Rothbury Heritage Trail

A gentle stroll around Rothbury and a not too serious introduction to its history
Acknowledgements

Whilst every effort has been made to minimise errors the publisher of these pages can not be held responsible for any inaccuracies or omissions.

Much of the information has been sourced verbally but special thanks must be given to the authors of additional sources:

Upper Coquetdale - David Dippie Dixon
Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland - WW Tomlinson
Northumberland - published by County Hall
Monthly Chronicles of North Country Lore & Legend
Village Trails of Northumberland - Andrew Waterhouse

Northumberland Place Names - Godfrey Watson
Rothbury & Coquetdale - Frank Graham
Rothbury - Joan Gale
Rothbury Parish Magazine
Local Records - John Sykes
Transport in Northumberland - C Warn

All photographs are believed to be in the public domain and thanks must be extended to those who supplied them
Rothbury lies near the centre of rural Northumberland, 12 miles from Alnwick, 15 miles from Morpeth and 29 miles from Newcastle upon Tyne. As such it has been a local centre since the 13th century and at various times had a castle, a market and magistrate's court. It was the administrative centre of the rural district till 1974.

It has been noted in history since the 11th century and Rothbury church was of importance around the time of the Norman Conquest. Rectors can be traced back to 1107 and in 1291 King Edward I granted a charter to hold a market every Thursday and a fair annually. Existing buildings date from the 18th century and the outline of the earlier village can easily be identified.

The name 'Rothbury' is variously derived from the Celtic word 'Rhath' meaning a cleared spot, or from the Saxon warrior 'Hrotha' whose kingdom was hereabouts. Or it may owe its origin to 'Rood' or cross from the Latinised word, 'Rodeberia', which was its first recorded name.

Be that as it may, the spelling was known to change across the years. In 1165 it was 'Roebiri'. In 1196 it was recorded as 'Robiri'. In 1209 'Robire' was mentioned. In 1233 it picked up a 'Y' to become 'Robiry' whilst in 1256 it neared its modern form with 'Roubiry'.

This Heritage trail is intended to provide an appreciation of Rothbury and a non too serious introduction to its history.
The Heritage Trail starts at the Cow Haugh Car Park on the south bank of the River Coquet and overlooked by Simonside, the Sacred Mountain.

So where did the names come from? Well, in a document dated 1292 the Sacred Mountain was called "Simundessete and by 1580 this had changed to "Simonside". It is thought that the name is possibly a corruption of "Sigemund's Seat" or "Settlement" and it has been suggested that this is the Sigmund mentioned in the great Anglo Saxon Poem, Beowulf.

Tomlinson seems to prefer "Simon's sete or settlement" while others prefer a derivation from "Sailor's sight" as it can be clearly seen from the coast. In fact this is mentioned in a poem hanging in the Newcastle Hotel:

"Oh purple hills of Simonside. Ye olde times sailors guide.
Where the grouse and partridge o'er thy heather guide.
Oft have I seen the blue North Sea from off thy highest hill.
While tiny streams run down thy sides towards old Tosson Mill."

And "Coquet"? Paul Frodsham suggests it is derived from "Coccoveda", the earliest known reference to the Coquet, from the Celtic word "cochwedd" meaning "red appearance", reflecting the red pebbles that litter its bed.

So take your pick. Whatever the reason it seems buried in history....

You might be interested to know that although it is probably the best known mountain in the area, Simonside is not the highest. This honour goes to Tosson Hill about half a mile to the west, which at 440 metres tops it by about 11 metres. Not really worth worrying about and depending on your definition it may not even be a mountain. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has defined "mountain" as all land over 600 metres for the purposes of right to roam legislation.

'Haugh' comes from the old English 'halh' and means a riverside meadow or flat area. Originally cattle grazed this area, and the land to the west, where the golf course now stands, was a steeplechase course for over two hundred years.
The first official race was held on April 28th 1762 and the last race was on April 10th 1965 two years after the last freight train and thirteen years after the last passenger train to Rothbury.

Just up from the Haugh in the direction of the cemetery is the Rothbury Hospital. Its garish lights have been toned down a little but the building with its flat roof, wooden slats and coloured walls looks completely out of place with its surroundings. How it ever got planning permission in a conservation area remains a mystery.

There is a popular story that Prince Charles was invited to open it, but on arrival was so disappointed that he opted to open the newly refurbished Jubilee Hall instead. However it must be said that the interior layout and decor is excellent. As indeed are the facilities. And we are pleased to have it.

The old golf clubhouse originally accessed by a rather insubstantial looking bridge across the Coquet is now redundant. A brand new clubhouse was opened a little to the south of the hospital.

A modern building that blends in well with its surroundings, it faces the setting sun and has a superb view down the valley.

This new facility is a great asset to the village. The course has been improved and now boasts 18 holes. Visitors are always welcome.

The house nearest the old closed cemetery on the north of the river boasts a 'Game Store' bought at the Newcastle Exhibition in 1926 and which can just be seen over the high wall. It is the only remaining one of its kind in the village.

Donkin's Well, to the south east and reached down some stone steps is pure spring water and was one of the first sources of fresh water in the district, prior to the availability of mains. The steps are rather overgrown and the slight trickle does not seem to be able to provide a great flow.

Continue east towards the Bridge.
The bridge dates from the 15th century. Originally a three arch pack horse bridge, the fourth arch was added in 1759 as the river grew wider: the arch to the south of the river being the latest addition. The road became more important as the corn road (the toll road) from Hexham and the Tyne Valley to the port at Alnmouth. The old toll cottage lay a few hundred yards to the south, on the road now leading to Hexham.

The bridge was declared unsatisfactory for modern traffic and the road was widened with the old stone walls replaced by reinforced concrete. But as the concrete chipped and cracked, becoming a danger to those passing beneath, it was finally removed and replaced by iron railings in 1973.

Today the bridge has been completely refurbished, in line with modern requirements and the stone parapets replaced. A great job by Northumberland County Council and taking almost three years. A temporary bridge had to be built and controlled by traffic lights and a one way system along Bridge Street and Haw Hill was installed whilst the work was being completed.

This picture of the bridge is particularly interesting as not only does it show the original structure with passing places but also appears to show a gate house or tower just to the left of the church, and it is thought that this may be the only photograph of the remains of Rothbury Castle.

