

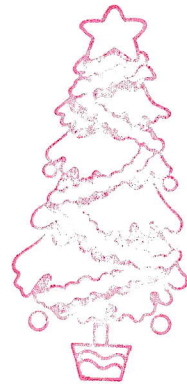
Northumbrian Language Society

"Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung"



Charity No: 515179

**Members' Newsletter No: 51
December 2004**



Patrons: Their Graces, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

Next Happnin



Yule Meet



Saturday 11 December 2004 at 2pm in the Chantry Bagpipe Museum, Morpeth

This is our popular pre-Christmas event, which features food and drink (Please bring some food to share if you can, and there'll be Hazel's world-famous punch to drink!!!), entertainment by members of the audience, and "Whe's Tellin Hoafies?" An event not to be missed!

Gaffer's Grumlin's

Deor Reedor hinny,

Can someone tell us wheer thi time gans til? Aah diwent beleeve thet it's varnigh thi yeor end. Mind, Aah reckon thet takkin ower the runnin o Newcassel City Coonsil hes summat ti dee with it. Aah've been sair rushed off me feet sin June, tryin ti keep up with aal thet's gannin on. Aa's hoppin thet things'll settle doon a bit efter the holidays, an thet Aah can pay mair attention ti the reely important things in life, like wor luvly tung. This eedition o wor newsletta hes a lot o news in it, especially aboot thi Moody byuk which wu reckon is aboot reddy wons the printer gets aal his peeple tigithor ti finish the job off like. It's been a lang wait, but it'll be worth it when wu get the finished article. An Aah hope thet mair of yous is gannin ti tek part in the writin competitions at the Morpeth Gatherin at the start ov April. Get yor thinkin caps on, and start scribblin! Gan canny.

The Gaffer

Society News

Whispers of Britain

At this recent drama writing workshop, Hamish Pirie of Piers Plough Theatre Company, worked with four Society stalwarts and two members of the public to create within two hours an episode to fit into a narrative tale, using a phrase ending contributed by a group in Yorkshire as a springboard. Various issues of identity and local concern were included, a storyline was devised, and a cliffhanger was left for the next team, at Berwick, to resolve. We'll let you know how the project develops.

What is Northumbrian?

Member Robert Craig of Weston-super-Mare in Somerset has sent some fascinating comments on the origins and spelling of Northumbrian. His concern is for a wider geographical tract of land than the Society's core area of interest, which we define as the living-memory "burr" area covering Northumberland, Tyneside and NW Durham, as mapped by Heslop in the 1890s.

Mr Craig writes (extracts from a couple of letters have been placed together here) :

"Northumbria lies to the north of the Humber and the Ribble. [Northumberland (the modern county) was not always within Northumbria. It was an earldom separated from the rest of Northumbria.] The dialects of Cumbria, North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, North Lancashire, as well as Northumberland, are all Northumbrian language."

"All languages have dialects. Northumbrian is no exception. The defining feature of Northumbrian is probably its retention of the Old English long u which has become ou in modern Common English. Thus, house=hoose (better, huus). It follows from this that Northumbrian is not confined to the present county of Northumberland. It crosses the border into the Lothians."

"How does the NLS convey the cultural unity of Northumbria? The Society's motto 'Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung' I think should be 'Keepan Ahaad O Wor Tung'. Thus, 'keepan wor tung i wor keepin' conveys the difference between 'keepin' the verb

and 'keepin' the noun."

What do other members of the Society think of this? Please write in with your views.

The Rollicking, Rousing R

The Secretary writes:

Try out your rolling Northumbrian r by reading this poem aloud. It's in John Bell's "Rhymes of Northern Bards" (1812) prefaced by the announcement below. It's recorded more or less in standard English (except for the use of "brocks" for "badgers") :

"The following Song was published in December 1791 as from One of the Rooks which then built their Nest on the Vane of the Exchange, and addressed to the good People of BUR-CASTLE."

Rough roll'd the roaring river's stream,
And rapid ran the rain,
When Robert Rutter dreamt a dream,
Which rack'd his heart with pain:
He dreamt there was a raging bear
Rush'd from the rugged rocks;
And strutting round with horrid stare,
Breath'd terror to the brocks.

But Robert Rutter drew his sword,
And rushing forward right,
The horrid creature's thrapple gor'd,
And Barr'd his rueful spite:
Then stretching forth his brawny arm,
To drag him to the stream,
He grappled grizzle, rough and warm,
Which rous'd him from his dream.

BBC Dialect Programmes

The BBC nationally is preparing a large-scale dialect project for 2005. Already, members Raymond Reed, Dr Joan Beal and Kim Bibby-Wilson have been interviewed for BBC-Tv Newcastle's "Inside Out" to be shown in January; and by the time you read this, Raymond, Allan Wood and others will have been recorded for Radio 4's "Open Country" (broadcast date uncertain, but probably soon).

Joint Meeting

We are to host next year's joint meeting of the Northern English dialect societies. The likely date is either 17 September or 15 October, depending on the other societies' preferences and the keynote speaker's availability. If you know of anything which would clash with either date, please ring Kim on 01670-513308 as soon as possible.

