



October 1994

Newsletter 22

Yule Meet December 3rd - See page 3

Newsletters for the Future

Well, here is the first newsletter cautiously presented by its new "Editor - Terry Common" with a little help from his friends, i.e., "The Bibbys". While this "virgin Editor" (I) will try his best to produce the newsletter as often as possible, without material submitted by you, The Language Society members, it makes it that much more difficult. So please let me have anything YOU feel is of interest even if it may not ultimately be published.

I received a letter from Nick Short, one of our Hexham branch members, mentioning that it was 50 years ago when a U.S.A.A.F. bomber en route for Germany crashed during a snow storm on Cheviot. A memorial using a propeller blade of a Flying Fortress with details of the incident painted on it was set up at the site of the crash. It has, however, disappeared over the years and Nick feels it might be a good idea to replace it on this 50th anniversary. I know a lot has been written about this tragedy and subsequent rescue by local shepherds but it is worth remembering that a collie dog, "Sheila", won the Dickin medal (the animals' V.C.) for her part in the rescue of survivors. If any member has more information about this incident and would like to pursue it further, they can get in touch with Nick at 32 Leazes Park, Hexham, NE46 3AY.

Short Story Competition

I have an entry form for the above competition, closing date 31.3.95. Although the form has to be submitted to a Newcastle upon Tyne address, the competition, which is approved by Northern Arts, appears to be national and indeed international. Entries must be written in English (wonder if this includes Northumbrian?). If anyone is interested I will arrange to photocopy the relevant form and information. You can contact me at 34, Middlegate, Loansdean, Morpeth, NE61 2DD (with an s.a.e.) - tel. (0670) 515967.

Tees Valley Writer

National Competition 1994 - Poetry and Short Stories

Entry fee £3 - closing date 31.12.94

Entry forms and further information available from Comp. Sec., Tees Valley Writer, 57 The Avenue, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 6QU.

The Kern Picnic

I understand this was a huge success. Unfortunately this correspondent was unable to attend due to commitment to the 124th Harbottle Show - the correspondent's birthplace. Mind ye can sartinly heor sum gud Northumbrian yonder: the sheep men hevin a grand crack aboot Wullie's prize gimma, or the ladies wonderin why Nellie Morton hedn't owt in the needlework this year. Mind the newcomers (why, ye knaa, been theor aboot 20 years) join in the spirit iv things is weel. Theor's a quoits competition ind the bairns still run the three-legged race, ind the egg ind spoon. Aye, still a friendly little family country show. But, back to the Kern Picnic and an excellent review by Mr. and Mrs. Robinson of the Newcastle Branch.

Ye'll mebbies mind on a yeor or twee back we wess gan ti hev a Yule Neet, but neebody wanted ti gan. So this yeor wor Committee decided t' hev a Kern Picknic. Noo ye'll aal naa whot kern is, it's what ye myek floo-a oot of afore it's grooned doon, an a kern picknic is when ye hev yor bait at the harvest. But that's aal bye the bye.

Ony road, we wor kindly invited ti gan ti Newton Haall, that's ootbye Newton on the Moor, by Mrs. McLean whe lives in wet wes yence the tack room an' uthor runs a' the haall but is noo a bonny bit cottage. So we aal gans up theor, aboot fower an twenty of us, give or tyek yen or twee. Efftor we got theor we forst sat doon t' coffee an biskits provided by Mrs McLean in hor hoos. Then efftor a bit crack wor Vice President formally welcomed us aal and Kim Bibby-Wilson ootlined wot we wor gan t' dee for the day, cos hor faathor had a bit wark i the chist an couldn't myek the picknic, but he's aal reet noo.

Forst we went for a waak roond the consorvatree led by Mrs McLean and by, wat a grand place is yon, and big tee, an full o floo-ors. The wes a greet big geranium clagged t' the waal aboot fifteen feet taal wi stems as thick as a bairn's arm. The place wes bigged by yen o Captain Widdrington's ancestors whee wes a geet man for the plants an that. Ye'll knaa the Widdringtons, yen o the aadest families o Northumberland. Yen o them fowt at Otterborn on his stumps efftor baith his legs were chopped off. Efftor that we wnt doon through the wood an roond the bit wettor. Mind, ye had t' gan canny for the giant hog weed, like greet sweep's brushes stood up on thor hint ends.

When we cyem ootbye the wood we went a bit ways doon the lonnen t' keek at the view ower t' the coast. It wesn't vary cleor but we cud just see Coquet Island. On the way back up the lonnen t' the hoos we saa lots o bords runnin aboot the field. We thowt they wes pheasants but someone thowt they saa a peacock ahint the dyke. By, but thes some grand big trees in yon wood.