There are a few Mason marks underneath the stone arches. These are the marks of "that ancient and honourable institution" the masons guild and a personal trade-mark as symbol of their craft and lodge. The initials 'W O' may be seen on a lower course at the southern end. These initials were those of a local mason, William Oliphant, who worked on the bridge in 1759.

These marks sometimes known as "Banker Marks" are widely seen across Europe from Roman times to the present but most frequently on medieval work. These personal marks were often passed from father to son and entered into the register of Masonic guild lodges.
The footbridge some 100 yards to the west of the stone bridge was built in 1964 and replaced the old stepping stones which were prone to movement.

Before you cross the bridge look at the house at the end, formerly the blacksmith's shop, now privately owned. And see if you can spot the old pill box from the war years, guarding the frontier so to speak. Tucked away at the end of the bridge amongst the trees it is not always easy to see.

Cross the Bridge to the Boys School and note the belfry and large windows which were a particular feature of schools in this area. Its last use was that of a motor parts shop. Today it has been converted into Tomlinson's Cafe and Bunk house.

The school was originally built in 1841 for boys whilst the girl's school was just a few yards up the Toll Road at Hurley Knowes. Sometimes known as the Masonic hall, it has been converted to holiday cottages. If you follow the trail to the end you will return past the girls’ school.

A quiet street today; who would have thought that Bridge street was once such a commercial area! Grocer and Drapers, Booksellers and Stationers, Game and Poultry Dealers, and Ironmongers, all plied their trade. There was even a Temperance Hotel, and at the southern most end of the bridge a Monumental Masons.

Although businesses have changed or disappeared Bridge Street looks as it always did: apart from the ubiquitous yellow lines.

From the Bridge turn left up Haw Hill towards All Saints Parish Church.
All Saints Parish Church is an ancient place of worship with the Gospel having been preached here for some 1,200 years. The Anglo-Saxons had a royal burgh here and the existence of the Anglican cross and evidence of a monastic building to the west of the present church (although this is now disputed) would indicate that there was a church on this spot in earlier times. It may in fact have been the site of two Saxon churches originally linked by a tower, although nothing of this date now survives above ground. It is thought that the monastic church may have been destroyed by Vikings or possibly Normans; but the eastern part seems to have survived to become the foundation of a new building in the 13th century, part of which can still be seen in the chancel, the chancel arch and the east walls of the transepts. The earliest record of the church is when Henry I confirmed that it had been given to the Monastery of Tynemouth by the Earl of Mowbray in 1090

In the 18th century the church had galleries, dormer windows and a three-decker pulpit. But in 1850 when Rector, Canon C. Vernon Harcourt undertook the renovation, these disappeared, and apart from a few additions and minor decorative alterations the church remains very much as we see it today.

In 1901 a carved oak pulpit, choir stalls and chancel screen were added. The pulpit was erected "in affectionate memory of Margaret, wife of Baron Armstrong of Cragside, who died on the 2nd September 1893...." The chancel screen with its flowing tracery and emblazoned with the arms of landowners and benefactors was erected "......in loving memory of William George Baron Armstrong of Cragside........". The choir stalls are inscribed "........in loving memory of Edward Mallet Young, Rector of Rothbury, 1894-1900................by his widow, brothers and sisters"

On the early 50's the pulpit was moved from its normal position, on the right facing the altar, to the other side as shown in the photo. Today no-one is quite sure why this was done as it now obscures two memorial plaques.

On the oaken screen that divides the chancel from the vestry may be seen panels with the coats of arms of twelve of the Rothbury rectors. The vestries themselves are built
upon the site of the old Cartington chantry in 1886. This chantry had fallen into decay over the years and in 1658 was blocked up to keep out the elements and other undesirables.

The eagle lectern was given in memory of Dr Ainger, rector from 1871-1886 whilst the reredos behind the altar was erected in memory of his third son, Herbert Ainger.

One of the greatest treasures in the church is the pedestal of the font. Although the font bowl is dated 1664, replacing the one damaged in the Civil War the pedestal is Anglo-Saxon. Remnants of the old Anglo Saxon cross were found during the 1850 restoration and are now housed in the Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle. Explanatory pictures are displayed in the Baptistry. The carving of the ascension is quoted as the earliest depiction of this subject in England.

Nearby, in the corner stands a small bell inscribed 'John Thomlinson Rector of Rothbury, 1682' which hung in the tower till it was replaced in 1893 by the present peal of eight bells. These are tenor weight 13 cwts and carry their individual casting marks and dedication.

Mounted in the original oak frame with the joiner's assembly marks clearly visible, these were presented to All Saints' by Mary Dawson "..in affectionate remembrance of the late William Dawson .......".

It is worth noting that Mary Dawson was not a resident of Rothbury although her late brother had been and it was her way of ensuring that he would not be forgotten whilst also benefitting the Rothbury community.

The new bells, frame, belfry and ringing room were all built and installed between Christmas 1892 and Easter 1893 when they were dedicated by the Bishop of Newcastle and rung by an invited band of ringers from Newcastle Cathedral. The time frame was impressive as the bells had to be cast in Whitechapel, transported to Rothbury and manhandled into the tower. All in only three months.

The original Bell Ringers Guild Record Book is still in use, containing details of accounts and events since 1893.
In 1740 a public clock was placed in the tower of Rothbury Parish Church. There is no record of how, or in what manner funds were raised for its purchase, but in the Church-wardens' accounts there occur entries extending from 1740 to 1818, relating to its erection, repairs, “winding up,” etc.

The last-entry in the records regarding the Church Clock is at the Easter Meeting of 1818 and soon after this it appears to have fallen into disrepair. Old Walter Mavin, the Coquet angler, who was born in 1815, told Dippie Dixon that he could not remember the Church Clock ever going during his lifetime, and that as far back as he can recollect the works were all red rust.

In 1897 the current tower clock, was erected by public subscription and on 27th June it was set in motion for the first time by Lord Armstrong’s son, William. It is not certain when the maintenance of the clock passed into the hands of the Parish Council but in the past few years a number of attempts were made to ensure its accuracy. It seemed to be a major discussion point at PC meetings. In 2012 the responsibility for maintenance was returned to All Saints with the Parish Council still responsible for costs.

To the south of the altar is the original 13th century Piscina, where the priest washes his fingers prior to consecration in the Communion Service.

On the southern outside wall of the Chancel can be found the remains of two scratch sundials and on the south lawn is a block sundial with four dials, formerly on the roof of the porch.

