

February 2023



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## For your diary:

**15<sup>th</sup> February:** Phil Huntley, online talk about the History of Fisher Lane 7:30 p.m. eMail [contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk) to request joining instructions

**8<sup>th</sup> March:** Annual General Meeting at St. James' Centre, 7:30 p.m. After the formal meeting, Marjorie Brown will reveal the true story of the Percy Tenantry Column

*Our trustees are responsible for the running of the society and the Charity Commission require that all trustees stand for election at this first AGM following our registration as a CIO. We are also looking for new Committee Members to help take the society forward. So this is a good time to let us know if you are interested in playing a more active role in running the society. Any of the current committee members would be happy to talk over what this might involve.*

**10<sup>th</sup> May:** John Matthews and Jackie Salmon of Northumberland and Newcastle Society

**July:** Sue Wood from Northumberland Archives on "A House Through Time"

**August:** Summer outing - watch for announcement

**November:** Any Questions - Topical Debate: details to follow



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It's the start of another year - is your subscription up to date?

# Ray Connell

Alnwick Civic Society has lost one of its stalwart members with the death of Ray Connell in November. Ray was widely known and respected in Alnwick for being the principal architect of Reavell and Cahill, the long standing and respected architectural firm, who were previously responsible for many notable buildings in the town, including Lloyds Bank in Bondgate Within, where he was based for many years. Ray's own work included the design of the late Duchess Elizabeth's house in Hulne Park, the restoration of Belford Hall and work on Lumley Castle. He was also a qualified Town Planner, holding the post of Assistant County Planning Officer for Northumberland County Council at the age of 29.

He is less well known for his work with the Civic Society, preferring to keep a low profile because of his professional roles but he gave freely of his time and expertise in the 1990s and early 2000s. At that time we were entitled to receive paper copies of local planning applications which he examined both within and outside the planning subcommittee. He would give us his professional view, often putting into words the opinions of the committee, including

those of us who had neither his turn of phrase or his depth of knowledge to express ourselves adequately.

He retired from active involvement with the Society but continued to support its work to the end. As recently as 2018, when a small group led by the late David Lovie was working on "Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes", we realised just how influential he had been in steering the town away from gradual decay to recognition of our unique town-scape, architectural heritage and transport issues. We discovered this by contrasting two town centre plans produced in the 1960s, the second of which he produced when at the County Council, but it is a measure of Ray's modesty that we had to work this out for ourselves.

In recent years while supporting his wife, who passed away earlier in 2022, through ill health, almost every day he could be encountered walking his dog on Alnmouth beach.

We have offered our condolences to his three children and their families. He is undoubtedly missed by all.

Peter Ennor

## Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review

*The final consultation on changes to the boundaries of our Parliamentary Constituency is now closed. To rebalance the number of electors the Boundaries Commission propose combining Berwick and Morpeth.*

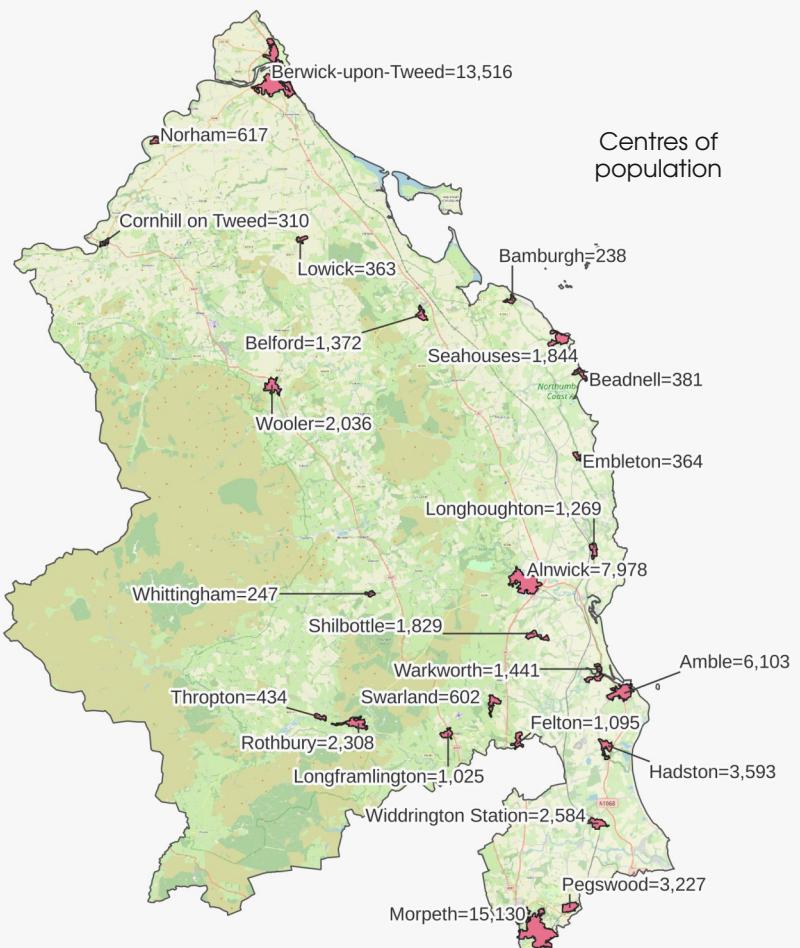
There has been some controversy over how Longhorsely should be represented in this scheme. We felt unable to comment on that, but we did add our voice to those who have commented on the proposed name for the new constituency. It seems the Commission has a preference for naming constituencies after major population centres. So they proposed the name "Berwick and Morpeth". This would, of course, exclude the name of the most central town in the constituency. We are not happy about that, but more significantly, in our view, this ignores the many smaller communities distributed across a constituency with a large rural population. Taken together, the towns of Berwick and Morpeth only account for one in three of the population. Even when Alnwick is added more than half of the constituency population live outside any of the substantial towns.

In the circumstances we think the name "North Northumberland" would have been seen across the new constituency as more inclusive, more representative, and more recognizable by those outside the area. The name "North Northumberland" also has historical precedent dating back to the Great Reform Act of 1832. That reform was famously introduced under Lord Grey, whose family seat at Howick lies within the constituency.

We will not know the final outcome of the review until later this year. However, in earlier consultations others have already suggested the name we prefer. The Commission did not accept their proposals, so we are not optimistic.

If the chosen name does turn out to be "Berwick and Morpeth" then our constituency will be named after two towns: each at one of the extremes of the constituency, and each inhabited by a small proportion of the population.

Questions will be asked about how well Westminster understands the nature of this constituency, and the people who live here.



