

# Newsletter



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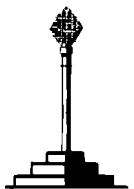
## For your diary:

**6<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Sept: Heritage Open Days** is England's largest community led festival of history and culture. Every year it brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history. This year the theme is "Connections, Routes & Networks". Find details of all events at: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>.



**18<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Unfortunately it has been necessary to postpone the planned talk by Chris Hunwick, archivist at Alnwick Castle. However, that allows us to explore a topical issue. And what could be more topical than the housing challenge? The shortage of affordable homes to rent, the cost of housing for young families, growing demand for single-storey homes with level access, competition from holiday homes and visitor accommodation and shortage of land for new housing development: all loom large in discussions on the refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan. Nationally, housing ranked as one of the top issues in the recent general election. So can we expect a change of direction? We are delighted that Rob Murfin, Director of Housing and Planning at Northumberland County Council has agreed to speak on **The Housing Challenge**. St James Church, Pottergate, 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

**9<sup>th</sup> Oct:** An evening with **John Grundy**. St James Church, Pottergate at 7:30 p.m.



# Heritage crime

*Northumbria Police define Heritage Crime as “any offence which harms the value of Britain’s heritage assets and their settings to this and future generations. That can include offences like lead theft from churches, damage to ancient monuments and illegal metal detecting”.*

Heritage Crime can be reported here: <https://tinyurl.com/Supp3axw>

Historic England and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) have recently released research on the scale and extent of heritage and cultural property crime in England. Their findings include:

- Theft of historic stone is on the rise.
- Metal theft from historic places of worship increased during lockdown, but has since decreased as a result of effective action.
- Unlawful metal detecting has recently reduced.
- The theft of cultural objects from art galleries, museums and stately homes is on the rise.

Emerging threats include an increase in theft of heritage materials as inflation impacts commodity prices; damage from arson, vandalism and graffiti; and use of the internet as an enabler for the sale of stolen items and fraud.

Recent progress has been the result of effective preventative and enforcement action, support from landowners and the metal-detecting community, and new technology for forensic marking of wreck sites. But understanding the true scale and extent of crime in the historic environment is hampered by lack of a standardised methodology for police recording.

More details of the research can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ym4zbf7> and there is more on prevention [here - https://tinyurl.com/37rf84dj](https://tinyurl.com/37rf84dj)



The criminal damage to the Harry Hotspur statue at the foot of Pottergate has been so skillfully repaired that there is no longer any sign that the vandalism took place. The Police investigated, some CCTV footage was collected, and the Town Council tried to recover damages. Unfortunately the evidence was deemed insufficient for the perpetrator to be prosecuted.

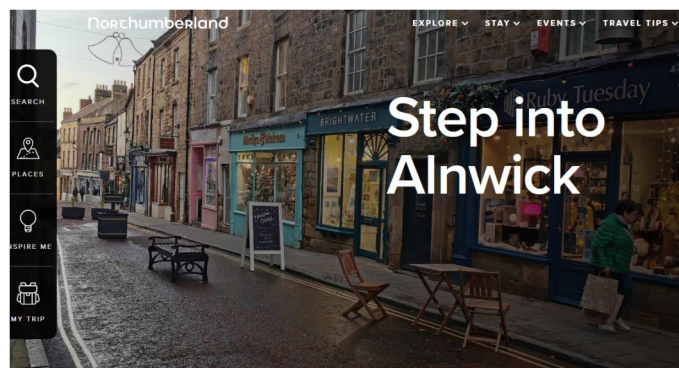
## The future of the high street

*On 22nd May we held a panel discussion with local entrepreneurs to discuss the future of Alnwick High Street. Lisa Aynsley, Mark Jones and Andrew Hodgson provided different perspectives on the pressures and opportunities facing local businesses in a changing and challenging environment.*

Discussion ranged widely. We heard how businesses rely on the loyalty of local people as well as the support of visitors. We revisited some past debates, considered aspects of the town that continue to attract footfall, as well as others that need attention. And we looked forward to how the character of Alnwick's high street is changing.

Out of that general discussion three themes emerged that could provide a positive basis for constructive action and help to take things forward.

- There is widespread frustration and concern at the slow progress on initiatives such as Borderlands, Cobbles resurfacing and Narrowgate pedestrianisation. The potential benefits for the town are well understood, and there is widespread support for councillors and others who are applying pressure on the authorities to make progress. Meanwhile there is uncertainty and confusion about what to expect. Efforts to keep the community informed and engaged would be welcome.
- The overall appearance of the town centre is seen as one of Alnwick's most important assets. The work of *Alnwick in Bloom* and the *Christmas Lights Team* is appreciated, but there is a feeling that other initiatives to improve the condition of the town centre do not receive the recognition that they deserve. It was disappointing that existing recognition schemes (such as Civic Awards and Civic Society Awards) had surpris-



ingly low visibility. However, there is an appetite for a wider range of initiatives to improve the condition of the public realm. Suggestions included improved covers for vacant shop windows, action on commercial waste bins, a reduction in street clutter, a reduction in excessive signage, etc.

- There was general appreciation of the importance of encouraging pedestrian movement around the town and particularly movement of visitors between the castle, town and garden. It is well known that opinion is divided on some proposals for achieving this, but other suggestions were widely supported. Examples discussed include improved pedestrian signage, enhancing the appearance of the key circulation routes, raising awareness of different attractions, and use of online resources such as the “Step into Alnwick” initiative by Visit Northumberland.

<https://www.visitnorthumberland.com/stepintoalnwick>

Our thanks to the panellists and all who participated.



# The Chantry of St Mary and the Chantry House

*Chantry - a small chapel or altar in a public place of worship with an endowment for priests, on condition that they sing mass daily for the soul(s) of the founder(s) and perform other divine services as may have been provided for by the bequest.*

On 6th July 1448, a licence was granted by King Henry VI to Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland; William, Bishop of Lincoln; Henry Percy, Knight, Lord Poynings and John Lematon, to establish a chantry at Alnwick for two chaplains to "... celebrate daily at the altar of Our Lady within the chapel of St Michael of Alnewicke". One of the chaplains was to "... instruct poor boys in the art of Grammar gratis, and without occasion of money whatsoever."

(St Michael's at this time belonged to Alnwick Abbey, hence it being referred to as a chapel. The services were dependent on the abbey with either the prior or one of the canons of the abbey being the minister.)

The Earl and the Bishop named in the licence had both been members of the council, which was established to rule during King Henry VI's minority.

Earl Percy was the 2nd Earl of Northumberland, son of Harry Hotspur and the Bishop referred to was William Alnewicke. In his lifetime the Bishop had participated in the foundation of several chantries, most often with educational associations - hopefully the educational chantry closest to the Bishop's heart was at his presumed birthplace here in Alnwick!

Henry Percy Lord Poynings was the eldest son of the Earl and John Lematon was described as being 'skilled in the law'.

Because of the existence of a piscina near the south-east corner of St Michael's Church, it is thought that this is where the altar of St Mary's Chantry would have been situated. George Tate in his History of the Borough, Castle and Barony of Alnwick, adds to this theory when he tells readers that the south window in the east wall of the chancel was traditionally called St Mary's Window.

