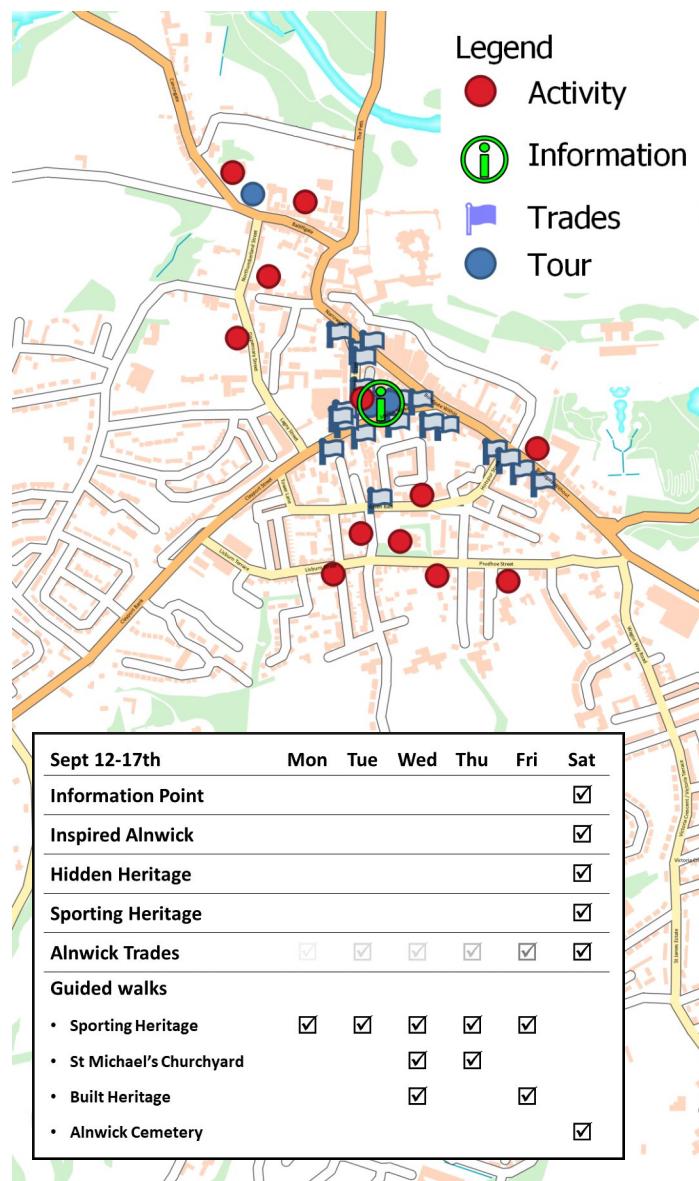
- Raise awareness of our heritage locally.
- Showcase our heritage beyond Alnwick.
- Bring Alnwick's heritage groups together for mutual support: raise our profile, build capacity, and lay the groundwork for future events and activities.

We think we have something for everyone in 2022: whether you want to re-visit attractions that you enjoyed last year, see places that you missed last year, or try new experiences that weren't available last year. We have two new guided tours, an exhibition of Astounding Inventions at the Mechanics' Institute, and new displays of sports heritage.

The busiest day will be September 17<sup>th</sup>, but there's too much to fit into just one day. So look out for different events from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September.

For full details:

<https://sites.google.com/view/almwickhod/>



## Which of these will you visit?

### Information kiosk

On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Sept friendly volunteers in the Market Place will help you to plan your day.

### Inspired Alnwick: Christian Heritage

- **St. Michael's Church:** including medieval bells, and an exhibition of remarkable graffiti.
- **St. James's Centre:** the home of Alnwick's United Reformed Church.
- **Alnwick Baptist Church:** a vital home of worship for over 180 years.
- **St. Paul's Church:** Alnwick's Roman Catholic church, with a remarkable East Window.

### Alnwick's Hidden Heritage

- **Masonic Lodge:** a rare opportunity to see the famous Chevy Chase carved sideboard.
- **Town Hall:** with information on the building and the trade guilds that effectively governed the town from here until the 19th century.

- **Alnwick Playhouse:** see behind the scenes at Alnwick Playhouse.

- **Youth Hostel:** Once Alnwick's Courthouse, Police Station and House of Correction. With refreshments and music.

- **Aln Valley Railway:** guided tours of the engine shed, workshops and signal box.

- **Mechanics' Institute:** with exhibition of Astounding Inventions.

### Alnwick Trades

- Alnwick's range of **Independent Shops** is said to be one of the best things about the town. Discover the stories behind our high street businesses.

### Bailiffgate Museum

- 1,000 years of history, a stunning **Textiles Exhibition** and free advice on **Family History**.

### Guided walks

- **Alnwick Cemetery:** with stories of some of Alnwick's most eminent and notorious residents.

- **St Michael's Churchyard** led by the team who researched burials that have taken place over the centuries.

- **Alnwick's Built Heritage:** explore Alnwick's heritage with members of Alnwick Civic Society.

- **Alnwick's Sporting Heritage:** visit the sites of Alnwick's pre 1918 sporting heritage.

### Sporting Heritage

- **Bowling Club:** with displays of the club's history, photographs, honours boards and trophies.

- **Tennis Club:** join members as they explore the story of the sport in Alnwick.

- **Golf Club:** Visit the new clubhouse and Peace Column, with opportunities to try golf, and compare how equipment has evolved.

# Alnwick Community Growers

While preparing the picture quiz for this issue we came across an initiative that deserves to be widely known.

The Alnwick Medical Group, Alnwick Town Council, Gallery Youth, the Northumberland Recovery College, Engage 4 All and Time to Care have come together as Alnwick Community Growers to create a safe, inclusive space at St George's Allotments that will improve the health and well-being of local people through social prescribing.

Alnwick Community Growers bring people together irrespective of age, ethnicity, background and ability. They encourage active participation of members to maintain, improve the allotment site and to reinvest any funds to provide a continuity of activities and to introduce new projects to meet the interests of the participants.

