



Members' Newsletter

**Number 116
Spring 2021**

"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"

The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering 2021

This is advance notice that this year's event has been cancelled because of the coronavirus.

However, the organisers are hoping to still hold the writing competitions, because these do not require face to face meetings.

The closing date for all of the writing categories will be Monday 8th of March 2021, so there is still time to get your entries written and sent off.

To enter the competitions, contact Kim Bibby-Wilson (details opposite), or see the Northumbriana website in due course at :-

<http://northumbriana.org.uk/gathering/competitions.htm>

The Gathering still intends to hold a day of online concerts, a virtual art gallery, archive images etc on Saturday 10th of April, details to be announced.

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**See below for details
of our websites ...**

Our Websites

We have two websites at the minute, the original one which we have been using for many years, and the new one developed recently by the Committee. Both websites will continue to be used for the foreseeable future, and the new one contains more information about the dialect.

northumbriana.org.uk

northumbrianlanguagesociety.co.uk

NLS News ...

For those of you with access to a computer and the internet, you might be interested in the following talk to be given by our President, Katrina Porteous later this month. It will be a Zoom event, so you will need to make sure you have access to Google's Chrome browser which you will need to gain access to the talk

**Centre for Endangered Languages, Cultures and Ecosystems
(CELCE)
University of Leeds**

Katrina Porteous: *'The Sea's the Boss'*

24th February 2021, 4pm GMT

The language spoken by the Northumbrian 'coble' fishing community in the late 20th century contained clues to that community's historical development and to its understanding of place and nature. In this talk, touching on the language of fishing practices and species caught, place names, navigation and visualisation of the seabed, taboo words and beliefs, Katrina Porteous will argue that elements of this way of life remained little changed since medieval times, and that recent developments in fishing technology, reflected in its language, have profoundly altered the relation between people and place. With illustrations from her poems, she will show that an intrinsic understanding of 'sustainability' lay at the heart of the coble fishing way of life, and explore the human cost at which this was achieved.

Poet and historian Katrina Porteous lives on the Northumberland coast and writes from a deep commitment to the ecology of place and local community. Her collections from Bloodaxe Books include *The Lost Music* (1996) and *Two Countries* (2014), and poems written for a planetarium, *Edge* (2019).

www.katrinaporteous.co.uk

Time: Feb 24, 2021 04:00 PM London
Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83217773251?
pwd=eEpxb0YyTVdUVUhzWnlpOENiNy92UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83217773251?pwd=eEpxb0YyTVdUVUhzWnlpOENiNy92UT09)

Meeting ID: 832 1777 3251

Passcode: 118342

NLS News ...

We have had two recent requests for dialect information, one from Russia, and one from Beadnell. You might be able to help with the requests ...

The first, from Russia, is from a man in Moscow who is compiling a dictionary of dialect words from around the world on the subject of dogs. He is interested in any dialect words you might know and use for different types of dogs; not breeds of dogs, but words to describe a male dog, a female dog, a puppy, a hound, a retriever, working dogs etc, etc.

The second is from someone who lives in Beadnell who has a business running holiday cottages to let. He would like to give each of his cottages a local, dialect name, to celebrate our very rich local speech. He is not looking for Standard English names like Sea View, or Sunny Vista, but genuine Northumbrian dialect names.

If you would like to contribute to these requests, please send your suggestions to the Newsletter Editor, Peter Arnold, either by phone on 07949 870966, or by email at pja13@phonecoop.coop, or by post at 33 Hackwood Glade, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1AL, and he will pass them on.



Waad Yuh Buleev It???

If you think it's difficult these days to persuade people to be candidates at local and national elections in this country, just spare a thought for the people of Rothbury four centuries ago. The following notice was spotted by our Chairman, Stuart Lawson, in the Rothbury Parish monthly Church Magazine of July 1889.

Churchwardens and Vestrymen 1659 :-

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE FOWER AND TWENTY NOW BEING ELECTED :...