When the plans for a disabled toilet in the church were finally approved and works begun in 2006 archaeologists were commissioned to undertake a watching brief. As a result Dr Ian J Stewart stated that observed results disproved the results of a dowsing carried out in 1988. This work had indicated that foundations of the pre-Conquest / medieval church extended beyond the limits of the present church and beneath Church Street. However careful examination of the sewer pipe trench that cut through this area revealed no evidence of walls, foundations, construction trenches or
suchlike. Dr Stewart sugested that the dowsing had in fact picked up utility pipes and that it is likely that any earlier foundations actually lie beneath the present church. But as the earlier dowsing had indicated foundations much in the style of other mediaeval churches this has not yet been fully resolved.

The most significant archaeological feature encountered, was a medieval lime kiln. Residues from the last firing had been re-deposited back in the kiln along with demolition rubble from the kiln. Within the rubble backfill was a small architectural fragment, - bevelled along one edge with traces of lime plaster and paint, of uncertain date.

Another important discovery turned out to be a reused fragment of pre-conquest cross arm incorporated into the wall of the kiln. It may be that the original cross was actually fabricated in Rothbury and this fragment may have been part of an earlier work.

Did you know that from early times England was noted for her wool products and home grown wool was an important part of the national wealth. During the 14th and 15th centuries the protection of this national product was of great importance, and an act was passed in the reign of Charles II for the express purpose of increasing the consumption of English wool.

It was decreed that:

"No corpse should be buried in anything other than what is made of sheep's wool only; or put into any coffin lined or faced with any material but sheep's wool, on pain of forfeiture of £5."

The following transcript (although not unique) were found in the Rothbury Parish Register.

"Elizab. Litster, Late of Low Trewitt, deceased, ye 2nd daughter of Edward Litser was buried in nothing but wooling accordyng to ye Act on ye behalf, as does appear by ye affidavit made by Edward Litster and John Vint to Mr. Thom. Collingwood, one of his Majs. Justice of ye Peace, and his certificate under his hand bearing date ye 2nd of 7br., 1678."
Other interesting graves are to be found across the street in the Closed Grave Yard which consists of two parts: the upper and lower plots. The lower plot, accessed via steps from the upper graveyard, was first used in 1900 as the burial place of the 1st Lord Armstrong of Cragside. In later years other members of the Armstrong family were buried in this area including the 1st and 2nd Barons Armstrong of Bamburgh and Cragside, their wives and General Sir John Ayde who died in 1900 aged 80. He fought in both the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny and was credited with putting down the Egyptian rebellion of Arabi Pasha. He later became the Governor of Gibraltar.

This area is separated from the remainder of the lower graveyard by iron railings and an entrance gate. Or, at least, was. The railings separating both areas were removed as part of the war effort and the gates finally removed in 2005. Whilst the Armstrong plot was supposed to be the responsibility of the Armstrong Estate it is now maintained locally on a voluntary basis. Both are now in good repair.

It was once suggested that sheep be used to keep the grass in check and reduce maintenance costs but this idea fell on stony ground along with other ideas of creating a small park although there is now an information board and a few seats where you can rest and meditate. Maybe even pen a modern Gray's Elegy.

There is a beautiful headstone in the lower graveyard erected to the memory of Walter Mavin, The Coquet Angler. Walter was born in 1814 and died in 1900 and was reputed to have trained Lord Armstrong in the arts of fishing. The stone shows a mountain stream, with a kingfisher on a rock whilst on the bank are a fishing rod, creel and fish. The inscription reads:

"But where's the auld fisher, sae bent and sae lame,
Wha cam' ilka spring wi' his rod ab' hois creel?
Death's ca'd him awa' to his lang latest hame,
An he'll wander nae mair by the stream le lo'ed well."
Local lore says that Rothbury Castle stood here, overlooking the River Coquet. No trace remains today although, in a sketch published by Dippie Dixon, Rothbury Hall can be seen and it is thought that with its square tower but no crenellations this building may have been the castle. In an old photograph circa 1843 there appears to be a tower peeking over the sides of houses in that area. Mr J. Reynaulds is credited with identifying this.

The prison which is mentioned as holding Robert of Crelinge and James "le Scot" in 1256 was probably the dungeon like basement below the original building. In any event James was put on trial whilst Robert managed to escape, taking sanctuary in Rothbury Church where he confessed to larceny. William de Valence who had charge of the castle at this time had to answer for the escape whilst the town of Rothbury was fined for not having retaken the escapee.

Part of the hall was in use till the middle 1800s but when the church yard was extended in 1869 it was finally demolished and its foundations removed.

Next door to the church is the **Parish Hall**

As major focal point of the village, the inn hosted meetings, courts, excise sittings and parish business. It was here in 1715 that the Earl of Derwentwater and supporters of the Jacobite Rebellion stayed on their fateful journey to disaster

From this spot the mail coach started its daily run to Morpeth and passengers wishing to travel entered their names on the coach slate at least three days in advance to ensure a seat. It is said that a letter posted here in the morning could reach Durham City by the end of the day. Quite an achievement in the 1880's!

The hall was built for the C of E Church as a Mission House with the foundation stone laid by Mrs Young who had given Church House to the Newcastle Diocesan Society.
It has been in continual use ever since. In the early 1960's the upstairs was used as an additional school room prior to the construction of the Middle School. And today it is used for church and social functions.

The Magistrates Court and parish business was conducted on this spot for over 200 years.

Built into the arch at the side is the ancient lintel of the inn's front door and in the nearby cemetery a small window from the Three Half Moons is imbedded in the wall.

Next door stands **Church House**

Church House dates back to 1896 when the Rector of All Saint's the Reverend William Mallett Young who lived in Whitton Tower on the south side of the River Coquet acquired the property.

The previous owner had been William Bewick, a provisions dealer from Hebburn Quay who in 1873 paid £550 for a dilapidated house on the site, pulled it down and built a new one in fine Victorian style.

He called it Warwick Villa and his date stone "W.B. 1880" can be seen high up on the back wall of the building.

In the same year, 1880, he bought the property next door, the derelict Three Half Moons Inn, for £300 and cleared the ground, giving him enough land for stables, conservatory and large gardens. When he died his family sold Warwick Villa to the Reverend Young and in 1903, three years later, his widow who had moved to Cullercoats, gave Church House to the Newcastle Diocesan Society.