A residence for the two chaplains, who were to be known as The Chaplains of the Chantry of the Blessed Mary of Alnewicke, was very soon built in Walkergate. It was in this building, generally known as The Chantry House but sometimes referred to as The Lady House, that the poor boys received their education in grammar and singing, making it the predecessor of the Grammar School. Access from the house to St Michael's was by a footpath, which no longer exists.

Over the years of the chantry's existence the chaplains were granted the rent from various properties in the town and district. In 1460 they benefitted from 47 messuages in Alnwick.

Unlike monasteries, priories and convents in the late 1530s, the chantries were saved from dissolution at the hands of King Henry VIII but in the first year of the reign of his son, King Edward VI,

chantries were suppressed and an act of Parliament passed resulting in their revenues having to be given to the king. Despite a favourable report by the King's commissioners on the character of the two schoolmasters resident at the time, the Alnwick Grammar School was stripped of most of its property. The commissioners' report describes the two St Mary's Chantry chaplains - William Hudson (singing master and canon of Alnwick Abbey) and Thomas Thompson - as both being "64 years of age, well learned, of honest conversation and qualtyies. . ." and that they "... keep two schooles, the one for grammar and the other for synge, to bring up Children in learning according to their Foundation".

William Hudson left his position of schoolmaster but Thomas Thompson continued to teach in the school for an annual salary of £4.1s 8d.

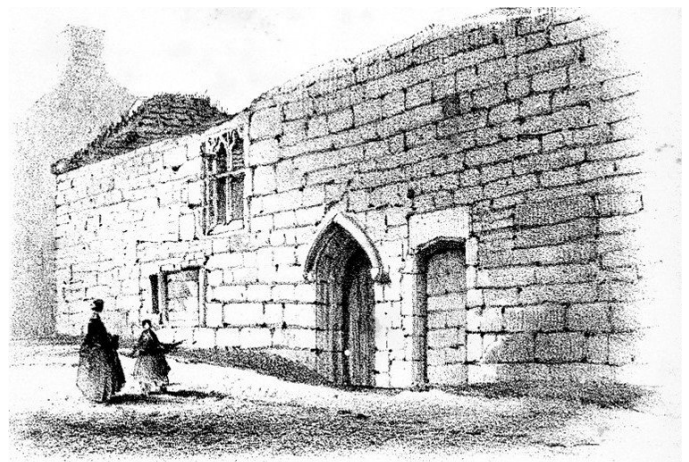
Thomas Vicars, who was the schoolmaster in 1613, appears to have caused some problems, because the Four & Twenty of the Borough ordered that a letter be written to the Bishop of Durham to prevent payment of any fees and allowances to Vicars and promised to find a "sufficient learned schoolmaster" to replace him, the cost of which would come from the town's revenues.

It would seem that even 400 years ago the town's Four & Twenty recognised the importance of education.

It is assumed that teaching ceased in The Chantry House when, in 1630, a new school was built on Pottergate. The Chantry House then became a private residence and later changed to a tenement house with access to the upper floor by outside stone steps. This provided low-cost accommodation in what was then becoming a run-down area of the town. George Tate tells us that in the latter part of the 17th century, part of the chantry house and over an acre of land attached to it were owned by his maternal ancestors.



'ANCIENT HOUSES, WALKER GATE,  
ALNWICK (1826)'  
(Richardson's Local Historian's Table  
Book Vol IV, 1844)



From Tate's History of the Borough, Castle  
and Barony of Alnwick

By the middle of the 19th century the condition of the Chantry House had deteriorated so much that it had to be abandoned.

What you see in Walkergate today is all that remains of The Chantry or Lady House. It is now protected and is a Grade II\* Listed Building.

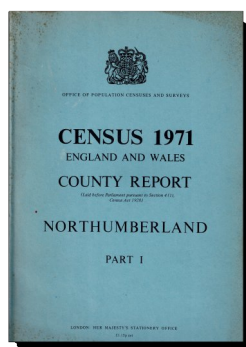
## More images

Watercolours of the Chantry House by John Wykeham Archer (1806-1864) from the collection of the Duke of Northumberland can be seen on Watercolour World:

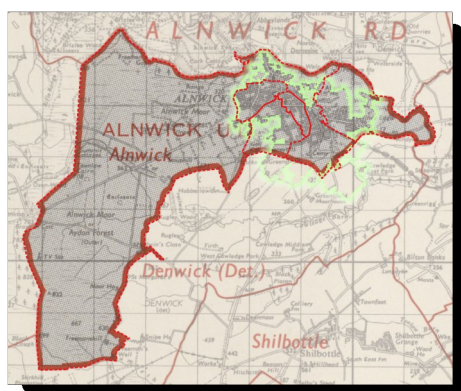
<https://tinyurl.com/4ada4sxxk> and <https://tinyurl.com/3rww7bjj>

# Fifty years of change

On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1971 the census counted 7,123 people in Alnwick. The details they provided paint a picture of life here not long before the formation of the Civic Society in 1974.



Not all were residents. 344 people were visiting Alnwick: 38 from elsewhere in Northumberland. Only 28 came from abroad. Most were from the UK. Only a couple of dozen were staying in hotels. Most were students.

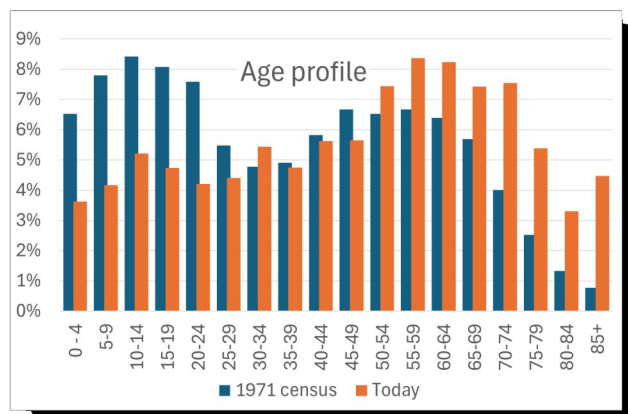


Over the last 50 years the Office of National Statistics has adapted to changes in society, the places we live, the structure of local government and the needs of their clients. Shortly after the 1971 census Alnwick Urban District Council was abolished and naturally the ONS stopped publishing statistics for that body. However, they continued to publish statistics for Alnwick Town Council, which covered the same area (see map). And for the last decade they have reported on smaller areas that can be aggregated to cover the same geo-

graphy. Some care is needed now that the town is starting to expand beyond long-standing boundaries, but there is enough detail to paint a fascinating picture of how Alnwick has changed over the last 50 years.

