

# Northumbrian Language Society



Newsletter 35 - March 2000

Society patrons: Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

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## Next Events:

33<sup>rd</sup> Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering, Friday to Sunday 28-30 April  
Reed Neet and Society AGM, Saturday 6 May, 7pm, meal at 8.30pm

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### *FORST PEECE*

Forst off, Aa wud like to say a speshul ward o thanks te wor ootganin newsletter editor, Terry Common, for the storlin work he's done ower the years. He's done a champion job fer a reet lang while, an he disorves a rest. Many thanks, Terry, an Aa ken ye'll hing around the society fer a canny bit yit.

Next, Aa hope yor geet chuffed like at aal the events wuv gitten tegithor fer yor entertainment n delight. Aa think there's summat for ivry yen, n Aa hope ye'll gan along tiv as many as ye can. Wor society'll only carry on like, if we aal git along and tek part. Aa hope ti see ye theor.

### *THE GATHERING*

Yes, it's that time of year again, when a true Northumbrian's thoughts turn towards the Morpeth Gathering. Have you written your piece yet? Have you been practising the pipes? Or your clog steps? Or your storytelling? Time's running out if you want to enter. Remember there are three kinds of competition:

Group A - Arts & Crafts - entries received by 27<sup>th</sup> April

Group B - Writing & Composing - includes dialect, verse & prose; closing date 8<sup>th</sup> April

Group C - Performing - including Northumbrian speech and storytelling

For more details, see overleaf, or ring Kim on 01670-513308

# 33rd Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering

## 28th-30th April 2000 Programme

### Thursday 27th April

2.00 **FAMILY STORY WORKSHOP** Taffy Thomas with local monster legends *Bagpipe Museum Free*  
6.00pm-7.30 **CRAFT** entries received *Town Hall*

### Friday 28th April

9.30 - 5.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** with refreshments; entries to adult & junior craft competitions. Displays: mats, shepherds' sticks, smallpipes, needlework, disabled crafts, models, etc. T-shirts, Clock Tower biscuits, books, CDs on sale *Town Hall 30p/20p*

10.00 - 4.00 **FREE STREET ENTERTAINMENT** Medieval Punch & Judy and stories from Taffy Thomas on his tricycle - stop him and hear one *Market Place*  
11.00 **OFFICIAL OPENING** of Gathering by Chairman of Morpeth Town Council *Town Hall Exhibition*

2.00 **STORY WORKSHOP** for families as Thursday  
5.00 - 6.00 **BEDTIME STORIES** with Taffy Thomas. Come with pyjamas and teddies; parents pick up some bedtime tale tips. *Library Free*

7.30 **MILLENNIUM CONCERT** Songs, poems & music from the cream of performers from NE Scotland and NE England plus Linking the Chain with Taffy Thomas and Werca's Folk. *Town Hall £3/£2*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** with Keith Besford, Ken Meadows, Alasdair Turnbull & Friends *Tap and Spile Free*  
**Saturday 29th April**

9.30 - 6.00 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** as Fri. *Town Hall*  
Daytime **STALLS** including crafts, WI Market and Morpeth Lions bookstall *Market Place & Back Riggs*  
10.00 **STORY-TELLING** for children with Taffy Thomas *Morpeth Library Free*

10.00-10.50 **MUCKLE MINGLE OF PIPERS** Misericordia (early bagpipes), Francis Wood (plastic bagpipes), Matt Seattle (Border pipes) and Sarah Simpson (Highland pipes) *Bagpipe Museum Free*  
10.30 **PEAL O' BELLS** from Morpeth's historic Clock Tower; open to public later - entrance at rear of building. Admission charge.

10.40-3.30 **STREET ENTERTAINERS** Rent a Peasant with ancient animal breeds, Punch & Judy, historic characters, early music from Misericordia, stories from Taffy Thomas, local rapper & morris dance teams *Market Place & Back Riggs (if wet, Town Hall, Sanderson Arcade or Back Riggs) Free*

11.00 **CAVALCADE & PAGEANT** Pipers, dancers, horses, banner, giant figures & shields plus costumed groups reach Town Hall; welcome by Morpeth Gadgy; rosettes presented by Mayor of Castle Morpeth. Music in Market Place by Misericordia, dancers, choir, etc.

