

Members' Newsletter

Number 120
Winter 2021/22

Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung

Important Notice

There will be no Yule Meet this year. The NLS Committee has decided that it was far too risky to hold the event because of the rise in covid cases throughout the UK, and also because of the uncertainty of the state of the pandemic during the winter months.

As a result of this announcement, this edition of the Newsletter will be bigger and better than ever before, and hopefully, with lots more dialect articles than usual.

We also hope that next year will be more normal than the last two have been!

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NLS NEWS



It is with very great sadness that we announce the sudden death of NLS member, Avril Common.

Avril had been a loyal and steadfast member and supporter of the Northumbrian Language Society for many years. She was a member of the Executive Committee, and recently served as our Secretary. Avril's health had not been good for a number of

years, but she continued to provide refreshments for the Dialect Competitions at the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering.

Her funeral at the West Road Crematorium was well supported, and her sons David and Steven paid fulsome tributes to their mother in their eulogies.

When Avril's husband Terry Common died, the family sponsored the cup for the new "Hoafy Trophy" competition at the Gathering in his memory. This has provided good humour and entertainment ever since.

CANNY by R. Oliver Heslop

(This article, provided by Andy Bogle, is an edited version of Heslop's essay on the subject)

A word so familiar as to give the distinctive character to "canny Newcassel" seems to have little need of explanation. It is just one of those words, however, which has made its home here, but which is sadly misunderstood by outsiders.

If we turn up Dr. Ogilvie's great work, "The Imperial Dictionary" of 1848, we do find the word. But this is not our own "canny." It is "cautious; prudent; artful; crafty; wary; frugal," &c. The Southern man accepts this rendering and believes that our "canny man" means "cunning fellow." This may be explained by the fact that "canny" does not appear in literature before the seventeenth century 1637 being the date of the earliest quotation of its use in Dr. Murray's "New English Dictionary." All the early references to it are found north of the Tweed, and the trans-Tuedian usage of the word justifies the Southern Englishman in understanding it "to denote qualities considered characteristically Scotch."

In Northumberland, the word is of ancient currency, for it is part of the mother-tongue of the people. But the history, and the dialect, which is part of the history, of this northernmost English county, show us how a folk, isolated at times from the rest of the kingdom have grown up by themselves in word and work. It is especially shown in this word, which among the people of Northumberland has developed a meaning far differing from a rendering that ascribes to it mere cunning, or craft, or wariness. Here "canny" is an embodiment of all that is kindly, good, and gentle. The highest compliment that can be paid to any person is to say that he or she is "canny." As home expresses the English love of the fireside, so in Tyneside and Northumberland does "canny" express every home virtue. All that is good and lovable in man or woman is covered by the expression, "Eh, what a canny body!" A child appealing for help or protection always addresses his elder as "canny man." "Please, canny man, gi's a lift i' yor cairt."

This Northumberland word is just the simpler English term for what we should otherwise have to style in grandiloquent language the highest human virtues. Beneficence, benevolence, magnanimity are all summed up in the plainer word canniness. So strong is this that to say one is "no' canny" is to say that he is simply unhuman.

When the traveller from the South experiences the congestion of traffic by which the lines to the Central Station at Newcastle are occasionally blocked, his train is suddenly pulled up, and he finds himself waiting on a viaduct. Below him there instantly gathers a promiscuous crowd of ragged bairns. From a dozen young throats is heard, in measured cadence, the chorus of a song, and from the guttural verse there comes up a constant ower word. This, as it is heard over and over, is not an accusation of the Southern gentleman. He is not being called "a cautious, crafty fellow," "Canny man" is really intended to convey the most touching appeal that the little hatless, shoeless, palpitating figure below can make to the better nature of his auditor, as he chaunts:

"Hey, *canny* man, hoy a ha'penny oot!

Ye'll see some fun, thor is ne doot;

Whorivvor ye gans, ye'll heor 'em shoot,

Hey, *canny* man, hoy a ha'penny oot!

“Can yuh keep a secret?”

Noo then! A canny few yeors back wuh had thi Gowlden Gathrin - 50 yeors o celebratin wor Northumbrian kultcher, so Aah thowt it waad be gud ti dee summat speshul ti rekognize aall thi hard work that wor gaffer, Kim Bibby-Wilson, does ti keep it gannin.

Wor lass sayd “Why divvent yuh ax thi Kween to giv Kim a speshul medal or summat, cos Hor Majesty’s yor marra isn’t shu?”

“Whey aye,” Aah sayd, “that’s a fact, pet. Aah’ll see whaat Aah cn dee.”

