



NORTHUMBRIAN LANGUAGE SOCIETY

(Keepin Ahad O Wor Tung)



Members' Newsletter No.65 – Summer 2008

Charity No: 515179

President: Katrina Porteous FNLS
Patrons: Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

GAFFER'S GRUMLINS

Deor Reedor Hinny

Thi Committee hes decided it's aboot time wuh started ti think about thi future. Thet's the reason for thi taak at thi AGM aboot subscriptions. If wuh divvent hev the cash, wuh canna dee ower much. An theor's a heck ov a lot ti dee. Noo thet Moody's oot the way like, wuh cn think ov other things what need deein. Theor's thi CD version ov Moody fer a start, an Hull, an Holland. An wot aboot a word-byeuk ov the way folk taak thi day? An wuh need things fer thi bairns. Thet's wot wuh need the munny fer, an wiv ony help thet wor members can give, thet should giv wuh a canny bit start ti keepin ahad o wor tung.

Gan Canny

The Gaffer

SOCIETY NEWS

AGM, Saturday 3 May 2008 - Executive Report

The most significant event of the past year has been the successful publication of the Moody Book. This project has taken many years to complete, involving many hours of work, and lots of frustration. We had an initial print run of 300 copies, but these were soon gone, and we ordered another 30. They've gone too, so we're looking at the cost of another run to see if we can afford to get any more printed. The main problem in getting the book published has been the time it has taken. Almost all of the preparation work has been done by volunteers, and this has led to delays because most folk have had to fit in their work on the book around a host of other commitments. Most of the burden has fallen on our Secretary Kim Bibby-Wilson, and the Society owes her a great debt of gratitude for her persistence and determination to get the job done. We know that if we embark on another project like this in the future, we'll have to do things differently.



Despite the time the Moody Book has taken, we have still managed to carry out a full programme of events. As well as the routine Executive Committee meetings, we've been involved in the planning and running of the usual events: - the Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering on the first weekend after Easter, the AGM and Reed Neet at the beginning of May, the Annual Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture in October, and our traditional Yule Meet in December. In addition, we still publish an average of four Newsletters a year; and we get involved in as many other events and activities as we can.

We now have Diane Green helping with the Newsletter, and this will help the Chairman to get on with other projects, because he's also been editing and producing the Newsletter for the past few years.

Our regular administrative activities have been hindered recently by the illness of our Treasurer Hazel Dickson. This has meant that we have not been as effective as we might since the turn of the year, and Hazel would like all members to know that she regrets that her illness has prevented her from being as prompt as she would have liked in dealing with a number of financial and membership matters. However, the books have been completed on time, and there will be a full financial report at the AGM. Hazel indicated last year that she would be retiring at this AGM, and we hope to be able to announce her successor at the meeting. Hazel Dickson has been the Society's Treasurer since the beginning in 1982, and we owe her our heartfelt thanks for her loyal and dedicated work for all of those years.

As well as appointing a new Treasurer, we also hope to be able to recommend the election of a new President to the AGM. It is some years since Tom Hadaway died, and we have spent quite a long time considering carefully how best to identify and approach a suitable candidate to present to our annual meeting. We think we have succeeded at last, and we hope to complete the process at the meeting.

As most members of the Society will know, there is a very close relationship between us and the Gathering. The Dialect Competitions on the Saturday afternoons are our responsibility, and from time to time we've helped out financially as well as practically on the day. This year the Gathering has run into some financial difficulty, caused mainly by the removal of financial support which had previously been provided from a number of funding bodies. One of the issues we are going to have to consider therefore is how we can help the Gathering to continue in its current form. We have no firm ideas at the moment, but this is to advise all members that we may be coming back to you with some proposals which will need your advice and possible approval.

One of the practical proposals we are also going to be putting forward at this year's AGM is an increase in membership fees to take effect from 1st April 2009. The detail will be discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda of the meeting, but we have decided that the time is right to make some changes. If we are to progress as a Society, we will need to develop a proper development plan which identifies what we want to do in the short, medium and long-term. This will no doubt contain projects that will cost money, and whilst we will have to find funding partners for a lot of these, having a more substantial financial resource behind us will also be necessary to convince these potential funders that we are a viable organisation they can do business with.

We welcome your ideas on all of these points, and we are hoping we can start a lively debate within the Society about our future.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our members for their continued support and encouragement, and in particular, I would like to thank the Society's Officers and Committee whose efforts have been appreciated.

AGM AND REED NEET

At the AGM, we were pleased to elect Katrina Porteous as President of the Society. Her love for the language is evident in her writing, and she will be an excellent Ambassador for the society. It was also good to see the faces of friends who have supported the society over the years. Barbara Hadaway, widow of previous President Tom Hadaway plus son and daughter-in-law attended, as did Renee Chaplin, widow of our very first President Sid Chaplin.

