

NORTHUMBRIAN LANGUAGE SOCIETY

"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"



Charity No: 515179

**Members' Newsletter No 47
August 2003**



Patrons: Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

NEXT HAPPININ

SPINDLESTONE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION TOUR 2003

Tuesday 12th August: Cramlington Folk Club, Comrades Club, Cramlington 8pm
Saturday 16th August: Allendale Village Hall, with Cranachan, 7.30pm with
licensed bar, Tickets £5, concessions £3, family £10
Final Concert - Monday 18th August: Chantry Bagpipe Museum, Morpeth 7.30pm
Tickets £5, concessions £4, including interval refreshments, from the Chantry on
01670-500700, or from Kim on 01670-513308

Kim, John & Ray back in action with their multi-instrumental approach to
Northumbrian traditional songs and tunes. Come and party at the last gig of the
reunion tour before singer Ray Leonard returns to Canada

GAFFER'S GRUMLINS

DEOR REEDOR HINNY

THIS YEOR IS GANNA BE VARRY IMPORTANT FER WOR SOCIETY. WHEN WU LOOK
BACK, AAH RECKON WU'LL SEE HOO MUCH PROGREES WU'VE MED. AN WHY DIV
AAH SAY THET? IT'S DEED SIMPLE - THE MOODY BYUK. WU'VE TAAKED ABOUT IT FER
YEORS, AN HOPED THET SUMMAT'D TORN UP TI LET WU DEE IT. AN BE SUMMAT,
AAH MEAN THE MUNNY TI LET WU GET IT PRINTED. WU THINK WU'VE FUND THE
MUNNY, AND WUH KEEPIN WOR FINGERS CROSSED THET IT'LL AAL CUM OOT REET
THIS TIME, AN THET IT'S GANNA BE REDDY FER WOR SPESHUL MEETIN ON IITH
OCTOBER IN MORPETH TOON HAAL.. WU'LL KEEP YU POSTED ON WOT'S GANNIN ON,
AN AAH HOPE YU'LL BE THEOR TI SUPPORT WU.

THE GAFFER

SOCIETY NEWS

Thirty members attended the Society's Annual General Meeting on Saturday 3rd May in the Morpeth Comrades' Club. Members received a report from the Executive Committee about the previous year's activities, and approved the statement of audited accounts. The meeting also elected the officers of the Society for the next twelve months.

Following the AGM we had a very successful Reed Neet celebration. The usual pie and peas supper was enjoyed, not forgetting the wonderful stottie! The toasts to the stottie were by Hazel Dickson and Terry Common; then Peter Athey and Johnny Handle toasted the bard Fred Reed. After this, several members present hoyed in their bits an pieces to entertain us all.

A number of members of the Society helped out at the recent Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering, particularly in the dialect competitions on the Saturday afternoon. There were five entries in both of the Storytelling and Fine Northumbrian Speech categories, and the judges gave a lot of helpful feedback to the competitors. This event was followed by the dialect recital during which the results were announced of the other language sections, and some of the prizewinners were present to read out their entries. Full results are on our website: www.northumbriana.org.uk

On Wednesday 14th May, Society Chairman Peter Arnold and Committee member Glenn Simpson travelled to Glasgow Airport to meet members of the UK Committee of the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL). The Bureau is a European organisation whose job is to record and preserve languages in the European Union which are in danger of being lost because they are not the language spoken by the majority of people in their respective countries. So, in the UK for example, the Bureau recognises Gaelic, Scots, Welsh, Manx, Cornish and Ulster Scots as distinct minority languages, and the purpose of Glenn and Peter's visit to Glasgow was to let the Committee know about Northumbrian, and to suggest that it should be added to EBLUL's list. We gave them quite a bit of information about what we do, and about why we think Northumbrian should be recognised as a separate language, and they asked us quite a few questions as well. The next stage is for the Committee to consider the issue, and to decide what recommendation to make to EBLUL. They have promised to contact us again in September, and we look forward to their recommendation. Whatever the outcome of that process, the Ulster Scots people have expressed an interest in having closer links with us, and that will add an interesting extra dimension to our activities.

Work is progressing on our collaboration with the University of Newcastle on the joint bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support with a number of research activities into the state of the Northumbrian Language. There is no certainty at all that the bid will be successful, and it is taking up a lot of time, particularly of the Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, but we think the principle of partnership working is the right one, and this has been endorsed by the AGM, and by the Executive Committee of the Society. As part of the on-going work, the University has produced a language questionnaire, which we have helped with, which they would like members of the Society to complete to provide some information that will help with future research. A copy of the questionnaire is included with this newsletter, and we hope everyone will spend a few minutes filling it in. When you've done this, please return it to Kim at Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RE, **by the end of August.**