Eftor a bit scratchin aroond, Aah fund oot that thi Kween waas cumin tiv Alnwick ti visit thi Duchess fer the weekend to see thi floorin cherry trees. Yous aall knaa thi Duke an Duchess o Northumberland is thi patrons o thi Language Society, divvent yuh? So Aah rings them up, an wuh gets it aall sorted.

Thi plan waas that Kim waad be tellt ti gan ti Morpeth train stayshun on thi mornin ti tek delivery ov a speshul parcel relatin ti thi Gathrin. It waad be thi sorprize ti beat aall sorprizes!

But then, yistorda eftorneun, Aah gets a phone caal tellin is that Hor Majesty had got a stonkin caald an cuddent dee thi job eftor aall!

Wor lass sayd “Why divvent yuh ax me mam ti dee it, cos shu’s erlwis sayin that shu used ti look like the Kween whaan shu waas a yung’un, an yuh just might get away wiv it if’n yuh puts thi leets oot an skwints reely hard,”

Noo, whaat yous aal needs ti knaa is that me mutha-in-law is a prood royalist. She waad be up for it, but thi problem waad be gettin Hor Majesty tiv agree, so Aah spent yistorda eftorneun an eevnin, on thi phone tryin ti git it aall sorted.

Hor Majesty waas a reet bobby dazzler, cos shu sayd “That’s no bother at all. It’s the least I can do in the circumstances.”

Me mutha-in-law waas reet med up aboot it an aall, but Aah had ti mek hor sweer ti say nowt ti Kim, cos shu hasn’t got a posh accent like, more Pitmatic, Coonty Durham Pitmatic that is, than thi Kween’s English, if’n yuh knaas whaat Aah mean!

Onyroad, wuh gits hor aall dolled up ti look like the Kween, an up tiv Alnwick, an on ti thi royal train.

Bye! Whaat a job Aah had this mornin, gettin Kim ti gan ti thi station!

Theor waas sek a stoor gannin on gettin thi Cavalcade sorted, an so that shu waddent twig that thi Kween waasn’t reely thi Kween, Aah had ti mek shoor hor speks got brokken. So, Aah axsidently on porpose dunshed intiv hor, knocked them off, and stud on them.

But then shu waanted ti gan ti Specsavers fer a new pair, but Aah sayd “Yuh divvent need ti gan theor, cos that’s tekkin twenty yeors off yuh.” Shu waasn’t ower impressed like, but Aah porswaded hor ti carry on wivoot them. Shu got theor just in time, an “Hor Majesty” presented hor wi thi speshul medal. Bye, Kim waas reet med up!

Aah waas geet chuffed it had aall gan see canny, but then Kim sidled up tiv is an sayd, “Bye! Yo’re a dark horse,” givin is a look. Aah started ti panic, thinkin me mutha-in-law must hev spokken ti Kim eftor aall, an Aah thowt Aah’d been fund oot! But then Kim sayd “A reet dark horse, Iarnin Hor Majesty ti taalk proper.” Aah just smiled, an sed nowt.

Noo, theor’s nee one, ceptin me an yous, whe knaas whaat reely went on, an Aah divvent want ony o yous tellin Kim, or thi papers aboot it nowther. It’s wor speshul secret, like, so mind on - nee blabbin!

By A. N. Onymous

From the Archives

“Little Star” by Fred Reed

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
Through infinity fleein;
Twinkle, twinkle, little star -
Whaat d’ye think ye’re deein?
Sum men say that ye cud be
A clood o deadly gases,
Or mebbies like wor land an sea
An human silly asses.
It meks nee odds - fer me ye are
A mystic leit that gropes
Through aal the endless leagues afar -
The missure of me hopes
That spring noo frumthe deeps o me
Up ti yor breit eternity.

“Whaat Aah Larnt”

(author unknown from a NLS workshop)

Aa’ve larnt aboot paanshops an whaat went
inside;
Aa’ve larnt aboot places doon on the Quayside;
Aa’ve larnt aboot Vickers an aad lord Aamstrang,
Scotswood Road an the pubs that theer waas
aal alang.
Aa’ve been up to Rothb’ry an Bambra as weel
An seen the bit boat that wor grace raad se weel,
Aa’ve been doon to Beamish, the museum at
Bowes,
An roond to Blackfriars, the place ye aal knows.
Aa’ve been to the Lib’ry aad papers t’read
(an noticed an advort - a shillin for breed!).
Aa’ve larnt aboot floods, pits an things gen sa
lang,
But, ee, best of aal, aa’ve larnt Geordie’s not
slang!

