



The Northumbrian Language Society



Newsletter 31

Patrons: Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

Editor: Terry Common

May 1998

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JOINT MEETING & SOCIAL EVENT

Sat. 13th June see p.3

MEMORIAL LECTURE Sat. 17th October see p.4

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Whey, how are ye deeyin, folks? Another Gathering came and went again, and another "gud yin" it waas. Again stuck (enjoyably!) nearly all Saturday afternoon in Collingwood House, I missed some of the other "gannin ons" but Ah knaa a lot about the writing competitions and dialect recital. The Saturday night Winners' Concert which I had the privilege to take part in was again a great success.

The lists of winners, runners up and commended are too many to mention but full lists of winners in all Gathering competitions are available from the Bagpipe Museum at Morpeth Chantry. However, I would like to say how impressed I was with the amount of work entered by young people in the different competitions, and may I say particularly, Belford School. Well done to the children and their teachers for a considerable amount of hard work. It is important, as they are our future.

Note from Kim: Two local video experts captured three hours of Gathering weekend activities, which they have distilled into a seventeen-minute promotional video. It gives tastes of such events as the children's pageant, clog workshop, didgeridoo workshop, country dance bands, street entertainers, the visit of two women's choirs to suffragette Emily Davison's grave and the Border Cavalcade. Unfortunately, as they did not wish to intrude upon the competitions and concerts by setting up separate vocal microphones, there is very little solo singing or dialect in the compilation, apart from the Morpeth Gadgy's speech of welcome at the Cavalcade and an outdoor conversation featuring Nick Short and his famous curly stick (what's the Northumbrian for Knobkerry?--- kigglycudgel?). Copies of the tape, including attractive cover, will be available for sale soon at £10 plus 50p postage (send cheques made out to "M.N.G.C." to Mrs. J. Brown, "Bilsdale", Ulgham, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 3AR).

Always Welcome

I'm pleased to say we hev sum new members who have joined the Society and hopefully a few mair in the pipeline. A waarm welcome te them fyemous canny fellas Johnny Handle of High Spen, Raymond Reed of Stakeford and Richard Berg Rust of Gateshead whe've paid thor subs for the forst teym.

If ye waant a few copies of the AppleeKayshun Form te give te yor freends jist ax ony uv the Committee.

Lindisfarne Gospels

On 21st March my wife Avril and I travelled by train to London with a party of same-minded people with regard to the Lindisfarne Gospels. We enjoyed some Northumbrian music en route, with Kathry Tickell playing the pipes, much to the amusement and enjoyment of some passengers who got on the train at Peterborough. Richard Berg Rust (one of our new members) from Low Fell was in charge. We made our way from King's Cross to the British Museum where the Gospels are kept and where TV cameras were present. Then came a march (peaceful, of course) complete with banner to Downing Street, to present the petition for the return of the Gospels to where many people believe their rightful home, Northumbria. There are some who feel there are other issues of more importance for Northumberland and I understand their feelings, but if you look at this as a "starter" then perhaps it may act as a stepping stone towards other matters. An enjoyable day out, anyhow.

The Fred Reed Neet

was held at Morpeth Comrades' Club, which provided much more room for the 45ish-strong party of us than we had last year.

The Address and Ripley tae the Muckle Great Stotty folleed bi the Address ind Ripley tae the Baad, wor ain Freed, wor maist interestin and entertainin. The bits an pieces hoyed in efterwards wor sum iv the best Ah've hord. Many thanks to all for a pleasant and entertaining evening. The Ripley to the Baard on his behalf was performed by Raymond Reed, Fred's son. It was a pleasure to welcome Raymond to our Society (Yes, he is another of our new members). He was also one of the winners at the Gathering Dialect Recital. The Reed Supper is always preceded by the Society's AGM. However, I'll leave this to wor gud secretarry, Kim, to provide information.

Note from Kim: Weell, hinnies, thor waas nowt startlin: aal the officers wor voted in agyen, ivvorybody thanked ivvorybody else fa theor haard wark ower the yeeor, an the new Chairman waas espeshly thanked fa bein quick on the uptake and a dab hand at raffles, weshin up an uther vital Chairmanly aaktivvitees. Meynd, we cud dee wiv a few mair membas at the AGM,

partickly those uv ye whaat scuttles in te the Reed Suppa eftorwards, if ye'll forgive the chidin.