In 1908 a Mission House was built on the site of the Three Half Moons and Mrs.Young laid the foundation stone. The Mission House is now the Parish Hall and built into the arch nearby is the ancient lintel of the inn's front door.

C.F. Wright purchased the property in 1919 and installed petrol pumps on the front pavement, running taxis and buses from the garage in the rear. Other buildings in the
rear (now demolished) housed the fire station and were also used a temporary CO-OP prior to the building of the present store in the early '50s.

It is interesting to note that the original building had servants’ quarters in the mansard roof. In 1922 this was removed to reduce the height of the building from three storeys to two, with a corresponding reduction in rates.

In 1954 Rothbury Rural District Council bought the house for offices and in 1974 Alnwick District Council became the landlord, when it took over the responsibilities of Rothbury RDC. One room on the ground floor was converted into a rent office and one room upstairs was let to the parish council as a meeting room. Other tenants were the Coquetdale Art Gallery who rented three rooms upstairs, the National Trust who rented one room downstairs before moving out in 1993 and Northumberland National Park who had the remainder of the ground floor.

By 1994 Church House was badly in need of refurbishment: the flat roof leaked, the heating and lighting were inadequate, the paintwork was in a poor state and the whole building had an air of sad neglect. Northumberland National Park went into partnership with Alnwick District Council to give Church House a complete facelift and restore the property to its former Victorian grandeur, although this did not include replacing the mansard roof. Repair of the roof, re-painting the outside and refurbishing part of the ground floor occurred in the winter of 1994-95 whilst improvements to the remainder of the ground floor, was completed during the winter of 1995-96.

In 1989 the District Council decided to dispose of the stained glass window at the top of the stairs due to its dangerous condition but pressure from local amenity groups persuaded them to have the window restored.

The work was carried out by Chris Chesney of Iona Glass in Warkworth and commemorated with a special plaque.

Cross the road to the Market Cross

The Market Cross, erected to the memory of Lord & Lady Armstrong, was unveiled on August 2nd 1902 by Sir Lowthian Bell, Lord Armstrong's oldest friend.
The inscription on the base reads:

"This monument was erected in the year 1902, on the site of the ancient market cross, by the inhabitants of Rothbury and other friends, in admiration and grateful remembrance of the long and useful lives of William George Baron Armstrong of Cragside, C.B. (1810-1900), and of Margaret his wife (1807-1893)."

But whilst the cross is very attractive, hewn from Cragside rock and carved to an extremely high standard, the historic Market Cross was entirely different. Erected in 1722 the it was a square building with a roof and four open sides, designed to afford shelter to those attending the weekly market. This type of building and its use can still be seen in other parts of Northumberland.

By 1827 the building, showed its age and was considered dangerous. The decision was taken to demolish it, much to the dismay of many villagers, one of whom penned a lament, which served to indicate an element of sadness at its loss, as well as registering some of the local village names.

Every last stone from the building was removed and Dippie Dixon reported in 1893 that the only remaining stone with an inscription was built into the gable end of a house in the Black Bull Yard with the name Archibold Douglas the only one still legible. The other men of note being Robert Snawdon and Robert Redhead.

It is worth noting here that, whilst many inns from the past have disappeared, directly opposite the cross is the Newcastle Hotel formerly known as the Black Bull.

However The Rifleman, the Fox and Hounds, The Malt Shovel, and the Fighting Cocks are no longer with us whilst the Star is now a private house, painted white and situated at the west end of the village on the road to Thropton.

A local paper said this about the Rifleman in 1885:
"The old Rifleman Inn, a relic of the Rothbury of one hundred years ago, when the village was described as 'a poor town of two streets, which are not paved and the houses are mostly thatched; they cover them with sods for warmth and with heath which will last thirty years' has at last succumbed to the improving spirit of these modern times. "The Rifleman" was an old thatched house that stood at the lower end of the village, which having been recently purchased by Mr A. Scott, butcher, is now in the process of being rebuilt."

Near the cross at the east end of Market place, opposite the old Church Gates stood the pillory and the village stocks. The last person known to have been confined to the stocks was Archie Deedles in 1820 for drunk & disorderly conduct. Cock fighting continued far longer in the village cock pit on Haa' Hill. At the west end of Market Place stood the Bull Ring.

Today it is difficult to imagine all this, with the Armstrong cross surrounded by a quiet area of lawn and enclosed by railings, (2002) replacing those removed as part of the war effort and the ugly concrete ones that followed them.

Just opposite the Cross stands the three armed Donkin's Lamp

Opposite the Market Cross and just in front of the United Reform Church in the centre of the village stands an interesting light. Known today as Donkin's Lamp it was proposed in 1902 by Robert Donkin, chairman of the group charged with the erection of the Armstrong Memorial Cross. He offered to erect a gas lamp at his own expense to celebrate the coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra.

. There are two embossed shields on the lamp with the inscriptions:"Erected by Robert Donkin and Presented to the Town of Rothbury" & "To commemorate the Coronation of their Gracious Majesties King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. August 9th 1902"

Erected in the same year as the Armstrong Cross, Donkin's Lamp did not stand the test of time quite so well. It was moved from its original position in front of Church House and was converted to electricity. It lost two of its arms, a crude swan neck
was added, posters were draped over it and it was used to supply the town Christmas lights. Over the years it fell into a pretty sad state of dilapidation.

In 1995 the Parish Council considered restoring the lamp to its original glory and started discussions with the County Council. Little happened and the idea seemed to have been shelved. However in 1998 the project was resurrected with the view of heralding in the millennium. All that was required was an appeal for funds and a little help with restoration.

With a year to go there was no urgency and the project commenced. The Parish Council contacted a number of businesses and appealed for funds in newspapers and on notice boards around the area. Slowly money flowed in: £10 here, £100 there: and a generous £500 from COOP Public relations raised the fund to some £1000.

But nothing runs smoothly. The European Development Fund had offered to pay half if the project was finished before the end of March. Only three months away and during the dark cold winter months when work would be difficult to complete. Lanterns had to be ordered, new arms made, electricity supply upgraded and refurbishment planned: all in three months.

In an impressive demonstration of partnership and coordination Northumberland County Council pulled out all stops and upgraded the supply and completed the job one day before the deadline expired, and Cragside volunteers (British Gas Research Engineers) braved the elements to prepare and paint the lamp, clean up the area and prune the nearby trees. A final touch of gold on the crest and the project was complete.

