



### 1 Alnwick Playhouse

The Playhouse building has undergone many changes. Originally it was built as a cinema and also saw use as an occasional Music Hall. It was closed in 1979 and then re-opened as a theatre and arts venue. Following further renovation in 2018/19 it now houses the library and visitor information centre, a gallery, cinema space café as well as the theatre space. Note the sculptures of the ‘Seven Stages of Man’ by David Edwick that adorn the front bay window.



The road that Alnwick Playhouse stands on is known as Bondgate Without. The road used to form part of the old A1 which came through the centre of Alnwick. This road also forms part of the old Corn road which ran from Hexham to Alnmouth upon which the grain was carried to be loaded onto ships at Alnmouth.

### 2 Bondgate Tower

As you approach the tower note the plaque of the lion rampant high on the wall. Originally one of four gates for the town it was completed in 1450. The tower was part of the enclosing of the town granted by Henry VI after the town was sacked on a number of occasions by Scots raiders. The enclosing of the town was mainly paid for by the local businesses and people of the town.

Go through the archway to the right of the tower into Bondgate Within. You will pass the White Swan which houses the bar from the RMS Olympic, the sister ship of the Titanic.



### 3 Hardy's Fishing Museum

This little museum is dedicated to the art of fly fishing. We will pass the original factory later in our walk. With your back to the museum face the cobbled area to the south

### 4 Robertson's Fountain (Pant)

The drinking fountains in Alnwick are known as Pants. This very elaborate Pant was erected in 1890 and paid for by local businessman, Adam Robertson.

Turn back to face along Bondgate and cross over the junction with Narrowgate so that you are on Market Street.



# A short stroll around Alnwick's heritage



Information in this leaflet has been compiled from local reference material within Alnwick Library. If you wish to learn more then the library is open Monday - Saturday 9am -6pm.

If you spot anything interesting please come and ask us - we like a good query!

Photographs © Alnwick Library.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

### 5 Market St

This short street leading to the Market square and the cobbled area opposite are where horse traders used to come to sell their wares. Enter the market area to the right of the colonnade building

### 6 Market Square



The small market area has been the site for regular markets since before 1291, the most important being Alnwick Fair. On the south side you can see the colonnade of Northumberland Hall, which is a Georgian Hall that will soon house the Bailiffgate museum. It was once the site of many a dance from dusk until the wee small hours. The colonnade is known locally as the Shambles and was where once the butchers would set up their stall under the arches. This area forms part of the renovation of the building ready for the museum.

Note the pathway that crosses the market area diagonally - this denotes an old right of way for the freemen of Alnwick. Also note the old market cross which symbolises both the legality of the market and that taxes are due from traders.

On the west side of the market area is the old Town Hall. It was originally built in 1731 on the site of the tollbooth and Lord's brewhouse. The clock tower above the town hall houses a 'curfew' bell which at one time tolled at 8pm.

Head for the north west corner of the market square and follow Paikes lane keeping the old town hall on your left.



### Narrowgate

**7 Abbey Hospice** As you emerge from Paikes lane you will be facing the oldest buildings in the town centre. They are from the 15<sup>th</sup> C. On the walls are the symbols of both the Percy family and the medieval Alnwick Abbey so it is thought that the buildings were once guest houses for Alnwick Abbey.



### 8 The Black Swan

As you reach the end of the pedestrianised zone you will see one of the oldest pubs in the town, the Black Swan on your left. Robert Burns is known to have stayed there in May 1787 on his only journey south of the border



Carry on along Narrowgate.

Another of the old pubs and originally called the Old Cross Inn, the Dirty Bottles got it's current name approx 150 years ago from the front window display. The local story is that following the sudden death of a former landlord, his widow claimed that it was due to him moving the bottles and that anyone else who did so would suffer the same fate. The bottles were then sealed up from the inside and have remained untouched since and the pub gained a legend and a new name.

At the junction of Narrowgate and Pottergate note **10 Dixon's Pant** donated by local businessman William Dixon in 1879 to replace an earlier Pant.

We will cross over to view **11 Statue to Henry Percy** (Hotspur.) The son of the first Duke of Northumberland, he was made famous by Shakespeare. He had gained his reputation serving the king, Henry IV in Scotland but later led a rebellion against the king and lost his life at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403



### 12 Pottergate

#### Tower

This gothic style tower was built by the Freemen of the town in 1768 to replace the original tower.





Go through the tower and turn right onto Northumberland Street. At the bottom of this street stop and turn to the left and you will see:

**13 St Michael's Parish Church of Alnwick.** This present church dates back to the 15th century though there is known to have been at least a chapel on the site from 1147. The church has undergone multiple restorations but is basically as it was built into the 15th century. The church houses another treasure in the form of a rare 14th century Flemish muniment chest carved with dragons. It is one of the earliest examples known in this country.

**If you wish to explore further -**

From the church gate cross over to Ratten Row and head away from the town centre, you will come to Hulne park. This is an enclosed deer park with beautiful walks and also contains the ruins of Brizlee tower and the gateway for Alnwick Abbey. Maps can be picked up from the visitor information centre or downloaded from <https://northumberlandstates.co.uk/the-estate/walks-trails/>



**15 Alnwick Castle**

It is believed that there has been a castle here since the 11<sup>th</sup> C and the Percy family have owned it since the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century and it has undergone numerous transformations. There are numerous books on it's history in the local reference section in the library or available to purchase from various places in the town.