When we got back t' Mrs McLean's hoos we had wor bait an she med the tea and coffee. While we wor hevin it we had t' dee a test t' see if we kened a list o Northgumbrian words which scumfeast maist o' w' but wor Joyce kened maist o' them and won a prize and Aa won the raffle -- Aa got a greet big chetty in a wee creel wi other bits o' fruit an ' veg. Efftor that we watched a bit film on the TV aboot Mrs McLean's husband Mac's award for his work for

the arts in Northumberland. Then Mrs. Joan Pringle give us a taak on hor days i the Land Army oot bye Wooler. An it's a gud job the lasses hadn't had ower much tea for Aa've niv laffed see much for a lang time. And when we cyem ootbye it wes var'nee fower instead o' three o'clock which says hoo good it wes.

Efftor that we finished the day at Malcom Cleghorn's studio t' keek at his pitchors wot he'd painted and mind, there wess some bonny yens, maistly local views. There wes yen greet big yen, a rose winder painted in thoosands of smaall roses, wi little wee scenes representing the fower seasons. By, it wes bonny. Oh, an Aa forgot, Kim had hor bit bairn wi hor an wat a bonny bairn she is. Finally we aal toddled yem an them that wesn't theor sud think shame. Wor thanks t' Captain Widdrington, Mr. Cleghorn and Mrs McLean for a grand day.

Close the Coalhouse Door

First performed in 1968 Alan Plater's legendary masterpiece, in a re-written version, is touring the area after an acclaimed run at Newcastle's Live Theatre. The play is based on stories by the Language Society's first President, the late Sid Chaplin. For further information about this great play, contact Allison Lister, Marketing Officer (091) 261 2694 or phone the Box Office (091) 232 1232. Not to be missed!

Branch News

Newcastle Branch -- next meeting is on Wednesday 9th November, 7.30 pm at Spital Tongues Community Centre, when the guest speaker/performer will be champion dialect speaker Terry Common (who?). Details from George Wallace, 091 2583105.

Hexham Branch -- next meeting is on Thursday 10th November, 7.30 pm at Priestpoppo House with a session on the latest instalment of the Dialect Survey. Details from George Johnson, 0434 605413.

Yule Meet

The Society's central Christmas get-together will be held at Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum at 2 pm on Saturday 3rd December. Admission will be free, but it is proposed that a raffle will be held to cover costs and members are asked to bring a story (or song or poem) and a mince pie (or cake or savoury). Punch and soft drinks will be provided, along with a competition or two. Let's make the Yule Meet as successful as the recent Kern Picnic! While tickets will not be needed, we do wish to have an idea of the numbers hoping to attend, so please complete the accompanying form and send to the Chairman's address as soon as possible (Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RF) with an s.a.e. so that we can send full details. There will be no further newsletter before Christmas, so don't forget the date!

A Dickens of an Evening

A fascinating theatre bill from 1852 has been reproduced for sale in poster form just in time for Christmas. While not involving dialect, it is of local historic interest, recalling the visit of Charles Dickens to the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle, with a band of theatricals under his management. The cast lists include Wilkie Collins as Mr. Shadowly Softhead, John Tenniel (illustrator of the Alice books) as Mr. Hardman, Augustus Egg as a Grub Street Author and Pamphleteer and Dickens himself as A Pedestrian and Cold Water Drinker, A Respectable Female and A Deaf Sexton.

The original theatre bill belongs to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, who have given permission to Northumbriana Magazine to produce the full-size facsimile (9"x20" approx., in red and black lettering). Copies are available from the Language Society's secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, at £2 each (add 50p postage & packing for any number) or at a higher price at certain retail outlets.

Barn Dance

The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering holds its fund-raising Barn Dance and Supper on Saturday 26th November at 8 pm at Morpeth YMCA Hall. Music is by the Blue Moon Band and guest dancers the Barnstormers, from Newcastle, will be performing. Tickets are from the Chantry Bagpipe Museum (0670 519466). N.B. 1995 Gathering dates - 21-23 April.

Editor's Postscript

I hope I've struggled through this 22nd Newsletter with reasonable success and I look forward to hearing from, and indeed seeing you all, in the future. *Keep ahaad.*

Terry Common

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Message from the Secretary

First, I'd like to thank Terry Common for producing the Newsletter so quickly and apologise to him, and you, for not processing it more promptly - the bairn had a gastric virus for almost a fortnight at just the wrong time (when is such a thing ever welcome?), the Chairman's suffering from the palpitations and a gammy leg and we're attempting to buy a new house.....(which is why any correspondence to me should be sent c/o the Chairman's address, although you could perhaps still reach me on 091 232 4329) Finally, is the address label on this letter correct? Please let me know if there are errors, or what your postcode is if it is missing or incomplete.

Kim Bibby-Wilson