An interesting footnote: Whilst the volunteers were restoring the lamp it was noted that one of the plates had been damaged. Further inspection showed that the date "August 9th 1902" was separated from the rest of the inscription. A little research provided the reason.

The Coronation was originally scheduled for June 26th 1902, but two days earlier Edward had to undergo an immediate and dangerous operation. He recovered and the coronation was then held on August 9th.

The mystery was solved. The plate had been cast indicating the original date and changed to reflect the new.
Donations were received from: Amenity Society, Barclays Bank, COOP Public Relations, European Development Fund, History Society, Rothbury Golf Club, Lloyds Bank, Mr. N Melville, Newcastle Hotel, Northern Marts, Queens Head, Spar Supermarket, and Mrs. Varty whilst Support and Labour were supplied by Cragside Volunteers (British Gas), Mr. L Gregory, Recognition Express, and Northumberland County Council.

Just behind the lamp stands the **URC**

The United Reformed Church was founded by the Rev. Reid of St Paul's Congregational Church, Westgate Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne following a stay in Rothbury in 1835.

Originally situated at the west end of the village (You will pass it if you follow the trail) it was opened for public worship in 1840. However within fifty years it became apparent that a newer and larger building was required.

In 1893 Lord Armstrong offered a site for the new building. To make way for the new church a 17th century house with a grey stone slate roof and mullion windows was demolished. This interesting old house once belonged to the Donkin family of Tosson and the door lintel was inscribed with the date "D 1690 D". It is thought that Lord Armstrong may have inherited this house from Armorer Donkin with whom he was once in partnership.

This present building situated at the south west corner of the village green was opened for worship in May 1896 at a cost of £1,497.

In 1993 the building was extensively altered and refurbished, transforming a rather bleak Victorian chapel into the attractive and welcoming place of worship it is today. Improvements at that time included the provision of a meeting room, a coffee bar, disabled persons' toilet, new heating and new carpets.
Part of the United Reformed Church since 1972, the church has shared a minister with Thropton URC for many years. The "parish" now extends throughout upper Coquetdale, and through upper Redesdale to Carter Bar on the Scottish Border.

Behind is an interesting terrace known as Model Buildings because they represented 'state of the art' workers' housing of the 1890s, built for the estate foremen.

Nearby on the corner of the Maltings stood the Old Manor House. Nothing much is known of its history other than it was reputed to have a tunnel leading from its cellars to the church. Now a pleasant housing development, following the demolition of the Bus Station the Maltings was not classified as one of the better areas. Some still remember being forbidden to frequent this area as children.

Passing Well Strand, (noting the original cobbled footpath and roadway) walk towards the Police Station above which is the Coquetdale Arts Centre past the white house formerly the Star Inn to Coquet House formerly known as the **Cottage Hospital**

Situated at the west end of the village, the Coquetdale Cottage Hospital is the only hospital in west Northumberland between Hexham and Berwick. In 1905 Miss Catherine Dawson bought Coquet House, previously a guest house, converted it onto a hospital and donated it to the village. She and her sister Miss Mary Dawson endowed it with £200 a year.

There were originally three beds, and all treatment was free.

The sisters were daughters of Ralph Hanson Dawson, "gentleman, wine merchant", of Wapping, and his wife Margaret Farquhar of Old Cottage Hospital Rothbury, daughter and heiress of George Farquhar (who incidentally, gave the ancient fire engine to Rothbury in 1788).

Margaret Farquhar inherited the estate at Holystone, which eventually descended to her only surviving son William. On his death in 1884 he left everything to his three sisters.
In 1893 Mary Dawson gave the peal of eight bells to Rothbury Parish Church in memory of William, and a commemorative plaque can be seen in the church. There are also three windows in Holystone church in memory of Ralph and Margaret Dawson and "a much loved sister" who died in 1849. The family coat of arms is among those carved on the chancel screen at Rothbury. Their final memorial is the Cottage hospital.

Before her death in 1906, Miss Dawson registered the hospital with the Charity Commissioners and appointed a local Board of Trustees, who with their successors administered the growing hospital until the coming of the National Health Service in 1948.

Coquet House

A maternity unit was founded in 1946 as a memorial to the Second World War, and after 1948 this expanded rapidly with up to three hundred babies delivered annually. There was also an expansion of consultants' clinics and services such a physiotherapy, and in 1956, as a result of local initiative, the adjoining Hawthorn Cottage was bought as a hospital extension.

But as medical science advanced and treatment depended more on expensive technology, concentrated in the larger hospitals, a gradual attrition began.

In 1975 it came under a new Area Health Authority which took over its administration from the local managers. The maternity unit was closed, the consultants' clinic was discontinued, and Rothbury was left to provide only convalescent and geriatric care.

However people's concern and generosity remained unwavering, and the League of Friends of Coquetdale was formed in 1978, to provide a focus for local involvement. Over the year's the Friends have provided many extra amenities, the most striking of which was the total refurbishing of Hawthorn Cottage for the physiotherapy department in 1990, at a cost of £60,000 raised locally.

In 1993 the hospital became part of the new Cheviot and Wansbeck Trust, whose financial problems subsequently caused much anxiety.

In 2006 the hospital finally closed and the old building was refurbished as apartments whilst the new hospital was built close to the Haugh.

From here continue west towards **Rothbury House**
Rothbury House is situated at the west end of the village and is now owned and managed as a convalescent home by the Royal Air Forces Association.

Known locally as the "County", it was originally named "Rothbury Hotel" and opened in 1789 as a private hotel catering to the large number of visitors to the area.

When it was sold by public auction at the Turks Head Hotel, Newcastle in 1880, it was described as:

"The most magnificent building of its kind in the North of England, displaying the high genius of the architect in beauty of design and solidity of structure, affording in its splendid public, reception, and private rooms, all the luxurious comfort which the palatial residence of the nobility can offer. Standing on a commanding eminence, within its own Pleasure Grounds and Gardens, its boundaries washed by the crystal stream of the far-famed River Coquet, with the bold outlines of the Simonside Hills towering rugged and high over a fertile valley. Stabling, Coach Houses, and every other convenience."