**N.B.** 10.45-11.45 Traffic restricted: access around town centre via riverside or via Dacre St/Manchester St.

11.30 **CLOG DANCE WORKSHOP** for novices & experienced dancers (bring hard-soled shoes) with Anne Walton & Shona Harper *Town Hall Ballroom Free*

11.45-1.00 **CONCERT OF THE SPOKEN WORD: MUCKLE MINGLE EVENT** with dialect writers and reciters from Scotland and Northumberland *St. Robert's Church Hall £3/£2*

M.N.G.C., a member of Morpeth Dist. Arts Trust & a standing committee of Morp. Antiquarian Soc. Reg. Char. 507640, reserves right to alter event details.

**DETAILS & TICKETS:** Morpeth Chantry Tourist Info. Centre (tel. 01670 511323) and during Gathering weekend at Town Hall. [www.morpethnet.co.uk/entertain/gathering](http://www.morpethnet.co.uk/entertain/gathering)

12.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Friday  
12.00 **NORTHUMBRIAN MUSIC & SONG SESSION** with Elsie and John Nettleton *Sun Inn Free*

### COMPETITIONS AT THESE VENUES:

**entrants & audience welcome**

*passport ticket £1.20/60p* (includes free entry to Exhibition)

12.30 **CLOG DANCE** (child & adult) *Town Hall Ballroom*

1.00 **NORTHUMBRIAN PIPES & LOWLAND/**

**BORDER/HALF-LONGS/ETC** *Bagpipe Museum*

1.30 **SPEAKING** (dialect reciting & story-telling)

*Refreshments available St. Robert's Church Hall (behind Collingwood House)*

2.00 **BANDS, ACCORDIONS, FIDDLES, OTHER INSTRUMENTS & DUETS** including Junior Band comp. *Refreshments St. George's Church Hall*

2.30 **WRITING RESULTS** and dialect recital by entrants of this year's dialect prose & poetry (judged in advance: closing date Sat. 8th April) *Refreshments St. Robert's Church Hall*

3.30 **SINGING** including groups *Town Hall*

2.00 - 3.00 **TAFFY THOMAS & MICHAEL WRAY** family entertainment *St. James' Centre Free*

4.00 - 5.00 **PLASTIC BAGPIPES** Francis Wood shows how to make Northumbrian pipes with biros and plastic bags (to be confirmed) *Bagpipe Museum Free*

6.30 - 8.30 **WINNERS' CONCERT** with Johnny Handle and winners of last year's open music, song and speech competitions *Bagpipe Museum £2.50/£1.50*  
8.00 **BARN DANCE** Glen Aln Band; caller Grahame Binless. Guest clog dancers and Muckle Minglers. Bar. *St. George's Church Hall £4/£2*

8.00 **NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS' SESSION** with Julia and Barry Say *Sun Inn Free*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Fri. with Muckle Minglers

### Sunday 30th April

10.00 **CHURCH SERVICE** with contributions by Gathering performers. Later, performers will visit local hospitals/homes. *St. Mary's Parish Church*

10.30 - 4.30 **CRAFTS EXHIBITION** as Fri. *Town Hall*  
10.30 - 1.00 **A WALK TO MITFORD CASTLE AND CHURCH** led by Chris Hudson *Meet at Town Hall £1 ticket needed in advance*

11.00, 12.30, 1.30 **ROBIN HOOD** puppet show with Michael Wray *Market Place Free*

12.00 - 2.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** as Friday  
2.00 **FAMILY CONCERT** with Sandra Kerr and the Bagpuss cushion, junior 1999 winners & Muckle Mingle guest musicians. *Town Hall Free (collection)*

2.00 - 4.00 **TOURS OF OLD COUNCIL CHAMBER**, Mayor's Parlour & Civic Silver, featuring the Newminster Buckle, with Joan Green, Isobel Smail, Trevor Hulbert & Jim Buchanan *Town Hall Free*

8.00 **MUSICIANS' SESSION** and Muckle Mingle *Farewell Tap and Spile*

## SOCIETY NEWS

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.00pm on Saturday 6 May 2000, in the upstairs Function Room of the Woodhorn Colliery Museum, Ashington, which is fully accessible. Please regard this as the official calling notice for the AGM. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below:-

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM, and matters arising
3. Executive Committee Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers - President, Vice-President, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Bibliographer, Newsletter Editor, Honorary Auditor
6. Executive Committee members (5)
7. Other elections - Fellows of the Society, Honorary Past Presidents and Vice-Presidents, Honorary Life Members
8. Any Other Business

If you are able and willing to help our work, why not put yourself forward for one of these posts? If you want to find out more, why not talk to our Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, on 01670-513308, for a "no-obligation" chat? We'd love to hear from you.