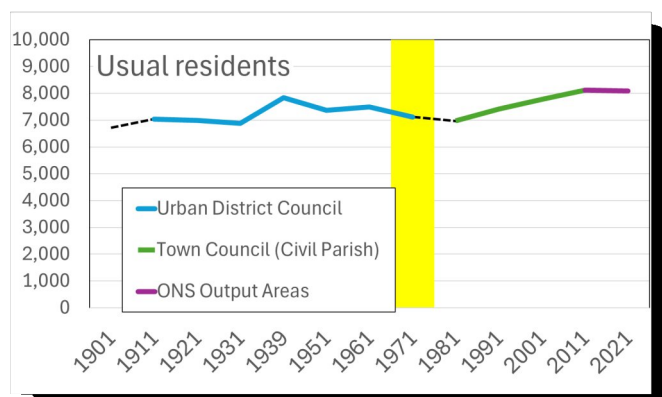
At the time of the 1971 census the total population of Alnwick had changed little since the 1900s. It had peaked at about 8,000 just before the second world war then it declined fairly steadily. The expectation had been that market towns such as Alnwick would grow as a result of migration from smaller rural settlements. So this falling population was a surprise and a cause for concern. However, after 1981 the population would grow fairly steadily, passing the previous peak around 2010. More recently, though, population growth has again slowed.

In 1971 the population was younger than it is today. Fifty years ago baby-boomers were reaching their twenties and the age profile in Alnwick was similar to the profile nationally, with around 14% of the population over the age of 65. Since 1971 life expectancy has increased by about ten years, and it seems that life in Alnwick is particularly appealing to those who benefit. So nationally the proportion of the nation's population aged over 65 has increased from 14% to 18% in the last 50

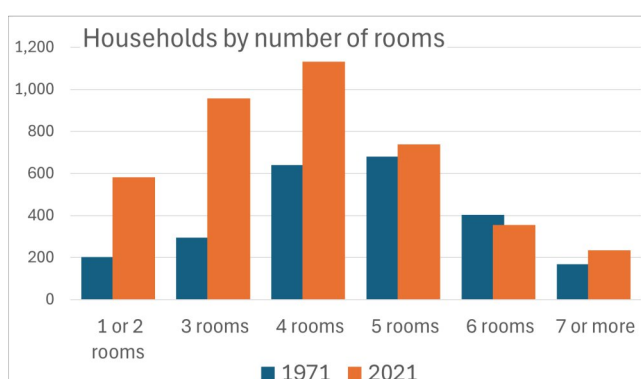
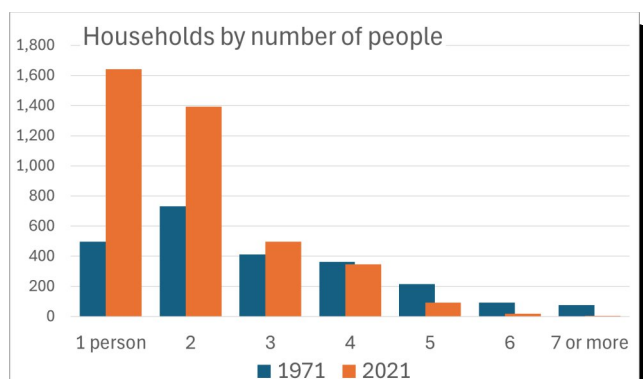


years, but in Alnwick the proportion aged over 65 has increased from 14% to 28%.

Meanwhile, households have become smaller. In 1971 half of the households in Alnwick consisted of three or more people, but the number of households with more than 4 people has fallen by 70% and the number with less than 3 has more than doubled. As a result the average size of a household has fallen from three people to a little over two.



The smaller number of people in a household is reflected in the size of accommodation. Today the number of households is 1,607 higher than it was in 1971. Two-thirds of that increase is in units with fewer than 4 rooms.



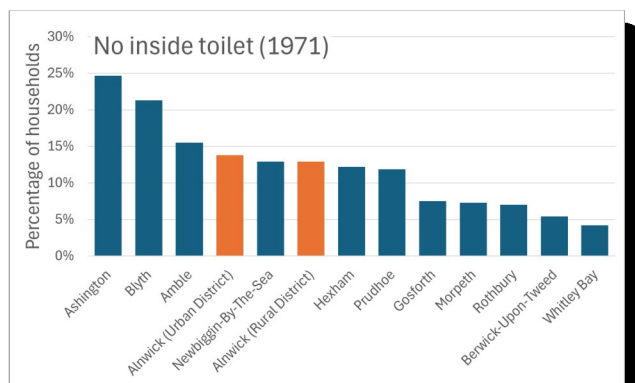
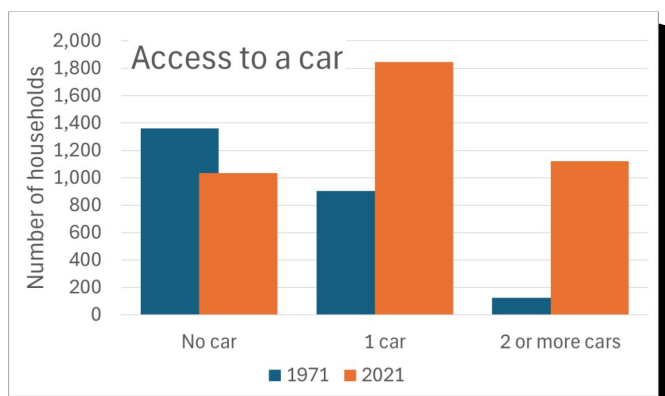


# Fifty years of change: continued....

Overcrowding is now measured by comparing the number of rooms that are thought to be required by a household against the number of rooms they have available. The formula assumes that a household with one person requires three rooms and larger households require at least two common rooms plus a number of bedrooms that depends on the ages, sex and relationships of family members. On that basis the 2021 census judged around 90 (2%) of Alnwick's households to be

had no inside W.C. (including 30% of those renting from private landlords, and 15% of households renting from the council).

Alnwick had better amenities in 1971 than some Northumberland towns, but was not



overcrowded. We don't have sufficient detail to make a precise comparison for 1971. However, we do know that at that time around 25% of Alnwick households contained more people than rooms and in around 6% the number of people exceeded the number of rooms by two or more. So by today's standards, overcrowding in 1971 seems to have been both more common and more serious than it is today.

The most recent Census form asked about Central Heating, which is now installed in 99% of Alnwick households. By contrast the 1971 census was concerned with households that had no access to an Inside W.C., a Bath, or Piped Hot Water. It found that 79% of Alnwick households had access to all three, so 21% were missing at least one. 6% had no bath and 4% did not have piped hot water. 13% of households

as well provided as others. However, by 1981 the proportion of Alnwick households without an inside toilet had fallen from 13% to 4%. By 1991 only two or three households in Alnwick still lacked an inside W.C.