Moody Book Update (It's at the printer, honest!!)

Thomas Moody (born in Amble in 1901) was a remarkable and talented man. Teacher, water-colourist, draughtsman, researcher, linguist, singer, euphonium-player, book-binder, calligrapher, sports coach, mathematician and arachnologist, he hand-produced texts which were never published.

Now the NLS is at the final stages of making available copies of his "Mid-Northumbrian Dialect", a 700 page scholarly study of Northumberland's language, literature and social history, with copious sources and appendices on the history of the language, childhood games and local songs. Although intended mainly as a dictionary of the dialect of the area Alnwick to Morpeth, and from Rothbury to Amble, as spoken during the first half of the 20th century, the glossary is of relevance to a much wider community, including as it does references to the author's time as a teacher at Coxlodge, near Newcastle upon Tyne.

It has been a long haul arranging the funding and printing of such a treasure-trove for lovers of dialect and social history; and even now, some last-minute glitches have meant that, disappointingly, the book will not, after all, be out in time for this Christmas. Those who have already expressed interest cannot be more disappointed than those of us who have been working hard towards getting the text to the printer to find that we have run out of time, and that January will be the earliest it can appear.

Our originally stated subsidised price of £25 per book plus postage of £5 per book still holds good for this limited print run. If you live within easy reach of Morpeth or Gosforth, we can arrange to

have books collected or delivered to save on the postage.

We should be grateful if those who have already expressed interest would now send the appropriate amount (cheques payable to the Northumbrian Language Society) directly to the Secretary, Kim Bibby-Wilson, Westgate House, Dogger Bank, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1RE (queries to 01670-513308), indicating on an accompanying slip your name, address, telephone number, and whether you wish to arrange collection. (The couple who have already paid in advance do not need to send money unless they wish to pay for postage.)

If you have not already ordered a copy, please do contact Kim as above, as there are plenty of copies not yet spoken for.

Christmas Gifts

We do have many other books and CDs for you to buy from Kim (see contact details above). Please add 10% for postage & packing on each.

"The Wund an the Wetter" book + CD celebrating language and life of fishing community by Katrina Porteous and Chris Ormston : £10

"The Northumberman" book of poetry by Fred Reed: £7.99

"Northumbrian Voice" CD by Fred Reed and Raymond Reed: £10

"Northumbrian Echoes" Ellington Colliery Band CD featuring local tunes and dialect readings, including some by our own Terry Common: £10

"A Good Line of Patter" recitations and airs by Johnny Handle: £10

"Wor Nanny's a Mazer" CD of archive recordings from the music hall era: £12

"Canny Bit Verse" book of poetry by Robert Allen: £6

"The Lang Pack" tape of poems by Robert Allen: £5

"Canny Shepherd Laddie" tape of songs by Graham Dick: £6

"Border Directors" Northumbrian tunes CD: £12

"O'ergrown" CD of local songs by Spindlestone: £12

All of the above are available from Kim. Look out also in bookshops for member Peter Athey's new book "The Forest".

The Memorial Lecture

This year's Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture was given by Keith Gregson on Saturday 16 October in Morpeth Town Hall. Keith's subject was Northumbrian poet Ned Corvan, and his talk was punctuated with plenty of examples of the songs and poems which formed the heart of Corvan's work.

Attention was drawn to the fact that many of his works were complex combinations of poetry, song, and monologue, each lasting several minutes and making up almost a complete entertainment. This format suited the audiences of the day (early 19th century) when many of those listening would have found the variety of Corvan's delivery easy to follow and appreciate.

Keith Gregson's talk was followed by some lively discussion by the audience who had been clearly engaged by what they had heard.

A Northumbrian Institute?

The Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle have got some ambitious plans for their buildings at the bottom of Westgate Road. They also want to do more to help the many local amenity societies that exist all over the north-east, and we are, of course, one of those.

They are thinking of setting up some kind of umbrella organisation which could offer some common facilities, such as secretarial support, for local voluntary groups and charities like ours, under the overall title of a Northumbrian Institute.

This is an idea we have thought of as well, and it is one of our long-term aims. The Lit&Phil's plans have been discussed by the NLS Committee, and whilst we are interested in the idea, we have decided to wait and see if these plans come to anything before discussing them further. We will keep you informed of developments.

Meetins an Happynins in 2005

Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering 1-3 April - details will be available soon, but this is a reminder for all of those planning to enter the writing competitions that the deadline for entries is at the beginning of March.

NLS Annual General Meeting & Reed Neet : Saturday 14 May, from 7pm. The provisional venue is Morpeth Football Club. Further details later.

Northumbrian Church Service: Sunday 21 August in Morpeth, details to be confirmed.

When the Committee meets early in the New Year, we are hoping to agree a fuller programme of events for the year, which will be published in the next Newsletter.

SEASON'S GREETINGS
TO ALL
NORTHUMBRIAN LANGUAGE
SOCIETY
MEMBERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES

Gan Canny

an

Keep Ahad O Wor Tung