“A Day Oot Wi Me Marras” by Raymond Reed

Wu’ll dandor an mooch ayont yon
galloway, an tyek note o thi blee sky blent
wi thi hills, see thi spuggies, an thi neuks
bedighted wi eglantine. Fornenst thi cree
an abeun thi hemmel, wu’ll hev wor bait,
an batten worsels, time wu watch wor
bollen bellies graa tiv i muckle, yarkin size.

Then wu’ll tyek wor pipe an blin heor time
thi reek gaans oot, an set wor dowps
amaang thi pittleybeds an forgit aboot this
bale world. An gyp it thi cuddies, an thi
gobby, donnart craas wi thor feckless cries
an thi lowpin yows an dunchin coneys i thi
grass.

Thi bollen born hes corved i jud i thi
stenchin clarts an sleck, as it lowps, reels
an blethors an cowps its creels. Thi
hoppin bords are aal agabbor, playin
hitchy-dabbor, an skiddadlin doon thi
swally i thi soft low. But thi larks are
geeson.

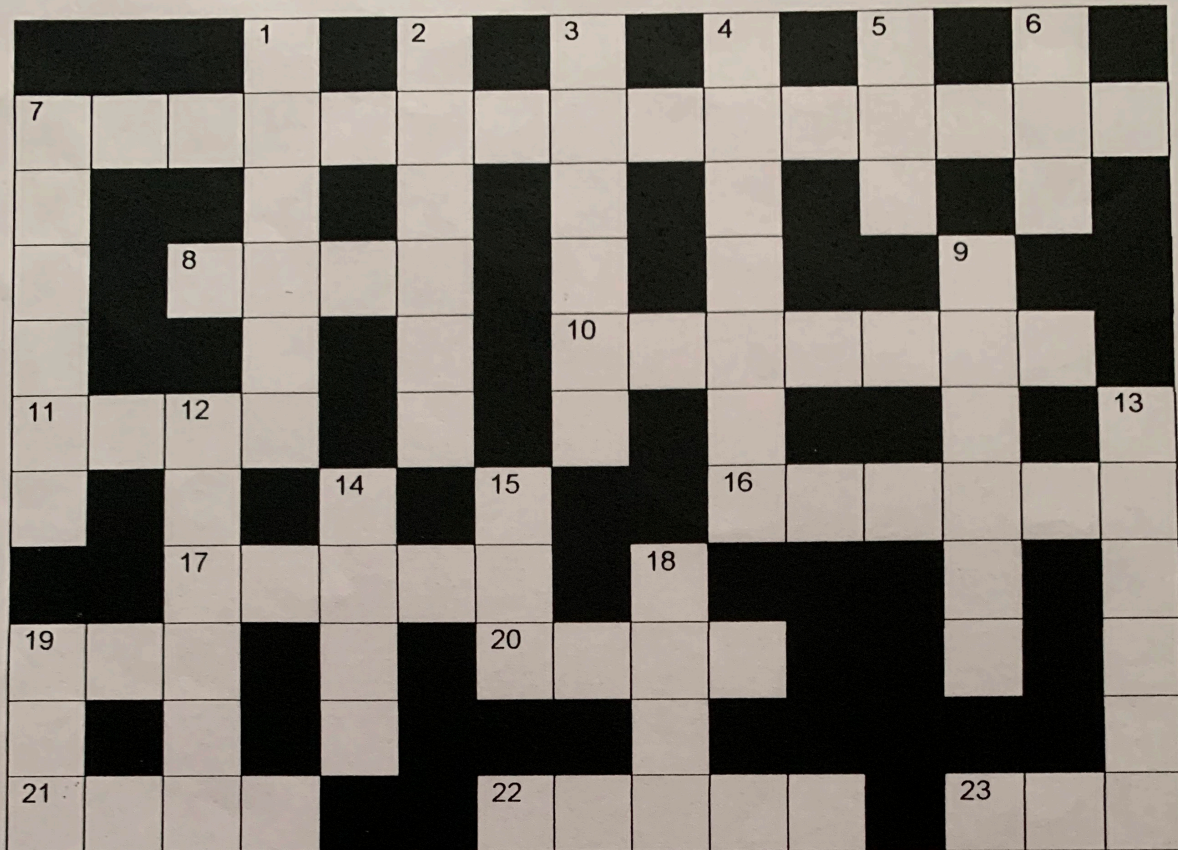
Yon field is chockor wi yarkin
bagies, wi tetties fornenst, seun ti be
howked. Thi bumlors are stottin doon thi
lonnen’s dyke, powkin thor snitches i thi
pittleybeds. Thi musky yarbs smell kif.
Thi aad chep on thi cracket, fishin, is
tyekin i deek it thi bari morts, while chowin
on ees yaries, an slorpin ees broon ale.
Ee’s jist caught haalf i duzzin yarkin trout,
off thi belt end, but ee’s ower stingey ti gis
i one. So, when aa git hyem thi neet, for
mi bait, aa’ll hev ti myek de wi me stotty
cyek wiv i bit o drippin, an for me pud, a bit
o spotty dick.