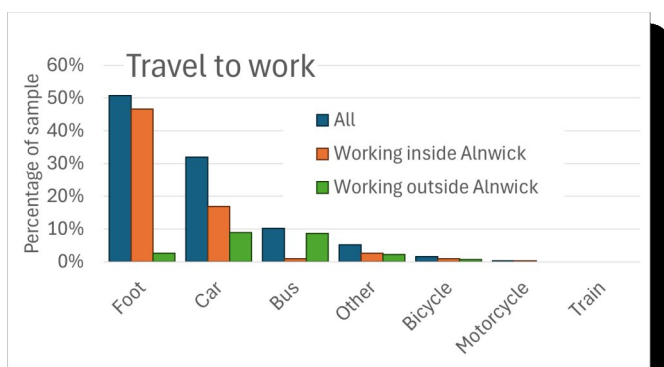
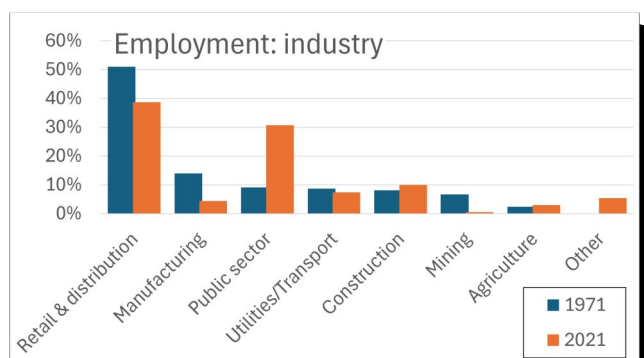
In 2021 there were about 4,500 vehicles registered in Alnwick (3,718 cars, 142 motorcycles and 605 other vehicles). Around 75% of Alnwick households now have access to a car and many have access to more than one. In 1971 fewer than half of households in Alnwick had access to a car, and most of those only had access to one. We don't have a figure for the number of cars in Alnwick in 1971, but there can't have been many more than 1,000. There were twice as many by 1991 and four times as many today.

Today women make up 47% of the Alnwick workforce, while in

1971 to 38% in 2021. However, the proportion of men in employment has fallen: from 75% to 45% (remember that in 1971 only 15% of men in Alnwick were over the age of 65).

Employment categories have changed and there have been changes in the numbers employed in retail and construction but the big change has been the fall in manufacturing and mining jobs and rise in public sector jobs.

In 1971 more than two-thirds of Alnwick's working population were employed within Alnwick. Two-thirds of those walked to work. Those who worked outside Alnwick travelled either by car, or bus in roughly equal numbers.



1971 the proportion was 36%. The marital status of working men was not reported but the 1971 census recorded that at that time 55% of working women were married. The proportion of women in employment has hardly changed: from 37%

Today the people of Alnwick have fewer outside toilets, more baths and more cars than their counterparts of fifty years ago. Our working lives, family structures and household arrangements have changed. We are warmer and live for longer.

*We cannot know what the next fifty years will bring but we can be confident that life in Alnwick will not be the same as it is today. It will not be for us to judge whether it improves or not. All we can hope is that in fifty years time the people of Alnwick still feel proud of their town and lucky to live here.*

# Hedgerows: are they a priority?

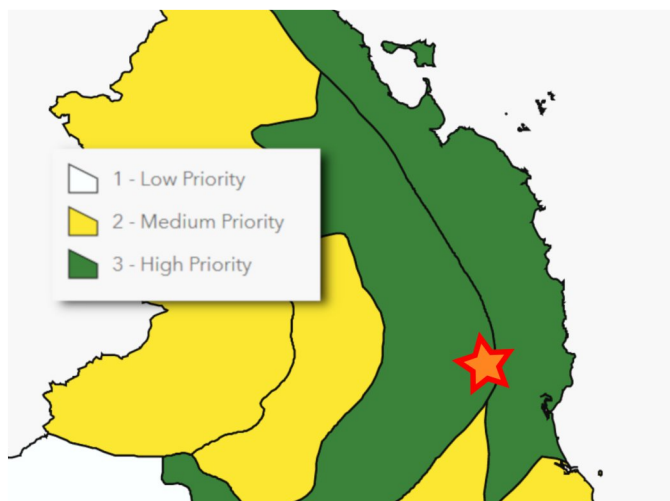
CPRE describe hedgerows as “the vital stitching in the patchwork of our countryside. Not only are they beautiful, with shifting seasonal colours, but they also provide homes and corridors for wildlife. And all the while they help tackle the climate crisis by capturing carbon”.

In national landscape studies, Alnwick is regarded as lying between two different types of landscape: the North Northumberland Coastal Plain and the Northumberland Sandstone Hills. CPRE identifies both as priorities for action on hedgerows.

This is how Historic England describe the field patterns in the sandstone hills: “Sandstone rubble walls are characteristic of the late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century enclosure in moorland areas, with hedgerows to the lower slopes”. They have more to say about the landscape of the North Northumberland Coastal Plain: “Areas of pre-18<sup>th</sup>-century irregular fields do survive, but the dominant patterns are those developed in the late 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – planned large scale enclosed fields separated by thorn hedgerows with few hedgerow trees and sandstone rubble walls. This enclosure affected the town fields around settlements and the formerly extensive areas of common pasture. Large-scale enclosure is most evident towards the coast. Further engrossment, field enlargement and boundary loss is typical of later 20<sup>th</sup>-century arable intensification. High survival of ridge and furrow is evident throughout on pasture land”.

Historic England statements on landscape show how our farming heritage relates to landscape. We are surrounded by evidence of ancient field boundaries. But field boundaries have more than heritage value. In 2010 Alnwick District Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on Landscape Character. On Alnwick Moor this encouraged conservation and restoration of landscape features such as dry stone walls, but it was more specific about landscape to the east of the A1: “intensive farming methods have in places reduced the opportunities for wildlife to co-exist with agriculture. Improved management of existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows, but also woodlands, watercourses and wetlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. In parallel with the restoration of landscape features, landowners should be encouraged to increase widths of field margins and to incorporate buffer strips managed primarily for nature conservation”.

Natural England has published National Landscape Character Assessments for the North Northumberland Coastal Plain and Sandstone Hills. They describe hedgerows in the coastal plain as “gappy” and “fragmented”. They encourage restoration and reinstatement to enhance biodiversity value, improve landscape permeability, reduce wind erosion of soils and reinforce landscape character. On the sandstone hills they identified opportunities to restore or reinstate hedgerows in the valley bottoms to slow water flow, aid infiltration, improve habitat connectivity and strengthen landscape character.



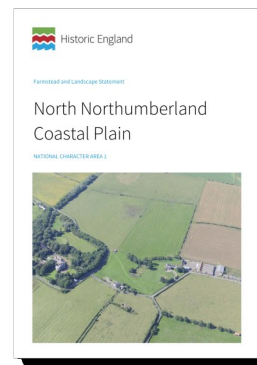
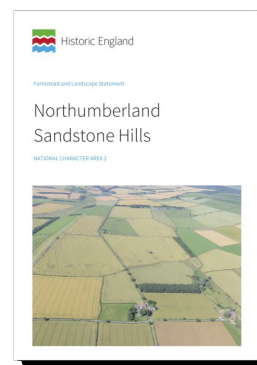
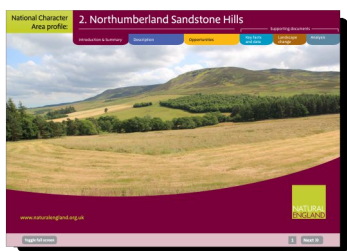
And now, research commissioned by CPRE and carried out by the Organic Research Centre has identified the North Northumberland Coastal Plain as one of the country's highest priorities for action on Hedgerows. With Northumberland Sandstone Hills as another high priority.

CPRE want to see more hedgerows planted and restored, and have campaigned for the government to accept a 40% increase in the extent of hedgerows by 2050 to help tackle the climate emergency.