Hazel Dickson retired as our Treasurer, but offered herself as Vice Chairman before receiving the scheduled (by us) surprise (to her) of the award of Honorary Life Membership for services to NLS. Hazel has been the Society's only Treasurer, and it was a fitting tribute to her for her twenty-five years of service. John Davidson took over as Treasurer.

Raymond Reed and Ron Forster joined the Committee, the remainder of whom were re-elected. Unfortunately, Vice-President Janet Brown was absent because of a brief illness.

During the AGM there was a debate about subscriptions, and after a lively discussion, and a vote, it was agreed to raise the subscription next year so that we can begin to build a fund that we can use to support our plans for the future. Details of the new rates are to be found later on in this Newsletter.

There was a good turn-out for the Reed Neet, and after the traditional beginning, and the pie and peas supper, the main speakers were: **Toast to the Stotty** - Raymond Reed; **Reply on behalf of the Stotty** - Peter Arnold; **Toast to the Bard** - Heather Ging; **Reply on behalf of the Bard** - Nick Short. The evening ended with contributions from the audience.

41st MORPETH NORTHUMBRIAN GATHERING 2008

Did ye see yon lad Aled Jones on BBC "Songs of Praise" on 18th May taakin te anithor canny singor, the Morpeth Gadgy, wor Alex Swailes MBE, inviting aal the lads an lasses at hyem te let doon thor galluses an waatch in the scenes of activity and enjoyment across Morpeth during this year's Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering? Unfortunately the weather upset the recording schedule, which meant that the film crew arrived just at the end of the dialect session, but there were snippets of Northumbrian in amongst the scenes filmed, including the Sunday morning church service featuring the christening of baby Aidan, led by Society member Revd Ron Forster of St George's URC.

The Society was pleased to support the town's 41st annual festival of local traditional music, dialect, dance and culture spanning 60 events and 100 competitions in 10 indoor and outdoor locations. Despite this year's staggered Easter holiday and uncertain weather, thousands of visitors came from right across the country, Europe and the US in response to the theme of "Crossing Borders" and to see the launch of the town's William Turner 500 years celebrations. The BBC team praised the welcoming atmosphere of the Muckle Fligiarishon during the three days of the Gathering.

As part of the fund-raising effort for next year, the sweet sounds of Northumberland rang out on Thursday 12th June at 7.30 pm when the county's women's choir, Werca's Folk, and a group of Northumbrian smallpipers performed at Morpeth Methodist Church in "Celebrating Emily", a concert to mark the unveiling of the newly-restored grave of suffragette Emily Davison, who died beneath the hooves of the King's horse in 1913. Werca's Folk is directed by Sandra Kerr, and draws singers from across Northumberland and Tyneside. Sandra's song "Emily Davison" took pride of place in the programme, with a slight reworking of the lyric to reflect the restoration of the grave in St Mary's parish churchyard in Morpeth, but the choir also sang pieces about Northumberland and women's lives. Their distinctive stage appearance is influenced by Emily and her colleagues, using as it does many shades of purple, one of the suffragette movement colours. They were supported by the performing group of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society, who played a selection of traditional and modern melodies, including a sequence of new tunes by local composer Roy Hugman, featuring his "Spring Flowers for Emily".

COMPETITION RESULTS

Full results of all competitions are on our website www.northumbriana.org.uk, but meanwhile here are the dialect-related winners:

GROUP B : WRITING & COMPOSING

B1 Song Writing: 1, "Admiral Collingwood at Tynemouth" Dick Lowes and Sue Ann Tee (Newcastle); 2, "O, the Sea it Flows" Val Madderson (Ashington); 3, "Carols at the Low Long House" David Mason (Hexham).

B3a Novice Northumbrian Verse: 1, "Gi me aad Shiels" Bill Stephenson (N Shields); 2, "Ty'emooth" Bill Stehpenon.

B3b Open Northumbrian Verse: 1, "The Waleting Lead Miners of Fourstones" Nick Short (Hexham); 2, "Christ Visiting Martha and Mary (A Paintin bi Vermeer)" Alan C Brown (Newcastle); 3, "Strictly Skatin" Meg Stephenson (N Shields); HC, "Nee Where to Hide", "What's Happened to the Working Man?", "Dreaming of Yem" all by George Carrick (Cramlington); Commended: "The Geordie Wiz Kid" Cathleen McGowan (Gosforth).

B5 Northumbrian Prose: 1, "High as a Kite" G Carrick; 2, "Evanescant Liaison" G Carrick; 3, "Tyme Gaans Slaa Ootby" Nick Short; Comm. "A Dimension of Eternity" G Carrick.

B8 Short Story: 1, "The Ring" Nick Short; 2, "Memoirs in Sepia" Bill Kendall (Winlaton); 3, "I Remember When" G Carrick; HC, "Monk's Gold" Peter B Hart (Longbenton); Comm., "Cycle Race" Adrian G McRobb (Cramlington).