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 9. | 17. |
| 2. | 10. | 18. |
| 3. | 11. | 19. |
| 4. | 12. | 20. |
| 5. | 13. | 21. |
| 6. | 14. | 22. |
| 7. | 15. | 23. |
| 8. | 16. | 24. |

I wonder how Rothbury Parish Council managed its business? Any ideas, anybody?

Pitmatic on Spotify

We were contacted a while ago by the Pitmatic Band who have been recording some local songs for the Spotify internet platform. Their online EP consists of five tracks and the introductory track features spoken snippets from member and Fellow of the Society Raymond Reed. The sound clips come with permission from the interview with Raymond recorded in 2013 at the annual Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture on the MorpethNews TV YouTube channel. You can hear the finished songs on: <https://open.spotify.com/album/0t2hbx01fkh0lq2cJGuVMb?si=rQN6Xj7zRRGM1INstRDYiA>



Query from a member via Kim: Can anybody mind the words of a sang that gans a bit like this? *"It was all on a Washin' day, and me hands were thick with lather"*



Song for Bur-castle – Town of the Rolling R

This verse from John Bell's "Rhymes of Northern Bards" (Newcastle, 1812) is not in dialect but provides a fine sample of words which, when spoken, showcase the Northumbrian accent's distinctive burr, the guttural letter r sounded at the back of the throat in our area from Anglo-Saxon times onwards. Try saying this aloud at home, but donning a mackintosh might be advisable first. Bell says:

The following Song was published in December 1791 as from One of the Rooks which then built their Nest on the Vane of the Exchange, and addressed to the good People of BUR-CASTLE.

Rough roll'd the roaring river's stream,
And rapid ran the rain,
When Robert Rutter dreamt a dream,
Which rack'd his heart with pain:
He dreamt there was a raging bear
Rush'd from the rugged rocks;
And strutting round with horrid stare,
Breath'd terror to the Brocks. (=badgers)

But Robert Rutter drew his sword,
And rushing forward right,
The horrid creature's thrapple gor'd,
And barr'd his rueful spite:
Then stretching forth his brawny arm,
To drag him to the stream,
He grappled grizzle, rough and warm,
Which rouz'd him from his dream.



Comment during these Covid times from a member: "Thank you for the newsletters – they do make a difference, and keep one grounded."

ABEUN CHOLLERFORD

Gan look doon frum the Military Road
Which Roman officers se lang sin strode,
Forrivvor scheming, but for little worth,
Hoo t subdue the wild barbaric North;
An theer ye'll see whaat words cud not
define,
The beauty o the tree-waaed Northern Tyne,
Nee mair reddened wi claymore and sword,
Glinton i the sun, frum Chollerford.
The wettor movin wiv a stately gait
T gan n join its Alston Common mate,
As luvly as itsel, the Sooth Tyne wettor.

Fred Reed

DARK LONNEN

Doon wheor it tyeks a sudden torn
An then dips steeply t the born,
Aa hord lood footsteps in the neit
Ower the footbridge, n teuk fright,
For moonleit laid the yell scene bare
But Aa cud see neebody theor!
An then Aa hord a wild voice toll,
"Please, God, hev morcy on me sow!"
Me blud torned cowld, the leit went red,
An in a panic blind Aa fled.

Fred Reed



TWO CLIVVOR BIRDS

The blackbord hops along the green,
An cocks ees feathord lugs,
Ee hears the rumblin worm that keen,
An erl them clattrin bugs.

The kestrel hovers i the blue,
An scans the waving bent;
Ee's sharp ti spot the scuttling shrew
An spy the way it went.

The Lord above made us folk wise
Ti find oot gannins on -
But Ee nivvor gie us lugs an eyes
Ti heor ann see like thon.

Robert Allen

A POEM'S A SANG

We start these vorses wiv a bang,
An shoot oot lood - "A poem's a sang!"
Whee says it's marttorless ti scan,
Is oot thor mind,
An folks that think yon way is wrang,
For'ts nowt the kind.

Just let them argy as they like,
An erl thor fancy poesies strike
Wi vorse that aye gans hump an hike -
An what ye got?
Some stuff ye'd hoy ahint a dyke
Ti lay an rot.