This provides opportunities, with support to: ✓ learn and develop new skills ✓ feel the benefits of being outside and improve physical and mental health ✓ connect with nature and improve personal wellbeing ✓ meet other people and reduce social isolation ✓ promote environmental importance and conservation issues through education, discussion and practical activities.

## Northumberland - a guide

Those of a certain age may recall, with some fondness, the Shell County series of books, which were produced from the early 1930s through to the mid 1980s. Combining a detailed but very readable text with excellent photography, each volume told the story of a particular English county, with a detailed gazetteer of the main places of interest. Until now, these have been only available as 'pre-owned' copies. But that is about to change. Over the past few years, Berwick-based author, Stephen Platten has written a new version of the

Northumberland guide. Titled Northumberland - A Guide and published by Sacristry Press, this version captures the spirit of the original while bringing everything up-to-date. Stephen will be formally launching the book in Alnwick Castle's Great Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 6.00 - 7.30 p.m.. The Duke of Northumberland, who wrote the book's introduction, will be presenting the event. Copies of the book will be on sale.

All Civic Society members, as well as friends and family, are invited.

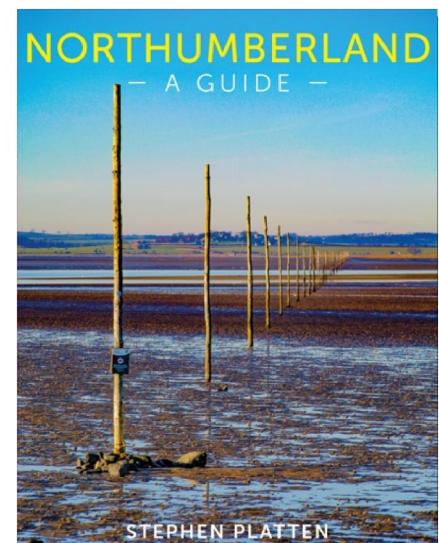


For people who may not have access to a garden or open space, the Community Allotment provides an opportunity to feel part of a community project, learn new skills and grow things. This has been shown to improve people's wellbeing and help to create a positive approach to coping with stressful situations. But most of all, they all have fun and enjoy each other's company.

We look forward to watching this grow.

For more details contact Sue Patience:

[susan.patience@galleryyouthproject.org](mailto:susan.patience@galleryyouthproject.org) - Tel. 01665 605846



## Summer outing

The fascinating geology of our local coastline: August 20<sup>th</sup> 1:00 – 4:00

The geology of North Northumberland underpins our landscape and has formed our buildings, our agriculture and our industry. George Tate, the Alnwick historian, is also known for the role he played interpreting Northumberland's geology. So for our summer outing this year we are delighted that Allan Mann has agreed to lead an exploration of the fascinating geology of Howick Bay on August 20<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Howick Bay is on our doorstep, but has an international reputation. This was where, only last year, scientists discovered the fossil of a millipede as big as a car. We do not promise a dis-

covery on those lines, but we do promise a fascinating insight into how this magnificent section of coast was formed by a sequence of climactic events over millions of years.

We expect this outing to attract a high level of interest, so please get in touch to book your place. [contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

The walk will inevitably involve close examination of a rocky coast. We will not be covering a great distance, but anyone who can recall a time when they were more confident on their feet might

want to invite a more agile friend to join them and offer some assistance. We will make travel arrangements once we know exact numbers.



## 'The Dunterns' – a Modern Street with an Ancient Name?

By Allan Mann

The Dunterns is a well-known Alnwick Street. It forms part of the older Hope or Hopp House Lane, or Hope Loning, which ran along modern Percy Terrace / Hope Terrace, then up past Hope House, and the Golf Course.

Stony Hills, Whinney Hills and Windmill Hills are names for different parts of the hills that lie to the south west of the town. The name Camphill was also used - from the presence of an Iron Age, British hill fort situated today on the golf course. Camphill Cottage reflects this name, as does the Camphill Column, which sits almost central to the hillfort. This ancient structure is often neglected in studies of Alnwick history, but plays an important part in the location/ early development of the town.

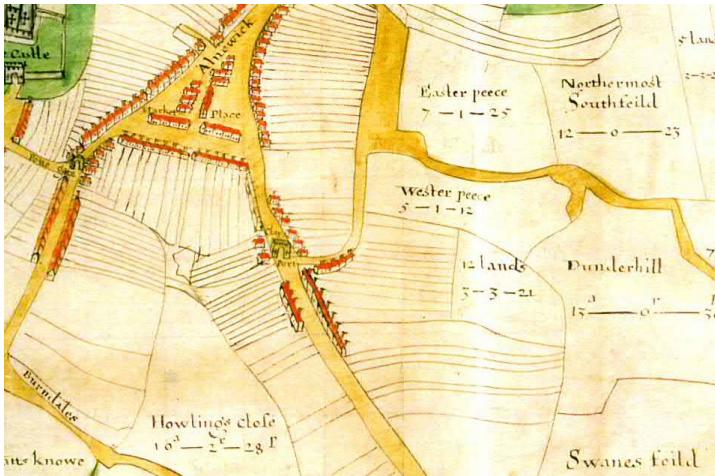


Fig. 1 From Norton Map 1624

In 1773 the Wilkin map calls this area 'Dunterton Hills', and the Norton map of 1624 clearly shows 'Dunderhill' laying to the North East between the hillfort and the town centre.

When houses were built through the 1930s, the street was given the name: "Dunterns". This name can be traced back at least as far as Wood's map of 1828. It's the modern pronunciation of two older variations: 'Dunder' or 'Dunterton', found in Dunderhill (from Norton's map of 1624; and Thompson's map of 1760), Dunterton Hills (from Wilkin's map of 1773) and Dunterton Closes (which Tate describes as the ancient name of Hope House Farm).

The term 'hill' is obvious, and the suffix *-ton* / *-tun* is the standard Anglo-Saxon word for 'an enclosed space/ farmstead, settlement', the source of the modern word 'town'.