The publication of the Moody Book is something we have agreed to do as our own project for 2003. Work on this is progressing as well, though some of the activities and funding are tied in with the Heritage Lottery bid referred to in the previous paragraph. We are still hopeful of having the book ready for the launch on Saturday 11th October. We think we have most of the money in place to make it all happen, and we're trying to tie up some loose ends before sending the material to the printer. Members will recall that we did float the idea with you some time ago about having a list of people who would guarantee to buy copies of the book when it is published. This is important to enable the powers that be to realise we are serious about this project. Well, the time has arrived when we need to call in those favours, so you will find enclosed with this newsletter a form which we hope you will fill in committing yourself to buying at

least one copy of the book when it comes out. The Moody Book is a beautiful text in its own right, as well as being an excellent statement of the position of the Northumbrian language in the middle years of the twentieth century. Please support us if you can. The price of the book will not exceed £25, the CD will be £12, and there will be postage and package costs as well. But please remember that this will be a unique book, something to treasure, and a very important text about the Northumbrian language.

We've just heard of the sad news from Denny Spence that George Johnson has died after a period of increasing ill health. George was a founding member of the Hexham Branch, and served as its efficient and kindly secretary and treasurer for many years, arranging speakers and conducting business, until retiring from the post, which in fact led to the end of regular branch meetings. George's service to the Society was recognised by his being awarded an Honorary Membership a few years ago. George was also active in the local history society and a volunteer guide at Hexham Abbey, where the funeral service was held last month. Our deepest condolences are extended to Mrs Johnson.

"THINGS I REMEMBER"

by Margaet Storey

Mrs Sarah Scott of Wooler has let us have sight of her late sister's notebook which contains her jottings over the years of old words, expressions, sayings, rhymes and singing games. Here are a couple of her old rhymes:-

Herdie, herdie, blaw your horn,
A' the sheep'samang the corn.
If your winna blaw
Send your dog amang them a'.
If your dog winna gan,
Gan yorsel, ye lazy man!

Three days March borrowed from April,
Three days and they were ill.
The first o' them was snaw and sleet,
The second o' them was wind and weet,
The third o' them was sic a freeze
It froze the sma' birdies' nebs to the trees.

And here are some ways Margaret Storey noted people used when calling animals:-

Cattle: "Hove, hove"
Pigs: "Geece, geece"
Ducks, goslings or geece: "Weety weet"
Hens: "Chuck, chuck"
Horses: "Cup, cup"
Pigeons: "Puddy pud"
Chickens: "Buddy, buddy"
Young turkeys: "Peep, peep"

MEETINGS AND HAPPENINGS

Saturday 6 September - Dialect Delights at Boldron village hall, near Barnard Castle, from 1.30pm until 5pm. This is the second of these regional gatherings, which brings together all of the dialect and language societies in the north of England. The purpose is to share our rich heritage, and to learn more. This year's guest speaker will be Stanley Ellis, one of our members, whom many of you will remember gave our first Roland Bibby Memorial lecture. Following that, there will be an opportunity for all the societies to do a spot highlighting their own unique dialect. We certainly intend to be there, and to participate. Anyone going along is asked to take something that can be contributed to the shared tea that will be available.

Saturday 13 September - Great North Fair at Gateshead Stadium. This is a commercial venture but organised along the lines of the Durham Family History Day, where people and organisations with an interest in the culture and heritage of our region come together to display and share their wares with members of the public. We have agreed to take a stall, and we will be grateful for any help members can give on the day.

Friday 19 September - Glendale Festival fundraising event. We have agreed to do a turn at this event which is designed to raise funds for the Glendale Festival, held annually in Wooler. We need volunteers to perform in the evening - songs, poems, stories - anything in the language will do!

Saturday 4 October - Morpeth Arts Day Coffee Morning, Morpeth Town Hall, between 10 am and 1pm. Another opportunity to tell members of the public what we do, and to encourage them to buy our excellent merchandise! Again, there are performing spots throughout the event, and volunteers are needed. This will be followed at 2pm in the Chantry Museum by a Songwriting Workshop with Johnny Handle and Sandra Kerr.

Thursday 9 October - National Poetry Day, Society activities somewhere in Morpeth during the day to celebrate the event. More details later, but please put the date in your diary. Suggestions for activities welcome. Let Kim know on 01670-513308.

Saturday 11 October - launch of the Moody Book, Morpeth Town Hall from 2pm. Apart from one or two mini-lectures on Moody himself, his dictionary, and the modern research project it has inspired, there will be performances of some of the songs he transcribed, refreshments, and with luck, actual copies of the book to inspect and buy!

Saturday 13 December - Yule Meet, Chantry Museum, Morpeth - our traditional pre-Christmas celebration of our language, with food (donated on the day for all to share), drink (Hazel's wonderful punch!), entertainment provided by the assembled throng, and finishing off with our own NLS Christmas carol. What a way to welcome in the festive season!

For more information about any of these events, please write to the Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson at Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RE, or telephone her on 01670-513308.