Discover Alnwick’s Heritage

From farming to fortress, Alnwick has had a turbulent and fascinating history. Once a ‘village by the river’, Alnwick was given to Baron de Vesci after the Norman Conquest, and later acquired by the Percy family. They built and expanded Alnwick Castle, and a wall was constructed around the town itself to defend it against the Scots. The Dukes of Northumberland represented the King in the Northern frontier of England and kept the peace. Sometimes loyal to the king of the day, and sometimes not, the Dukes participated in civil wars, insurrections, battles and politics as the most powerful aristocrats of their day.

Now peaceful, Alnwick’s history can be read upon its streets and in the town’s Bailiffgate Museum. At one end of the town, the 15th century Hotspur Tower is one of the original gates to Alnwick, and an 18th century replica of another stands in Pottergate, at the northern entrance to the town. Buildings and monuments from the 17th, 18th and 19th century can be seen in the main streets of Narrowgate, Fenkle Street and Bondgate Within, and the 15th century St Michael’s Church stands near the Castle.

In Alnwick’s Marketplace there is an old stone cross, the Town Hall and the 19th century Northumberland Hall. More recently, a bronze statue of Alnwick’s famous son, Harry Hotspur, was erected in 2010 in Narrowgate, and immediately outside the town centre is the Tenantry Column, the old Railway Station (now home to Barter Books) and the Alnwick Garden.

The Alnwick Garden. The Alnwick Garden was opened in 1995 and is dedicated to the principles of sustainable horticulture. It has received numerous national awards and is a leading horticultural attraction in the North of England.

Bailiffgate Museum

Take a guided tour of this fascinating museum which documents the history of Alnwick.

Alnwick Museum

The museum has many interesting displays, including a fine collection of ancient coins and a number of local history artefacts.

Further Information

Tourist Information Centre

Centrally situated in the Market Place, Alnwick Tourist Information Centre offers a wide range of services designed to help you enjoy your visit to the town and the surrounding area. Friendly staff are on hand to advise you where to go, what to see and how to get there. A wide range of guide books, information on local events and maps are available together with an accommodation booking service both locally and throughout the UK. 

Opening Times

Easter to October: Daily
November to Easter: Monday to Saturday

Useful Publications

Alnwick Town Trail

A walking guide and map to Alnwick’s heritage sites – available from the Tourist Information Centre (price £1).

Alnwick’s Inspired Christian Heritage

A leaflet and guide, describing nearly 1000 years of religious heritage in Alnwick and Northumberland, is available in the Tourist Information Centre.

Telling the Story of Alnwick & District

An illustrated history of Alnwick published by Bailiffgate Museum (price £5.99) and available from the Museum and the Tourist Information Centre.

Useful Websites

The following websites can help you plan your visit:

www.visitalnwick.org.uk

Alnwick Tourism Association website. For information about accommodation and the area.

www.alnwick-tc.gov.uk

The Alnwick Town Council website which includes information on parking and events.

Events & Festivals 2018

Alnwick hosts many, many events throughout the year.

The central Market Place is a focus for many of these as well as weekly markets and a monthly Farmers Market. Community Groups in the Town organise a host of free events in Alnwick each year.

April

14th: Spring Flower Show
23rd & 24th: Taste of the North Festival

June

4th - 11th: Alnwick International Music Festival

August

4th - 11th: Alnwick International Music Festival
21st, 22nd & 23rd: Alnwick Beer Festival
22nd & 23rd: Alnwick Food Festival

September

1st & 2nd: Alnwick Christmas Market & Small Business Saturday
5th: Ancient Shrove Tuesday Football

November

Alnwick Fireworks Display
23rd: Christmas Lights switch-on
Northumberland Street display
24th: Christmas Lantern Parade

December

Alnwick Christmas Market

Opening Times

Easter to October: Daily
November to Easter: Monday to Saturday

Useful Websites

Discover Alnwick’s Heritage

Alnwick’s 160 retailers are a mix of favourite national shops together with local boutiques and are located in the centre of Alnwick within easy walking distance of each other. Do you enjoy locally produced, high quality food, home bakers, speciality teas, award winning local butchers, cheese shops, jewellery, books, household gifts, antiques, weekly/monthly auctions and open-air markets?

Alnwick has it all.