## Definitions associated with Dunder/ Dunter

*Dunder*: the residue left in a boiler during distillation of rum. For example there is a Dunder Hill in Jamaica. Clandestine distillation may well have been going on in this area, but Alnwick is not noted for its sugar cane. Its legendary dark rum only dates from foundation of 'The Alnwick Rum Company' in 1914.

*Dunder*: thunder or any loud noise/ beating/ thumping or dunting. For example Dunderhole in Devon, a coastal blow-hole, would fit into this category. There is also Dunder Hill in Polzeath, Cornwall and in Dalmeny, Lothian. All of these examples lie in early Celtic speaking geographies. There are also Thunder's Hill in East Sussex and Thunder Hill, Norfolk, amongst many others. However, despite storm Arwen, it's not obvious why these small hills would be more prone to thunder than many other hills surrounding the town.

*Dunder*: the Devil. Again, no obvious reason for these small hills to be so linked.

*Dunder*: any noisy spirits inhabiting old buildings, castles or noisy

natural settings like coastal coves etc. The wind may be involved.

*Dunter*: a fuller i.e., one who beats cloth. Alnwick has a long association with the fulling of cloth, with Walkergate the centre of the trade, since proximity to the river and a source of water are a crucial requirement. It seems unlikely that the Dunder Hills would be an attractive site for fulling, given the lack of plentiful water.

*Dunter*: a name for the common eider duck, especially in Scotland, and Shetland in particular. The eider is locally known as Cuddy's Duck (i.e., Cuthbert's Duck), and being entirely marine, it is not obvious why it would be connected to the inland Dunterns.

*Dunter*: a porpoise. Again, an entirely marine mammal, and not relevant in this location.

In summary, some meanings, such as Thunder Hill or Devil's Hill may be relevant, but none of these is particularly convincing.

## Dunterton forms

The Dunterton form of the name is not unique to Alnwick. For example, Dunterton in Devon is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It lies in the Tamar Valley, near Launceston and Tavistock. This has been an area of complex interaction and conflict between the predominantly Celtic British speaking population of Cornwall and the English language folks of Devon. Dunterton is also close to a large Iron Age defended settlement/ promontory hill fort on a spur in a meander of the Tamar, today known as Dunterue Wood. The variations of forms of the name through time, have been well documented (see list below). They may be directly relevant to the Alnwick Dunterton.

Dondritona 1086 Domesday Book | Dunterdune 1242 |  
Duntertone 1242, 1244 and 1265 | Donterton 1291 |  
Duntretone 1301 | Dountretone 1319 | Dunderton,  
Dunderdon 1434

The first name element seems to be '*don/ dun*', Old English = hill, but also Old Irish *Dun*/ British (Welsh, Cornish, Breton) *Din* - fort, encampment, stronghold. The last element appears to be ton for '*tun*' - Old English -settlement, homestead. The Devon name is interpreted to be a compound of Celtic '*dun*' -hillfort and English - '*tun*'. The middle element appears to be '*ter*', but the oldest name 1086, and those of 1301, 1309 give '*tre*', an interesting possibility.

In Welsh and Cornish, '*tref*' represents the same as English '*tun/ton*' -farmstead, settlement, habitation, so that 'Duntref' is recognisable Old British, with the defining element first '*dun*' and the specific '*tref*' second, as normal in Celtic languages, meaning the 'settlement of the hillfort'. The final consonant of '*tref*' is often lost in Welsh and Cornish place names, e.g., Tregaron/ Trethomas/ Tregony. The village of Treen



Fig 2. Part of Wilkin map 1773 - showing Dunterton Hills enclosure -similar to but reduced in area from Norton 1624

# ...the Dunterns (continued)

in Cornwall, has older versions of Tredyn 1304 and Trethyn 1314, with the same elements but in reverse order 'tre(f)-din'. The English 'tun' simply repeats the perhaps earlier Celtic 'tre', as often happens by tautology, so we have 'settlement, settlement of the Hillfort'. Such repetition is common, a good example being the name of the village of Torpenhow in Cumbria, which would mean something like, 'Hill hill hill' in Old English/British/ Old Norse. Modern English has also added a fourth to this as 'Torpenhow Hill', but that name may never have actually existed. The British 'tre' becomes modern 'ter': it's easier to say.

## Discussion

Northumbrian place names are generally considered to be predominantly Anglo-Saxon, and both the 'Dun' and 'tun' elements of Dunterton could indeed be such. Old English 'dun' means 'hill', generally a low-lying hill with an extensive flat top, similar to those south-west of the town. 'Tun' is the usual termination for settlement, etc. However, the middle element 'ter' is not so easily explained, and may well represent an older British 'tre', as shown by the early forms of Dunterton in Devon. Also, of 61 'dun' names in Northumberland and Durham that have been identified as Old English 'dun' = hill names, only a few have 'dun' as the first element in the name, e.g., Dunstan and Dunston. All of the others have 'dun' = hill as the final element, e.g., Homilton Hill, Glanton. However, if the name Dunder/ Dunter was Celtic, then the original 'Dun tref', 'hamlet of the hillfort', would be in the usual Celtic word order. Dunterton would then become a compound of Celtic 'Duntref = Dunter' and English 'tun' by repetition of the older 'tre'.

The example of Dunterton in Devon, would appear similar to Dunterton in Alnwick, both lying close to defensive hillforts, which may well have had adjoining settlements/ farmsteads. The position of the Alnwick settlement called Duntref/ Duntre later Dunter, would lie between the Hillfort high on Camphill, and the modern town, crucially situated on the lower hillslope, sheltered from prevailing westlies. Compound Celtic-Anglian place names do exist in Northumberland. Alnwick is itself a compound of the river name Aln/ Alne of Celtic provenance and Anglo-Saxon 'wick' -meaning dwelling/ abode (Latin villa) and/ or small village (Latin vicus). Watson in his classic 'Celtic Place Names of Scotland' links our Alne to the many river and place names involving Allen/ Allan/ Alun/ Alne/ Ale throughout the British Isles and Ireland -relating them to old Celtic 'ail' – stone/ rock. The River Alne as the 'rocky/stony one' would reflect its early course through the Cheviots.