# Croft House

*Croft House in Alnwick stood behind where the tennis courts in Prudhoe Street are today. In the early part of the 19th century several of the more affluent Alnwick families made this mansion their home. One only needs look at the memorials on the wall of the north aisle in St Michael's Parish Church to name the first three families to occupy Croft House - Patterson, Lambert and Kerr.*

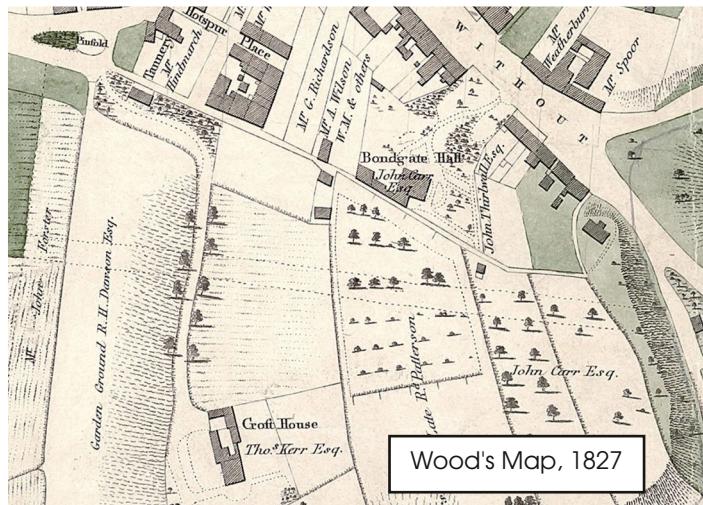
Croft House was built by Linen Draper Robert Patterson who owned a business in Alnwick marketplace. Robert died in 1807 at the young age of 44 and Croft House passed to his son – also Robert. Tragically Robert junior died on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1811 as a result of a fall from his horse on Alnwick Moor. He was only 23 years old and had been married for just over a year. Following his death, Robert's estate was administered under the direction of The Court of Chancery until October 1819 when the property was sold.

In the intervening years the Lambert family occupied the house. Alnwick Solicitor John Lambert's address at the time of his marriage to Juliana Mounsey in 1812 is shown as Croft House Alnwick and three of their children, Mary Juliana, Anthony and Cicely were born there between 1813 and 1819.

On 13<sup>th</sup> October 1819, Croft House was sold to Mr Thomas Kerr, another Alnwick Solicitor, for the price of £1,530 and it is documented that he made considerable improvements to the house during the years he lived there. Thomas died aged 74 in September 1831 and, by the terms of his will, Croft House passed to his business partner, John Leithead, in whose possession it remained until his death in 1847.

In 1832, the year after Thomas Kerr's death, Croft House was to experience a complete change of use when a Miss Thompson "*...moved her Establishment for the Education and Board of Young Ladies from Lucker Hall to Croft House, a mansion near Alnwick*". Miss Thompson's advertisements indicated that a limited number of day pupils would also be admitted to her educational establishment and that "*in order to facilitate the progress of her young ladies in the various branches of fashionable education, able masters and other efficient assistants are engaged*". One of the teachers, also a resident of Croft House, was a Parisian Lady who taught French to the young ladies. The school continued until 1836 when Miss Thompson died.

In an 1836 advertisement offering the house to let, Alnwick solicitor John Leithead described the property as comprising a dining room, drawing room, breakfast room, servants' hall, two kitchens, pantry and dairy on the ground floor and four good bedrooms, a light closet and two servants' rooms above. The estate also included a four-stalled stable, coach house, granary, a partly walled garden well-stocked with fruit trees plus two enclosures containing together about three acres of old grass land with a stable and water in each. The house was described as being in a very healthy situation, commanding a beautiful prospect of the adjoining country in all directions and that it was in good order and fit for the accommodation of a genteel family. The dwelling at the entrance to the estate,



which is still occupied today, was described as a neat lodge, containing two good rooms and other conveniences.

By 1841 Edward Thew, an Alnwick merchant, and his family occupied the house.

In July 1847, under the terms of the late John Leithead's will, Croft House was advertised as going to public auction, although it was occupied at that time by Hugh Moises, a local Justice of the

Peace. The property was purchased for £2,080 in 1848 by Charlotte Florentia, Dowager Duchess of Northumberland, with the intention that Croft House be used as a residence for the incumbents of St Paul's Church, which had recently been built in Percy Street. The church, the building of which had been supported by her husband Hugh, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Northumberland was opened for worship in 1846 and had provided much needed additional accommodation for the town's Anglican community but His Grace's untimely death in February 1847 had been before a vicarage could be built. The John Bull periodical at the time reported on the Duchess's purchase of "*the beautiful mansion and grounds of Croft House, Alnwick, as a parsonage for St Paul's Church, to which it adjoins*" and likened her generosity to the benevolence of the late Duke.

In 1950 the Vicarage roof was partially re-slated. Half the cost was met by a grant from the Church Commissioners and the other half by a mortgage-loan repayable over ten years from the stipend of the benefice. The intention was that the annual repayments and interest would be paid from the rent of what was described as the "*cottage*", which had been created by the division of the vicarage.

Part of the building continued to be rented out until the vicarage was demolished. Sheltered housing, which was opened in 1977, was built on the site.

The following were incumbents of St Paul's Church and lived in what was Croft House. Up until 1881 some census documented the property as St Paul's Parsonage and some still referred to it as Croft House.

1846 - 1868 The Reverend Charles Charlton (Perpetual Curate)  
1868 - 1873 The Reverend Henry Murray Oswald

1873 - 1908 The Reverend Jevon J M Perry  
*Those who know the story of the Edlingham Burglary will be familiar with the Reverend Jevon James Muschamp Perry and the part he played in the case, originally brought before Magistrates at Alnwick Court House in Green Bat, and how it changed the law of the land.*

1911 The Reverend Horace Edgar Yorke Breffit

1919 - 1925 The Reverend Leonard Gethen

1925 – 1937 The Reverend W Robert Fairclough

1937 – 1945 The Reverend Hermann Boyes Ferris

1945 – 1953 The Reverend George Herbert Marshall

In 1918, while serving in France as chaplain to the Royal Flying Corps, Reverend Marshall buried Baron Manfred von Richthofen (The Red Baron).

1953 – 1960 The Reverend Christie

1960 – 1971 The Reverend Anthony Meakin

Alnwick Place Names - The Stocken or Stocking Burn

By Allan Mann

*The Stocken or Stocking Burn is a considerable stream, roughly one mile and a half in length, to the west of Alnwick. It drains the headlands of the Moor, hence its alternative name of the Alnwick Moor Burn. Flowing to the North-East it enters the River Aln just above the weir at the Abbey Mill. This article hopes to show that it may have been a significant element in the development of Alnwick, particularly in early centuries.*

## Importance of Stocken Burn & Dene

The Stocken Burn and Dene would have provided the following to the town of Alnwick:

- 1) A sheltered North facing dene, providing ample flat fertile lands on the stream banks for settlement, agriculture and industry.