After the AGM, at about 8.30pm, we will be holding our Sixteenth Reed Neet, which is our annual celebration of the life and work of the late Fred Reed FNLS, whose reputation as our national poet becomes more firmly established every year. The Programme for the Neet is as follows:-

1. Peypin in The Muckle Greet Stotty Cyek bi Maistriss Ann Sessoms
2. Sarrimoanyil Forst Hack bi the Preseedint
3. The Stotty Cyek Weesh bi the Chairman
4. Tradishnal Suppor o Peys n Pees n thin Stotty
5. Address ti the Muckle Greet Stotty bi Maistor Denny Spence of Hexhamshire
6. Ripley on eets bihaaf bi Maistor Brian James of Alnwick
7. Address ti the Bard, wor ain Fred, bi Maistor Evan Martin of Bedlingtonshire
8. Ripley on hees bihaaf bi Maistor Chris Stewart frae the BBC

9. Bits n Peeces, hwen aal whe's willin is axed ti hoy in tha bits o varse, tyales, sangs, n owt else thit entortyains aal gud Northumbrians.
10. Bennydikshun, canny n tradishnal, bi the Chairman

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** The AGM and Reed Neet should remind all members that annual subscriptions are due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Annual fees are £3 per member (£2 for those of modest means), and a renewal form is enclosed. If you are coming to the Reed Neet, please let us know now on the same form, so that we can order the right amount of food and drink. Please help our Treasurer by sending these forms back now.

**BASIC NORTHUMBRIAN DICTIONARY:** a small group of members meets on a monthly basis to work through the alphabet in order to produce a basic Northumbrian dictionary. We're not trying to imitate Heslop, but to produce a useful word list of easily-recognised Northumbrian words and phrases which should help and encourage people to use the language. The group hopes to complete its first draft by the end of the year, and there will be a chance for all members to make a contribution to this important publication. Contact Peter Arnold on 0191-285 7209 if you want to help.

**THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** also meets monthly, and we're slowly making progress on a number of issues. As well as planning the annual programme of events, we also keep in touch with a wide range of people and organisations we think can help us with our work. Most recently, we've talked to academics and others about our publishing plans, and some progress is being made.

**MERCHANDISE:** We'd like to have a wider range of Christmas cards, and other general greeting cards, available for sale. These have proved to be very popular, and we'd like to extend the range, but that depends on all members letting us know their ideas. Brian James is co-ordinating this work, so if you have a good idea, just let him know on 01665-603364.

**HEXHAM BRANCH:** After many years of sterling work, the branch is unable to carry on. None of the members was able to volunteer to organise activities, and so, regretfully, the decision was taken to close the branch down. However, Hexham members, like all others, are members of the main Society, and can attend any event organised by the Society in any part of the county. Details on later pages. [Sorry, it wasn't possible to organise a bus from Hexham to Woodhorn on 6 May. We did try!!]

This item was held over from the last newsletter:-

## **"DIGGING UP FOLK MUSIC'S PAST" - TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER 1999, CHANTRY MUSEUM, MORPETH**

This was an excellent lecture by Graeme Lawson, one of the leading experts on the archeology and origins of music. The upstairs room in the Chantry Museum was full, and more chairs had to be found to accommodate everyone who turned up.

Graeme began by giving us a potted history of music from the earliest civilisations, illustrating his talk with slides of the latest finds from different parts of the world, and using reconstructed instruments which provided a whole range of very unusual sounds (some intended, and some not!!)

Perhaps the most interesting part of the evening was Graeme's account of how early pipes and whistles, because of the way they were made and played, led to the sort of instruments like our own Northumbrian pipes. And it was fascinating to hear the sound made by pipes from centuries ago which sounded very similar to ours.

It just goes to show how most of the major inventions occurred a very long time ago, and all we've done since then has been to refine the original design. Many of our ancestors may have lived more crudely than we would find acceptable today, but their imagination and skill was the equal of any modern invention.

Now there's a sobering thought!

## OBITUARY: PETE ELLIOTT

We're sorry to hear of the death of Peter Elliott of the famous singing Elliotts of Birtley. Pete was a member of the Society for several years, and many will remember the Mining Theme Day at Woodhorn at which Pete and his wife Pat entertained us with stories and songs from the north-east. Peter was highly regarded by everyone in the traditional music world, and he will be sorely missed.