And

".... splendid public rooms, viz.: Two Dining Rooms (convertible into one), 28ft by 16 ft each, with marble fireplaces, ornamental cornices; Billiard Room, 26 ft by 18ft; Library and Coffee Room and Drawing Room of similar size; numerous Sitting and Bed Rooms, en suite; Smoke Rooms, Kitchens, Sculleries, Butler's Pantry, Servants' Hall, Larders, and Store Rooms, and splendid Cellarage. The entire accommodation numbers upwards of 60 apartments.

It is worth noting that the auctioneer at this sale was Samuel Donkin & Sons, founder of the Rothbury Auction mart. The price was £5,700 and the buyer was Mr. Robert Muckle.

Directly opposite is the Roman Catholic Church on Gravelly Bank, once the main road to Thropton. The church is now open again following substantial repairs to the roof. The diocese considered closing the church permanently due to the high cost of repairs and the dwindling number of attendees. One parishioner offered to fund the whole cost and his sentiments were echoed by many in the village who promptly pledged donations for the repairs.
Before continuing the circular tour of the village you might like to take your life in your hands and stroll along the road towards Thropton. A hundred yards past Rothbury House is a path leading down to the river. This is Beggar's Rigg Car Park with a few pleasant places to sit, picnic and watch the river.

Beggars Rigg itself comprises the green slope north of the main Rothbury to Thropton road. There are a number of derivations of the name but according to Dippie Dixon the real origin is to be found in the term 'Big rig' where 'big' is a coarse barley grown in former years. Chambers dictionary includes this word spelled as 'bigg'.

Tomlinson who wrote the definitive 'Guide to Northumberland' in 1888 quotes it as being a place where 'mendicants in the olden time waited to be admitted to the town'. And in a time of great scarcity during the 17th century the poor were allowed to pluck the peas which grew on the ridge. No peas grow there today and the steep hillside is used to graze sheep.

Just across the main road was a vantage spot from which to view the Rothbury races earlier this century. The races were discontinued in 1965 after some two hundred years of steeple chasing and turned into a nine hole golf course before finally expanding into a full 18 hole course. Today this erstwhile vantage point is part of a network of walks and a place where those with metal detectors still manage to find the occasional coin from the racing days.

This is the end of the village and it is time to cross the road and passing the original Congregational Church continue down the High Street.

For centuries the High Street has been the main shopping area of the village and has little changed over the years; apart from an influx of cars. A few shops at the west end, with the majority towards the east. Many businesses are family owned and have been trading on the same premises for decades. High Street Rothbury
To the east is a house named "West End". This is a building of great historic significance in that it is reputed to be the oldest house in Rothbury. Some years ago the interior was renovated, disclosing enormous curved wooden beams of black oak and a beautiful inglenook fireplace that had lain hidden for many years. Local lore claims that it was once the local lock up and iron bars in the attic appear to substantiate this story.

Splendid buildings of the mid 19th century stand amidst much older properties and do not look at all out of place. Most of the trees were planted in the late 19th Century, have grown to maturity and are now the preferred nesting place for the crows that leave their messages in the spring. A perennial problem that has baffled the Parish Council for many years and divide the views of those who live in the vicinity

Ogle House, on the left is still know locally as "The Doctor's". Owned by Dr Barrow, this was a surgery for over 70 years; a medical practice that served not only the village but also the whole of Coquetdale.

Dr Barrow achieved a great deal in his busy life. Born in London, moving to Morpeth and settling in Rothbury, he was a man ahead of his time. For over 60 years he was district medical officer at a time when hygiene and sanitation schemes were just starting. He was physician to Lord Armstrong. He was elected to the first Parish Council in 1895. He was chief bell ringer at All Saints for 50 years and a churchwarden for 25.

In the village he was known simply as "The Doctor", a well loved man, also noted for simple things such as giving a new penny to all children at Christmas. Dr Barrow died in 1948 and at his funeral service the church bells ran in muffled peal. His headstone in the new cemetery bears the simple inscription:

"Having served his generation He fell asleep"
Follow the High Street towards the Village Green noting that this area is a favourite spot to sit in the shade and while away the long summer evenings. Mind the crows though!

On Sundays the Vale Milk Bar attracts motor cyclists who have been visiting Rothbury since time immemorial and who are now a feature of the village. Bank managers, and respectable business men, these are a far cry from the Hell's Angels of popular fiction.

Look in at the Sun Cafe, or the Turks Head, one of the oldest public houses in Rothbury and the main venue for the afternoon sessions during the Music Festival.

The site of the COOP was where the old Bluebell Inn once stood. Only a few stones at the rear are testimony to the old inn.

Read the inscriptions on the War memorial, refurbished in 2002 with smart new railings: replaced as often as they are damaged by the every increasing traffic in Rothbury. The memorial was unveiled on 21st January 1921 by Lord Armstrong officiating for Major General Sir Percival Wilkinson who was in command of the division to which the Rothbury soldiers were attached. Names from the 1939-45 and Korean wars were added later.

The memorial used to feature a water fountain and the tap remains can just be seen tucked behind the flowers planted in an ancient trough.

Continue east to Front Street glancing up at the three ornamental heads above the Chemist's Shop.

Did you know that these are called "gapers" and were used to indicate that the building was a pharmacy. It is believed that they originated in the Netherlands and often showed a man in a turban with his mouth open ready for a pill or medicine.

Look up at Lloyds Bank and admire its beautiful mansard roof. A Mansard roof, sometimes known as a French roof is a four sided roof with slopes on each side creating additional room space at the top of the building and was first popularised by Francois Mansart (1598 - 1660).
Across the road almost opposite Barclays at the corner of Bridge Street Bank stands the **Jubilee Hall**

The Mechanics' Institute was established in 1850 by the Rev. G.C.V Harcourt, the Rector of Rothbury who presented 295 volumes of 'good, sound literature', and continued thereafter to increase the number of books till his death in 1870. premises consisted of a small reading room situated at the end of the Black Bull long room, but in 1864 a new library room was built by voluntary subscription; Mr. R Jubile Hall circa 1920 Farrage being the collector and treasurer of the fund.

At this time provision was also made to house the local hearse and the Rothbury fire engine (circa 1788) on the ground floor. This had been presented to the village in 1788 by Robert Farquar after a disastrous fire which destroyed a large number of thatched houses.

This is recorded on a piece of parchment pasted into the Vestry Book dated 1785, duly signed by George Farquar and witnessed by Thos Adams, Solicitor of Alnwick and is translated from the Latin as :

"August 1788, George Farquhar Esq., presented to the town and parish of Rothbury, in the county of Northumberland, a fire engine, under the care and control of the Rector and Churchwardens for the time being, of the same parish, for ever."