2) The geology exposed by the down-cutting of the Stocken Burn would have been significant to early Alnwick. The burn exposes a section through part of the Scremerston Coal

Group. This consists of a series of fine sandstones, silts and shales, clays, limestone and some low-grade but workable coal seams.

The Stocken Burn hence allows relatively easy access to useful resources. Coal seams would provide domestic fuel, and promote various industrial activities. Limestones would allow for lime production; sandstones for building. Iron and ironstone would allow for some early metal smelting. Many of the clays and fireclays are suitable for firing, promoting pottery, tile and brick making. The Percy Bailiff's Rolls tell us that in 1471/1472, there was at least one coal mine in the Stokeynge, which was accustomed to render 33s 4d in annual rental (about £1,140 p.a. today). Iron slag / smelting deposits have been found in the upper part of the Stocking Burn.

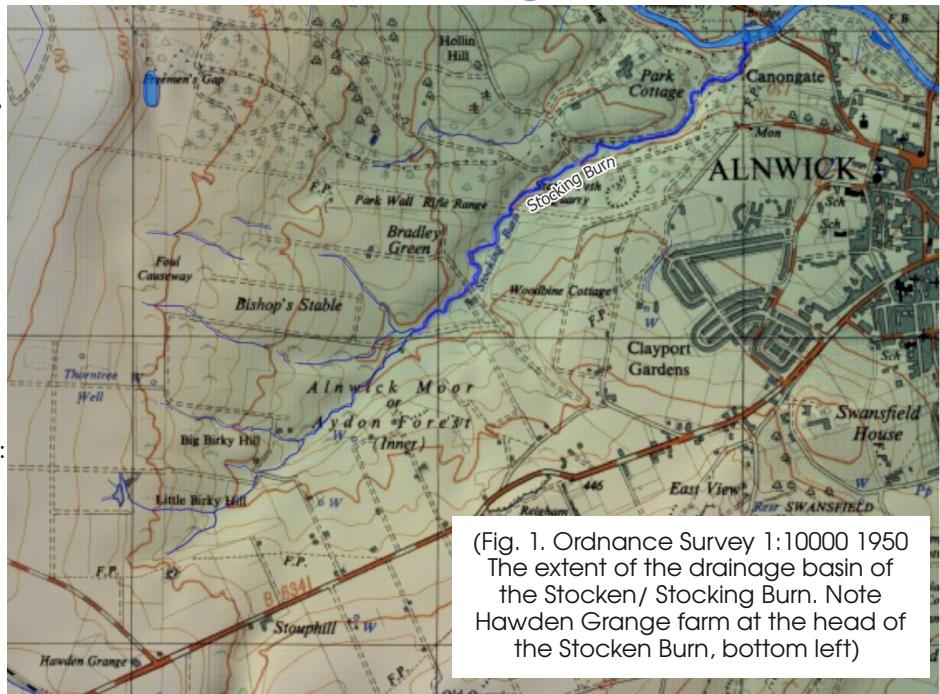
The exposure of such strata within the Stocken Burn would also indicate to early inhabitants where such deposits might also occur at depth. Hence the Stocken Burn became the focus of mining activity on Alnwick Moor.

3) Copious fresh water for human and animal use; for permanent settlement; processing of agricultural produce; industrial economic activity from metal smelting to textile manufacture and fulling, to clay pottery and brick firing. Two Bronze Age barrows, incorporating stone coffins, one skeleton, and an urn/pottery were discovered on the slopes, in 1820 and 1861.

4) This dene is one of the nearest to Alnwick, and its forest would produce wood as fuel and for building. The forest could also be part cleared for pasturing domestic livestock, such as swine. Enclosures would exclude wild animals, but could also be employed in trapping and hunting of deer. The forest could be cleared in higher reaches to provide pasture on the moor. Stocken Burn Dene might have been one of the first communal pastures for Alnwick, which in Anglo-Saxon times increasingly came under pressure from encroaching central lordships, until communal pasture on the Moor was confirmed by the Vescy Charters (1157-1290). On the stream dividing Bishop's Stables from Fox Holes, are stone foundations, similar to hut circles. These could be iron-Age, British homesteads, but livestock pens may be more likely.

## Past Name Variations.

Some of the following name variations refer to the Dene, to the Burn, and some to enclosures of land along the banks of the burn.



(Fig. 1. Ordnance Survey 1:10000 1950  
The extent of the drainage basin of  
the Stocken/ Stocking Burn. Note  
Hawden Grange farm at the head of  
the Stocken Burn, bottom left)

These names are taken from Tate, maps by Norton, Wilkin and Ordnance Survey, etc.

- Poterumburne (ca. 1220) Poterdeburne (1220)
- Stokeynge (1471/72) Stokin (1624) Stokin (1624) Stocken Dike (1647)
- Potterdeneburn (1700), Potterdean Burn (1700s)
- Stoken (1709), Stockin High/Low (1760), Stocking Close (1770), Stocking Gate (1770), Stocken Burn (1782), Stocken (1811), Stocking (1865), Stocken (1866/68/69)
- Alnwick Moor Burn, Moor and Stocken Burn, Stocking Burn

## The name element 'Potter'

The earliest names we have for the Stocken Dene and Burn are 'Poterumburne' and 'Poterdeburn' from ca. 1220 AD. Tate's conclusion that both represent a corruption of Potterdeneburn seems reasonable, and is supported by the variation 'Potter Dean burn' in 1700.

The OED gives '*pottere*' as late Old English to Middle English, influenced by Norman French '*potier*' = pottery maker. Many places with the element 'potter' are post-conquest names, and many based on the surname 'Potter' from about 1200. However, some are Anglo-Saxon (e.g., *Potteresleag* 951 - the Potter's Field, Staffordshire). Many early names have the element '*poter*' for potter (e.g. *Poterne* 1086, now Potterne, Wiltshire).