B9 Essay: 1, "An OAP in Morpeth" Maisie Polwarth (Morpeth); 2, "Skeleton in the Cupboard" Alex Hastie (N Shields); 3, "Carnival" G Carrick.

B10 Local History Article: 1, "The Blink of an Eye" George Carrick; 2, "Shiel Gair" N Short; ; 3, "Strictly on Ice" M Stephenson.

GROUP C : PERFORMING

C18 Northumbrian Speech: 1, Raymond Reed (Stakeford); 2, Nick Short.

C22 Story-Telling: 1, Raymond Reed; 2 (tied) Bill Stephenson and Nick Short; 3, Meg Stephenson.

For those who were unable to attend the Gathering, here is Nick Short's winning entry to the Open Verse Competition.

Ye-ors ago, thi miners uv Fourstones used ti waark oot ower thi fells ti thi lead mines uv Allenheads aan Killhope. They wud bey aaway fhre ho-ume fo five days aan wud caahrry aal theer food in aa laarge envelope lyke bag which waas known aas aa "wallet," hence they 'walleated ti thi mine.' Thay wud live in aa pla-ece caalled 'thi shop' whyle aat thi mine. Theer wud bey aan op-un fire fo cookin thi food on aan some beds ti sleep in aftohr aa shift doon thi mine. This waas aa hard way ti ohrn aa livin.

Thi Walleating Lead Miners of Fourstones

Ower bog aan ower boh-run
Ti thi mine his pay ti ohrn.

Thi guid wyfe filled thi wallet
Wi food fo fyve laang days
Thi miner cahried eet on ees back
Achross thi moorlaand ways.

Monday ti Fhriday waas thi tyme
Thi food wud bey thi best
Cooked i' thi shop next ti thi mine
Wheer thay wud tay-eke theer hrest

Fadge aan two ghreet stottie ca-ekes
Wud keep thi miners goin
Aa bit uv veg aa bit uv meat
Aan aa pot ti dey thi cookin.

Theer wud bey tatties fo' sum meals
Howked fhre thi miners' plot
Nut much fo thi puddin lyne
Aan that wud bey theer lot

Fhre deep beneath thi muthor oarth
Thi lead wud sap thi miners' worth.

In haard conditions faar from bryght
Workin theer bi caandle lyght.

Wi gyevelic, pick aan hroond moothed shule
Workin on til thi tub waas full.

Sthruglin in thi mud aan ghrime
So-akin in thi wet aan slime.

Bhroken skin aan scaabbied baacks
Fhre digging ore fhre seams aan chraacks.

Theer wud bey many mo-ans aan ghro-ans
Theer wud bey many achin bo-anes.

Theer wud bey many cuts aan ghrazes
Wi lynes uv age on young men's fa-eces

Aa way uv lyfe aan uv sthrain
Aa way fo' work wi little gain.

Little tyme left aat thi end uv thi day
But ti cook thi fare aan doon ti lay.

Ahroond thi fyre theer wet duds lay
Dhryin oot fo' work next day.

He'd spend thi nyghts in fitful sleep
Aan wa-eke next moh-rn then ma-eke ees way
Baack doon thi lead mine co-ald aan daark
Ti dig thi ore aan oah-rn ees pay.

On Friday nyght theyed gaan theer ways
Oot uv thi valley, back o're thi hills
Aan i' theer pockets aa full week's coin
Baack ti theer ho-umes wi aal theer ills.

Thi paaths thaat led oot o're thi fells
Wor set wi way maark cairns
That led them baack ti ho-ume aan wyfe
Aan aa hoose uv ghrowin' bairns.

Aa haard lyfe this mo-ast surely waas
Spent 'neath thi surface moor
Pickin aan diggin thi leadin ore
They still found theersells quyte poor.

Whaat ta-eles thi moorlaand paths cud tell
Uv miners walletin ti miners hell.

MEETINS AN HAPPNINS

National Poetry Day is Thursday 9th October. This year, we're trying to put on a series of events in different parts of the area to celebrate this special day.

The Roland Bibby Memorial Lecture will be on Saturday October 25th from 2-4pm in Morpeth Town Hall. Title and speaker yet to be announced. Doors open at 1.30 for drinks.

The Yule Meet will be on Saturday December 13th 2-4pm in Morpeth's Chantry Museum.

The 42nd Morpeth Gathering will be held on the weekend of 17-19th April 2009. It will have an eighteenth century theme but will also celebrate the 850th Anniversary of St. Robert of Newminster.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

As mentioned in the Executive Report earlier in the Newsletter, new subscription rates will apply from April 2009. An individual subscription will be £10, with a concessionary rate of £5 for younger and older members. Two or more folk at the same address taking out joint membership will pay £15.

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More News...

- Heslop's Dictionary has now been digitised and is available on the internet.
- An index of articles published in the first fifty editions of 'Northumbriana' is now available on our website.

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Keep in Touch...

Should you wish to contact us for further details or to enquire about subscriptions, the main contacts are as follows:-

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