Shortly after this a vestry meeting was held on 10th Aug 1788 when it was "agreed also to allow John Storey, of Rothbury, one guinea for the care of the fire engine per annum and signed by the Rector, Rev Drummond"

Although later transferred to the Jubilee Hall it was originally stored in the Church porch under the charge of John Watson the sexton.
Now restored to full working order it is now housed the Bailliewick museum in Alnwick, having had a short holiday in the erstwhile garage at Town Foot. A great shame but at least it will be on public display and well cared for.

In 1873 there was a substantial rise in the population of Rothbury, mainly due to the number of people who had taken up regular employment in the grounds at Cragside, and the committee considered the advisability of extending the library by adding a reading room. This was carried out under the direction of the Rector Dr. Ainger and proved extremely popular.

But the library did not rest on its laurels and in 1888 there was another addition; that of a lecture hall and recreation room as a permanent commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee. Generous donations were given by locals including Lord Armstrong, whilst the site itself was a gift of the Duke of Northumberland. An interesting point here is that in the event of the hall being sold, it must be offered in the first instance to the current Duke of Northumberland for £200. However in 2009 when a new governing body was established this was changed so that in the event that it ceases to be viable the Duke has the right to buy it at market valuation.

The opening ceremony on 7th September 1888 was chaired by Lord Armstrong, speeches given by Thomas Hodgkin, Colonel Watson and The Rev Medd, whilst the hall was 'declared open' by Lady Armstrong.

A short time later The Newcastle Journal dated 12th February 1889 reported:

“The recreation room - a large apartment on the ground floor beneath the library room where the members can smoke and chat and enjoy themselves in playing various games - was opened for the first time on Friday night last (8 February) and in future on Sunday afternoon the rooms will be open to members from 1 pm to 5.45pm and from 8pm until 10pm (sic). This, it is expected, will supply a want long felt by Rothbury workmen- particularly those who are at lodgings - and it is hoped that many will avail themselves of the use of these comfortably fitted up rooms where they can spend a quiet hour on a Sunday afternoon in the acquirement of useful knowledge.”

The Jubilee Hall has had a chequered history, including being burnt down in July 1939 following Saturday evening pictures. There was no Jubilee Hall after the Firefire brigade in the village at that time and the nearest was in Morpeth some 15 miles away. But nothing daunted, the old fire engine (circa. 1788) was brought out of retirement to extinguish the fire.
Whilst awaiting the Morpeth Fire Engine, old fire hoses, long since stored in the police station, and full of holes were used to minimal effect. Although it is interesting there is a vague suspicion that the story may have been prompted by an Ealing Comedy. Or was it the other way round?

The old fire engine had been provided in 1788 by Robert Farquhar after a disastrous fire which destroyed a large number of thatched houses. Although later transferred to the Jubilee Hall it was originally stored in the Church porch. Now restored to full working order it is back in Rothbury and housed in the garage at Town Foot. However there is a rumour that it is soon to be moved to the Bailliewick museum in Alnwick. A great shame but at least it will be on public display and well cared for.

Certainly a public meeting had been held in 1885 to discuss its replacement; described in the newspaper as 'wretched old squirt which stands beside the parish hearse'. What an epitaph for so dignified a machine!

In 1944 during World War II the hall was rebuilt at the army's request as a centre for the troops and changed considerably. It no longer boasted the reading room and the roof was entirely different. But the pictures were revived and for many years the hall echoed to the sound of, now, almost forgotten stars. The twice nightly (saving Sunday) pictures attracted farmhands from miles away, and with the soldiers billeted in the village, queues up to a hundred yards long would snake through the village awaiting the second 'house'. The News was always old, and visitors on holiday were treated to a rerun of Pathe News, already seen in towns a fortnight earlier. The pictures finished in 1960 and the last film shown was The Ten Commandments.

Over the years there were discussions regarding a complete re-vamp both inside and out. Plans were drawn up for a modern glassed in vestibule with a balcony in the main hall and a corridor underneath. But there were insufficient funds and the idea was
dropped. The inside however was completely rebuilt and now boasts a number of function rooms as well as a computer section and youth Drop-In centre.

The installation of sound and projection equipment revived the cinema and films are now shown every two weeks. The main hall hosts talks, concerts and shows as well as the ubiquitous coffee mornings that are a regular part of village life.

Further down in the area called "Town Foot" stands the Queen's Head at the corner of Brewery Lane, the brewery itself now long gone and the hotel changed substantially over the years.

The older portion of the Queens Head was erected in 1790 and for the first fifty years of its existence was known as the Golden Fleece. Jane Snowden was the hostess in 1827 and thereafter it was kept by the Dores family, followed by Mr. Lawson who restored and enlarged the property. The change in name probably took place in 1837 in commemoration of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. In 1877 Mr. Temple rebuilt the old property next door which was then added to the hotel and made a number of other changes to cater for the ever increasing trade.

A brief detour up Brewery Lane takes you to Addycombe Cottages which were built for the retired staff of the Armstrong estate.

A little past the Queens Head the Coplish Burn flows under the road and into the Coquet. A bridge is shown on old maps and traces of it still exist, built into the surrounding houses.

Continue your walk towards the Garage at the east end of the village.

Lying at the east end of the village, the garage was built by John Lee as a modern showroom and workshop.

John Lee started life as a plumber but being interested in cycling he opened a cycle shop at the turn of the century. He built the first motorRothbury Garage cycle in Rothbury and opened a garage at Townfoot in 1904. His chief mechanic was Mr CF Wright who later branched out on his own as a motor bus operator.
John Lee went on to develop several lines of business including funeral cars, taxis, cattle wagons and road haulage. From his profits during the first world war when he transported timber from Harbottle Forest he invested in the modern garage at Townsfoot and a substantial fleet of vehicles. He became the Northumberland & Durham agent for Lancia vehicles and also owned a franchise for Leyland good vehicles.

In 1921 he ran buses from Rothbury to Newcastle on Tuesdays & Fridays and in 1936 he expanded, running more frequent services to Newcastle, Longframlington and Morpeth in opposition to his old employee CF Wright. Further routes were added with market day services to Harbottle, Alwinton and Netherton.