However, 'pot' may be an old Anglo-Saxon word for 'fired clay receptacle', and by transference to landscape, to mean depression, then later to hollow, pit, and the like. If Potter Dene Burn had an early provenance, then the 'pot' element may have been used for the 'stream with depression/ hollows'. These hollows could be natural features, such as rock pools, but they may also reflect early human activity to extract coal, limestone, sandstone, clays and fireclays from the outcrops along the Stocken Burn. To reach these deposits at depth quarry excavations and bell pits would have been dug along the banks and onto the moor. Such pits were widespread. Up to 70 were infilled ca. 1752, for safety reasons, and the bell pits at Corby Crags are a Scheduled monument today. It's possible that much of the topography of the present day Stocken Dene results from man-made activity, and may not be natural. However the likely interpretation of Potter is that it refers to the maker of pots, from Norman Post Conquest times, when

# ...Stocken or Stocking Burn. (continued)

pottery became a more established craft industry. This is suggested by the date of 1220 AD of the variants we have. The nearest street in Alnwick leading west towards the Stocken, is Pottergate (The street of the Potters), though its older name may have been Barresdale Street.

The name Potterdene may indicate a community of potters living along the Stocken Burn, or nearby in Alnwick, excavating clay from the Stocken burn outcrops (as well as other places like Clayport). As late as 1820-1890, there was a brick and tile manufacturing shed on Alnwick Moor, just east of Reigham Quarry on the main Moor Road, with a short railway connecting the works to a large clay pit, close to the upper reaches of the Stocken Burn.

## The name Stocken or Stocking.

Usually in place name studies, the oldest name takes precedence, so the Stocken / Potterdene should be the 'Dene of the Potters'. However the name elements 'stoc' and 'stocc' have an equally, if not older origin in Anglo-Saxon England. The name Stocken or Stocking could date to the years 1471-1624, and refer to the personal name of some unknown owner. However, the place name elements 'stoc' and 'stocc' are very common, often dating to early Anglo-Saxon Charters. They are usually identified as relating to two Early English roots:

- Stoc – meaning 'a secondary, dependent settlement or outlying farm'. The numerous 'Stokes' in English place names fall within this category. Often, they combine the name of a larger settlement, e.g., Stoke Abbott, Dorset, was the secondary, outlying settlement of Sherborne Abbey. Some are very early e.g., Stoke Prior, Worcestershire was 'Stoke' in 770 AD.
- Stocc – meaning 'tree stumps, land covered in tree stumps or stockaded enclosure'. The derivative term 'Stoccen' meaning 'made of logs / stocks', occurs in early English. Examples include Stockenbridge Devon- 'Stokkenbrugg' 1330 – bridge made of stocks or logs; Stocken Hall Rutland 'Le Stokkyng' 1326 – piece of land cleared of tree-stumps; Stockenchurch Buckingham – Stochenechurch 1220 – 'church made of logs' or 'church in the wood'.

Both the above name terms may be of relevance to the Stocken Burn. A secondary, dependent, outlying settlement or hamlet, or outlying farm buildings would be a reasonable description of the position of the Stocken Burn, relative to the larger settlement of Alnwick, just some half a mile away. Both the Stocken and Alnwick would have provided early settlements, but Alnwick surpassed the Stocken in importance, and the Stocken would be expected to be an important but secondary settlement, within the surroundings of Alnwick.

In addition, the forest along the Stocken burn would provide one of the nearest points, to the growing settlement of Alnwick, for the pasturing within the forest of swine, sheep and other domestic

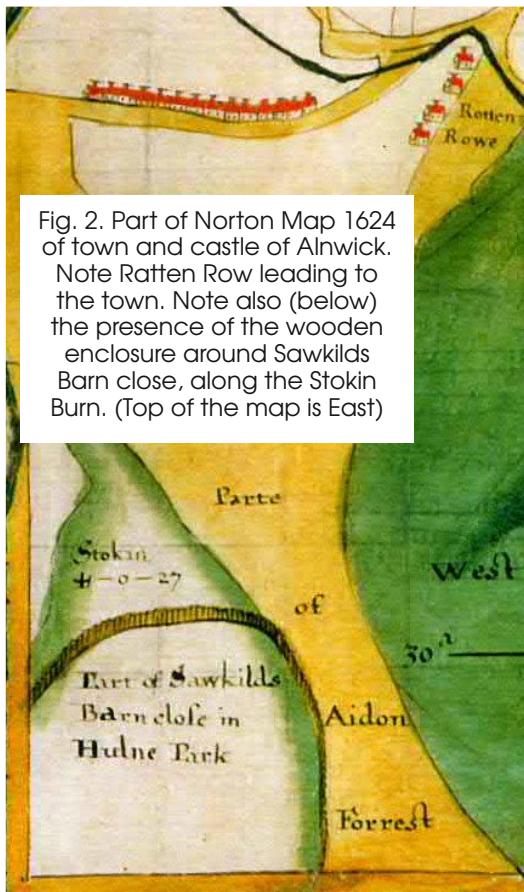


Fig. 2. Part of Norton Map 1624 of town and castle of Alnwick.

Note Ratten Row leading to the town. Note also (below) the presence of the wooden enclosure around Sawkilds Barn close, along the Stokin Burn. (Top of the map is East)

animals. As such, tree stumps could well dot a valley landscape cleared of mature trees, and/ or be the site of stockade enclosures, within the forest for the pasturing of livestock. Wooden enclosures for the trapping of deer may also have figured along the Stocken. Note the existence of such a stockade, just to the west of the 'Stokin' land, along the Stocken Burn, on the Norton map in 1624 (Fig.2). The Percy Bailiff's Rolls confirms that such an enclosure was in existence from the 1470's, but enclosures may well have a much earlier existence, as suggested by the name term 'Stocc'. Such forest enclosures were common features in earlier Anglo- Saxon times, throughout much of England.

The connection between the names Stocken and Aydon, earlier Haydene.

The earliest versions of the name Aydon Moor/ Forest (aka Alnwick Moor) show clearly as 'Haydene' -the valley of the Hay'. There are 5 places called Haydene/ Aydon in Northumberland, and the conclusion of the County History of Northumberland seems valid – 'In each case the early form of the second syllable is den not

don, the name being derived from a neighbouring dene'. Since the headwaters of the Stocken/ Stocking Burn drain much of the area of the Inner Moor, I suggest that the 'valley of the Hay' is actually the Stocken/ Stocking Dene.

Since Haydene/ Aydon in Alnwick constitutes an upland forested, later moorland 'waste', the possible meaning of – Hay = mown grass/ fodder from Old English (OE) *hieg/ heg*, seems unlikely. Observant as usual, Tate suggests 'Hayden, from *haeg*, A. S., a hedge, *haia*, medieval Latin, a minor park in the forest for taking deer, and den'. A more relevant possibility may be 'Hay/Hey' from OE. *Haga / Haege* = Hedge, fence, boundary, enclosure and / or the later Norman French *Haie* = Fence. In middle English, '*hei/ hay*' can mean fence or land enclosed by fence, hence enclosure. Such enclosures may be around settlements; around land cleared for agriculture; forested land hedged to allow domestic animals like swine to forage; forest enclosed for deer hunting or to trap deer in 'Hay Winds'.