In his classic study of the urban development of Alnwick, Conzen shows that the oldest element recognisable in Alnwick is the road fork at the market Square. The road coming from the port / coast at Alnmouth and Lesbury, would follow pretty much the line of the modern road, splitting into a North-West branch going off to Eglingham, leaving the West. branch to proceed up onto Alnwick Moor, and on towards Edlingham and Whittingham. The point of the fork at the Market Square being controlled by the local geology and geomorphology. The Anglian settlement of Alnwick from roughly the 7<sup>th</sup> century then proceeded as a green - village around the High Street/ Market Street/ Fenkle Street triangle, in a form recognisable from other English towns and many German settlements. Conzen states:

*'From this discussion the great road fork in the centre of Alnwick with its eastward trunk and its two diverging branches westward emerges as the most ancient feature of the present town plan and as one probably older than the Anglian vill. As such it represents an inherited outline.'*

So, the road intersection at Alnwick Market Square likely pre-dates

the Anglian development of the town in the early 7th century. Indeed, the B6341 across Alnwick Moor has the distinct appearance of a Roman/ Romano-British Road, trending straight to Lemmington Bank head, then again branching, the north branch going down Lemmington Bank to the Roman Fort at Learchild, where it would intersect the major Roman Road, 'The Devil's Causeway, close to Thrunton. It would also meet up with the known Roman Road westwards from this intersection towards Bremenium Roman Fort (High Rochester), itself on Dere Street. The place name Lemmington may be indicative of lying on, or close to a Roman road (e.g., Leam Lane/ Wrekendyke in Gateshead, leading to Arbeia Fort; Leeming Lane, a name for Dere Street from York to Catterick). The road outline of Alnwick is thus the oldest feature of the town, presumably dating back to very early British Celtic, and then Roman/ Romano- British use. The B6341 would then complete an East-West Roman/ Romano British Road all the way to either Howick Haven (the target of its trend) or Lesbury/ Alnmouth on the coast, connecting Bremenium and Dere Street to The Devil's Causeway, and onto possible coastal ports.

If the reasoning of this study of the names Dunterns/ Dunterton/ Dunderhills is reasonable, then I suggest that it too could be added to early evidence of pre-Anglian Alnwick. The presence of a British hillfort, reflects an importance of control of the fork of the road system at the Market Square (and possibly to control crossing of fords of the River Aln, on a proto-Great North Road as it passes North – South). This hillfort, whatever its main purpose, would be expected to have adjoining settlements/ farmsteads, lying on the lower slopes closer to the road fork/ crossing of the Aln, where the later Anglian settlement developed. As such the British hillfort would have basic functions very similar to those of the later Norman Alnwick Castle. The modern name 'the Dunterns' and older Dunderhill/ Dunterton Close, 'the settlement of the hillfort', may reflect a very early feature in Alnwick history.

*This is purely speculation, and will require to be tested against any older pre-1624 variations in the Alnwick 'Dunderhills/ Dunterton/ Dunterns' name, which may be discovered in the archives in future. However, such potentially ancient names should not be ignored in studies of Alnwick History.*

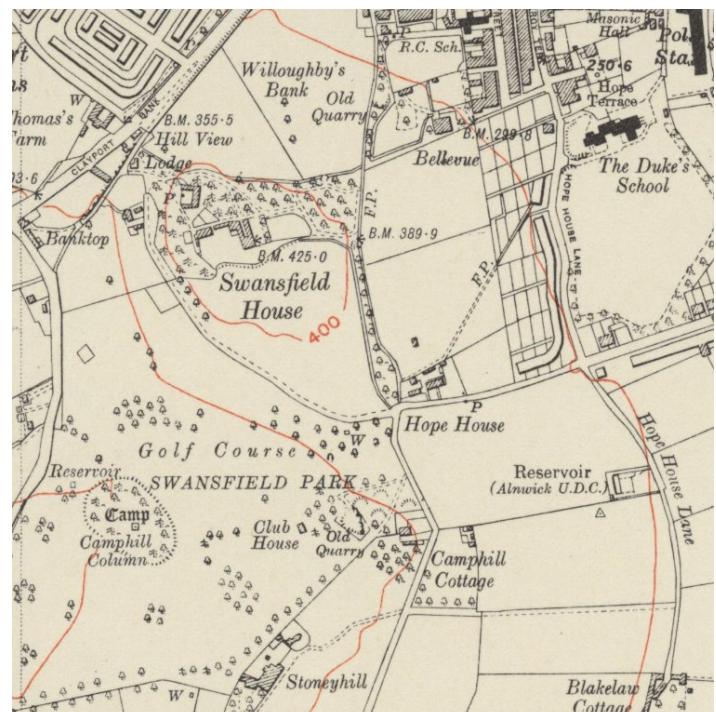


Fig 3. Part of OS 6-inch map Northumberland, 1948. Hope House was once called 'Dunterton Closes.'

# Highway Code

This year we have seen a new edition of the Highway Code. The code was first published in 1931, and this seventeenth edition introduces significant changes, including a new "hierarchy of road users", with the most vulnerable at the top.



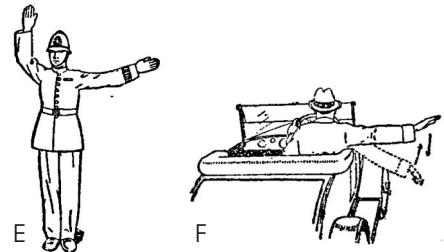
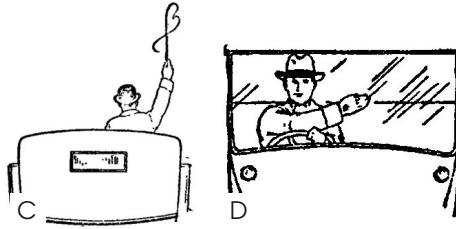
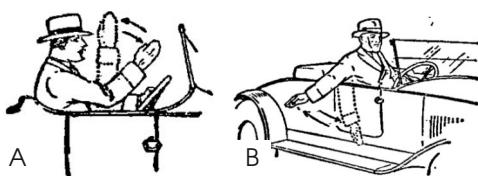
The Highway Code is not just for drivers - it is essential reading for all road users. So if you haven't already studied the new edition we encourage you to do so.