In 1928 the Newcastle to Rothbury service was acquired by the United Bus Company together with that of CF Wright. Following the takeover he continued to operate the garage, road haulage service and private coach hire service.

The garage at Townfoot was credited with being a most efficient & modern building for its time. The original interior of the workshop now forms the basis of the garage interior at the Beamish Museum in County Durham.

J Lee sold his last bus to LC Wright, the son of CF Wright and by 1953 LC Wright had acquired sufficient capital to purchase the Townfoot garage from the Lee family. It changed its name to Rothbury Motors when it was purchased by Andrew Mackie and for many years was the home of Andrew's fleet of coaches. In 2001 Rothbury Motors closed down, the petrol service discontinued and the building was sold.

The garage has now been refurbished and opened for business for the specialist storage and renovation of Classic cars.
Difficult to visualize today, but prior to 1939 the ground at the left of the garage used to be a lake and a home to many species of ducks and water hens. Now it is another housing development.

From the garage it is a pleasant stroll, towards the Armstrong Cottages, often called the Alms Houses.

In 1896 following the demolition of the original Alms House to make way for the United Reform Church in the centre of the village Lord Armstrong CottagesArmstrong erected a block of twelve cottages at the east end of Rothbury, on the main road and adjacent to the old work house.

Now named the Armstrong Cottages they were originally known as Alms Houses and were established as homes for aged estate workers. There is an inscription on the wall which reads:

"Erected by
William George Baron Armstrong of Cragside
in Memory of Ann Armstrong His Much Loved Mother 1896"

Up to about 1900 the old work house stood on the north side of the main road into town and just opposite Riverside.

However in 1901 the Rothbury Board of Guardians purchased a new site on Silverton Lane (to the south of the town) and by the following Rothbury Alms Houses c 1906 year a new workhouse and school was erected. This new workhouse could accommodate up to 50 inmates and was much larger than the original with wash house, laundry, kitchen, shed and mortuary. Master & Matron's accommodation was central with men's day room and dormitories to the east and women's to the west. By 1920 this workhouse was known as "Rothbury Poor Law Institution".
Crossing the river at Scottish Ford at the stepping stones will take you to the old Auction Mart above which lay the Railway Station. No trace of the station exists today and it is now a thriving industrial estate. The auction mart was once the pride of the area and a great social day for farmers coming from remote farms.

As far as livestock is concerned it is now defunct although there are still sales of antiques, furnishings and memorabilia quarterely.

It is interesting to note that the stepping stones were part of the old wartime defences along the riverside. Waste not want not!

The old sheep pens at the side of the Coquet Vale Hotel (formerly the Station Hotel) were finally removed in 2001. Some twenty houses were built on this site: another link with the past demolished

Over the years it passed though many hands but since the demise of the railway it seems to have struggled. At one time it was even scheduled to follow the fate of other large buildings and be converted to flats

But following the latest acquisition it is now well on its way to attaining its former glory with spacious good quality bedrooms and an excellent restaurant, Italia Plus, that was awarded Best Hotel Restaurant for 2008.

There are a number of stories associated with the Hotel.

In 1935 a previous owner Mr Baker named it "The Silver Grill" possibly referring to the Silver Jubilee of George V.

But what happened to the fertility chair that stood in lounge beside a matching table. Carved out of ebony with dragons’ heads in an oriental fashion, its origin is unknown. A number of people claimed to have given birth after having sat on it.
There was also an owner who won the pools then bought the hotel. It had to be completely refurbished before any visitors were allowed. Mrs Carrie McLean is credited with this story as she was a temporary cook there.

Pass the old girls school (also known locally as the Masonic Lodge) towards the Bridge and back to your starting point.

In the late 1990's, it was realised that the Masonic Hall required a great deal of expenditure if it was to remain viable. It was sold and converted into holiday cottages and the Masons moved to Alnwick.

To the south of the car park lie the Half Acres: a range of small fields. Villagers who had served in the ranks of the Percy Tenantry Volunteers, during the Napoleonic Wars, were granted half acre strips by the Duke of Northumberland in 1819 as a reward for their service. These half acre strips can still be seen although, with hedgerows being grubbed out over the years, some have turned into full acres.

Incidentally an Acre is taken to be 4,840 square yards, or about 50 yards by 100 yards and it should be noted that Irish & Scottish acres have a different measure of 7,840 and 6,150.4 square yards respectively.

Even older traces of community cultivation have been found on the opposite side of the river, comprising long strips of narrow fields, allotted annually to the villagers. These fields were allocated in such a way that each man's holdings comprised several non contiguous strips, and each person was obliged to cultivate his strip of land in accordance with the crop rotation observed by his neighbours.

This method of cultivation was popular in England as it forced crop rotation, and ensured that each farmer cultivated a selection of crops rather than concentrate on the most profitable at any given time. Does this sound familiar?

The strips were originally divided by unploughed ridges or balks, but over the years these were levelled and the strips started to form the complete field as they became the freehold of the villagers. Dippie Dixon tells us that the last remaining strip exchanged hands for a pair of leather breeches.

So there we have it: a short stroll, a little history, with much omitted as being beyond the scope of these pages.
For example:

What about the musicians, pipers and poets, the fairs, parades and festivals

What happened during the war, Bombs, pill boxes, POW camp?

Where was the Studio Cafe or the Rifleman, Malt Shovel or Fighting Cocks?

What about the great snow storm of 1888 or the train crash of 1897? For that matter what about the railway?

What about the 'free the geese' campaign?

The perennial discussions on road safety, parking charges, yellow lines and housing. Not to mention the crows or the church clock

There was a proposal to elect a mayor of Rothbury: and a councillor who offered to buy the mayoral chain?

What happened to local clubs and groups. The Amenity Society, the Mechanic's Institute and others long since defunct.

And sports:

Tennis, bowls, golf, quoits, cricket and football: not to mention the Shrove Tuesday football match between Thropton and Rothbury, played on the moors at Debdon and discontinued in 1867.

And what of the future?

Well: there was a proposal to buy or lease land near the river and a skate board park was suggested; a project of which not everyone is in favour. The new riverside path is a great success. At long last push chairs and visitors in wheelchairs have access to the riverside. Not to mention cyclists.

House building continues apace, with many houses and flats, in progress or projected for the immediate future:

One thing is certain, whatever the future:

Rothbury is set to expand
Diverse Productions

Rothbury