But gie us lines wi pulse an beat,
I thyme an meotor, liltin sweet,
What gits folk gan wi tappin feet
That ferl an rise;
Aah'll reckon at the Judgement Seat
Yon taks the prize!

Robert Allen



REQUIEM FOR AN OLD PIT

Aye, lad, the windin wheel is still,
A clutored cage descends nee mair
Inta the depths; nee clankin soond
O pick an shovel echoes wheor,
Fer decades noo, strong men hev hewed
Black diamonds frae the booels of orth,
Mid creakin timbors, faalin stone,
An few t'recognise thor worth.

Noo, theor belaa, a silence reigns;
Ne human voice t'laugh an shoot,
Ne noise o clampin ponies' hooves,
Fer man an beast are lang since oot;
An doon each fyece the watter creeps,
Wi nyen t'stem its steady flow,
Or prop the roof; the owld pit groans
In agony, a cry of woe.

Plundored of aal its preshus ore,
Bereft o toilin, swattin men,
Reclaimed at last be Muther Orth,
The day fast comin tiv it when
Ne sign remains, nowt left t'show
That heor folk worked fer daily bread.
Rest, mighty cavern, bide i peace,
Mourned by the thousands ye hev fed.

Ellen Thompson

THE DUEGAR

The folk whee cum tae Rothbury
Knaa its beauty is renooned:
But dee they knaa the secrets
O the hills that theer aboond?

Noo Simonside has been well knaan
Bi local folk for yeers
Ta harbour sartin critturs thit
Cud dreyve a man te teers.

Yon wicked little blighters med
The travellor thor prey,
By lowpin up a rock fyace
Tae gar him doon the brae.

A trav'llor wan neyght med his camp
Up on a narra ledge,
An i the morn he var nigh deyd,
Bi cowpin ower the edge.

Yon critturs wor te blyame fo this,
O yon thor is nae doot.
They'd treyd the selfsame trick afore,
As uthors hed fund oot.

But noo wuh hev the Duegar - meynd,
Aah knaa not whence he cyame -
But Aah've a funny feelin it's
A modorn keynd o nyame ...

Nee Duegars lived when Aah wis young;
'Least not as Aah recall.
Noo Aah expect wor dance-hall syun
Tae howld a Duegar Baall.

Publicity's a marv'lous thing;
It nivvor did nee harm.
As lang as toorists spend thor cash,
Wuh divvent feel a quaalm.

Tae hunt the Duegar isn't haard;
Yuh divvent need a caar.
Just hzire yorsel a moontin beyke -
Yon's thowt the best bi faar.

Reydin up some clarty track,
Tae oxters deep in glaur;
Nae success but sumhoo glad
Tae think yuh've got that faar.

Aah think Aah'll ret mesel a staall
An set hor up this Spring,
To sell the Duegar byuks and dolls,
An pop'laar Duegar bling.

Aah doot the Duegar does exist,
Though quaarels Aah'll evade;
But whaat Aah knaa fo' sartin is
He helps the toorist trade!

Terry Common



HALF A GOWPEN O MEAL

A lowter o crowdy cowped in a hut on the
step,
The bowl a scatter o playgens, that fummelin
fingers couldna kep.
"Fetch that laddie a skelp we the thievel"
yelled crabbit Mistress Cairns.
"Howt" roared aad Dode, "there's eye slips
where there's bairns.

"Forby ye wor a glaykit lassie once yoursell,
an gai sweer te train.
Aa mined yor mother sayin, she wished ye'd
had a brain."
He stooped an grabbed a reed het aizle oot
among the bars
An rammed it doon on his dottle, fingers
numb we aad burn scars.

"Aa'm away oot by, te the stell, to cow the
eows,
Te corn the gimmers, an torn the trows.
An be the lousin, Aa'll hey layered an clarted
duds,
We shaain the bagies, an pittin the spuds.

"Aa can tell the thane, as we stand in the
weel harrled yard,
Aa've eye dyun his askin, an Aa've dyun ma
darge.
Aa've no reested in the limmers, Aa think that
Aa've dyun weel,
So nivvor mind a broken crowdy bowl, an half
a gowpen o meal."

Peter Athey