**16 On the corner of Fenkle St and Narrowgate is the Bear and Bank building with it's imposing architectural features.**

Originally the building was a savings bank and was then later turned into a barbers shop. The barber is reputed to have kept bears in the basement of the building. Now the building houses a gallery on the ground floor with holiday accommodation above.

Carry on along Fenkle Street, take note of the architecture especially of the buildings on the right side which used to house the homes of the wealthy merchants etc of the town. Fenkle St also contains the Nags Head which is known to have been on the site since at least 1598 although it was then called the Griffin.

When you reach the end of Fenkle Street you will see you are back looking at the large cobbled area cross over to:

**17 St Michael's Pant.**

In the Gothic style this depicts St Michael slaying the dragon. The fountain was erected in 1759 at the old grass market and it was also blamed as a source for a major cholera outbreak in Victorian times.



**14 Bailiffgate Museum**

Turn onto Bailiffgate. This wide tree lined street forms the final approach to the castle and is of wide elegant proportions. As you walk towards the castle take a moment to note the church building on the left which houses the Bailiffgate museum. This gem of a local museum is very child friendly and holds fabulous exhibitions. The building was originally the Catholic chapel for the town.



**If you wished to explore further if you were to turn left at this point and follow the Peth, go over the Lion bridge and then follow the footpath to the right. This follows the meadow along the side of the river and enables you to get a good view of the castle.**

However to carry on with our town trail you will need to turn right at the castle and follow Narrowgate back to the town centre. When we have returned back to 'The Dirty Bottles' cross over the road to Fenkle St.



**22 Sion Meeting House** stands half way along the lane on the left hand side. In 1822 William Davison knew this lane as Willow walk and states that 'this elegant and commodious place of worship,...is the largest structure in the town' He also notes that another dissenting chapel nearly adjoins Sion House and a third is on the south side of Green Batt.

Retrace your steps to Green Batt and turn left after a few minutes you will reach the YHA

Head west onto Clayport Street

**18** The grand building at **no1 Clayport Street** has housed the post office and Council Chambers though it was originally a private dwelling.

Continue west along Clayport Street, just before no 9 there is an archway to the left leading into Chapel lane.

Turn to look over the road

**19 Alnwick Methodist Chapel**

The foundation stone for this chapel was laid by the preacher John Wesley, (though he is known to have preferred octagonal designed chapels). Alnwick was an area very popular with the non-conformist movement and John Wesley was a regular and very popular preacher. There were at one time half a dozen non-conformist chapels within only a few hundred metres of each other.

At the end of Chapel lane turn left then cross over the road to turn right up Percy Street.

**20 Mechanics Institute**

Note the fine Grecian style front entrance. Mechanics Institutes started to be established at the end of the 18th century and this one was built around 1831. They were started as a way of providing a technical education to manual workers and proved very popular. Many see in them the origins of technical colleges and even of the public library service.



**21** Opposite the MI is **St Paul's Church.** Originally built as an Anglican church on the instruction of the 3rd Duke of Northumberland. It has since replaced the catholic chapel on Bailiffgate as the main place of worship for the catholic congregation of the town. The magnificent east window is Pre-Raphaelite and follows the designs of William Dyce. (The original designs are housed in the Laing Gallery in Newcastle.

Retrace your steps to Green Batt and turn right and then left into St Michael's lane.



**24 Old Library** The building facing you was first founded as the 'Jubilee School' in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee for King George III. Originally providing elementary education for boys then it later became home for the town library including the mobile library service for the north of the county. In 2019 the library moved to the Playhouse centre and this building has been turned into private accommodation.

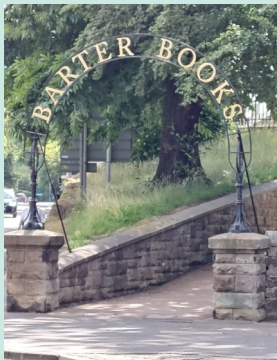


Continue eastward along Green Batt and stop at the corner.

**25** From the corner note the **Tanners Arms** - a traditional pub that has the added curiosity of a tree in the centre of the bar area. The name is a reminder that at one time there were over 20 Tanneries in Alnwick and the trades supported by them such as skimmers, shoemakers, glovemakers.

**26** Also from this corner note the small enclosed area in the centre of the road. This is the **Pinfold** and is where animals that were running loose in the town were placed.

Carefully cross over the road heading for the far side of Davidson & Sons for the Dovecote Lane passageway at the end turn left and follow Prudhoe St to its junction with Wagonway Rd.



**27 Barter Books** On the right corner you will see the archway for Barter Books famous for its literary legends mural, its model railway and the famous 'Keep Calm and Carry On' posters originally found during renovations.



**28 Column/Wager Cottage**

Said to have been built in 2 weeks in 1817 as the result of a wager between the Duke and Duchess of the time.

**29 Tenant's Column**

Cross the main road carefully to see this doric column topped by a Percy lion and with 4 lions at its base. This was erected by the Duke's tenants after he granted rent relief during the hardships following the Napoleonic wars.



**30 War Memorial**

This striking war memorial consists of three bronze figures in military uniforms facing each corner of the memorial, it commemorates the dead of both world wars and also the Korean war. It was paid for by subscription from the public of the town



**31 Alnwick Squash Club**

The beautiful building that now houses the squash club once housed Hardy's the famous fishing tackle company.