“Picnic” by Lisa Hewitt

(Lisa was a schoolgirl of 12 and a bit when she
wrote this poem in 1984)

Way doon the field where the bords flee,
I often gan there wi me bait,
Me stottycyek filled wi tuna-fish,
An me bottle o lemonade;
But a queer aald gadgy whee lives nigh
On the hill in ahint o the fence,
Is aalways oot there on his cuddy
Gliffin the poor little bords — why
Doesn’t he hev mair sense?
When the time gans slaa, I feel tired,
An I hoy away me crumbs.
The bords flee doon an eat’m up,
As I pour lemonade in me cup.
When the darkness is startin to faal,
An I can’t hear the little bords’ call,
It’s time then for me to gan hyem,
By the varyy same way that I cyem.

Try Your Luck With The Wampishword



Across

- 7 I don't understand French title of an old N.E. story (2,2,8,3)
- 8 Bounce
- 10 Come sir hold the baby
- 11 Newcastle's most expensive footballer
- 16 Used up ash in a pipe
- 17 See **21 Across**
- 19 Boy
- 20 Silly part of apple
- 21 **+17** Famous lighthouse Darling
- 22 Hoy this man hoy a ha'penny oot
- 23 Go

Down

- 1 On the moor or by the sea
- 2 Container following Shil
- 3 Sparrow
- 4 You could paddle across and almost ring it
- 5 The number fower is not one of these numbers
- 6 A proggy one
- 7 And she wheeled her wheelbarrow from Wallsend to this place
- 9 Tickle
- 12 It stands among the hungry hills and wears a frozen look
- 13 Stagshead pub is here
- 14 Sometimes it's best to say this
- 15 This doll has a wood near Ashington
- 18 **White bird = pub in Alnwick**
- 19 Goes before burn tower

“Up An Doon” by Bob Bolam

Aa've wrote a byeuk o poetry
Wey aa hev one here the day.
That picture's on the front
'N like thor's forty pence ti pay.

Aa selled one ti the vicar
An mother's bowt a few
Me fatha took a dozen
An me uncle one or two.

Aa selled some ti me wark mates
An the telled us it was grand,
Aa went around the sixties,
An the fellas in the band.

Women's clubs sent for us
An aa give them aall a thrill.
An better still, aa featured
On a show at Bardon Mill.

Me marra says “That's smashin
Wey man noo ye hev the car
Gan roond the pubs an flog a few
Just leave them on the bar.”

So aa diddled off ti Elsdon,
An aa fund the Bord an Bush,
Aa left some like aa'd ettled
Thinkin “Noo thor'll be a rush!”

Aa called back six weeks later, sayin
“Aa hope ye've not forgotten.”
“Aa selled them,” says the landlord,
“Mind we aall thowt the wor rotten!”

“Grandma's Little Treasure” by Hazel Dickson

Me grandbairn's cum aroond to stay
While eez mam and dad's away.
Noo, though Aa luv this little lad,
Aa hev to say his fettle's bad.
Aa say we'll gan ti play outside
Then heor his other grandma chide
He disn't get it from wor side!

Wi dee sum shoppin at the store,
Ee hoys thi tins aboot the floor.
Eez dunched the trolley at the till,
Thi poor lass tries ti sort thi bill.
Aa just hang me heed in shame,
Aa cannot show me fyes agyen -
One aad gadgies gan hyem lame!

Ee hes a shuggy in thi park
Aa heor a tortured frightened bark
And torn aroond ti find oot why
Eez poked sum poor beast in the eye!
Eez nappy's cled, ee starts ti yell,
Thi parkie says ee feels unwell,
And Aa'm not ower grand mesell!

A canny lassie thinks eez grand -
Ee daads hor doon inti thi sand.
The poor bit bairn shi gets a gliff,
Hor muther sees - we dee off quick!
Next wi gan ti see the shows -
Ee cowps his buggy on me toes,
Sum sour-dockin gorns eez nose!