Many old pre-conquest hays are commonly associated with forest, with enclosures in forests, the pasturing of domestic livestock, and, especially in the North of England, 'with rough pasture between settlement and moorland.' This would seem to be a valid description of Alnwick and its associated Alnwick/ Haydene Moor. This suggests that Haydene was the site an enclosure, close to the settlement, of part of the larger Alnwick/ Haydene Forest, later Moor, for the pasturing of livestock. This may have been communal, enclosed woodland pasture for the population, as evidenced by the Vescy Charters from 1157 -1290, but which could have existed back into the Anglo-Saxon period, or exclusively for the benefit of the Anglo- Saxon, then Norman lords of Alnwick.

Modern research has also shown that the name element '*Haw*' is cognate with 'Hay' = fence, enclosure, in many dialects of English, especially in northern counties. So, the relatively modern

# ...Stocken or Stocking Burn. (continued)

farm name of Hawden Grange (Fig. 1 extreme bottom left), sitting on the Inner Moor, in the higher reaches of the Stocken/ Stocking drainage basin, may reflect the site of the original Haydene, 'the valley of the forest enclosure'.

So the names Haydene/ Aydon and Stocken/ Stocking may both refer back to a much older possibly Pre-conquest stockaded enclosure for pasturing of livestock, within the vast Aydon Forest. Haydene and Stocken Dene may have similar origins, and refer to the same valley. There is a hint that Stocken refers to enclosures closer to the Aln, in its lower reaches, within the modern Hulne Park (Fig 2 'Stokin' land enclosure), whilst Haydene/ Hawden may refer to enclosures in the upper reaches of the Burn, on the higher forest / moorland areas. In 1865, the Northumberland Name Books record that the burn is 'A small stream which rises in Alnwick moor, and is there called "Moor Burn", but as soon as it enters the Demesne wall at Moor Burn Bridge it receives the name of Stocken Burn till it falls into the river Aln at Abbey Mill-dam'.

## Conclusion

The Stocken Burn appears to have been an important site of human settlement, agriculture, mining and industry from the Bronze

Age, through the Iron Age / Romano-British, and presumably into the Anglo Saxon and later post conquest mediaeval periods.

Consideration of the name variations above show that the Stocken/ Stocking, Moor or Potterdene Burn, may represent: -

- A community of Potters, inhabiting the Stocken and/or close-by areas of Pottergate, Alnwick, using the Stocken Dene as the source of their clay, and coal/ wood fuel for pottery production. (Potter)
- Alternatively, it may be named after an unknown owner of surname Potter (Potter)
- A secondary settlement for the nearby, larger settlement of Alnwick. (Stoc)
- The nearest locality to Alnwick, for the pasturing of domestic animals, within cleared areas of the vast Aydon Forest and moor, possibly enclosed with a wooden stockade. (Stocc/ Stoccen and Hay)
- An unknown owner called Stokin/ Stocking

So there you have it, take your pick. The Stocken Burn basin would seem to be fertile ground for archaeological investigation.

## Local Plan - Natural, historic and built environment

*The new Local Plan for Northumberland was adopted last March. It sets the strategic planning policies of the Council. It will be the starting point for assessment of all planning applications, and will frame the refresh of our neighbourhood plan. In this extract we look at how the plan describes Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment.*

Northumberland's environment is distinctive in terms of its natural beauty and historic significance. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.

Superimposed on Northumberland's internationally recognised natural assets is a rich cultural heritage - a legacy of archaeological sites and structures and historic buildings, settlements and landscapes. The relatively undeveloped nature of the County has allowed often exceptional levels of preservation for some parts of the historic environment.

There are numerous designated areas and sites, many of which are recognised internationally and nationally, for their nature conservation, geological, landscape or heritage value. Most notable are:

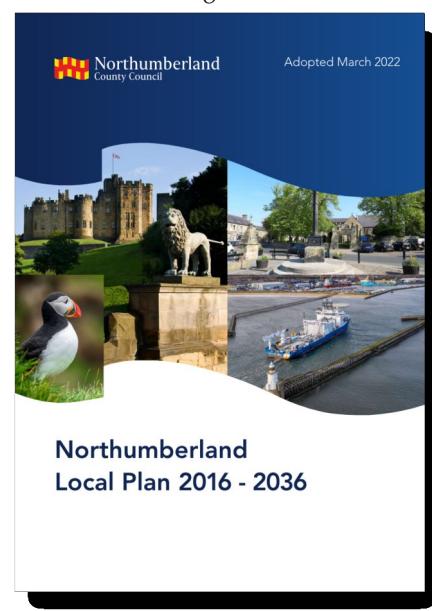
- Northumberland National Park
- Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Historic landscapes, reflective of past forms of habitation and cultivation
- Areas of international biodiversity and geo-diversity importance, mostly concentrated along the coast and in more remote upland areas
- National Nature Reserves, and more than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Over 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites; and 23 Local Nature Reserves
- 3 Marine Conservation Zones
- Kielder Water and Forest Park
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site
- Northumberland International Dark Sky Park
- Northumberlandia human landform sculpture
- Several Registered Historic Parks and Gardens surrounding some of the County's castles and stately homes
- Numerous Registered Battlefields
- 70 Conservation Areas marking out historic villages, town centres and other unique built environments
- Well over 5,000 nationally Listed Buildings and

Structures - approaching half of all those in the North-East - including many of great significance, including Norman castles, country houses, fortified farmhouses, and buildings associated with the County's diverse economic, social, religious and cultural legacy

- Around a thousand Scheduled Monuments.

There are also highly important assets that are less easy to attribute to an exact location, such as some of the protected species. The County's many environmental assets do not all receive statutory protection. It is important to consider the County's biodiversity, historic environment and ecosystems as a whole in terms of the threats that they face and the opportunities they present. Many natural and built assets are vulnerable to development and human activity and some heritage assets remain 'at risk'; all of these need careful protection, enhancement and/or management, including through planning decisions. Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment presents many opportunities to raise people's awareness and understanding of, and attachment to, their environment.

This ranges from outdoor learning for children and young people through communities being empowered to protect the environments that are important to them to tourists and day visitors appreciating Northumberland's unique assets. The natural environment also plays a role in making a positive contribution to the health of the population.