It can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

The advice included arm signals to be given by drivers and police officers controlling traffic. Can you tell what these meant in 1931?

(Answers on back page)



## Borderlands

The first consultation on the Alnwick Borderlands Place Programme ran from 28th March to 11th April.

The consultation sought views on:

- Borderlands Place Programme Vision for Alnwick.
- Borderlands Place Programme Objectives for Alnwick.
- Best things about Alnwick.
- Worst things about Alnwick.
- Three things people would like to change about Alnwick.

The full results are at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8s2wpz>

There were 395 responses to the survey, and widespread support for the vision and objectives that were proposed. Highlights included:

**Some of the best things about Alnwick:** Local businesses and retail offer | Destinations: Castle, Gardens, Playhouse, Museum | Natural environment | Location | Community spirit.

**Some of the worst things about Alnwick:** Lack of retail restaurant | Lack of activities and facilities for young people | Bus station | Traffic.

**Some of the most important changes:** Enhanced culture, leisure and retail offer | Town centre improvements | Transport connectivity (within town and with wider region) | New homes, housing renewal, and quality of place improvements | Young people provision.

The next stage will be development of the Place Plan.

They were different times, and very different road conditions, but the introduction to the first Highway Code still reads well:

*Always be careful and considerate towards others. As a responsible citizen you have a duty to the community not to endanger or impede others in their lawful use of the King's Highway.*



*Remember that all persons—pedestrians, cyclists, persons leading, riding or driving animals and the drivers of motor or horse-drawn vehicles—have a right to use the highway and an obligation to respect the rights of others. Good manners and consideration for others are as desirable and are as much appreciated on the road as elsewhere.*

*Bear in mind the difficulties of others and try not to add to them.*



### Vision

Enhancing Alnwick's long-term future as an outstanding place to live, work and visit.

### Strategic objectives

- Sustaining Alnwick's existing employment, creating new jobs and opportunities, embracing innovation as a driver for growth.
- Improve the economic prosperity of Alnwick by increasing the sustainability of the visitor economy.
- Create a sustainable future for young people in Alnwick.
- Maintain and raise the quality of the built environment in Alnwick town centre.

Our objectives will be underpinned throughout by the priorities of:

- Fostering collaboration across the town.
- Contributing to net zero 2030.
- Capitalising on opportunities in technology.
- Responding to the challenges of connectivity in a rural location.

# News in Brief

Following the talk on Energy Efficiency and Traditional Windows by Conservation Officers in June we have updated our web site to include the guidance that they referenced.

This includes advice for home owners on: Improving energy efficiency, Reducing carbon emissions, Repair, replacement and thermal upgrading of windows, and Building maintenance in a changing climate.

Some of this advice will help any owners, whatever the age of their home. Owners of traditional homes will also want to take account of how construction techniques have changed over time and owners of a home that is considered to be a heritage asset of national importance may also need to consider statutory approvals.

The relevant pages are:

- Guidance for owners:

<https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/guidance/>

- Climate Action:

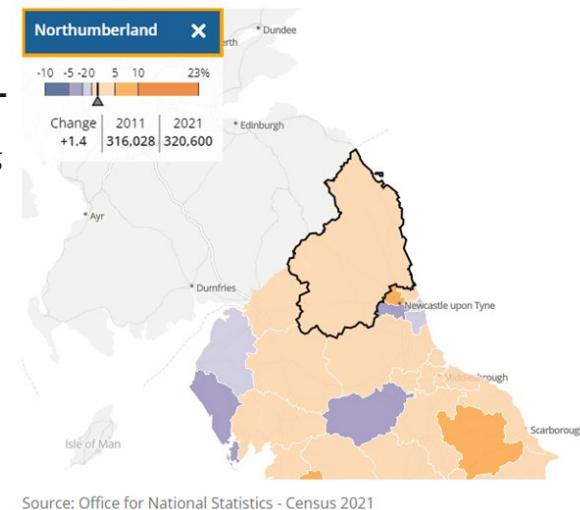
<https://alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk/climate-action/>

We are working on this with Alnwick Town Council, and hope to help them make similar guidance available to owners through their Web Site.

Northumberland County Council Planning team issued the following statement on 12<sup>th</sup> May .

*We have been experiencing unprecedented volumes of applications and are having difficulty meeting our usual decision timeframes.*

*We have been putting measures in place to help with workloads and we would like to reassure you that your application is still being considered and that we will endeavour to*



## There are no issues left in Alnwick for the council to fix

*But of course there are. There are numerous issues that mar the appearance of the town centre. Members frequently draw our attention to them.*

We try to help members to get things fixed through our "Eyes and Ears" initiative. So far we have tracked more than 50 issues. As we write 57% are fixed, 9% are being fixed, but one-in-three is still outstanding.

The principles behind Eyes and Ears are simple:

- We encourage and help members to report issues. Telling someone about a problem is not "reporting" it, even if the person you are telling is a councillor or a member of the Civic Society Committee. It is not difficult to submit

a written report, but sometimes people need help. If you want to submit a report, but need help, then please ask.

- We can't follow up anything without a written report, but we will track any reports that we are told about. When you submit a written report to the council you will receive an acknowledgement. Send that to us, and we will keep track of progress.