Wi gets thi bus inti the toon -
Eez fleein roond, ee'll not sit doon.
Ee rings the bell and winnit stop,
The driver corses as we get off.
Wi gan ti hev a bite to eat -
Ee bowks ees boilie at me feet!
A huffy wife hes moved hor seat!

Doon the lane ee teks the gee,
Ee yells and kicks iz in the knee.
Aa try to get im in the hoose,
But ee danders up so it's nee use.
Ahint the weshin on the line
Aa heor a neighbor's vexin whine -
“Aa'd bray that bairn if he wor mine!”

Eez mam arrives ti tek im hyem,
“Wor yi gud?” she asks thi bairn.
The laddie doesn't utter peep -
Eez lying doon and soond asleep!
Grandma doesn't really care,
She's scumfished, flaked oot in hor chair!!

“Off The Mark” by Robert Allen

When Aah heor that owld sayin, man,
Aah nivvor tak nee heed,
Boot Southornors an Foreignors
Beginnin at Gatesheid;

Aah just torn roond an smile an say -
“Y'ore gey far off the mark;
For them that lives i Bellingham
The beggors starts at Wark!”

“Thi Caal o thi Corloo” by Nick Short

Aa'll hike this trod oot ower thi fell,
Ower land that nivvar saa thi ploo;
Aa'l travval it wi mi gibby stick,
An lissun for thi lone corloo.

Bi mossy hag, aal spagnum green,
An black heaps that thi monors hyoo,
Bi cotton grass an bleebarry clumps
Ti thi plaintive caals o thi sad corloo.

Bi thi wind-blahn rowan, sair tilteed,
An sprags deckt oot wi fah'n sheep woo',
Bi bull-snoots an hairy hewborts ti
Thi haantin caal o thi leythe corloo.

Thi grouse aar swattin ti thi heathor;
A distant foxo reddish hyoo;
A grey heron at thi quarry poo'ul,
An liltin caals o thi heugh corloo.

Rocks shyap'd bi thi hand o teyme,
Bi thi schar wheer brackin groo;
A cairn built bi thi herds ov auld,
Melodyus caals fre thi sweet corloo.

Bent-grass blahin i thi wind,
An thi watta stain'd an ambor hyoo;
Pluvvor an sneype flee fast o thi wing
Ti thi ripplin sang o thi wan corloo.

Noo, aa've tramped thi trod ower thi fell;
Thi tyuns o maichor mi heed run throo -
Thisoarin laark, thi shy peewit,
An thi liquid, bubblin, sweet corloo.

“Jist A Thowt” by Margaret Leslie

If Naebody smiled an Naebody cheeored,
An naebody helped us alang;
If aal uv us jist lukked eftor worsels,
An thi gud things jist went ti thi strang;
If naebody cared whaat happened ti ye,
An wi aal jist thowt about ME;
If wi stud bi worsels in thi battle uv life,
Whaat an aaful life it waad be!

“Foreshift Blues” by Mary Preston

When Geordie was in foreshift
Ees poor wife lived in fear,
In fact aall freends an family
Med sure they wor not near.

Yi cudn't caall him wark-shy,
His marras vouched for that,
They'd seen im fill ten tubs o coal
In ninety minutes flat.

Mary had ti try hor best
Ti keep thins runnin propor,
Othorwise shi knew fine weel
That she wad cum a croppor.

Nowt but the best went in ees bait,
Pease puddin an roast ham.
(In backshift ee waas lucky
If ee got breed an jam!)

Shi'd wrap it in newspaper,
Wawk time wus gettin near,
“Mary” ee'd say “Aa betta not gan,
Aa'm feelin kinda queer.”

Bi noo shi wus quite used ti this,
An knew ti use hor guile.
“Cum on, mi luv” sn stroked ees hair,
Ee'd give a sickly smile.

Outside thi wind wus blaa'n a gale,
The rain wus chuckin't doon.
“Yi canna send is oot in yon;
It's a sure bet aa wud droon.”

“Aa'gree wi yon,” shi calmly sayd.
“It's not fit forr beast nor man.
Heor's yorr hat an raincoat,
Jist dee thi best ye can.”

Once outside ee realised
Ees devastatin plight,
Ee wadn't get back yem agyen
Until thi morn's daylight.

T'was then thi buzzor blew,
A luvly wailin soond,
Ee threw ees cap up in thi air -
“Wor idle! Cheeors aall roond!!”