Their analysis considered historical hedgerow cover, the condition of existing hedgerow and levels of on-going government support. Special mapping techniques were used to identify areas with the most suitable habitat for hedgerow creation and restoration. Of the two landscapes in close proximity to Alnwick, the current condition of hedgerows in both the Coastal Plain and Sandstone hills were ranked as poor. The condition of historic hedgerows on the Sandstone hills was judged to be “loss but some restoration” and the condition of historic hedgerows on the coastal plain was judged to be “loss and little restoration”.

We cannot focus on everything as a Civic Society. Much of our effort goes on built heritage and the Alnwick Conservation Area. But here's a subject that crosses members' interests in our built and natural heritage, planning, landscape, ecology, environment and climate action. Our proposals on field boundaries for the refresh of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan generated little reaction. We may not be in a position to take a lead, but surely, if CPRE are right, then hedgerows deserve more of our attention.

- The Character Assessment reports by Historic England are here: <https://tinyurl.com/3w342ybr>
- The Character Area profiles by Natural England can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/bd7kbmc2>
- More on CPRE research and their position on Hedgerows can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/t4bs79v2>





## News in Brief

We've been trying to contact other Civic Societies that share our concerns about commercial waste bins: which seem to be increasing in both size and number, and detracting from the appearance of the Conservation Area.



We want the high street to thrive, we understand that a successful business will generate waste, and we know that the historic structure of our town constrains the ways that commercial waste can be managed. So we don't expect a simple solution. But we hope to learn lessons from others. We haven't (yet) found the close match that we hoped for. But we are finding similar concerns about neglect of the public realm, a view that neglect is perceived as indifference and an expectation that indifference leads to further decline. So our search continues.

The Charity Commission maintain a register of 169,255 charities with total annual income of £89.85 billion. These range in size from large organisations with thousands of employees (like Save the Children or the National Trust), to small community groups run entirely by volunteers. Among 154 Civic Societies we rank as mid-sized in terms of annual turnover.

Surprisingly for a tourist town with a wealth of history and architecture, there has seemingly never been an Alnwick calendar. With over 600 photographs of Old Alnwick and District available on file, Bailiffgate Museum has decided to launch one. The calendar is A4 wire-bound with a range of fascinating monthly images, including cars racing through Narrowgate when it was part of the A1, a hectic Marketplace in the 1880's and even Pottergate boasting its infamous urinal. It will make an ideal novel gift for relatives and friends, as well as gracing the office-or even the downstairs loo.

The Old Alnwick 2025 calendar will be available in the museum shop and online at [www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk/museum-shop](http://www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk/museum-shop) from late July 2024, priced at £6.99 inc. VAT. As it is the first year it is very difficult for them to estimate demand, so you are advised to secure your copies asap. For more details of the calendar see the website above, and for the whole range of historic images in their collection see their archive website: [www.bailiffgatecollections.co.uk](http://www.bailiffgatecollections.co.uk).

Part of the role of the Charity Commission is to act robustly where they find wrongdoing. But they also have a responsibility to help charities to be financially resilient, improve administration, attract suitable trustees and develop leadership. So when we submitted last year's annual return we were asked about our policies and procedures. We know from experience that funding bodies ask similar questions. So we have been taking stock, and updating our policies.

We have confidence in our financial procedures so our first step was to formalise these and take a fresh look at related areas, such as IT and Online Security. Next we chose policies that relate to our public facing activities. We make every effort to meet expectations, but problems can still arise. So we now have policies on complaints, safeguarding and risk assessments. And we are not done yet. For example, we are non-political, but we know from experience that it's easy to stumble inadvertently into political territory. We should make better use of Social media so we need to consider how to do that, without creating problems. So guidelines in those areas would be helpful.

You can find more about policies on our web site, and if you are interested in governance of voluntary organisations and looking to get more involved in our work then please get in touch.

The House of Lords inquiry into High streets in towns and small cities has been seeking to understand how high streets can be regenerated and become more resilient and attractive. It considered the different uses of high

streets by various communities and businesses and what is essential for them to flourish economically and socially.

It has not yet reported but oral and written evidence can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/433ae46e>



So far nobody has asked us how many tidal roads there are in the UK, but when they do we will point them to Wetroads: an attempt to list every tidal road and ford in the UK. It lists 82 tidal roads (including Holy Island Causeway). The 2,399 fords include Rugley Wood and Hawkhill among 125 in Northumberland. Only North Yorkshire and Devon have more.

See: <http://www.wetroads.co.uk.htm>

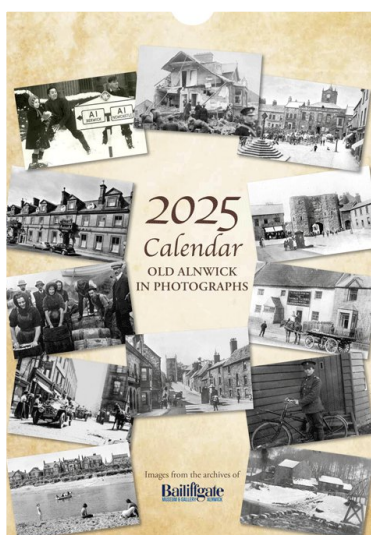
The National Library of Scotland have put more Ordnance Survey maps online, covering, the period 1944-1973 at scales of 1:1,250, 1:2,500, and 1:10,560 / 1:10,000. These were the most detailed post-war Ordnance Survey maps. For Alnwick the most interesting are the 1:2,500 editions from 1959 and 1971. Changes in the decade shortly before formation of the Civic Society include construction of Willowburn Trading Estate, Oaky Balks, The Duchess's School on Howling Lane and Our Lady's Convent High School, Dismantling of the railway.

See <http://maps.nls.uk/os/national-grid/>



The Mechanics' Institute on Percy Street is well known for its distinctive architecture. What is less well known is that later this year will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation.

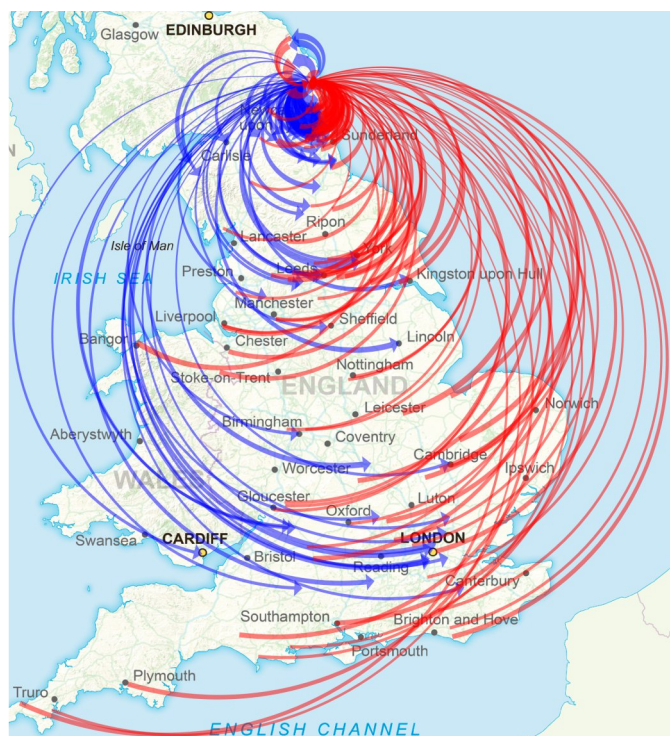
Four information panels are being installed to tell Alnwick's role in the wider movement, and some of the people involved in the fascinating story of its formation and development from 1824 to the post-war Elizabeth Club.