# News in Brief

On behalf of the many members who enjoyed their warm hospitality in December we would like to thank Carl and Michelle Watson for a fascinating Open House at 1, Bailiffgate. You can now find more on the history of their home and its previous occupants at Bailiffgate Collections. Here: <https://tinyurl.com/3fx5utu>

Little Buildings with big stories on the Northumberland Coast



The Bathing House at Howick is one of seven small buildings featured in the latest little book from the Howick Heritage Group: along with the Hermitage at Warkworth, the Ferry Hut at Alnmouth, Ratcheugh Observatory, the Boulmer World War One barrack hut, the Tin Church at Newton by the Sea, and the Armstrong Cottages at Bamburgh. Discover the stories behind these local icons, the vision, and the legacy over centuries of Northumbrian history. £5 from the Accidental Bookshop, the post office at Alnmouth and the Longhoughton Co-op.

Alnwick Story Fest 24-26 Feb. See [www.alnwickstoryfest.com](http://www.alnwickstoryfest.com) for full details of activities and events: Informal Socials, a Silent Book Disco, Best selling authors, etc. to light up our lives this winter.

The BBC has used experimental data from the Office of National Statistics to analyse how High Streets and shopping areas have changed since the beginning of the pandemic. Over the whole country, the number of Beauty salons and tattoo parlours has increased, while the number of banks and department stores has fallen. The pattern locally and across Northumberland is similar to the national picture, but not identical. The number of eating and drinking places has increased, but the number of retail shops has fallen. The big changes are the drop in the number of clothes shops and restaurants, and the increases in fast food, beauty services, tattoo and piercing studios. More detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/4en8z3y4>

In 2021 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake historic building recording of the former Greensfield Steading site. Their report has now been published, and preserves a record of the buildings before they are cleared. The steading was an extension to Greensfield Farm. It was used for processing grain and animal feed and provided accommodation for cattle, but never operated as a separate farm in its own right. It was developed over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, starting around 1870. <https://tinyurl.com/ykw7jdz6>



Members will remember that we supported the HRE Group and local campaigners when they opposed proposals by National Highways to infill the Rugley Railway Bridge with rock and concrete. So far their efforts have proved successful. A recent study of the bridge concludes that *"This is a fine bridge, well built and lightly used. It is clearly handling the traffic it carries with aplomb, and there is no reason to expect that traffic or the bridge's response to change".*

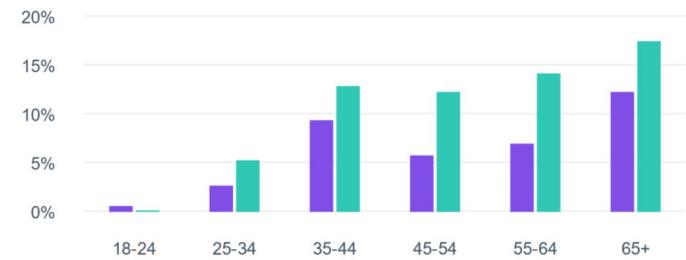
See: <https://tinyurl.com/2fsmr5v6>



The profile of our audience on Facebook shows that most are middle-aged or older, two thirds are women, a third live in Alnwick and half in the North-East. What would you do to spread the word more widely?

## Age and Gender

Men	37.70%
Women	62.30%



# George Penrose and Sons (by Anne Lewis)

George Penrose Senior was born in 1833 in Aldborough, North Yorkshire working as an innkeeper and shoemaker. He moved to Painters Hill, Alnwick in 1860 as a professional cricketer and played for Alnwick Cricket Club excelling as a bowler. He and his wife Hannah had 4 children, Thomas, Annie, George Junior and Mary Jane.



George Junior was born in 1864 and served his apprenticeship as a hairdresser with Mr Mark Patterson of Narrowgate. He commenced his own hairdressing business in Wellwood Street, Amble in 1883 and later moved to larger premises in Queen Street. George married Charlotte Gibson in 1885 and as the business flourished he expanded his portfolio to include tobacconists, sweetshops and penny bazaars and a facility for charging accumulator batteries, opening branches in Radcliffe, Broomhill, Red Row and Alnwick. After returning from India in WW1 Georges eldest son William joined the business and

## Spend a Merry— Christmas

At home by having a Wireless Set installed. It's so delightful to switch on to the latest Concerts, Lectures and News Items, and enjoy the winter evenings indoors.



in the 1920s started making radio sets for family and friends, then realising the potential started selling them. Because of the high demand he had to buy them from suppliers such as HMV and Columbia and diversified into electrical goods.

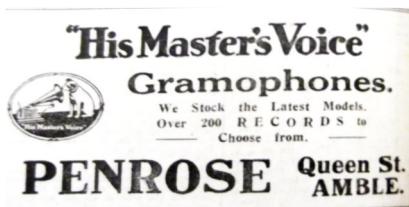
The Alnwick shop opened firstly in Bondgate Without now occupied by Outlook



then moved to 23 Bondgate Within in 1927.

George died in 1935 leaving his 2 sons William and Fred to run the Alnwick and Amble shops respectively and their sisters ran the other businesses.

William had married Jane Douglass and moved to West Acres in Alnwick and had a daughter Jane who was later to be affectionately known as Penny. The business evolved with the advent of radio, gramophone and television and the occasional hair cut! This was followed by the sale of small musical instruments, sheet music and 78 records. Aerial installations began in the 1950s by which time Penny had married Ken Lewis who joined the business. The 1960s brought the introduction of the electrical contracting division (employing 14 people) colour tv and the pop music charts which Penny had to update every week!

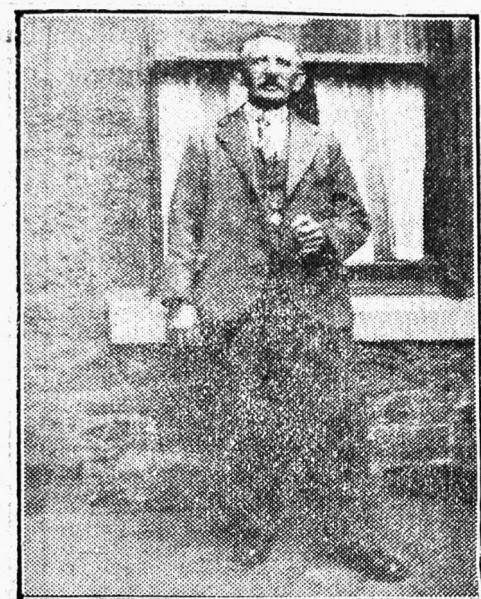


William died in 1979. Ken and Penny's son Peter joined the business in 1976 continuing to trade until his retirement in 2017. He sold George Penrose and Sons to Guy and Sarah Filer from Seahouses who continued to trade to this day keeping the name going.