Female Fellow A special pleasure at the AGM was the awarding of the Society's highest honour, its Fellowship, to Katrina Porteous of Beadnell, who can now use the letters F.N.L.S. after her name. Katrina is a leading contemporary poet who has studied the language of the area's fishermen and incorporated much of it into her work. Her recent book, "The Lost Music", is available in "all good bookshops", published by Bloodaxe.

Today or not Today The Society nearly had national exposure on the morning of the Reed Supper. The "Today" programme had contacted Kim the day before to arrange an interview about the Society's work, the historic importance of the language and the importance of Fred Reed as a literary figure. Poet, critic and publisher Peter Mortimer was brought in as a second speaker to speak on the literary angle. However, at 6.20 the following morning the producer rang to cancel the item, claiming that 90% of the programme would be devoted to the overnight news that the IRA was responding to the Good Friday Peace Agreement, and that the "gentler" items were to be axed. However, they still managed to fit in a fatuous feature about dogs and the usual southern-biased news items and sports reports. You can't reschedule a feature about an annual event to any other day of the year so it looks as if that's that for the time being.

Saturday 13th June, 1998: Joint Meeting with The Lakeland Dialect Society at 2 pm. The Lakeland Dialect Society (founded 1939) is hosting this special event which we hope as many of our members as possible will attend.

The Secretary tells us: "The venue is the Dacre Hall, Lanercost (this was formerly the Refectory, and adjoins the Priory) so follow the signs for Lanercost Priory off the A69 east of Brampton. There are external steps up to the room, so this may prove a little difficult for the infirm, but they are wide enough for them to have assistance from a person alongside."

The meeting will begin with a welcome from the President of the Lakeland Society and after brief outlines of the work of each society, members will provide a short entertainment of stories, poems and what have you. There will then be a shared tea, with a raffle and bring and buy. There is no charge to members or friends.

If transport is needed or can be offered, please let us know on the enclosed slip. On the way back from the afternoon's activities, our society is running an evening event :

Sat. 13th June: Merry Neet at Haltwhistle, at the Centre of Britain Hotel (all function rooms at ground level). Arrival about 5.30 pm with drinks; we're hoping to have a speaker on the history of the building, formerly the Red Lion, which incorporates a pele tower. A Roman-

menu buffet "banquet" will follow, with entertainment from members including Bob Bolam and Kim Bibby-Wilson. The proprietor has been very obliging in helping set up this social event, and while the cost per head for the evening (a couple of drinks included, plus a pay-bar) is at £10 rather more than our norm, the venue and cuisine are certainly well worth experiencing.

Diary Date: Sat. 17th October Memorial Lecture: the Society is hosting the first Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture, to be delivered by dialect expert Stanley Ellis of Leeds. The provisional venue is Northumberland County Hall at Morpeth and there will be a social event with refreshments before or after (or both!) the afternoon lecture. Other organisations connected with the county's culture are being approached to support the lecture series.

Northumbriana

The joint publication of the Society and the Morpeth Gathering features entries to the Gathering dialect and other writing competitions, articles on Northumberland's history, literature, folklore, music, natural history, etc.

The Index to the first 50 editions is now available at £2.50 (postage free).

Reissues of the previously sold-out back numbers 1, 4, 8 and 10 are now available at £1.75 each (or a bargain at £2.00 including discounted postage).

Other back issues can be had for their various cover prices, ranging from 25p to £1.40, or a **complete set** (minus nos 1, 4, 8 and 10) for £25 (or £30 including postage and packing). With luck the next issue may be ready for sale at the end of the year.

Queries and orders (cheques made out to "Northumbriana", please) to Kim Bibby-Wilson c/o Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, NE61 1RF.

Alluring Oxters

Radio 4's "You and Yours" earlier this month prefixed a feature on a scientist's new therapeutic aromatic substance (can't remember what it actually was, but I think it involved adding physically-attracting pheromones to aftershave) by referring to listeners in the North-East who would know what oxters were. After building up an alluring description of the nature of the new invention, the presenter revealed to the rest of the nation that oxters were armpits.

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Well, that's it fa noo.

Keep Ahad. -Terry Common

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