“Song O The North” by Ellen Thompson

Thor’s nyen can sing a sang o thi North,
Bar them that hev bent neath thi blaa
Ov an icy blast o thi Cheviot Hills,
Wi snaa i the valley belaa;
Or hord thi breakers beat on thi shore,
An waatched them sea-horses ride,
Thor white manes flyin, thi sea bords cryin,
Awaitin thi torn o thi tide.

Thor’s nyen can sing that storin refrain,
Bar folk that hev waaked i thi Spring
Doon Coquet way, when thi wawld comes
ti life
In hedgeraas wheor sweet blossoms cling,
An thi river meandorin doon ti thi sea
Is catchin thi glint o thi sun,
That syem gowlden baal high up ower aal
When thi daylight hoors varnigh are dyun.

Thor’s nyen can sing a song o thi North
If thi hairt isn’t true ti thi tune,
An thi eye hesn’t seen thi gay Autumn
tints,
An breathed in thi fragrance o June;
But once ye’ve larnt thi sweet melody,
It’ll haant yi an nivvor let go,
For e’en i December are joys ti rimember
An keep thi North’s spirit aglow.

“Wor Northumborland” by Margaret Leslie

Noo, it’s not jist a rumour; it’s gospel, Aa feor;
When thi Coouncil’s disbanded, w’ore still
“Tyne an Weor”.
Aa’m varry upset; Aa’m reet dowly an sad;
Aa’ll gan forther thun yon, man - Aa’m
blummin weel mad!

Th’ore tryin ti tell us that nyen uv us mind:
Th’ore just taakin rubbish - an yon’s bein kind!
Hoo many foaks t’ this corna uv Brittin
Think sic a nyem is reet, proper an fittin?

Divvent ye think it soonds tarrible queor
When ye hev ti admit ye “bilang” Tyne an
Weor?
Tha’s bin minny chyanges, an few fa thi
bettor,
But wi aal tyek thi gee at them wawds on
a letter.

“Tyne an Weor”, yon’s a title that nee wan can
stand,
An ti hev yon, wi loss wan thit’s perfectly
grand —
Whaat’s wrang wi them fond foak, thi brains o
thi land,
Thit thi must keep us oot o Nothumborland?

“A Geordie View” by Jean Baker

When Aa’m cummin hyame frum faar-aff
forrin parts,
Wi mi dyutty-free Sundorland wine,
Aa feel a greet thumpin doon heor i me
heart,
Syun’s Aa’m nigh on Newcassel on Tyne.

Coz theor’s thi Tyne Bridge, man, a reet
canny sight,
Yon corved goders a joy ti bihowld,
It means Aa’m back hyame, an amang me
ow’n kind,
Wheor it’s dorty an common an cowld.

Wheor folks taalk reel funny an divvent
hev jobs,
Thi guvformint knaas nowt aboot;
Tha’r reet canny sowls an thor’s plenty o
pubs
Ti discuss hoo ti get this lot oot.

Yon bridge stands for days when thi
Geordies had wawk,
An shipyards had order-books full,
Ye knew wheer ye wor wi yor reggular pay:
Noo it’s gan Sooth, or sign on thi dole.

Aa winnit gan Sooth, an whey shud Aa?
Aa mean —
Aa wis born heor ‘side pit heaps an mines;
Aal these is me folks, an aal this is ma
scene,
Wheor thi Tyne Bridge lowps ower thi
Tyne.



NB: Ansors ti thi **“Whe’s Tellin Hoafies”** on
page 11: 1b, 2a, 3c, 4a, 5b

“Shephord’s Waarnin” by Dick Lowes

Geordie Dunn wis a shephord. Ye know, yon can be a lanely life, an forr a bit iv a joke ee bigan taakin tiv ees sheep. Tev ees surprise ee foond oot in time thit ee cud hev a bit uv a convorsaishun wi them. Mind ye, They wad clam up if onnywan else cyem on thi scene. Whey noo Geordie wisn’t a bad singor, and wan day ee wis singin thi Whiffinpoof sang ti them, an tiv ees amyazemint when ee cyem ti thi chorus iv “Baa, baa, baa,” thi sheep joined in!

Strite awaa ee saa thi potenshil iv this, an ee picks hissel an aalto, a tenor, an a baritone, an ee staartid gannin roond the clubs, wheer ee waas a greet success. Wawd gets roond o corse, an thi Dyuk o Northumborland phoned ees boss wan day. Geordie wis caaled ti thi phone, an a voice at thi uthor end says, “Whaat fettle, Geordie? Ye divn’t knaa is but ah’ve heord iv ye an yor wunnorful act wi yor sheep. Whey, Ah’m hevvin a bit iv a Gathrin in Alnwick Castle afore lang, an ah’m wundrin if ye cud fit an appeorince in?”