**ALNWICK CRICKET CLUB.—MARRIED v. SINGLE.**—The Alnwick Club finished their season on Thursday, the 26th ult. by a match between the married and single members. The whole of the players belonging to the town, more than ordinary interest was manifested in the event. The wickets were pitched at one o'clock, when a considerable number of spectators were on the field, and continued, watching the various turns in the game, up to the close. Before the commencement, the bachelors were decidedly the popular favourites, from the laurels they had achieved during the season, when opposed to rival clubs; but, unfortunately for them, the two crack bowlers, Messrs. Dixon and Penrose, are both benedictis, and their splendid bowling told heavily upon their opponents. The married party first assumed the bat, and came out after scoring 44. The youngsters then went in, but their wickets rapidly fell before the assaults of Dixon and Penrose, and they came out with the pitiful number of 12. In the second innings, the benedictis made 22; and at six o'clock the stumps were drawn, the bachelors having made 18, for one wicket down, and were apparently in the way to redeem their lost credit. In the evening, the cricketers and their friends, numbering between 40 and 50, supped together at the house of Mr. Dunn, Nag's Head Inn, Mr. J. Yeaman presiding, and Messrs. Hardy, Piper, and Wright, acting as vice-chairman. The following is the score:—

MARRIED.	
1st innings.	2nd innings.
Dixon c W. Skelly b T. Skelly	0 hit wicket..... 1
Furlonger hit wicket b T. Skelly	19 not out..... 0
Piper b T. Skelly	0 b M'Kinley c Smart 8
Penrose run out	0 b Robinson..... 3
Appleby run out	1 b M'Kinley..... 0
Hardy b Robinson	3 run out..... 1
Wright b T. Skelly c Dodds	1 b Robinson..... 2
Carter b Robinson c W. Skelly	6 b M'Kinley c T. Skelly..... 0
Yeaman not out	6 b Robinson..... 1
Ferguson b Robinson	0 b M'Kinley c Dodds 3
Bye, 1; wides, 6; no ball, 1	8 Byes, 2; wides, 1 3
Total..... 44	Total..... 22
SINGLE.	
1st innings.	2nd innings.
Forster b Penrose	4 b Pearson..... 1
Lockey b Dixon	0 not out..... 4
T. Skelly b Penrose	0
W. Skelly b Dixon	1
Dodds b Penrose	2
Smart b Dixon	0
Robinson b Dixon	0 not out..... 4
M'Kinley b Dixon	0
Short b Penrose	0
Thompson not out	2
Leg-byes	3 B, 7; 1-b, 1; w 1; 9
Total..... 12	Total..... 18

Alnwick Mercury 1st October 1861



MR. G. PENROSE.

May 25th 1935

# Any questions?

*Our thanks to all who confronted difficult weather to participate in our "Any Questions?" event On November 16th.*

Members discussed the town's future with an expert panel: Anne Lawson and Chris Tyler from the Borderlands Team at Northumberland County Council, Katherine Laing and Fraser Serle from the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Martin Allenby from the Duchess Community High School, and Paul O'Reilly from Quotient Sciences.

The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and the Northumberland Local Plan both envisage a more diverse and inclusive economy in Alnwick and the evening's discussion centred on some of the challenges that will be faced in recruiting the talents that the town will need.

Panellists were able to share their experiences of attracting and retaining professionals from outside the area and of recruiting and developing local skills. We heard analysis by experts in economic development that is in line with practical experience of recruitment. Economic development in Alnwick is influenced by our distance from the Tyneside commuter belt, limited public transport links, a shortage of suitable employment sites, the restricted capacity of

Alnwick's historic centre, a relatively narrow range of employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities, and a shortage of certain types of affordable housing. Young people in particular experience a limited choice of social, leisure and service facilities.

However, we also learned about the efforts that the authorities are making to aid economic development. Panel members from both the Borderlands Place Programme and the North of Tyne Combined Authority described how they were trying to stimulate economic recovery, and we learned of efforts at a more local level to bring different parties together.

We were left with plenty of questions about how the community is able to influence priorities and how we can engage effectively. The landscape of different initiatives seems unnecessarily complex. However, as usual, we remain utterly convinced that we are lucky to live here.

We are grateful to panellists Anne, Chris, Katherine, Fraser, Martin and Paul for giving so generously of their time and expertise.

## Protecting Gill's Lane

*We have asked Northumberland County Council to consider the possibility of adopting Gill's Lane, and adding it to the Historic Environment Record for Northumberland.*

Alnwick's Howick Street development was a residential suburb created in the 1830s, with a consistent style specified by the developer. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Alnwick identifies the planned layout of the Howick Street area as one of Alnwick's special features. M.R. G. Conzen's study of Alnwick described the Howick Street development as being "of special interest". Pevsner's Architectural Guide to Northumberland describes the area as "virtually unspoiled".

At the heart of the Howick Street Development is a back lane, known locally as Gill's Lane. This runs from Green Batt to Lisburn Street and provides access to the rear of properties on both Howick Street and Percy Street. Ordnance Survey Maps from the 19th century show that these originally included a mix of light industrial units

(Coach works, Smithy), a Scientific and Mechanical Institute, a Beer House, and a mix of terraced artisan residences. Today, the original whinstone surface of the lane is largely intact, with cobbles, cart tracks, and glinters still in place. It appears to be in good condition. There are no fewer than a dozen entries on the national heritage list providing statutory protection to more than two dozen properties that back onto the lane.

Hence, Gill's Lane makes an important contribution to the character of the townscape in this part of the Alnwick Conservation Area. It still reflects something of the story



of how this suburb has evolved over the last 200 years. However, unlike other similar back lanes in Alnwick, Gill's Lane has never been adopted by the County Council. In

order to correct this anomaly and to provide a greater degree of protection for the character and history of this important part of Alnwick's heritage, we have asked that Northumberland County Council consider:

a) whether it would be possible for Gill's Lane to be adopted, in order to ensure an appropriate standard of heritage protection in future.

b) adding Gill's Lane to the Northumberland Historic Environment Record as a non-designated heritage asset of historic interest and local significance.

# Planning Matters

Work on the Percy Tenantry Column has been approved. We understand that a specialist condition survey of the Coade Stone lions is ongoing and remedial works are likely to form the final phase of the project.

Although we objected to excessive signage on Denwick Lane for Story Homes the application was approved.

We objected to revised proposals for the RAFA Club because we felt that they reinforce the loss of the original design at the rear of the building. Officers acknowledged our objection, but felt the impact of the proposals was acceptable so they recommended approval.