- Most issues get fixed without any further intervention, but some don't. Our earliest records are now two years old, and we are still pressing for some to be fixed. But we can only chase if we have a record.
- We look for patterns. When there are multiple examples of the same problem

*determine it as soon as possible. All details of valid applications are available to view on our Public Access Planning Register. Search for the application reference number and then select the "Documents tab". This will also detail any new or additional comments or consultation responses.*

*We would be very grateful if you can allow the case officer time to consider your application, they will be in contact if there is any additional information required prior to the determination. Can we please ask that you only get in contact if absolutely necessary by calling 0345 600 6400 and requesting a call back and we will aim to respond within 3 working days. Please provide your application reference number if you do need to contact us.*

*Thank you for your patience.*



The first results from the 2021 Census were published on 28<sup>th</sup> June. Data from the Census gives communities an insight into how the local population has changed in the past decade and provides a rich dataset to inform decisions about public services.

We now know that across Northumberland the population increased by 1.4%, from around 316,000 in 2011 to 320,600 in 2021. This is lower than the overall increase for England (6.6%). The largest increase was in the 70-74 age band, which grew by 50%. The number of people aged between 40 and 49 decreased by 21% over the decade, and there was a decrease of 5.9% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 3.4% in children aged under 15 years.

We look forward to the release of profiles for smaller geographical areas, including Alnwick.

we can seek out more and try to help the authorities deal with them efficiently. We have several examples now where a member reported one issue, but on the back of that one we have managed to get several fixed.

All we ask of members is that you report any issues that you encounter, and that you encourage others to do the same. Then let us know.

The email address is [eyes.ears@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:eyes.ears@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

You may be able to do more. If you would like to help us to maintain a dialogue with the authorities and try to progress some outstanding issues then your assistance will be very welcome. Let us know.

# As good as the nation got (Part-2)

## A brief history of secondary education in Alnwick, by Gordon Castle

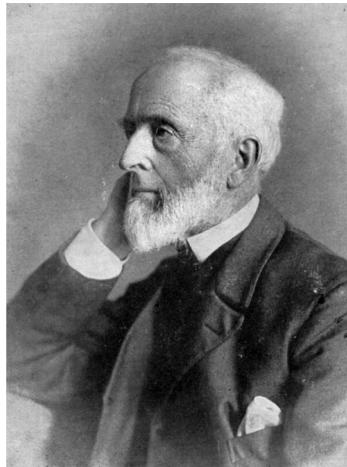
Previously...

*In the last issue we covered the story of secondary education Alnwick to the end of the 19th century. By the time T. Collinson retired the Duke's School had established a reputation as an outstanding educational establishment, but the confused structure of education in Alnwick began to result in a serious contest of direction and ownership between the Alnwick Freemen and the Duke. I will now cover much too rapidly to be comprehensive the dispute that arose.*

### The Struggle for Control

At the turn of the century the government attempted to rationalise the confused state of secondary education nationally, of which you have had some flavour here. The Bryce Commission reported with a view to removing the tangle between grant awarding bodies and the unhealthy narrowing and cramming effect they tended to have on school curriculums. This produced after 10 years a single Board of Education and the removal of school boards and education committees, to be replaced with local education authorities. Not all schools were likely to survive as providers of secondary education and in Alnwick this brought about a 4 year struggle that involved the Corporation, Charity Commissioners, Local Press, County Council and the Department of Art and Science.

The Duke's initial application to have established under his control a science school, fully equipped and endowed, was not at first successful because the Freemen feared, with every justification, that the survival of their own school would be threatened. The county council tried to obtain proposals from both parties for joint management, but the Duke clearly wanted none of it. He tried every means to circumvent the county council ending up with a successful bid to establish science classes under the Department of Arts and Science. However, he was thwarted in his efforts to establish a girl's secondary school. The question to be resolved was whether the town could support two secondary schools – it seemed marginally too big for one but a little too small for two. Secondary education required 17 secondary places per 1000 head of population (10 boys and 7 girls) and the Alnwick population, including the rural population, produced a requirement for 100 boys places and 66 girls. The Technical Education Committee initially favoured a secondary school each for boys and girls under joint management, but the Duke was not interested and stuck to his proposals for building and endowing a new technical school out of his own resources. However, the Freemen recoiled at the notion of the town's major school being under the control of an individual, and for the time being the county council concurred. The Duke persisted, but all plans were suspended pending the adoption of legislation to establish a Board of Education. It seemed the Duke was beaten, because the new board was hardly likely to favour an independently run school and subsequently the Charities Commission developed a plan for joint management of a mixed secondary school for boys and girls in Alnwick based on a reconstituted grammar school as then run by the Corporation and with a joint management structure in their favour. But the Duke was far from beaten, he had one major advantage – money! He insisted that he would build, endow, and maintain a new independent secondary school for boys come what may, but if the



Thomas Collinson, Head of the Duke's School from 1851-1898

commissioners were to drop the scheme for mixed education, he would also support the secondary school for girls now moved from Canongate to Bailiffgate. The tide began to turn in his favour - the Duke's bounty could not be matched! The question of Duke or Freemen split the town, with public meetings and contrary positions taken by Alnwick's 2 newspapers. The issues resolved into ones of governance, and the Duke made sufficient concessions on the composition of governing bodies to sway the Technical Education Committee. All the while the role and representation of the Freemen was eroding and when the Duke's proposals were accepted at a public meeting on 30 July 1900, having been recommended by Urban District Council and Rural District Council, the way lay clear.

### How it Moved On

It was then that Freemen made a fateful and ultimately fatal decision. At their next meeting they decided, by a majority of one, that they could not accede to becoming involved at all. Thus, they were never able to reconstitute their ancient grammar school and lost any hope of representation on the Duke's. To those who might incline to deplore the nature of Alnwick's aristocratic feudal power, I would suggest that the Freemen themselves were no more democratic and almost as feudal! After several hurdles, the Duke's and Duchess's schools became the accepted providers of secondary education in Alnwick. The pedantic might care to note that no formal decision to recognise them as such exists in any minutes or records of the county council.