Whey, Geordie didn’t knaa whit ti say, but thi faarmor whee’d been near enuff ti heeor thi convorsaishun, nodded ees heed like mad. Seh Geordie stammored thit ee wad, an thi Dyuk telt him thi time o thi concert, an say’d thit a Land Rover wad pick’im up on thi neet an breeng him back hyem efforwaads. Thi faarmor slapped Geordie on thi back, sayin thit ee shudn’t lyuk gift horse i thi gob, an this might dee baith o them a bit ov gud an help them prosper.

Whey, ye knaa, Geordie got intiv sic a fettle wi eesel that ee cud haardly’s theenk strite aboot ees wawk. Ee catched eesel thinkin thit ee’d bettor gan a bit up-market forr ees gis at thi Dyuk’s. Ee gets thor lass ti run up sum fancy jackits forr thi sheep, but, though thi wor quiet enuff yooshly, it torded oot theer wis nee way they wor ganna weeor tuxeedos! Geordie threatened ti train anuthor trio, but tha wisn’t wan blackleg i thi hord, let alane a black sheep! Thi wor wan hunnord por cent solid, an they caaled in thi yoonyun stewaad, whe telt Geordie his membors wis supposed ti luk sheepish, not mannish! In thi end a compromise wis reached. Thi trio agreed ti weeor bow ties an Geordie had ti be content wi yon. It wis still an unhappy sitiwaishun when thi big neet arrived.

Onnyways, theer they wor in Alnwick Castle, on a little podium, afore thi Dyuk an ees guests. Noo Geordie had been se worried abyut ees up-market immij thit ee strayed awaa frae seengin in ees yushyul Northumbrian fashin. Ee’d been whaat wi yoosed ti caal “scrapin ees tung” forr thi greet occashin. But he forgot thit animals aare reckined ti be funny wi langwij - nee use speakin Indian tiv an Afreecan eleefint, or t’uthor way roond.

Onnyways, thi gadgy at thi pianner strikes up a chord an Geordie begins singin in ees new posh voice “We are poor black sheep who have lost our way” an ees lyuks at thi sheep expectantly. Whey, ye knaa, nowt happens. Ee gans on “We are poor black sheep who have lost our way” and ees lyuks agyen. Nivvor a bleat. Bi noo, ee cud heor thi tittors iv thi guests. Thi wore ower pilite ti shoot “Hoy im off!” but i thi end, Geordie left thi styage wiv an aaful reed fyace. Back stage, ee says “Whaat thi hell happind ti ye lot? Why didn’t ye cum in on cue?”

“Cue?” says thi heed sheep. “Wi nivvor heord it. Aa divn’t knaa whit langwij ye wor singin in, but it wisn’t Northumbrian!”

One of the NLS traditions at the Yule Meet at the beginning of December, is to sing our NLS Christmas carol written by NLS Fellow, Hazel Dickson. So, because there won't be a Yule Meet this year, why not get yourselves some refreshments, and sing our Yuletide Carol instead!!! ,.....

One dark neet in Beth-le-hem. Sing 'Ha-way me lad'

Christ was born in hem-mel then. 'Ha-wa-y me bon-ny lad'

One dark neet in Bethlehem.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 Christ was born in hemmel then.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

He was happt in hippins waarm.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 Mary rocked Him on hor aarm.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

Shephords cum ti keek at Him.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 God's aan bairn was welcomed in.
'Haway, me bonny lad.'

Angels cum doon from aheight.
Sing, 'Haway, me lad.'
 And aal the orth waas filled wi light.
'Waat cheor, wor bonny lad.'

Whe's Tellin Hoafies?

Wey, noo, hinnies, it's a sheyum that wu still cannut hev a propa porson-ti-porson Yule Meet but, onyweys, let's hev anuther stab at wor word-bluffin gyem, Whe's Tellin Hoafies? - the Northumbrian verson of Call My Bluff. These aad Northumbrian words belaa wor used back in 2011 at wor real live event. If ye wor theor ye'll surely nivvor remember the ackchewal correct meanins, so why not try thim oot wi yor families at hyem instaird?

One of the definishuns given in each group of meanins is sartinly the reet one, but the ithers are propa hoafies (Aa'm sure ye divvent need remindin that a hoafy is a half-truth or fib).