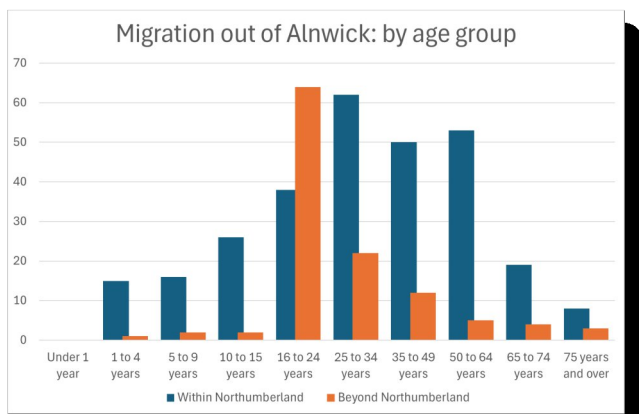
# Where did we come from? Where will we go?

More than 400 people moved to Alnwick in the year to May 2021. They came from elsewhere in Northumberland (50%), from elsewhere in the North-East (12%), from elsewhere in the UK (31%) and from overseas (7%). The main place of origin outside the North-East was Yorkshire and Humberside. 30% came on their own, and 70% arrived as a member of a family.

At the same time, almost as many moved away from Alnwick. The average age of those leaving Alnwick was 44. Older emigrants tended to move within Northumberland, while those aged around 20 tended to move further away. Most stayed loyal to the north, though. Almost 90% left for an address in the North-East, and 5% for an address in Yorkshire and Humberside. Those that moved as a family were more likely to stay within Northumberland. Those who moved further afield tended to be on their own. They weren't all leaving Alnwick for college or university. Two-thirds were in work or seeking employment, 11% were retired and 16% were students.

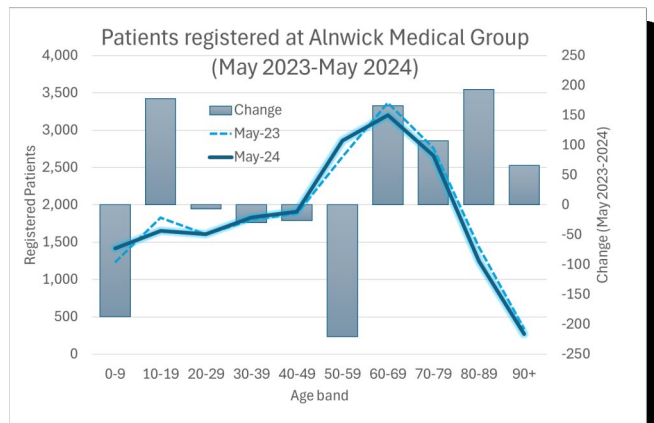


So there were different types of migration: Young people moving away from Alnwick to destinations beyond Northumberland, often leaving their family behind. Movement of the working age population in both directions between Alnwick and the surrounding county. Inward migration of those in their late 50s and 60s from the North-east, Yorkshire & Humberside and beyond.



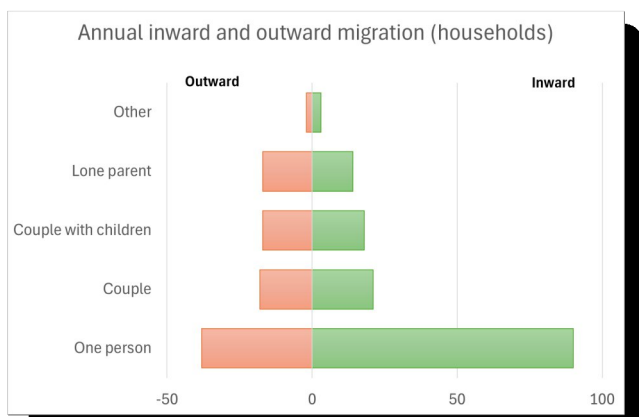
Not all who came to live in Alnwick were retired. Their average age was 38 (younger than the average of the resident population by almost a decade). More than half were in employment. 16% were retired and the remainder a mix of those seeking work, students, sick, disabled or looking after home and family. The profile of new arrivals varied according to where they came from. Those coming from elsewhere in Northumberland were typically of working age (75% aged between 16 and 64) while those arriving from elsewhere in the UK tended to be older (half of them aged over 50).

The number of people moving into Alnwick was only slightly larger than the number moving away. Around three-quarters arrived as part of a family and the number of families arriving in Alnwick was almost exactly the same as the number leaving. However the families moving out were slightly more likely to have dependent children than those moving in. Individuals who were not part of a family accounted for one in four new arrivals, but it's tricky to extract a comparable figure for individuals leaving. Many individuals who left Alnwick had previously been living here as part of a family. What they left behind is called a "partially moved household".



The census was more than three years ago and where there is more recent data it doesn't carry the same level of detail. But the picture it paints seems to be consistent. For example, the number of patients registered at Alnwick Medical Group has barely changed over the last year (see chart above). The total of those aged under twenty changed little, the total over sixty increased by 7%, while the number of women in their fifties fell 7% and the number of men in their fifties fell 9%.

If these trends continue then some families will continue to leave Alnwick and others arrive, but the overall number of families will change little. Youngsters will move away, and Alnwick will continue to attract increasing numbers of retirees. Is it inevitable that these trends define the future demographic profile of our town?





## Recent work with schools

*Heritage is a great way for young people to connect with the place where they live, and to discover links between their surroundings, the national story, and the wider world. But it's always been a challenge for us to find suitable opportunities to work with young people. And then three come along at once.*

A couple of years ago we ran a successful initiative with **St. Michael's Church of England Primary School**, based around our historical map of Alnwick and Alnmouth. This year members of the society were again invited to join teachers and pupils for a similar exercise based around local history month.

Pupils chose three topics:

- Year 1/2 looked at the Castle and medieval history.
- Year 3/4 looked at schooling and education, and how it changed over time.
- Year 5/6 looked at the First World War, with reference to the barracks.

Civic Society members worked with teachers to help deliver each session. These seem to have been enjoyed as much by the pupils as they were by Hilary, Pam, Mary and Ian.



Meanwhile a group of Year-12 students from the **Duchess's Community High School** asked to volunteer with the Society and helped us to clear vegetation from around Malcolm's Cross on the North Desmesne. Northumberland Estates kindly agreed that we could take this forward, and with help from Councillor Castle and support from Alnwick Town Council we found links between Malcolm, the students' studies of Shakespeare's Macbeth and other historic events. Hopefully this will lead to similar opportunities in future.



It's a pleasure to meet all of the groups that join us for a tour of Alnwick's heritage. But few are as enjoyable as the groups of **French Exchange Students from Lagny-sur-Marne** and their hosts from the Duchess's Community High School. Again this year we were invited to help the students explore some less well-known aspects of Alnwick's heritage.