The application for alteration and refurbishment of Northumberland Hall to accommodate Bailiffgate Museum involves changes to the entrance and access, glazed infills to enclose the arches, installation of a Mezzanine, and refurbishment of the second floor to create a meeting/storage area. Although the loss of the graceful assembly hall, and open fish market is regrettable we felt it has been handled well. Providing any structural changes are reversible, we believe this proposal deserves support for the economic and social benefits that it promises, including the potential contribution to the vitality of the town centre. We would like to see suitable conditions to ensure that the commercial life of the town is not disrupted during construction, and because the development involves the loss of a number of small retail units at the heart of Alnwick, the authorities may want to consider compensating measures to help maintain Alnwick's retail mix, and encourage a variety of independent traders.

Robinsons on Market Street applied to use a shipping container as a storage unit and for landscaping to enable a new timber structure at the rear of site. We recognise the contribution that this business is making to the vitality of the town centre but it is important to ensure that such a successful business can coexist with nearby homes. Our main concern was the risk of noise disturbance to adjacent residents from any evening events held in the cabin. We hoped that consideration would be given to limiting the hours when the structure could be used.

We don't believe that a shipping container is an appropriate long term solution to storage problems in a conservation area. However, it may be acceptable as a temporary expedient, so we suggested a temporary planning permission while a long term solution is found.

There is a proposal to erect a field of solar panels to the South of Quotient Science, beside the A1. For us, this is an early experience of this type of development so it was interesting to see it welcomed by the Town Council and the county ecologist. Natural England saw no significant adverse impact on nature conservation. County have sought assurance that footpaths will not be disturbed during construction, and the archaeologist sought assurances that construction would not be intrusive. National Highways sought reassurances regarding impact of construction work

and have some concerns about the risks to safety on the A1 from glint. We commented on the need to consider landscape and any gaps where additional screening may be required along the boundary.



An amended application regarding windows at the former Duchess High School on Bailiffgate was withdrawn shortly before it was due to be considered by the Northern Area Committee. Officers had recommended refusal. Such an ambitious project by a prominent developer on a high-profile building should be a model of good practice. So we objected when it became apparent that the variation did not address the concerns of conservation officers. If this applicant was not expected to comply with current policy then it would indicate that different rules were being applied for an applicant with sufficient political and economic leverage. A new proposal has now been submitted that the applicant believes will address the earlier concerns, and satisfy conservation officers. We hope they are right.

Twenty-four applications in November was a relatively large number for us to consider. Two involved replacing render on listed buildings, but both appear to have been carefully prepared, and we felt we had nothing useful to add. We took an interest in an application for amplified music at the Alegate in Bondgate. This raises no issues for built heritage, but with growing pressures on the high street, and its importance to the local economy, this is another example of the need for careful management of the mix of homes and hospitality in the town centre. In this case, police have questioned the need for amplified music, but raised no objection. We decided not to comment: neighbours are better placed to express concerns over noise, and are doing so.

In December we only had seven applications to consider, and chose not to comment on any.

Over the last year we have examined 163 planning applications, and made representations on 19. In two cases we expressed support, and we objected to eight. Mostly we made comments that drew attention to an aspect of the application that we felt needed careful consideration.

Thanks to all members who have contributed and helped to ensure that we are able to represent views from a cross-section of the society. If you are interested in getting more involved with this aspect of the society's work then there is an open invitation to join the Planning Advisory Group.



# Quiz: Micro Tours of Alnwick's Built Heritage

We were privileged to join this little group of visitors as they explored Alnwick's Built Heritage (though some of the party seemed more enthusiastic than others).

Thanks to them we are able to offer readers two quizzes for the price of one. Buy one, get one free.

- First, we invite you to identify the heritage that you can see behind our little group of visitors.
- Secondly, we ask what other heritage might be seen by such a group, at these locations, but is not in the picture because it lies behind the camera..

The answers are on the back page.



## Diary dates

**15<sup>th</sup> February:** Phil Huntley, online talk on the History of Fisher Lane 7:30 p.m. To request joining instructions eMail [contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk).

**8<sup>th</sup> March:** Annual General Meeting at St. James's Centre, 7:30 p.m. After the formal meeting, Marjorie Brown will reveal the true story of the Percy Tenantry Column.

**10<sup>th</sup> May:** John Matthews and Jackie Salmon on the work of Northumberland and Newcastle Society.

**July:** Sue Wood from Northumberland Archives on experiences of the BBC "A House Through Time".

**August:** Summer outing - watch for announcement.

**November:** Any Questions Topical Debate. Details to follow.

## Some notable anniversaries

6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1845: Death of Thomas Coward, last of the Alnwick Waits.

7<sup>th</sup> Feb 1879: Edlington burglary.

9<sup>th</sup> Feb 1889: Hardy Bros submit plans for shops and workshops in Bondgate Without.

19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1828: Shrove Tuesday football match played on the pastures for the first time. First recorded in 1762 it had been played in the streets, until banned in 1821.

6<sup>th</sup> Mar 1762: Settlement of legal dispute between Alnwick Freemen and the Earl & Countess of Northumberland.

12<sup>th</sup> Mar 1872: Sale of Windy Edge farm leads to development of Edwardian villas on Alnmouth Rd.

27<sup>th</sup> Mar 2003: Dualling of Alnwick bypass from Willowburn to Denwick.

1<sup>st</sup> Apr 1974: Formation of Alnwick District Council.

6<sup>th</sup> Apr 1889: Position created for a Suffragan Bishop of Alnwick. The post has never been filled.

26<sup>th</sup> Apr 2002: Opening of Bailiffgate Museum.

28<sup>th</sup> Apr 1768: Foundation stone laid for Pottergate Tower.

30<sup>th</sup> Apr 1945: First students arrive at Alnwick Emergency Teacher Training College.

## About Alnwick Civic Society

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

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

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



Founding Member

## Who's Who?

**President:** Peter Erron

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

**Other Executive Committee members:** Elizabeth Jones, Lorna Gilroy, Allan Mann, Tim Smith, Colin Watson.

**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/>



## Alnwick: leading the way to the Metaverse?

Some predict that future buildings will be constructed as large featureless boxes. We will all wear virtual reality spectacles that project our preferred architectural styles onto each building.

Can you think of any examples that anticipate this trend? What architectural style would you choose to project?



## Quiz Answers

A) Lion Bridge, and out of sight is Alnwick Castle.

B) Percy Tenantry Column. Out of site are the former Alnwick Station (now Barter Books), Column Cottage, and War Memorial.

C) Green Batt, with the Pinfold out of sight.  
D) Alnwick Playhouse and Bondgate Without. Out of sight is Bondgate Tower.

E) Harry Hotspur Statue and Duke's Memorial Cottages. Out of sight is Narrowgate, and the Dirty Bottles.

F) Market Place and Market Cross. Out of sight are Northumberland Hall and the Town Hall.

G) Gateway to St Michael's Church and Bailiffgate behind, with the Parish Church and Churchyard out of sight.