As we telt ye last year, ye'll probly hev ti guess the meanins, an nee cheatin bi sneakin a leuk in yor copies of local glossaries or goggling online!

1. BAGGIE

- a. a swollen eye
- b. the belly
- c. a tramp who carries his possessions in a cloth bag

2. FLOTHERY

- a. slovenly, but attempting to be fine and showy: "He's fat an flothery"
- b. fussy, easily confused: "She's gan aall flothery since she kenn'd the priest wes comin te tea"
- c. bubbling up, boiling, forming scum on the surface: "The suds in the set-pot cum up proper flothery"

3. BAGGOT

- a. an opinionated bigot: "She's nowt but an aad baggot"
- b. a wooden mallet used for killing salmon
- c. useless, contemptible, worthless - applied to a little, vixen-like child or a drunken man

4. CAT-GALLOWS

- a. a children's game in which they take turns to leap over two sticks placed upright with one across
- b. a farmer's device for scaring off pests, shaped like a crane from which an appropriate item is hung
- c. nickname for a butcher's hook, used in Wallsend

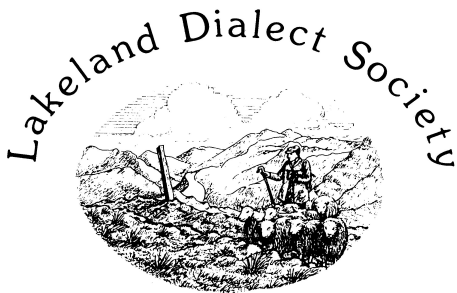
5. PERRICK

- a. a perch in a bird's cage
- b. an enclosure of fields near a farm house or any place of shelter or protection
- c. two upright props with a cross piece at the top, for the support of a pit roof or forming wood bridges or staiths. The top piece is the "crown tree".

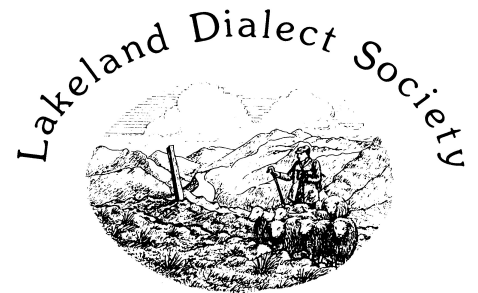
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The Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture 2021



We are pleased that this year's Lecture was able to go ahead, though in a reduced format. A small but perfectly behaved audience gathered in Morpeth Town Hall on Saturday 9th of October to listen to Bob Bolam (top photo) telling his tales and singing his songs.

This year's lecture was different, because Bob had the support of people like Don Clegg (bottom photo) and Alex Swailes doing recitations, and Ruth Ball entertaining us on the fiddle.

The whole event was videoed (another innovation!!) and it is hoped to produce an edited version which will appear on our websites.



Please Remember, Don't Forget

It's that time of year again!!
Have you got all of your Yuletide presents sorted?
If not, why not think about some
Northumbrian Language Society merchandise?

**We have T-shirts, Books, CDs, and Christmas Cards,
all at reasonable prices.**

Visit our websites for more details:-
northumbriana.org.uk
northumbrianlanguagesociety.co.uk

“The Aunties” by Jane Smailes

Lang ago, whan Aa wes smaal,
Thi aanties aal seemed varry taal;
Thi gathored, regula es clocks,
An fussed aroond in chattrin flocks,
Aal shiny shoes an paarty frocks.

When e'er wor famly had a “do”,
Thi aanties, an thi cousins too,
Wud bring thi uncles in thor soots,
Blues an greys, an squeaky boots,
A convocation o me roots.

Laughin ladies, Rubens* roondid
(Weight-waatchors'd not been foondid),
Lipstick on an nice clean pinny:
Florrie, Polly, Sally, Jinny,
Dora, Doris, Lily, Minnie.

Thi bustle as thi got thor tea!
Not one sittin - two or three!
Fruit an jilly for thi takin,
Stacks o sarnies, hoors in makin,
Cakes an scones an aal hyame bakin.

An eftor, whan thi men went oot,
Ti thi pub, Aa hev ne doot,
“Newmarkit” an games of chance,
Pianna playin for a dance,
An sing-sang wi thi jolly aants.

Wor gathrins noo are not thi syame,
Wi cousins scattored, seekin fyame,
Thi aants are gone - but whee can cry?
Aa'm sure wi'll meet thim by an by,
At yon greet “knees-up” i thi sky!

* Aa mean thi painter fella, ye knaa, not yon Lord thit lukked eftor thi Coal Board!