We try to tailor the content of these walks to the interests of a group and with connections between Alnwick, the Normans, the Napoleonic Wars, the French Revolution and Clochemerle there's no shortage of material. And always something new for us to learn.

## Draft advice on climate change and historic building adaptation

*Historic England recently held a consultation on advice about balancing climate action with building adaptation.*

Planning Authorities report that they are dealing with a growing volume of casework relating to energy efficiency retrofit, but few staff feel confident about responding. Anecdotally, we know of widespread frustration among homeowners about policy in this area. Myths and misunderstandings are common. And so are ill-informed alterations.

The draft Advice Note offers advice on insulation, boilers and heating systems, heat pumps, draft-proofing, replacing or adapting windows, and installing solar panels. It aims to provide clarity and support consistent decision-making by planners. It is largely intended for a professional audience, though the final version may also be useful to homeowners. It includes:

- Advice on the need for planning permissions or other consents for some of the common changes required to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings.
- Advice to assist local planning authorities in determining proposals to decarbonise and improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings to enable positive climate action.
- Advice on how local plans and other planning mechanisms can deliver a positive strategy for historic buildings that proactively supports climate action.
- Signposting to other relevant information, advice, and guidance.

We all recognise that historic buildings need to contribute to climate action and be fit for purpose for the people who live in and use them. Thoughtful and careful change can both protect our heritage and deliver climate action. Sensitive repair, maintenance and adaptation can help to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.

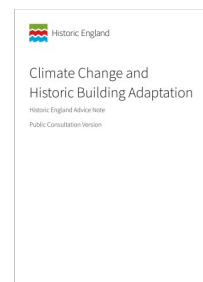
We do not yet have sight of all the feedback from the consultation, or how Historic England will respond to the feedback. However, Historic England has already done impressive work in this area. We would like to think that advice like this will help to dispel some of the myths, and encourage informed action on climate change.

However, it's important to strike a note of caution. This is a huge, complex and highly technical area. The response to this consultation by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation includes 12 pages of detailed comments then concludes *"The draft document contains a great many shortcomings, has serious omissions, and requires a major re-working if it is to be fit for purpose. If it were to be published in its current form, it would undermine Local Planning Authorities in their attempts to conserve historic buildings and would be likely to result in irreversible harm to such heritage assets. It would almost certainly be preferable to update and reinforce existing HE guidance on specific adaptations to historic buildings"*.

Climate action plays an important part in discussions on the refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan. We see developing policy on energy efficiency in historic buildings as a journey, not a destination. So we would prefer an approach that progressively tracks the way that national policy develops. Not an attempt to over-ride it with a simplistic local solution.

Do you agree that this is the best way forward?

The advice note from Historic England can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yabhx4aa> and the full response from IHBC can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/48pthcxm>



# Planning Matters

At 26, Fenkle Street consent was sought for a new external soil pipe on the Narrowgate face. This is a listed building, in the Conservation Area and adjoins the celebrated former Savings Bank at the corner of Narrowgate and Fenkle Street. However, there doesn't appear to be a realistic alternative to an external drain. So we felt that this was a reasonable proposal. The officer report indicates that the Built Heritage and Design team raised concerns at the pre-application stage but did not submit a formal objection. So the application was approved on the basis that the benefit of solving the sanitation issues outweigh any harm that the pipe will have on the building.

At 1, Bailiffgate, consent was sought to restore and stabilise a cellar. The works will have no impact on external appearance, but this is a building with considerable historic significance so we suggested a condition requiring the use of good conservation practices. The Built Heritage and Design Team found the proposed works respectful and necessary. They recommended applying to limewash the room: that would benefit the air quality, the environment in the cellar and help preserve the historic fabric. The application was approved.

Listed building consent was sought to repair the stone facade at 15, Upper Howick Street. Sandstone erosion is a common problem in Alnwick so we felt it was worth a comment to encourage repair work such as this, using appropriate new stone and traditional methods. The application has since been approved.

Roof timbers in the new hotel at 2, Bailiffgate are suffering from wet and dry rot, and are structurally inadequate. Some are original. Some appear to be modern interventions, carried out by Northumberland County Council in the 1980s, without consent when the building was the Duchess's High School. We felt that scrutiny of the detail was best left to conservation specialists. So we did not comment. The Conservation Officer and Historic England both objected on the basis that the plan involved full replacement of the roof structure, the majority of which is original and an irreplaceable part of the building's special architectural and historic interest. Historic England advised that removing the cause, assessment of each roof member and localised repair is a more appropriate course. That will now be

the way forward.

There is a proposal for two holiday flats above Baileys at 49-51 Bondgate Within. There will be no change to the external appearance of the building so the NCC Built Heritage and Design team judged that the impact on the Alnwick Conservation Area would be neutral. We disagree. The proposal relies on commercial refuse bins stored on the pavement at a prominent location on Market Street. This will have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area. So we objected. The Town Council and NCC Highways have done the same.



5, Lisburn Street is a listed building in the Conservation Area. An earlier combined application for work on the gable / chimney and retrospective consent for a new extension at the rear has now been resubmitted as two separate applications. The work to the chimney / gable is both uncontroversial and urgent. That has been approved. The remainder of the work is being dealt with separately. We originally objected that "the materials and design of the extension clearly do not comply with planning policies that apply for any listed building in the Alnwick Conservation Area". The Town Council also objected. We have both resubmitted our objections to this new application.



Lloyds Bank is the most prominent in the row of banks on the North side of Bondgate Within, dating from around 1910 and designed by local architect, George Reavell. Pevsner describes it as the best in our row of banks. It is difficult to

see how the proposed work to remove external signage, branding and ATMs could be approached more sympathetically. We had nothing to add so made no comment.



We supported plans for construction of a steel and timber foot and cycle bridge to reconnect the former Cornhill trackbed. This community initiative will improve access to a significant heritage asset and enhance the local walking and cycling infrastructure. Northumberland Local Plan Strategic Policy STP 6 (Green infrastructure) recognises the contribution that local green infrastructure makes to health and well-being and we felt that should be given appropriate weight.

The new garden centre at Cawledge promises to benefit both the local economy and employment. This will be welcomed, but needs to be weighed against losing other opportunities to generate employment at Cawledge, the risk of a significant adverse effect on town centre retail and the landscape impact.

- The Neighbourhood Plan allocates this land for offices, R&D, light industry and services, but not retail.
- The impact on Town Centre retail is forecast to be a loss of around 5%, but this understates the cumulative effect. Together with the impact of ongoing development at Willowburn Retail Park there will be a significant adverse impact on the town centre.
- The site is highly visible, particularly from the A1. Neighbourhood Plan and Northumberland Local Plan policies require such proposals to conserve and enhance important elements of landscape character.

In that context, when weighing this proposal against public benefit it is critical that design, materials and planting are employed to mitigate the development's visual impact and particular attention should be paid to how it contributes to local employment, town centre vitality and green infrastructure.