**NEW PUBLICATIONS:** We have been notified of the following new publications, which members may find interesting -

"North-East Dialect: Survey & Word List" by Bill Griffiths, price £7.99 - This is an interesting book. It's based on the dialect of County Durham, and concentrates on how the language developed in the industrial and urban areas rather than in the countryside. There is a very useful word list, and the Society's dictionary group has found it very helpful! Available in bookshops, or from the publisher "books.north-east" on 0191-384 9707.

Ray Stephenson tells us that he's just published a new 44-page booklet called "A Slice of Geordie Heritage". It's a potted history of vernacular gramophone and phonograph recordings made by Tyneside, Northumbrian and Durham artistes between 1893 and 1943. The booklet is the result of the research Ray has carried out since 1965, and contains a wealth of interesting, and surprising, facts and figures. Price £2.99.

"Wor Nanny's a Mazer" CD and audio tape. This is a collection of early recordings of artists from the north-east who recorded between 1904 and 1931. The original recordings have been digitally re-mastered to produce a better sound. This will obviously complement the booklet produced by Ray Stephenson, and both publications should add to your enjoyment of our language. Price: CD £10, tape £7.

Both of these publications can be obtained from Kim on 01670-513308.

## THINGS TE GAN I' YOR MEETINS BYUK

Friday 28 - Sunday 30 April: 33<sup>rd</sup> Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering, at a variety of venues in Morpeth throughout the weekend. Details and tickets from the Morpeth Chantry Tourist Information Centre, Bridge Street, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1PJ, phone 01670-511323. NB: there will be a live performance of Wund n Wetter on Friday by Chris Ormston and Katrina Porteous; and a concert of the spoken word will be held at 11.45am on the Saturday in St Robert's Church Hall (in memory of Pete Elliott of Birtley).

Saturday 6 May at 7.00: Reed Neet and Society AGM; Woodhorn Mining Museum, Ashington - the traditional celebration of the Society, with lots of proper talk, good food, fellowship and entertainment in the best Northumbrian style, preceded by our AGM - all members, friends and families are invited, so book your place now by filling in the form enclosed with this newsletter!

Saturday 17 June at 2pm: Joint meeting with Lakeland Dialect Society, in Caldbeck, precise venue to be decided.

Saturday 24 - Sunday 25 June: Millennium Festival Weekend, Alnwick - we will be having a stall at this prestigious event, which celebrates everything that is uniquely Northumbrian, so please come along for some of the time and see what's on offer - and we're ordering some especially fine weather for the occasion!

Monday 26 June: Alnwick Fair - we've taken a stall again at this well-established week-long fair, so come and support us if you can. We're only there for one day, but we'll have merchandise for sale, there'll be members of the Society to chat with, and we'll be doing some musical turns as well. What more could you ask for?

Sunday 6 August: Northumbrian Dialect Church Service, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Ashington. This is a new venture for the Society, and one we hope everyone will support, whatever their religious persuasion. It coincides with St Oswald's Day, regarded by many as Northumberland's patron saint.

Wednesday 6 September: Hexham event, 7.30 - Royal Hotel, Priestpople, in the Court Room - "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?" Bar provided.

Saturday 9 - Sunday 10 September: Seahouses Sea Shanty Festival, - the Society will be involved in some way with this popular local event, probably taking a stall, and contributing to the entertainment. More details in the next newsletter.

Wednesday 13 September: Tyneside event, 7.30 - 14 Dilston Terrace, South Gosforth, Newcastle (wor chairman's hoos) - "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?"

Saturday 21 October: 3<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Lecture, County Hall, Morpeth at 2pm - this year's lecture will be given by well-known Northumbrian musician, singer, storyteller, language expert and NLS member, Johnny Handle.

Saturday 9 December: Yule Meet, Morpeth Chantry Museum, from 2 til 4 - our annual yuletide celebration, with food and drink, stories, songs and recitations, and our world famous "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?" How could you possibly miss it?

**And Finally , a thowt frae wor ane Fred Reed .....**

When a Northumbrian speaks t'ye, ye see,  
He's taalkin in the tung o history.  
He disn't wave wi wild gesticulations;  
Ye'll knaa jist whaat he means bi intonations.