The new Duke's school opened in 1904 and the old school continued to operate as an elementary school, the Local Authority evidently having accepted that the new Duke's School would be the place for boys secondary education in Alnwick (they adopted it as such formally in 1919) and the existing Duchess's School for girls. A final word about the Duke's bounty should be made – he leased the school to the county council in 1904 at a rent of £90 per year for 100 years. The subsequent market value increase in rent in 2005 did not assist the argument to retain 3 tier education in Alnwick! As a fine grammar school, often said to be the best in the north, the Duke's School continued through the war under the esteemed leadership of Mr Shelford (a conflict in which he lost his son), and it began to take in boarders, many from RAF Boulmer. However, in 1978 the decision was made to move from 2 tier to 3 tier education, with two middle schools in Alnwick. A new secondary school for boys and girls was built on the site of



My late father attended both Duke's Schools and here he is on the school field in 1921 receiving an award for drill.

## Secondary education in Alnwick (continued)

the former Duchess's School for girls, the option of adapting Lindisfarne Secondary Modern School being too much it seemed for the refined sensibilities of most governors already distressed at losing their prized grammar schools to a "comprehensive"! I am told that again this far-reaching decision was passed by one vote. It was a good example of democracy being no more likely to make a good decision than the aristocracy, as the Duchess's School was clearly too small, having moved as a girl's grammar school to the Howling Lane site in 1965.



Duchess's School

As a comprehensive school it then had to split into 2 sites one of which was the original pre-1965 Duchess's school buildings in Bailiffgate half a mile away. As time went on the Howling Lane site acquired a conglomeration of portakabins that invited comparisons with a military field base. By comparison the secondary modern school at Lindisfarne had been a large mixed-sex secondary school with ample room for expansion and would have been far more suitable as a comprehensive.

### How it Ended

I will end with a resume of the growing failure of the 3 tier system to match national changes in secondary education, with Northumberland one of the very few Local Authorities to retain a 3 tier system. This reluctance to change back to 2 tiers was strongly influenced by its rural nature and the distances children would need to travel, not to mention pressures from staff fearful about their jobs. However, 3 tiers meant that schools were relatively poorly equipped because funds for the large number of schools were never sufficient and the administrative overheads a great burden. Moreover, the national system of 4 key stages conflicted with pupils moving between schools such that actual ownership of a child's progress was not clearly down to any one school through which the child had passed. Nevertheless, as this debate developed, becoming heated and polarised, the government decided that new schools were indeed needed country wide and from this scheme money was found to build a new high school in Alnwick through the local authority. However, financial support was provided to build one only big enough to house secondary pupils in the then 3 tier system. Once again the Duke's bounty was critical and land was leased to the county council at very low cost. The "3 cheers for 3 tiers" debate intensified, but my judgement in Alnwick was that parents were generally in favour of 2 tiers and the Alnwick Schools Partnership recommended decisively in favour of it. But this was not the case county wide, where the still continuing mix of 2 and 3 tiers plus academies has left something of an educational dog's breakfast. County Councillors from the Alnwick catchment area were strongly in favour of 2 tiers (with the vociferous exception of Wooler!) and eventually it was left to local wards to find their own solutions, Alnwick's decision being a move back to 2 tier. Fortunately, the



Staff, 1966

Labour administration of the day was also of this mindset, so the county council raised a further £11M to expand the new Duchess's school in Taylor Drive to take year 7 pupils and upwards even though it was still being built and planning to open as a 3 tier school in September 2016. These year 7 pupils began to arrive in 2017, having suffered some unavoidable disruption in existing middle schools. I did feel for the then Duchess's School Head Teacher, Mr Maurice Hall, as he had to contend simultaneously with the move to a new Duchess's Community High School and the change to a 2 tier system, imposed despite much opposition (though not from him). Now we have no middle schools in Alnwick with others in the catchment area having closed or been expanded to become Primary Schools. The old Duke's School site reverted to the Duke and the Lindisfarne site is owned by the county council, where it is now designated as a Community Campus with continuing educational functions.

In 1890, the Sisters of Mercy moved from Guernsey to Alnwick and set up a school subsequently known as the Convent School and now St Paul's Primary School. Evidently, a passing Belgian friar had commented to these good ladies that, however well the Anglicans were doing, the state of catholic education in Alnwick left much to be desired. I am indebted to Josh Burgess for this information, which I have plagiarised from his prize-winning essay. Researchers have no conscience in their pursuit of material but mine is comforted by the knowledge that he was paid for his work!

I hope this has given some insights into the complex progress of secondary education in Alnwick and justifies my initial statement that it was always at the cutting edge and often as good as it got.

*Acknowledgements are made to Lorna Gilroy for her History of the Duke's School, from which I have used much material with her permission.*



Reunion, 1993

# Planning Matters

There has been an application from Northumberland Estates to construct a bypass of the B1340 at Denwick. The village is under pressure from traffic, and the proposals aim to restore its peaceful character. They have support from Denwick Parish and residents but the Highway Authority and Highways England have concerns; the Environment agency and others have raised a variety of objections, and require further assessments. We objected on the basis that this is a major proposal that was not envisaged in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan. It lies beyond the Alnwick settlement limit defined in the new local plan. Any such proposal should be brought forward as part of the refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan so that the planning authority and the community have the information that they need to assess the wider impact.



Members will recall that we objected to digital advertisement displays on South Road. Both the Town Council and Highways Authority also objected, and the application has been refused.

On Beaconsfield Terrace there is an application to replace a side extension and insert a dormer and balcony on the second floor. The building is not listed, but it stands at a prominent position in the Conservation Area, and has local significance. The Howick Street Development is nationally recognised, and this terrace featured in *Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes*. In that context, this opportunity to address a poorly executed extension must be welcomed. The applicants and neighbours are keen to do the right thing, but the nature of the property presents some challenges. To allow the development to move forward we suggested that Built Heritage and Design officers from NCC should be involved.