We welcome the National Highways recommendation that permission should not be granted until the issues at the A1068 / Shilbottle Road junction have been resolved



# Quiz: Frederick Richard Wilson churches

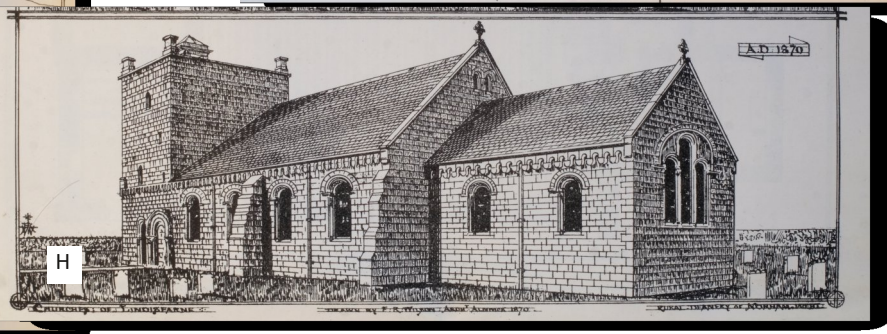
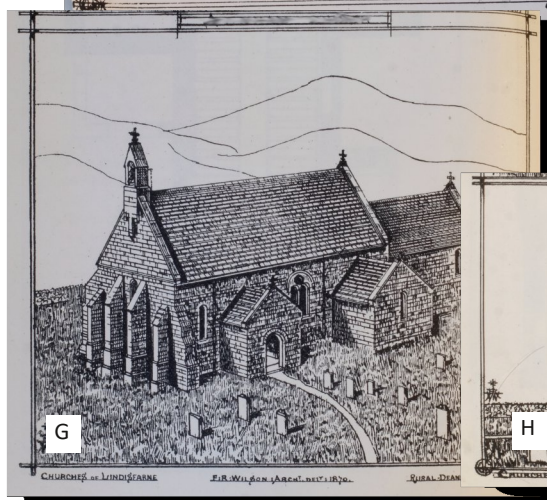
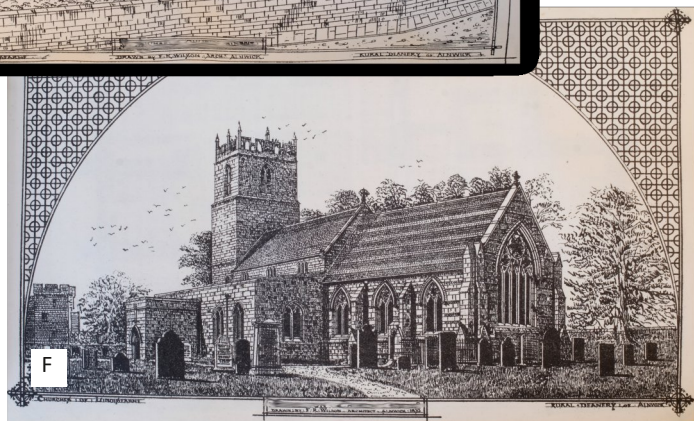
Frederick Richard Wilson was born in 1827 and worked for Charles Barry on the Houses of Parliament before coming to Alnwick in 1854 to work with Anthony Salvin on the restoration of Alnwick Castle.

In 1859 he set up business on his own account. From 1880-1892 he was surveyor to Alnwick Rural Sanitary Authority and served on the local Board of Health for 27 years and the Burial Board for 12 years. As Surveyor for the Diocese of Lindisfarne (1877-1892) he restored many churches and earned a reputation for careful work that respected the original fabric. He died on 6 May 1894.

These are his drawings, taken from his book "Architectural survey of churches in the archdeaconry of Lindisfarne". They show eight churches that he worked on:

- St. Michael & All Angels, Alnham,
- St. Michael, Alnwick
- St. Anne, Ancroft
- St. Ebba, Beadnell
- Holy Trinity, Embleton
- St. Philip and St. Paul, Rock
- St. Bartholomew, Whittingham
- St. Mary, Wooler

How many do you recognise?





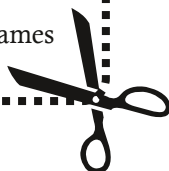
## Diary dates

**6<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Sept: Heritage Open Days.** Find details of all events at: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>.

**18<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Rob Murfin, Director of Planning and Local Service at Northumberland County Council will speak on **The Housing Challenge**. St James Church, Pottergate, 7:30 p.m.

**7<sup>th</sup> Oct:** *Remember to raise a glass and celebrate the anniversary of Alnwick Civic Society's inaugural meeting in 1972.*

**9<sup>th</sup> Oct:** An evening with **John Grundy**. St James Church, Pottergate at 7:30 p.m.



## About Alnwick Civic Society

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

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

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



## Who's Who?

**President:** Peter Ennor

**Trustees:** Chair: Peter Reed; Membership: Gill Parker; Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith; Treasurer: Tim Smith.

**Committee members:** Colin Watson.

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

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

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

**Substack:** [alnwickcivicsociety.substack.com](http://alnwickcivicsociety.substack.com)

**Charity registration number:** 1197235

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

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



Membership of the society is open to all who share our aims.

## Correction:

In our previous Newsletter we said that Oaky Balcs dates from 1969. Thanks to an attentive member, we are now able to correct this. The truth is that Oaky Balcs dates from 1960-61. Chapel Lands dates from the late 1960s. Apologies for any confusion.

## Quiz Answers

A) St Ebba, Beadnell. Replaced a chapel founded in the C7<sup>th</sup> near the harbour. Built about 1740, enlarged in 1797, then partly gothicized around 1860 by F.R. Wilson. Features include the octagonal screen surrounding the tower, inside, an Arts and Crafts screen. St Ebba was the sister of King Oswald.

B) St Mary, Wooler. Built 1765, enlarged 1835, gothicized 1873 by F.R. Wilson. Chancel and east vestries added 1912-13.

C) St Bartholomew, Whittingham. 12<sup>th</sup> century with some Saxon remains. Chancel rebuilt in 1725, extensive changes in 1841 then in 1871 chancel was extended and gothicized by F. R. Wilson.

D) St Michael Alnwick. Remnants of Abbey chapel of 1147, but mainly C15<sup>th</sup>. Major restorations in 1782, 1818. In 1863 F. R. Wilson worked with Salvin on reversing 18<sup>th</sup> century gothicization then inserted an organ chamber in 1890.

E) St Philip and St James, Rock. Origins in a Chapel of Ease from about 1176, rebuilt in 1806. Salvin added the apse, rebuilt the vestry and restored the windows. In 1866 F. R. Wilson added an extra aisle, which involved moving the north wall, stone by stone.

F) Holy Trinity, Embleton. The lower part of the tower dates from around 1100, the nave from around 1200. The aisles were rebuilt and tower heightened around 1300, the porch added around 1500. John Dobson extended the aisles and altered the windows around 1850, and F. R. Wilson replaced the chancel and vestry in 1867.

G) St Michael, Alnham. Saxon foundation but largely late C12<sup>th</sup>-early C13<sup>th</sup>. Restored in 1870 by F.R. Wilson then again in 1953.

H) St Anne, Ancroft. Nave dates from C12<sup>th</sup>. West end raised into a tower in C13<sup>th</sup>. Restored 1836 and then by F. R. Wilson in 1870 when the nave was extended, the chancel rebuilt and the door and windows replaced. Tower restored 1886.