Coffee shops and cosy cafés, an award winning fish and chip restaurant Alnwick serves everything from snacks and light lunches to traditional Northumbrian food and drink. International cuisine is not neglected with established Italian, Indian, Chinese and Thai restaurants located centrally. Traditional pub food and real ale are available in the town’s excellent hosteries.

Alnwick is a vibrant, picturesque market town in the heart of Northumberland, midway between Newcastle and the Scottish Border offering...

A unique historical heritage...
A fantastic shopping experience...
World famous visitor attractions...
A festival town...
A wide choice of cafés, restaurants and traditional pubs...

...Explore and enjoy our wonderful town
Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England; it has been home to the Duke of Northumberland’s family, the Percys, for over 700 years. The castle’s rich history is brimming with drama, intrigue, and extraordinary people; from a gunpowder plotter and visionary collectors, to decadent hosts and medieval England’s most celebrated knight, Harry Hotspur. Combining magnificent medieval architecture with spectacular Italianate State Rooms, Alnwick Castle is one of the UK’s most significant heritage destinations. In recent years it has also taken starring roles in a number of film and television productions, featuring as Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the Harry Potter films and as a location for ITV’s Downton Abbey. Telephone: 01665 511100

www.alnwickcastle.com

One of the world's most contemporary gardens, The Alnwick Garden's enchanting landscape offers adventure and intrigue in the heart of Northumberland. Scale the treetops in Europe's largest wooden treehouse, lose yourself in the mysterious Bamboo Labyrinth, steal through the Poison Garden or gaze upon the Grand Cascade. Transformed across seasons, no two days in the garden are ever the same, as it greets all visitors with an array of colour and geometric designs, including a traditional ornamental garden and innovative water sculptures, as well as varied programmes of music, arts, theatre and interaction. A garden with a purpose, The Alnwick Garden is a registered charity (No.1095435) that places people at the forefront of all of its activities. Telephone: 01665 511350

www.alnwickgarden.com

Aln Valley Railway

Trains run at Aln Valley Railway’s Lionheart Station on Sundays from April 16th to September 24th. We also run on other days during the holidays and have a programme of Special Events too. Our steam engine Richboro’ runs on Special Event weekends with our two restored Mk1 coaches. On other days we have diesel-hauled brake van rides and the Wickham trolley ‘Buzz’ runs during school holidays. Parking and entry to the site are free (donations welcome at Special Events), and we have a cafe, shop and museum. To find us go to the A1/South Road junction and follow the brown loco signs. Telephone: 0300 030 3311

www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk

Visit Bailiffgate and uncover the rich history of Alnwick and North Northumberland. Located on Bailiffgate, near Alnwick Castle, the museum tells the exciting story of the town and people from its beginnings until the present day. Great for families with a programme of special exhibitions and holiday activities. ‘A small gem’ ‘Something for all ages’

OPENING TIMES
Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays from 10am until 4pm (closed mid-December – mid-January)

Telephone: 01665 605847

www.bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk

Barter Books

Barter Books is one of the largest second hand and antiquarian bookshops in Britain with over a half-million books. It is also one of the biggest tourist attractions in the North East with over 300,000 visitors a year. The bookshop is located within a magnificent old Victorian railway station on the main road into Alnwick off the A1. There is plenty of comfortable seating, coal fires, and a framed copy of the WWII poster, Keep Calm and Carry On, that was rediscovered here in 2000 and was to become one of the first iconic images of the 21st century. Barter Books also owns and operates an in-house Station Buffet. The Buffet serves fresh homely food from breakfast in the morning on to early supper. (Last hot food orders: 6pm.) Barter Books is open every day except Christmas Day from 9am – 7pm. Telephone: 01665 604888

www.barterbooks.co.uk

House of Hardy Museum and Shop

Opened by HRH The Princess Margaret on the 18th July 1987, the Museum houses arguably the finest collection in the world of fishing tackle and associated products. If you are inspired by our rich angling heritage after your museum visit, then browse our fully refurbished fishing tackle store. The Compleat Angler is one of the best equipped angling stores in the country. Our range includes Hardy’s, Greys, Chub, Shakespeare, Penn, Abu Garcia, Berkley, Spiderwire, Mitchell, Hodgman and JRC. We welcome all abilities from absolute beginners to seasoned professionals with prices to suit all. Telephone: 01665 602771

www.purefishing.com