The Discharge of Conditions on the "Peter's Mill" development at Windy Edge included proposals to for a Cycle Path along Fisher Lane and across Column Field to the War Memorial. We believe that this will receive widespread support, and accept that it will involve shared use by pedestrians and cyclists, that segregated use is impractical, and that any such development will involve some compromises with respect to biodiversity along Fisher Lane and the character of Column Field. The route links residential areas, the town centre, Alnwick Infirmary, two Doctor's Surgeries, the Freerider Bike Track, Column Field and popular country walks. It will be used by pedestrians with varying levels of mobility, enthusiastic young cyclists, families and dog-walkers. We want the scheme to be well-received, but because details are embedded in a comprehensive Discharge of Conditions they may not receive the level of public scrutiny that they warrant. So we hope that

assessment of the design will demonstrate that the needs of different categories of user have been considered and an appropriate balance sought between the different constraints.



New housing, such as this development North-East of Stoney Hills, adds to pressure on local amenities, services, and infrastructure. Our response did not cover these general concerns. They must be addressed in the forthcoming refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan. But we did question whether removal of three mature trees on the boundary of the development can be justified. If officers are satisfied that there is a compelling case, then we hope they will ensure sufficient planting using native stock of local provenance to mitigate the removal.



An application has now been submitted to form a mixed use bar / restaurant by refurbishing and altering 28 and 30 Narrowgate (formerly Capella and Bari Tea). These are significant buildings at a prominent position in the Conservation Area. The recent deterioration in their condition has been a concern, and the developer has done good work on neighbouring properties. So this application is welcome, and we hope it will result in an improvement.



# Quiz: Allotments

The Ordnance Survey publishes an open dataset of green space. They want to encourage its use, promote well-being and help anyone who is looking into how such amenities are used. Don't we all? More houses mean a bigger population, which adds to the demand for all amenities, including playgrounds, sports fields, parks and allotments.

The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan identified 6.5 hectares of allotments, and anticipated that demand would steadily increase, as the population of Alnwick grew. It proposed an additional 3.5 hectares of allotments, located in the south and east of the town, close to new housing developments.



Because of the way the Ordnance Survey dataset was collected it is not entirely accurate. They record nine allotment sites in Alnwick. These eight are correct.

The images are arranged in order, running from North to South. You can check your answers on the back page.

If you recognise these, you may be able to help the Ordnance Survey improve the quality of their other data on green space in Alnwick. Please get in touch if you want to know more.

Footnote: *The area of Alnwick allotments is still 6.5 hectares. The same as it was when the ADNP was prepared.*



## Diary dates

Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Flower Festival (see page 1)

Aug 20<sup>th</sup> - Summer outing: the geology of Howick Bay (see page 3)

Sept 14<sup>th</sup> - Paul Henery. Wildlife Protection Officer and Artist. St. James Centre, Pottergate, at 7:30 p.m.

Sept 12-17<sup>th</sup> Heritage Open Day (see page 2)

Sept 27<sup>th</sup>: Launch of "Northumberland - a guide" in Castle Guest Hall. (see page 3)

November: Any Questions 2022 (details to be announced)

**Some notable anniversaries**

2<sup>nd</sup> Aug 1873 William and John James Hardy commence business in Pake's Lane.

19<sup>th</sup> Aug 1850 Opening of first Alnwick Station.

20<sup>th</sup> Aug 2010 Harry Hotspur statue unveiled.

25<sup>th</sup> Aug 1977 83% of Alnwick's protected buildings listed on this day.

1<sup>st</sup> Sept 1939 First evacuees arrive from Newcastle (1,000 arrived within two weeks).

3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2002 Prince Charles opens Alnwick Garden.

23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1849 first case in 1849 Colera outbreak.

7<sup>th</sup> Oct 1974 Alnwick Civic Society's inaugural meeting.

16<sup>th</sup> Oct 1970 opening of Alnwick bypass.

23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2002 - Creation of Alnwick Wikipedia page.

31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2002 Country Life rates Alnwick as the best place to live in the UK.



## About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in 1974, following the defeat of proposals to re-develop the town centre with a modern shopping area, and amid growing concerns about the future of our town. Since then, we have sought to influence developments, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure that proposals protect and enhance our heritage.

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

All who share our aims can support the work of the society: by joining as an individual, family, student, or business member; by participating in activities, sharing ideas, raising areas of concern and pointing out examples of good practice. Or simply by demonstrating pride in our town, and spreading the word about the value of our work.



Founding Member

**President:** Peter Errnor

**Trustees: Chair:** Peter Reed; **Treasurer and Membership:** Gill Parker; **Honorary Secretary:** Sue Smith; **Mary Carter**

**Other Executive Committee members:** Elizabeth Jones; Colin Watson; Lorna Gilroy.

**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)

**Charity registration number:** 1197235

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

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

**Quiz Answers**

Picture quiz: Allotments

- Canongate
- Ratten Row: Seventy-two plots between Alwynside and Hulne Park. operated by Town Council
- Dunterns: operated by Northumberland Estates
- Back Duke Street: Operated by Northumberland Estates
- Ansen Court / Percy Court. Behind Lovaine Buildings on Wagonway. Operated by Northumberland Estates.
- F. St George's: Thirteen plots between Victoria Road and St Georges Crescent. Operated by Town Council. This is the location of the Alnwick Community Allotment.
- G. Saint James: forty-six plots off Victoria Road and near to Willowburn. Operated by Town Council.
- H. Cawledge View: Three plots at the rear of the Alnwick Cemetery, just off the old railway line.
- Operated by Town Council

Find out more:

<https://alnwick-tc.gov.uk/services/allotments/>

**Northumberland Estates:** For information on availability of allotments contact 01665 510777

(The OS dataset includes an allotment site on Walkergate behind St Michael's Church, which is no longer used as allotments).

1931 Highway Code Hand Signals

- I want to go straight ahead.
- You may overtake me on my right.
- I am going to stop.
- I want to turn to my left.
- To stop vehicles approaching from his front and from behind simultaneously
- I am going to slow down, or stop, or turn to my left.